| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 23-2542  Responded to: 13th December 2023 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**Please provide relevant excerpts of Standard Operating Procedures, as well as any other instructions/guidance/memoranda provided to line managers within the Police service detailing how managers within the organisation should deal with a police officer suffering from a stress related condition.**

**For the avoidance of doubt, examples of relevant guidance should include (but not be limited to) the following cases:**

**- Performance management issues relating to staff suffering from stress (work related or otherwise)**

**- Disciplinary issues relating to staff known to be suffering from stress (work related or otherwise)**

**- Keeping in touch procedures for staff medically "Signed off" due to stress (work related or otherwise)**

**- Return to work arrangements for staff returning from a period of stress related absence.**

**- Occupational health referral procedures for staff who have demonstrated long-term stress .related issues (as part of this response, please define how Police Scotland identify officers suffering from long term stress)**

**- Identification and Monitoring process for staff thought to be at risk of ill health due to stress.**

**Please also provide excerpts of materials provided to candidates for promotion to supervisory roles under the Police Learning and Development Programme detailing the expected approach to Performance Management and Wellbeing for staff suffering stress.**

Police Scotland holds a number of documents relevant to your request.

**Stress Management Procedure**

Please be advised that in regards to the above noted procedure, part of the requested information is publicly available.

As such, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

(a) states that it holds the information,

(b) states that it is claiming an exemption,

(c) specifies the exemption in question and

(d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information that you have requested and the exemption that I consider to be applicable is set out at Section 25(1) of the Act - information otherwise accessible:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information”.

I can confirm that the information requested is available through our website. I have attached a direct link to the relevant document below:

[Stress Management Procedure (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/zkmnjpkt/stress-management.pdf)

All the guidance in this document applies but I note the links have been removed from the useful resources section, I include these below.

[Acas: Dealing with Stress in the Workplace](https://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6062)

[Employee Assistance Programme](https://besupported.helpeap.com/#/)

[Health Working Lives: Stress at Work](https://www.healthyworkinglives.scot/workplace-guidance/mental-health/Pages/stress-at-work.aspx)

[HSE Website: ‘Work related stress – health and safety in the workplace’](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm)

[International Stress Management Association](https://isma.org.uk/)

[Mind, the mental health charity: Blue Light Information](https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/bluelight/blue-light-information/?ctaId=%2fnews-campaigns%2fcampaigns%2fbluelight%2fslices%2fblue-light-information-booklets)

[Mind, the mental Health charity: How to Manage Stress](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/#.XTcfwnllJb1)

[NHS: 10 Stress Busters](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/reduce-stress/)

[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made)

[Trade Union Congress (TUC) Rep Guidance: Stress](https://www.tuc.org.uk/union-reps/health-safety-and-well-being/stress)

[Working Time Regulations 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/1833/contents/made)

In regard to the Individual Stress Risk Assessment Questionnaire document noted within the resources section, this is a tool for staff to use individually rather than a tool provided to line managers and so has been deemed outside the scope of your request.

## Attendance Management Procedure

I have included the relevant extract below:

“How should sickness absence for work-related stress be handled?

We have a statutory duty to protect people from work-related stress. Although we manage the absence in the same way as any other sickness, there are some additional considerations. These are:

* being sensitive to how frequently contact is made.
* considering alternative locations when arranging ASMs.
* offering a stress risk assessment.
* signposting the Employee Assistance Programme; and referring to Occupational Health”.

Please note that this procedure also contains several sections relating to general procedure which whilst not specific to stress, would apply. I have included these extracts below, but I must advise that it has been necessary to withhold some of the information requested, therefore, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought.

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I can confirm that Police Scotland holds the information you have requested and the exemption that I consider to be applicable is set out at:

Section 30(c) - Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs

**Section 30 (c) - Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.**

An internal telephone number has been redacted. To release these details publicly through FOI legislation could negatively impact on the operational effectiveness of various departments. While it is acknowledged that the disclosure of this information would support transparency and better inform the public as to how the Service conducts its business, there are already established routes for the public to contact the police and the disclosure of these additional details would not support the effective conduct of public affairs. As a result, section 30(c) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 is engaged.

“Reporting absent

You must let us know if you are too unwell to attend work or cannot attend work because you have been injured. You do this by calling an appropriate on duty supervisor and People Direct. The call should be made by you personally, unless you are unable to do so and regardless of sickness falling on a rest day or non-working day.

The telephone number for People Direct is [Redacted S30(c)] and lines are open Monday – Sunday, 07:00 – 17:00. If your sickness starts outside these hours you should call as soon as the line is open or within 24 hours.

If you become unwell at work or have to leave work due to an injury, you must follow the same process, letting your manager or another supervisor know before you leave. If your absence relates to an injury at work, you should read the Accident/Incident/Near Miss Reporting and Investigation guidance.

If you have a disability that means you cannot use the phone, we have a Short Message Service (SMS) absence reporting facility that we can set up for you. To access the facility you need to fill in registration Form (123-011). Once signed up, you can let us know you are sick by sending an SMS to the assigned number. This will send an email notification to your line manager. Further details can be found within Appendix G - Absence Reporting Short Message Service (SMS) – User Guide.”

“Certifying your absence

Absences lasting more than seven calendar days must be covered by a Statement of Fitness for Work, also known as a Med 3 certificate or fit note. Fit notes can be certified and issued by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists, in addition to doctors. Fit notes are required from day eight (inclusive) of any absence and must cover all days from this point until your return to work.

You may need to see a healthcare professional several times depending on the length of your absence. Additional fit notes must run one after the other with no missing dates and must be given to your manager for SCoPE system updates. Photocopies or scanned copies are fine for this purpose. We do not keep these on file. Once the details are taken from them, we will return originals to you or destroy copies. The details taken will include, the date you were assessed, the name of the doctor who assessed you, the reason for your absence and the period your absence is certified until. These details are required for Statutory Sick Pay Purposes to check eligibility.”

“Keeping in contact

You and your manager have to stay in contact while you are off. This includes returning missed calls and attending any meetings about your absence that you are asked to attend. An alternative manager can be appointed as an absence contact in some circumstances. How often contact is made, how and when, will depend entirely on individual circumstances and should be discussed with your manager.

Face-to-face meetings, phone calls, video conferencing, SMS, and email, are all acceptable ways of keeping in contact. All emails should have appropriate Government Security Marking (GSM) applied.

You should keep your manager informed about any likely return to work, as well as any changes in your condition or the reason for absence. They should keep you informed about developments at work unless you specifically ask them not to.”

“Support

If you reach any of the trigger points outlined in the Key Information section your manager may ask you to an Attendance Support Meeting (ASM) so that they can discuss the reasons for your absence in more detail. ASMs may be held during or after any absence. An ASM is an informal, supportive meeting to discuss support you may need to help you return to work or continue at work. You can ask for an ASM if there are things you would like to discuss about your attendance.

Your manager may offer to refer you to our occupational health provider. This is an optional service requiring your verbal consent, this will be checked by the provider when they initially contact you and may be withdrawn at any time. Occupational Health help minimise any health risks associated with work and provide expert advice and guidance on fitness for work. They also provide:

* advice on any adjustments likely to be required for you to perform your role,
* various medicals for specialist roles such as firearms and drivers,
* immunisations; and
* access to physiotherapy where specific criteria are met.”

“Ending your sickness absence

As soon as you are feeling well enough to return to work, call the absence reporting line on [Redacted S30(c)]. It does not matter if you are not due to be at work because you have a rest day or annual leave scheduled. A failure to report fit could mean you have to provide additional fit notes for days lost.”

“Return to work interview

When you return, your manager will have a return to work interview with you. This may be combined with an ASM.”

“Phased return and recuperative duties

Your doctor or other health professional may recommend that you return to work on a phased basis, or with amended duties. If this is the case we will try to accommodate their suggestions where possible. Depending on the level of detail provided, we may need to refer you to Occupational Health for further advice. You’ll be asked for your consent before we do this. Alternatively you may need to return to your own health professional to provide the necessary details.”

## Capability - Attendance and Performance (Authority/Police Staff) Procedure

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“Informal support (guidance for employee)

“If there are underlying reasons that are contributing to the unsatisfactory attendance or performance then you should make your manager aware of them e.g. disability or health related issues or personal circumstances. Your manager might suggest a referral to Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme if this is the case”.

Informal support (guidance for manager)

“You might be told there are underlying reasons that are contributing to the unsatisfactory attendance or performance e.g. disability or health related issues or personal circumstances. If this is the case it might be worth suggesting a referral to Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme.

If there are disability or health related issues you should not progress to the formal stages of the capability procedure without first following the guidance in both the attendance management and disability in employment procedures”.

To encourage improvement and help achieve and maintain the standards expected, you should talk over what support is available. This could include coaching, training, mentoring, flexible working, reasonable adjustments etc.

Stage 1 capability meeting (guidance for employee)

“If there are underlying reasons that are contributing to the unsatisfactory attendance or performance then you should make your manager aware of them e.g. disability or health related issues or personal circumstances”.

Stage 1 capability meeting (guidance for manager)

“There may be underlying reasons for the unsatisfactory attendance or performance e.g. disability or health related issues or personal circumstances.

If you are told there are underlying reasons, then it may be appropriate to talk about a referral to Occupational Health or the Employee Assistance Programme.

Where disability or health related issues are identified you need to contact People Direct for guidance on how best to progress the case. It might be more appropriate to consider reasonable adjustments, medical re-deployment or ill-health retirement rather than formal action”.

Frequently asked questions (guidance for both)

What support is available?

People Direct can be contacted on [Redacted S30(c)] or using the People Direct Online

Portal for advice or guidance. The Employee Assistance programme offers confidential support. You can also get support from: your manager; Trade Union(s);

Staff Associations etc.

Formal Capability Meeting Invite Letter

Please let me know if you want me to consider any reasonable adjustments or other support measures to help you fully participate in the procedure.

The Employee Assistance Programme is available if you require any additional support.

Formal Capability Meeting Outcome Letter

The Employee Assistance Programme is available if you require any additional support.”

**Capability – Attendance and Performance (Officers) Standard Operating Procedure**

Please find the requested extract below:

“Advice and Support Mechanisms

It is recognised that officers may require support and assistance throughout the capability procedure.

The following sources of assistance may be available:

* The officer’s line manager;
* People and Development;
* Occupational Health;
* Employee Wellbeing/Assistance Programmes;
* Scottish Police Federation or Association of Scottish Police Superintendents
* Representatives; and,
* Diversity staff groups.

Further information, including contact details can be found on the Intranet or from line managers or People and Development.

Line managers can seek advice and support from their line manager and/or

People and Development as required.”

**Disability in Employment Procedure (Officers and Authority/Police Staff)**

Whilst stress is not automatically considered a disability under the Equality Act. Stress could be deemed a disability if it substantially and adversely affects the performance of everyday activities. As such our Disability in Employment Procedure is within scope of your request.

Please be advised that the requested information is publicly available.

As such, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

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“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information”

I can confirm that the information requested is available through our website. I have attached a direct link to the relevant document below:

[Disability in Employment (Standard Operating Procedure) (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/vy1mi4gc/disability-in-employment-v7-00.docx)

I would in particular draw your attention to the following sections:

* Key information
* What you need to do
* How to tell us you have a disability
* Assessing needs
* Implementing reasonable adjustments
* Monitoring and review
* When someone tells you they have a disability
* Assessing the needs
* Occupational health
* Access to work

**Disciplinary Procedure (Authority/Police Staff)**

Please find the requested extract below:

“Managers Section

“You should ask the team member if they need any additional support to help them fully participate in the procedure”.

Invite to Disciplinary Meeting Letter

“Please let me know if you want me to consider any reasonable adjustments or other support measures to help you fully participate in the procedure.

The Employee Assistance Programme is also available if you require any additional support”.

Outcome of Disciplinary Meeting Letter

The Employee Assistance Programme is available if you require any additional support.”

**Grievance Procedure**

I have included the requested extract below but I must advise that it has been necessary to withhold some of the information requested, therefore, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought.

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“Formal procedure (manager guidance)

You should ask the team member if they need any additional support to help them fully participate in the procedure.

Frequently asked questions (guidance for both)

What support is available?

People Direct can be contacted on [Redacted S30(c)] or using the People Direct Online Portal for advice or guidance. The Employee Assistance programme offers confidential support. You can also get support from: your line manager; Trade

Union(s); Staff Associations etc.

Grievance and Appeal Meeting Invite Letter

Please let me know if you want me to consider any reasonable adjustments or other support measures to help you fully participate in the process.

The Employee Assistance Programme is also available if you require any additional support.

**Organisational Change (Authority/Police Staff)**

Please find the requested extract below:

“Supporting you through organisational change (employee guidance)

In addition to support provided by P&D, assistance is available from Trade Unions and the employee assistance programme.

Consultation (manager guidance)

Through the consultation process, your team members should be encouraged to express their views, ask questions and raise concerns about any aspects of organisational change which impacts on their area of business. They can also seek advice and support from P&D or Trade Union if they feel this would be beneficial.

Manager’s Guide to Consultation

Additional support for staff

In addition to support provided by P&D, assistance is available from Trade Unions and the employee assistance programme.

Support provided by P&D

P&D representatives will:

* provide support and guidance to business area leads, managers and staff during periods of organisational change, ensuring compliance with relevant procedures and legislation;
* provide support at both group and individual consultations, if required;
* provide advice on the support available through the employee assistance programme and other agencies; and
* work closely with Corporate Communications, project managers and business area leads to ensure communications and consultations are delivered consistently and within required timescales.

Invitation letter to organisational change consultation meeting

I appreciate that this may be a very difficult time for you and your colleagues. SPA/Police Scotland wish to offer what support it can and I would encourage you to speak to myself, your P&D representative or the Health and Wellbeing team if required.”

**Police Leadership Development Programme**

If stress is deemed a disability because it substantially and adversely affects the performance of everyday activities, then the guidance for reasonable adjustments in the PLDP Programme Handbook may apply. Please find the requested extract below:

“Reasonable Adjustments: Let us help

SPA/Police Scotland is committed to being an inclusive employer and to developing policies which allow both staff and students to better balance their personal and working lives.

The potential for disability discrimination can arise from a range of disabilities; SPA/Police Scotland adopts processes consistent with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that employees with disabilities are not unfairly disadvantaged.

The relevant Procedures are:

* Equality, Diversity and Dignity
* Disability in Employment
* Police Leadership Development Programme

Learners should note that the PLDP team will not have any knowledge of reasonable adjustments which may be in place for their current role. It is important to let the PLDP team know, therefore, if reasonable adjustments are required for any stage of the qualification.

Under the terms of the Disability in Employment Procedure, appropriate and limited information will only be shared with those who ‘need to know’ in order that relevant support can be offered. Requests for support will be considered on a case by case basis and disclosures will be treated with the strictest of confidence.

Further information and guidance may be obtained from the PLDP team, Scottish Police College - Tulliallan.”

**Postings and Transfers**

Please find the requested extract below:

“Transfer for other reasons

Officers may be transferred into protected or light duties posts as required to support an officer through a period of pregnancy, injury or rehabilitation or as a reasonable adjustment in line with the Disability in Employment SOP.

In addition, there may be cause under the Code of Ethical Practice, or either prior to or during misconduct proceedings for an officer to be moved. This will normally be done to protect either the individual, or the organisation. In these circumstances the reason will be documented by the Professional Standards Department and the officer concerned will be advised at an appropriate time.

In these occasions, HR will advise of the appropriate process to be followed for the individual circumstances.”

**Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)**

Please be advised that the requested information is publicly available.

As such, in terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

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“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under Section 1(1) is exempt information”

I can confirm that the information requested is available through our website. I have attached a direct link to the relevant document below:

[Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) (Standard Operating Procedure) (scotland.police.uk)](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/wytllamm/trauma-risk-management-trim.docx)

## Police Scotland Intranet

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Where necessary some internal telephone numbers and email addresses have been redacted. To release these details publicly through FOI legislation could negatively impact on the operational effectiveness of various departments and external partner agencies. While it is acknowledged that the disclosure of this information would support transparency and better inform the public as to how the Service conducts its business, there are already established routes for the public to contact the police and the disclosure of these additional details would not support the effective conduct of public affairs. As a result, section 30(c) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 is engaged.

“[Help – employee assistance](https://besupported.helpeap.com/#/)

By contacting Help, Officers and Staff can speak confidentially to highly experienced, trained counsellors.​

[Optima Health](https://www.optimahealth.co.uk/)

Occupational health in Police Scotland/SPA is delivered by Optima Health.​ Occupational health helps identify how your health could impact on your work or how your work could impact on your health.

They help minimise any health risks associated with work and provide expert advice and guidance on fitness for role and how and when a return to work can be facilitated.

They also provide:

* Various medicals for specialist roles such as firearms and drivers
* Immunisations
* Access to physiotherapy where specific criteria is met

Occupational Health is not your primary health carer. They do not diagnose, treat or prescribe medication. Your GP and other NHS services are your primary carer.

You can contact Optima Health on:

Tel: [Redacted S30(c)] (Free to call from a landline but mobile providers may charge)

Email: [Redacted S30(c)]

If attending in person our address is: 1st Floor Mercantile Chambers, 53 Bothwell Street, Glasgow. Scotland. G2 6TS.

Occupational Health Referrals

You can make referrals to occupational health on the Optima Health portal.

TRiM is the model of support used to provide support for officers and staff who are directly involved in potentially traumatic incidents.

Post traumatic support for all police officers and members of police staff is hugely important.

TRiM is the model of support used to provide support for officers and staff who are directly involved in potentially traumatic incidents.

Examples where TRiM is commonly used:

* Incidents involving fatalities (for example Road Traffic Collisions, Infant Deaths, Suicide)
* Exposure to violent and life-threatening situations
* Multiple casualty/ public disorder incidents
* Where overwhelming distress following an incident is experienced

The list is not exhaustive and TRiM should be offered to all individuals who have been directly involved in a traumatic incident.

You can self-refer for TRiM or you can ask your Line Manager to make a referral on your behalf by completing the TRiM referral Form.

More information on TRiM is available in TRiM SOP.

Contact Details: [Redacted S30(c)]

[The Police Treatment Centres](https://www.thepolicetreatmentcentres.org/)

Police Treatment Centre offers a dedicated Psychological Wellbeing programme.

Mental Health Foundation

The Mental Health Foundation provide high-quality, evidence-based information on a range of mental health topics.

[SAMH](https://www.samh.org.uk/)

Whether you’re living with a mental health problem or supporting someone who is, accessing information about a condition is vital. SAMH has developed a series of information resources for you.”

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.