Job Related Fitness Testing

Contents

Policy Statement ......................................................................................................................... 2
Officer Training and Fitness Training .......................................................................................... 2
Failure to Achieve the Minimum Standard ................................................................................. 5
Medical Conditions...................................................................................................................... 6
Maternity and Pregnancy ............................................................................................................ 7
Responsibilities............................................................................................................................ 8
Additional Information.............................................................................................................. 10
Policy Statement

Summary
This policy details how police officer fitness testing and standards will be operated and managed. It aims to ensure that individuals are able to carry out the full range of duties as a police officer and, if appropriate, their specialist role.

The policy explains:
- The testing process and fitness standards required;
- The procedures for officers with medical conditions; and
- What happens if the required standard is not achieved.

Scope
This policy applies to all police officers, including special constables, who are required to undertake Officer Safety Training (OST), however, some elements only apply to officers in specialist roles as defined by NPCC.

Delegation
The responsibilities of the district or departmental heads can be delegated to another member of the senior leadership team, if they consider this is appropriate.

Officer Training and Fitness Training

Principles
- All police officers who are required to undertake OST will take the Job Related Fitness Test annually, subject to the provisions of this policy.
- Officers will normally undertake their fitness test before starting annual OST.
- A Fitness to Train form must be completed, which requires the officer to provide details of any medical restrictions, such as injuries or illnesses, they may have and to state that they consider themselves to be medically fit to take the test. Failure to sign the form will mean that the officer will not be allowed to participate in the test.
- Before the test it will be demonstrated and it will be run in accordance with guidelines.
- Medical restrictions must be declared if they affect an officer’s ability to take the test.
- If an officer states, immediately before the test, that they are not medically fit to take the test or if the Physical Training Instructor (PTI) or Public Order Trainer (POT) determines that they are not medically fit to take the test, it will be rescheduled. This will not be regarded as a test failure.
- Officers who have returned to duty following a lengthy period of absence (twelve months or more) will be required to undertake the test within three months of starting their role.
- If officers have concerns about personal fitness or matters relating to the
fitness testing they will have an opportunity to attend an open sessions run by a PTI.

- Officers will not be permitted to take the fitness test if they do not attend with suitable clothing and footwear. Disciplinary action may be taken in these circumstances, especially if this is repeated.
- Unreasonable refusal to undertake part or all of the fitness test may result in disciplinary action being taken against the officer.
- Outcomes will be recorded.
- Where appropriate, dynamic push and strength pull assessments will also be carried out to national standards.

**Standard Test**

- For the standard fitness test, which is a national assessment, officers must attain a level of at least 5:4 on a multi-shuttle or “bleep test”.
- Officers will finish the test when they:
  - Attain the level of 5:4; or
  - Fail to complete the 15 metre course before the bleep sounds on three consecutive occasions.
- Officers are required to undertake and complete a standard warm up, including stretching, and running to level 3.

**Alternative Test**

- Officers who are unable to take the standard “shuttle run” fitness test for medically certified reasons can take the Chester Treadmill Police Walk Test Police (CTPWT), as an alternative.
- Medical certification should be sought via Occupational Health utilising the normal Management Referral process. The line manager will decide if the officer should take the alternative test, based on the outcome of the referral, following consultation with the HR Officer.
- The CTPWT has been approved by the College of Policing as the best available alternative test to the shuttle run to determine whether an officer is able to achieve the minimum recommended aerobic fitness standard for OST.
- After a suitable warm-up determined by the PTI/POT an officer taking the alternative CTPWT test is required to walk at a brisk pace (6.0km/hr) on the treadmill for 10 minutes. Every 2 minutes the gradient is raised by 3%. After each period of 2 minutes the officer’s Borg scale Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) must be less than 18 in order for them to continue.

**Specialist Roles**

- Officers in specialist roles are expected to annually achieve the minimum standards described below which have been defined as national standards.
- The CTPWT, if appropriate, may also be used as an alternative fitness test for specialist roles but the required walking times and gradients vary depending on the level of physical exertion required of the relevant training. (Recommended shuttle standards and CTPWT target times are shown).
• Officers in the specialist roles below can take Chester Treadmill Police Run Test (CTPRT), if appropriate, as an alternative to the relevant “shuttle run” fitness test.

• After a suitable warm-up determined by the PTI/ POT an officer will be required to run at a brisk pace (10.4km/hr) on the treadmill. Every 2 minutes the gradient is raised by 2%, until, at 8 minutes, it is raised by 3%.

### Specialist Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialist Role</th>
<th>Shuttle Standard</th>
<th>CTPWT Target Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marine police unit</td>
<td>5:4</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBRN</td>
<td>5:4</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of entry</td>
<td>5:4</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mounted branch</td>
<td>5:7</td>
<td>10 mins 20 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Handler</td>
<td>5:7</td>
<td>10 mins 20 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Pedal Cyclist</td>
<td>5:8</td>
<td>10 mins 20 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police support unit</td>
<td>6:3</td>
<td>10 mins 40 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air support – Tactical Flight Officers</td>
<td>6:4</td>
<td>10 mins 40 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police divers</td>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>11 mins 20 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine police (tactical skills)</td>
<td>7:2</td>
<td>11 mins 40 secs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorised firearms officer (AFO)</td>
<td>7:6</td>
<td>12 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Risk Assessment

- A specific risk assessment for the fitness test will be completed by a PTI or POT in consultation with health and safety colleagues.
- The risk assessment will be reviewed periodically or in the event of:
  - A significant injury/illness to a participant; or
  - An organisational change affecting the delivery of the fitness test.
- Dynamic fitness test risk assessments will be undertaken.
- A specific risk assessment may be required on a case by case basis.

### Assessment and Test Outcome

- A PTI or POT will decide if an officer has successfully completed the assessment. Their decision cannot be disputed.
- Officers will be informed of the level that they achieved.
- Outcome:
  - Test Successful: If an officer is successful in passing the test, then they will continue in role.
Test Unsuccessful: If an officer fails the test, the PTI or POT will submit a written report to their District/Departmental Head with a copy to their Line manager and their HR Officer. This will detail the test outcome and provide an assessment of the work necessary to enable them to achieve the required standard.

- The outcome of the test will be recorded on Carm and the HR IT system.
- Failing or not taking the fitness test will mean that an officer cannot continue on to take OST or an equivalent course for a specialist role.

**Failure to Achieve the Minimum Standard**

**Remaining in Role**
- The line manager will hold a meeting with the officer to discuss the test or re-test outcome and carrying out their role responsibilities.
- A decision will be made about whether the officer should be permitted to continue in their role.
- If the officer is posted to a new role this decision will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Recruitment and Selection policy.

**Fitness Improvement Plan**
- A fitness improvement plan will be created which is tailored to the officer’s individual needs, taking account of national guidance and health and safety considerations.
- If an officer experiences any significant difficulties or discomfort implementing their plan they must stop immediately and speak with the PTI/POT as soon as possible.
- Officers can request a progress check and, subject to exigencies of duty, the officer will be given opportunities to achieve the required standard during the improvement plan period. If they fail the progress check this will not be regarded as a formal fitness test failure. The officer will formally undertake the fitness test at the end of the improvement plan period, if they have not passed the test earlier.
- Officers will have three calendar months from the date of their test failure in which to pass the fitness test.
- The period of the improvement plan can be extended, in exceptional circumstances, by up to a further calendar month if the officer’s line manager, following a recommendation from the PTI/POT, determines that a longer improvement period is appropriate.

**Failure to Pass a Re-Test**
- A further improvement plan will be set and the officer will be given a further specified period in which to pass the test.
- If formal action is taken, a programme of supervised training will be offered to the officer. Subject to exigencies of duty, supervised training in duty time of two hours per week for eight weeks will be offered to improve the officer’s fitness, if this is considered to be appropriate by the line manager.
Consultation will be undertaken with specialist advisors (PTI/POT, HR officer etc.) on a case by case basis over whether further supervised training should be offered after this period and whether duty time should again be made available.

It is unlikely that an officer will be retained in a specialist role if they fail the fitness test twice.

If the OST fitness test is not passed, formal action may be started under the Police (Performance) Regulations 2012 which could ultimately lead to the officer’s dismissal.

**Medical Conditions**

**Assessments**

- Medical conditions or disabilities may impact on an officer’s ability to undertake a fitness test.
- Consideration will be given to whether the disability or medical condition precludes the officer from undertaking the fitness test.
- If an officer has a medical condition or disability, this will be considered sensitively and fairly on a case by case basis.
- This is separate to any assessment of whether the officer should be placed on recuperative duties or whether their duties should be adjusted.

**Temporary Issues**

- If an officer is unable to take a fitness test due to a temporary medical issue, their test will be rescheduled to a later date.
- Normally a test will be rescheduled within two months.
- A longer delay will only be agreed where there is medical evidence provided by the officer’s GP, an Occupational Health specialist or another medical specialist, that they need this due to the nature of their temporary medical issue(s).
- If an officer seeks to delay to a fitness test date due to a temporary medical issue on more than one occasion, without providing medical evidence to support the request, their second cancellation will be deemed to be a test failure.

**Fitness Test Exemption**

- If an officer has a medical condition, which is not a disability covered by the provisions of the disability – reasonable adjustments section of this policy, which they consider prevents them from undertaking the fitness test, they may request to be exempted from taking it.
- If an officer wishes to be exempted, they must make their request in writing to their line manager, detailing why they consider that they are prevented from taking the test.
- The line manager will refer the officer to Occupational Health with these details.
- An Occupational Health professional will decide, based on the medical
information provided, if it would be appropriate for the officer to take the
fitness test.

- Occupational Health may obtain medical reports or may ask the officer to
attend an appointment with them to carry out a medical assessment. The
requirement to attend an appointment is especially likely if Occupational
Health are not already aware of the medical restriction.
- If the request is declined the officer must complete the test.
- If the request is agreed, the decision will be reviewed every twelve months
but can be reconsidered more quickly if circumstances change. If the
exemption is withdrawn by Occupational Health, the officer will be
required to take the fitness test and training within 90 days.

Disability
Reasonable
Adjustments

- The content and delivery of the OST can be varied for an officer with a
medical condition. The training can be tailored to their needs following
discussion with the officer, their line manager, the PTI/POT and OH, as
appropriate.
- If an officer has a medical condition which is a disability covered by the
provisions of the Equality Act that restricts their deployment, a reasonable
adjustment may be that they are not required to complete the OST,
including the fitness test.
- Each case will be considered individually and it may be decided that they
still have to take the fitness test, as appropriate.
- A decision to exclude an officer from taking the test will be made by the
district or departmental head in consultation with the line manager, HR
officer and PTI/POT and advice from Occupational Health based on the
nature of the medical condition.
- In exceptional circumstances, an officer who is excluded from taking the
fitness test, may be given some tailored personal safety training, if
appropriate. Consultation over such training will be undertaken between
the officer, their line manager, the PTI/POT and OH, as appropriate. This
training will not count as OST.
- A referral will be made to Occupational Health before a decision is made as
to whether the officer should remain in their present role.
- A decision to exclude an officer from the test will be reviewed periodically
(at least annually) by their line manager in consultation with HR, especially
when restrictions are being reconsidered.
- If an exclusion is rescinded, the officer will be required to undertake the
training and fitness test within 90 days.

Maternity and Pregnancy

Provisions

- A maternity risk assessment will be conducted including whether the
officer should still undertake the fitness test.
- The assessment may be during the officer’s pregnancy or after they have
returned to work.

- When an officer has returned from maternity leave, their line manager will discuss their ability to carry out the fitness test with them and, if necessary, refer the officer to Occupational Health.
- Providing there are no medical issues, the officer will be given time, based on individual circumstances, in which to prepare for the fitness test (typically three months).
- The fitness test should be arranged to be taken as soon as is reasonably practicable, in line with the above discussions.
- It is expected that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the officer will take the fitness test within six months of returning to work.

**Responsibilities**

**Officers**

Officers are responsible for:

- Undertaking the fitness test, and the warm up, when taking OST, subject to the provisions of this policy;
- Bringing with them and undertaking the test in suitable clothing and footwear;
- Speaking with public order training if they have concerns about the JFRT;
- Detailing any medical restrictions which affect their ability to take the test to the test assessor;
- Completing a Fitness to Train form when taking the fitness test;
- It is expected that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the officer will take the fitness test within six months of returning to work;
- Stopping exercises immediately, and speaking with the PTI/POT as soon as possible, if they experience any significant difficulties or discomfort during the fitness improvement plan; and
- Writing to their line manager to request an exemption if they think that they have a medical condition which they think prevents them from taking the test. They must provide details of their restrictions and why the fitness test is considered to be unsuitable.

**Physical Training Instructor (PTI) or Public Order Trainer (POT)**

PTIs and POTs are responsible for:

- Completing and reviewing a risk assessment of the fitness test, in consultation with health and safety;
- Dynamically risk assessing officers before, during and after the fitness tests;
- Observing, conducting and recording test outcomes, ensuring that test guidelines are met;
- Deciding if officers have passed the fitness test or not; and
- Creating tailored training packages and fitness improvement plans for officers.
Line Managers are responsible for:
• Holding a meeting with the officer, if they have failed the test, to discuss the outcome and carrying out their role responsibilities;
• Consulting with specialist advisors (PTI/POT, HR officer etc.) and determining if, on a case by case basis, further supervised improvement training should be offered for officers who repeatedly fail the fitness test;
• Discussing completing the fitness test with officers who have returned to work following maternity leave;
• Reviewing whether an officer with a disability should continue to be exempted from the fitness test and making a recommendation to the district or departmental head for change, if appropriate; and
• Deciding if formal action should be taken under the Performance Regulations 2012, if a re-test is failed.

District or Departmental Heads are responsible for:
• Deciding whether an officer, who has failed the fitness test, should be permitted to continue in their role;
• Deciding if an officer should be exempted from having to take the fitness test if they have a disability; and
• Deciding whether to rescind an exemption.

Occupational Health are responsible for:
• Deciding if it would be appropriate for the officer to take the fitness test if they have a long term medical condition; and
• Providing a report for the line manager with their assessment and giving the officer a copy.
Additional Information

The supporting information for this policy can be accessed via this link.

Policy Database Administration

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The Equality and Human Rights Assessment for this policy is held on Force Registry which can be accessed via this link.

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<td>Amended the policy to incorporate the changes to the fitness test, including the alternative test. JNCC approved.</td>
<td>09/03/2017</td>
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