

# OP-01.004, Health & Fitness Procedures

## Document Information

Security Classification	Not protectively marked
Document Owner	Head of HR
(M33C) Date Last Review Published	13 March 2017
Category of amendment	Minor amendments. Addition of more frequent fitness tests for 'at risk' staff. At risk in the context of this change relates to those who are close to the required fitness standard
Completed by	Richard Stevenson, Senior Health & Fitness Advisor
(M33A/Factual) Date Last Amendment Published	
Category of amendment	
Completed by	
Date of Next Review	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020
Notes	

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## 1 Introduction

The Welsh Fire & Rescue Services recognise the links between healthy employees and an efficient, productive workforce. Workplaces with a strong culture of wellbeing regularly see improved worker health, reduced sickness absence and improved staff retention. As such the Services strive to develop a culture of health and to encourage all staff to lead physically active and healthy lifestyles. This procedure details its commitment to employees relating to nutrition and physical fitness.

All employees are encouraged to be physically active for general health benefits. However for operational personnel it is essential that they maintain sufficient levels of physical fitness to enable them to carry out their role(s) both safely and effectively.

It is recognised that fitness standards must reflect the occupational demands of firefighting and that these standards be job specific to take into consideration the different roles within the Service. These standards must be based on up-to-date scientific evidence and set at the minimum acceptable level to ensure the safety of the firefighters themselves and the public which they serve.

The Welsh Fire & Rescue Services are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as is reasonably practicable. Employees are also reminded of their own duties under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974, to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do (or fail to do) whilst at work.

### **1.1 Safety considerations when undertaking Physical Training**

Safety guidelines are contained within the relevant fitness programme within Section 3 of the Health and Fitness Information Pack (see Appendix C). Copies of this Pack are present at each fire service location.

Prior to, and following, each physical training session the recommended warm up and cool down procedure should be performed as detailed in the General Fitness Programme contained within Section 3 of the Health and Fitness Information pack.

## 2 Corporate Policy

This Organisational Procedure supports Corporate Policy 01, Health and Safety.

### 3 Scope and Applicability

This procedure outlines the Service's approach and commitment to employee health, wellbeing and fitness. It should be noted that whilst the Service encourages employees to engage in healthy lifestyles, whilst at work, where appropriate, operational duties and commitments must always be given priority.

Only Service employees are permitted to use the fitness equipment provided.

This procedure applies to all service personnel as indicated below:

#### 3.1 Wholetime Duty System (WDS) Personnel

Employees may, whilst giving due consideration to operational commitments and other work activities, undertake physical training during the hours of their shift/working day.

- All employees will have access to Health and Fitness information and services as listed below:
- Watch-based personnel will have access one of the Health & Fitness Advisors
- Office-based personnel can contact the Health & Fitness Advisors directly for health and fitness information / services.

#### 3.2 Retained Duty System (RDS) Personnel

- Due to the limited positive hours available to RDS personnel it is not practical to allow physical training to be undertaken during the two hours available on drill nights. However, the facilities that are available on RDS stations can be used by RDS personnel when providing on-call cover and during their free time.
- RDS personnel are able to contact the Health & Fitness Advisors directly for health and fitness information/ services.

#### 3.3 Support and Control Staff

- Support and control staff are able to undertake physical training for a maximum of 45 minutes per week as part of their work (see section 5 below).
- They are also able to contact the Health & Fitness Advisors directly for health and fitness information/services.

All employees are required to adhere to this procedure. Employees should note that any breaches of this procedure may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this procedure may constitute gross misconduct and lead to dismissal. Please refer to our disciplinary procedure OP-02.007 for further information.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service supports an environment of mutual respect and equality of opportunity. In accordance with the Equality Act (2010), this document has been Equality Risk Assessed to ensure all Protected Characteristics are considered. Should an employee perceive that an adverse impact does exist, it is their responsibility to bring it to the attention of the Diversity Officer. This document also complies with other relevant legislation.

## 4 Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

It is well known that diseases related to certain lifestyles (tobacco use, excess alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and an unhealthy diet) are largely responsible for almost two thirds of premature deaths globally and can significantly impact on an individual's quality of life, health status and ability to work.

Promoting healthy lifestyles in the United Kingdom is now considered a priority and can help us address some of the important challenges facing the UK today. Investing in the health of employees can also bring business benefits such as reduced sickness absence, increased loyalty and better staff retention.

### 4.1 Physical Activity Promotion

Physical activity is essential for good health and contributes to positive well-being. Many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society – such as coronary heart disease, strokes, obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), colorectal cancer, stress, anxiety, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and low back pain – are associated with physical inactivity.

**The public health importance of physical activity is clear, as adults who are physically active have 20-30% reduced risk of premature death, and up to 50% reduced risk of developing the major chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancers.**

The workplace is an important setting in which people can increase their levels of activity to benefit their health and protect against illness. Physical activity helps people to manage stress, back pain, weight and medical conditions. Physically active employees also report less illness and recover more quickly from the illnesses they do get.

In addition, employees engaged in physical activity initiatives have reported greater enjoyment of their work, improved concentration and mental alertness and improved co-operation and rapport with colleagues.

For general health benefits, adults should achieve **a total of at least 150 minutes a week** of at least moderate intensity physical activity. Every bout of activity of **10 minutes or more** counts and we should try to be active **on every day of the week building up to our 150 minutes.**

Any activity during leisure, working or travel also counts. Physical activity includes activities such as walking, cycling, gardening, dancing and housework, as well as participation in sport and formal exercise. However, only 3 out of 10 people in Wales participate in the minimum levels of activity necessary to promote good health.

#### **4.2 Accessing Fitness Facilities, Information and Support**

The Service has an obligation to ensure that fire-fighters maintain an appropriate level of physical fitness for their role. However, the Service also recognise the benefits of physical fitness and physical activity to the rest of the organisation, no matter what their role is. As such, in its attempt to promote physical activity to all, the Service provides all employees with a range of services to support them in being more active in and out of work.

These include:

- Free fitness facilities at all work locations

It is accepted that common barriers to exercise include lack of time, access to facilities and cost. As such investing in workplace exercise facilities is an ideal way in which to promote physical activity and there is a growing evidence base that workplace physical activity interventions can positively influence physical activity behavior. Employees may use the Service's fitness facilities within the regulations as set out in section 3 of this document.

- Access to health and fitness advice and support

Operational personnel are required to undergo a health and fitness review at least once every 2 years. The procedure for this is set out in section 5. Whilst operational employees are obliged to undergo a review, support & control staff employees can request and appointment with a health & fitness advisor at any time by contacting occupational health for advice and support on fitness and weight management issues. All advice and support given will take into consideration any medical or personal issues and consultations will be conducted in a confidential and professional manner.

- Health and wellbeing intranet page

The health and wellbeing intranet site **offer a wide range of information on all aspects of health and fitness including links to useful websites and frequently asked questions. There are sections on men's and women's health issues and information on fitness for health benefits and sports performance. You can also access all of the fitness** equipment manuals for the equipment supplied across the Service.

### 4.3 Nutrition / Healthy Eating Promotion

Eating and physical activity patterns that are focused on consuming fewer calories, and making informed food choices can help people attain and maintain a healthy weight, reduce their risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health. A wide variety of nutritious foods are available in the United Kingdom.

However, many people do not eat the array of foods that will provide all needed nutrients while staying within calorie needs. Intakes of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, milk and milk products, and healthy oils are lower than recommended. As a result, dietary intakes of several nutrients — potassium, dietary fibre, calcium, and vitamin D — are low enough to be of public health concern for some adults and children.

Several other nutrients also are of concern for specific population groups, such as folic acid for women who are capable of becoming pregnant. Nutrition recommendations are based on evidence that consuming these foods within the context of an overall healthy eating pattern is associated with a health benefit or meeting nutrient needs.

### 4.4 Accessing Nutrition / Healthy Eating Information and Support

In its attempt to promote good nutrition, healthy eating and weight management to employees, the Service provides all employees with a range of services to support them eating healthily in and out of work. These include:

- [Health and wellbeing intranet page](#)

The health and wellbeing intranet site **offers a wide range of information on nutrition and healthy eating. It contains recognised information on nutrition health topics such as saturated fats, salt intake, fruit and vegetable consumption and recommends foods for a balanced, nutritious and healthy diet.**

- [Access to nutrition advice and support](#)

If further information is required, employees can request an appointment with a health & fitness advisor or the occupational health nurse by contacting occupational health for advice and support.

## 5 Procedures for WDS and RDS Health & Fitness Reviews

- 5.1.1 To ensure that Operational personnel maintain the required physical standards to complete their duties safely and effectively, every employee with an operational commitment will be required to undertake routine health & fitness assessments. The physical standards identified are job related and as such differ depending on the type of role they perform.

Station based personnel that ride a fire appliance (Firefighter, Crew Manager and Watch Manager) will be expected to demonstrate the physical ability to be able to perform tasks that have been identified as critical to their role. These include activities involving lifting and extending fire service ladders, hose running, wild land fire, casualty evacuation, stair climbing and equipment carrying activities whilst wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Incident Commanders (Station Managers and above) will be expected to demonstrate the physical ability to be able to perform critical incident command roles, which include walking and stair climbing activities whilst wearing appropriate PPE.

All WDS and RDS station based personnel will undertake a Health & Fitness Review (HFR) at least once every 2 years. All office based personnel and roles of Station Manager and above will undertake a Health & Fitness Review at least once every 3 years at the time of their 3-yearly medical. At least one month prior to the HFR, discussions will take place between the Occupational Health administrators and the relevant employee(s) agreeing a suitable date and time for their appointment.

- 5.1.2 For watch based employees this will be arranged with the watch manager (or via relevant support staff and liaison officer in the case of RDS staff) and will be entered into the station diary. If the proposed date is not suitable, then the Occupational Health administrators should be notified as soon as possible (at least 7 days in advance of the scheduled date) so that the appointment can be re-arranged.
- 5.1.3 Once the date has been confirmed, the Health & Fitness Review should be given high priority and cannot be postponed unless extenuating circumstances exist. Watch based Health & Fitness Reviews will take place at 0930 hours on either day shift, Monday to Friday at the Fire Station. RDS personnel will be reviewed during the hours of 0900 – 2030 hours, Monday – Friday, at the individual's station.
- 5.1.4 Those watch-based employees that are unavailable to perform the Health & Fitness Review on the specified date will be reassessed at a later date. This appointment will be performed at a suitable location for both parties. Where the re-assessment is to be performed at the Fire Station the Watch Manager will be contacted with the list of individuals required to undertake the HFR and a suitable time and date agreed. **Wherever possible, those required to perform their HFR should not be sent on detached duty on the day of the reviews.** Employees that are requested to attend an alternative appointment at the Occupational Health unit will receive a letter notifying them of the date, time and location of their HFR. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Central Staffing Department and to their Station Manager.

- 5.1.5 Office based employees will be contacted directly. If the proposed date is not suitable, then the Health & Fitness Advisors should be notified as soon as possible so that the appointment can be re-arranged. Office based Health & Fitness Reviews will take place between 0900 - 1700 hours, Monday to Friday at a suitable location for both parties.
- 5.1.6 It is the responsibility of the individual **and** the line manager to ensure appointments are kept. If any employee fails to attend an appointment or successively cancels review appointments, the matter will be reported to the relevant line manager / station manager. It is the duty of the individual to notify the relevant health professional at the earliest opportunity if they are unable to attend for an appointment e.g. annual leave etc. 'Failure to attend' is interpreted as any occasion where an employee fails to attend without giving prior notification or an appropriate or satisfactory reason.
- 5.1.7 Employees may request more frequent monitoring by the Health & Fitness Advisors should they feel it necessary. However, this will be subject to other organisational commitments.

## 5.2 Fitness Testing Procedures

5.2.1 As part of the Health & Fitness Review each employee will be required to undergo a series of physical measurements to determine their health and fitness status and suitability for operational duties. Individuals will be required to undergo the following measurements:

- Stature and body mass
- Body fat assessment
- Resting blood pressure and pulse
- An appropriate physical activity risk assessment
- An appropriate medical history check
- An appropriate cardio-respiratory fitness test

Any employee that does not meet the requirements in the physical activity risk assessment and / or demonstrates a blood pressure **>155/95 mm/Hg** will be referred to the Occupational Health Physician / Nurse before performing a fitness test.

The physical fitness of operational employees will be managed in the following manner depending on their role and fitness score:

### **Firefighting Roles (Firefighter / Crew Manager / Watch Manager)**

5.2.2 Operational personnel that ride a fire appliance (Firefighter / Crew Manager / Watch Manager) with an aerobic fitness capacity of **42.3** mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min or above will be considered physically fit for operational duties. Individuals will be required to undergo a fitness test at least once every 2 years. Personnel with a fitness capacity above 42.3 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min but below 44.0 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min will be required to undergo more frequent monitoring (every 6-8 months). More frequent monitoring for personnel close to the minimum fitness standard will



help improve firefighter safety by reducing the risk of an individual falling below the required standard for an extended period of time, which could put the individual or their colleagues at risk. Personnel with a fitness capacity of 44.0 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min or greater will be re-tested every 12-24 months depending on the station fitness testing schedule.

- 5.2.3 Operational personnel that ride a fire appliance (Firefighter / Crew Manager / Watch Manager) with an aerobic fitness capacity between **35.6 – 42.2 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** may remain on operational duties, but will be expected to improve their physical fitness to a level equal to or above **42.3 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** within 4 weeks of an unsatisfactory fitness test. Individuals will be offered weekly fitness training support by the Health & Fitness Advisor and will be re-tested every 4 weeks until the required level of physical fitness (**42.3 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min**) has been achieved.
- 5.2.4 Operational personnel that ride a fire appliance (Firefighter / Crew Manager / Watch Manager) with an aerobic fitness capacity below **35.6 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** will be considered unfit for operational duties and the Health & Fitness Advisor will recommend that the individual be removed from operational duties on health & safety grounds. Individuals will be offered weekly fitness training support by the Health & Fitness Advisor and will be re-tested every 4 weeks until the required level of physical fitness has been achieved. Individuals may be allowed to return to operational duties once their fitness has improved to **35.6 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min**, but will continue to be supported by the Health & Fitness Advisor until the required level of physical fitness of **42.3 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** has been achieved.

#### **Incident Command Roles (Station Manager and above)**

- 5.2.5 Those in an incident command role (Station Manager and above) with an aerobic fitness capacity of **36.8 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min or above** will be considered physically fit for operational duties and will be retested at least every 3 years. Personnel with a fitness capacity above 36.8 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min but below 40.0 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min will be required to undergo more frequent monitoring (every 6-8 months) More frequent monitoring for personnel close to the minimum fitness standard will help improve firefighter safety by reducing the risk of an individual falling below the required standard for an extended period of time, which could put the individual or their colleagues at risk. Personnel with a fitness test score of 40.0 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min or greater will be re-tested every 3 years in line with their routine medical surveillance.
- 5.2.6 Those in an incident command role (Station Manager and above) with an aerobic fitness capacity between **31.4 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** and **36.7 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** will be referred to Occupational Health for an assessment of other health risk factors that may contribute to the overall level of risk to the individual. Following this, individuals will be classified as low, moderate or high risk by the Occupational Health professional. Those in a low or moderate risk group may remain on operational duties but will be expected to improve their physical fitness

to a level equal to or above **36.8 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min**. Those in a high-risk group will be removed from operational duties on health & safety grounds by the Occupational Health professional. Individuals will be expected to improve their physical fitness to a level equal to or above **36.8 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** within 4 weeks of an unsatisfactory fitness test. Individuals will be offered weekly fitness training support by the Health & Fitness Advisor and will be re-tested every 4 weeks until the required level of physical fitness of **36.8 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** has been achieved or when their overall risk has changed to a low or moderate risk category.

- 5.2.7 Those in an incident command role (Station Manager and above) with an aerobic fitness capacity below **31.4 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** will be considered unfit for operational duties and the Health & Fitness Advisor will recommend that the individual be removed from operational duties on health & safety grounds. Individuals will be offered weekly fitness training support by the Health & Fitness Advisor and will be re-tested every 4 weeks until the required level of physical fitness has been achieved. Individuals may be allowed to return to operational duties once their fitness has improved to **31.4 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min**, and they are considered to be in a low or moderate risk category by an Occupational Health professional. Individuals will continue to be supported by the Health & Fitness Advisor until the required level of physical fitness of **36.8 mlO<sub>2</sub>/kg/min** has been achieved.
- 5.2.8 Where there are concerns regarding the physical ability of an employee to perform operational duties, which may impact on the safety of the individual and their colleagues, the Health & Fitness Advisor may consult with the Occupational Health Physician / Clinical Nurse as to the most suitable course of action to address the situation. This may result in a period of non-operational duties pending an improvement in physical fitness. Reasonable time scales with targets will be identified. Specific advice and support together with a physical fitness programme tailored to the individual's needs will be offered to the individual.
- 5.2.9 Where specific concerns are identified relating to the health and / or safety of an employee, the Health & Fitness Advisor(s) may refer them to the Occupational Health Physician / Nurse for further assessment.
- 5.2.10 The possible effects of anxiety and any other relevant factors will be given due consideration before any recommendation is made in relation to the employees situation.
- 5.2.11 Employees that fail to meet the required fitness standard for their role during a fitness test will be managed under the Service's Capability procedure. Individuals will be re-tested every 4 weeks. If the required fitness standard is not met at each 4 week fitness re-test, the next stage of the Capability procedure will be implemented.
- 5.2.12 Once the employee has achieved the required fitness standard for their role, a 3 month follow up appointment will be arranged to ensure the individual has maintained the appropriate fitness standard for their role.

### 5.3 Weight Management Procedures

The responsibilities of weight management must lie with the employee. However, as already stated the Service has a duty to ensure the health and safety of its employees and therefore other parties also have specific responsibilities.

#### 5.3.1 Employee responsibilities

- Maintain a state of physical fitness for operational duties that includes an appropriate body weight, aerobic fitness, strength and muscular endurance levels.
- Take appropriate steps to prevent overweight and obesity.
- Familiarise themselves with the general advice provided in this procedure and other sources of information provided by the Service for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the management and prevention of overweight and obesity.
- Accept advice offered by Health & Fitness Advisors and the Occupational Health Unit.
- Comply with any advice that may be recommended in line with this procedure
- Attend review consultations as required.
- Comply with any return to work / rehabilitation strategy following a period of non-operational duties.

#### 5.3.2 Occupational Health Physician / Nurse / Health & Fitness Advisors responsibilities

- Promote healthy lifestyles amongst all employees and give advice where appropriate during routine consultations.
- Initiate early intervention and advice in cases of weight increase and/or a reduction in aerobic fitness.
- Provide specialist advice, support and monitoring, where appropriate
- Agree with employees a weight loss program that includes the setting of realistic targets.
- Advise the Service on an employee's operational fitness.
- Advise the Service on an employee's return to work (e.g. from sickness, maternity etc.) / rehabilitation strategy.

#### 5.3.3 Line Manager Responsibilities

- Encourage employee's compliance with the Service's Health & Fitness Procedure.
- Assist in ensuring that staff attend Health and Fitness Reviews and consultations.
- Assist in supervising any return to work / rehabilitation strategies following an employee's restriction to non-operational duties.
- Raise any concerns regarding the operational fitness of an employee with the Occupational Health Unit or the Health & Fitness Advisors through the management referral routes that are available (line managers would not be assessing someone's fitness or

weight, but should be making those who can assess weight and fitness aware that there may be a problem).

- Immediately seek advice from the Human Resources Dept., the Occupational Health Unit and the Health and Safety department if there are any concerns over an employee's capability to perform operational duties safely.

5.3.4 There are four specific situations where it may be possible to identify employees who may potentially require weight management support. They are:

- The Occupational Health Unit following routine medical appointments.
- The Health & Fitness Advisors during the Health & Fitness Review.
- A line manager may refer individuals to the Occupational Health Physician / Nurse or Health & Fitness Advisors for assessment, where concern and / or doubt exists over the capability of the employee's to perform their role due to excessive weight.
- A self-request consultation by the employee for appropriate advice.

5.3.5 Overweight and obesity will primarily be assessed using Body Mass Index (BMI). The BMI is defined as the weight of the individual (in kilograms) divided by their height (in metres) squared ( $\text{Kg}/\text{m}^2$ ).

- A BMI over 25.0 is usually classified as overweight and is associated with long-term health risks.
- A BMI over 30.0 is usually classified as obese and is associated with significant increases in long-term health risks, possible reduced operational performance and increased occupational health and safety risks.
- A BMI over 35.0 is usually classified as morbidly obese and is associated with greatly increased general health risks, which is likely to negatively effect on operational performance and significantly increase occupational health and safety risks.

5.3.6 It is acknowledged that performing certain types of exercises or activities e.g. resistance training can result in a higher BMI. To this end, the use of BMI as a measure of fatness could misclassify very muscular employees as overweight or obese. The optimum range for BMI in relation to longevity is 21.0–24.9. In more muscular employees, a higher BMI may be acceptable. A BMI in excess of 30.0 is generally associated with a significantly increased risk of obesity related health problems. Where a possibility of misclassification arises in a particular case, other methods to assess overweight and obesity will also be considered, for example, body fat percentage and waist circumference measurements.

- 5.3.7 All employees who have been identified as being obese with no other medical complications will be referred to the Health & Fitness Advisors for specialist support and monitoring. The Occupational Health Physician / Nurse may also be involved in providing support and assessing fitness in cases where it may be required.
- 5.3.8 In some cases, restriction to non-operational duties may be necessary in order to reduce the health and safety risks where an operational member of staff has been assessed as significantly overweight. In such circumstances a decision may be made that the employee is unfit for operational duties until a desirable level of weight loss or a satisfactory Operational Performance Assessment has been achieved.
- 5.3.9 When a restriction to non-operational duties occurs this impacts upon the operational effectiveness of the service. Whilst the Service is prepared to support and assist in rehabilitating overweight and obese employees, it cannot find itself in a situation where increasing numbers of operational staff are restricted from their role due to excess weight and obesity. Such a situation will inevitably have a significant impact upon efficiency and the delivery of services to the public.
- Employees are therefore encouraged to take a responsible approach towards the prevention of overweight / obesity and to maximise fitness in order to ensure that the delivery of services to the public is not affected.
- 5.3.10 Where employees are classified with a BMI >35.0 but are able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of aerobic fitness, an assessment of their operational performance in simulated fire fighting tasks may be undertaken (see Appendix A for details of the Operational Performance Assessment procedure).
- 5.3.11 The Health & Fitness Adviser will undertake the Operational Performance Assessment at a suitable work location. Employees will be offered either union representation or a work colleague to witness the Operational Performance Assessment.
- 5.3.12 The employees BMI will be established on initial assessment and subsequent case management will be categorised as follows:

**A) BMI 25.0 – 29.9**

Where the presence of excess body fat percentage confirms that the employee is overweight, education and dietary advice will be provided that may also include a recommended physical training programme. The employee will be offered an opportunity to accept voluntary monitoring that may provide continued advice and support whilst they aim to achieve weight loss to a desirable level. Time scales for frequency of reviews in voluntary monitoring will be agreed between the employee and the supporting professional.

**B) BMI 30.0 – 34.9**

Where the presence of excess body fat confirms that the employee is obese, education and dietary advice will be provided that may also include a physical training programme. The employee will be offered an opportunity to accept voluntary monitoring that may provide continued advice and support whilst they aim to achieve weight loss to a desirable level.

Time scales for frequency of reviews in voluntary monitoring will be agreed between the employee and the supporting professional. However in some circumstances an individual may be required to undertake compulsory monitoring of their weight if the Health & Fitness Adviser and/or Occupational Health Physician/Nurse consider that there are additional risk factors in relation to the impact that their weight may have on their operational safety.

**C) BMI >35.0**

Employees demonstrating a BMI greater than 35.0 will be considered a higher risk. In some circumstances these individual may be required to undertake compulsory monitoring of their weight if the Health & Fitness Adviser and/or Occupational Health Physician/Nurse consider that there are additional risk factors in relation to the impact that their weight may have on their operational safety and performance.

This may include more frequent Health & Fitness assessments and / or an Operational Performance Assessment in order to demonstrate that their excess body weight does not impact upon their ability to perform critical tasks associated with an operational role. A satisfactory assessment will confirm that the individual is able to remain on operational duties.

The employee will be advised of a recommended target weight and will receive appropriate education and specialist support on weight reduction. A reasonable time to achieve the recommended improvements will be agreed. Compulsory monitoring may be required at suitable intervals to provide support and to monitor the employee's progress.

Employees may be asked to complete a food diary and exercise diary that should be brought to all review consultations in order to assist the relevant professional to identify aspects of lifestyle where advice may be tailored appropriately.

If subsequent weight monitoring consultations identify that that there is no progress with weight reduction or there is evidence of further weight increase, then it may be necessary to revisit the Operational Performance Assessment.

Table summarising BMI classifications and related actions

<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
BMI < 25.0	No further action
BMI 25.0 – 29.9	Education and voluntary monitoring
BMI 30.0 – 34.9	Education and voluntary monitoring <sup>a</sup>
BMI > 35.0	Health & Fitness Assessment and / or Operational Performance Assessment <sup>a b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> In some circumstances an individual may be required to undertake compulsory monitoring of their weight if the Health & Fitness Adviser and / or Occupational Health Physician / Nurse consider that there are additional risk factors in relation to the impact that their weight may have on their operational safety.

<sup>b</sup> Operational Performance Assessment (See Appendix A).

- 5.3.13 It is acknowledged that due to individual differences and circumstances that not all employees will make the same progress within similar time scales. An element of flexibility will therefore need to be included within the procedure to respond to individual cases.
- 5.3.14 The Occupational Health Nurse and / or Health & Fitness Adviser will monitor employees within agreed time scales and periodical appointments will be arranged to monitor progress. Employees are expected to co-operate fully by attending their appointments and to bring with them any food or physical activity diaries that they may have been asked to complete.
- 5.3.15 It is the responsibility of the individual **and** the line manager to ensure appointments are kept. If any employee fails to attend an appointment or successively cancels review appointments, the matter will be reported to the relevant line manager / station manager.
- 5.3.16 It is the duty of individual to notify the relevant Occupational Health professional at the earliest opportunity if they are unable to attend for an appointment e.g. annual leave etc. 'Failure to attend' is interpreted as any occasion where an employee fails to attend without giving prior notification or an appropriate or satisfactory reason.
- 5.3.17 The right of all employees to make lifestyle choices that do not affect their contractual obligations is fully respected. This procedure should not give rise to any unwanted actions or intrusions in circumstances where an employee's excess weight does not conflict with their contractual obligations.

- 5.3.18 In circumstances where an employee's excess weight does conflict with their contractual obligations they will be expected to take reasonable steps to reduce their weight in accordance with the procedures identified above. The Service is committed to providing all reasonable support and encouragement to assist an employee in achieving a recommended weight loss. However, it is recognised that each employee has a personal responsibility to ensure that they maintain a standard of physical fitness that will enable them to perform their role safely and competently.
- 5.3.19 Employees who do not demonstrate improvement for extended periods of time or who demonstrate a lack of commitment to achieve and maintain the recommended targets will be managed under the Service's Capability procedures. Improvement will be determined by the professional opinion of the Health & Fitness Advisors / Occupational Health Physician / Nurse and reviewed with the relevant line manager.

## **6 Support and Control Staff Health and Fitness Procedures**

### **6.1 Procedures for Physical Training**

- It is widely accepted that individuals can substantially improve their health and quality of life by including moderate amounts of physical activity in their daily lives. For individuals who do not engage in regular exercise, taking the first step towards developing a pattern of regular physical activity is important.
- Managers must consider the impact on operational and financial viability within their departments when applying this procedure. As such, it may not be possible to offer this benefit to all staff members in certain circumstances. Additionally, there may be occasions when, due to organisational pressures, it may not be possible to grant the time required by the employee.
- It is recognised that for the procedure to run effectively there will be an element of trust required to ensure the system is not abused.
- Consequently, individuals must seek the permission of their line manager prior to taking any form of exercise under this procedure.
- Prior to and following each physical training session the recommended warm-up and cool-down procedure should be performed as detailed in the General Fitness Programme contained within Section 3 of the Health and Fitness Information pack.
- The safety guidelines within the General Fitness Programme in Section 3 of the Health and Fitness Information pack must be strictly adhered to at all times.
- The procedure is detailed below and employees will need to discuss with their line manager the ways in which it can be operated without adversely affecting organisational efficiency.



## 6.2 Time Constraints

- Support staff are entitled to a maximum of 45 minutes per week for exercise during work hours (for part-time employees see below), where this exercise is undertaken during the normal working day.
- Employees can use the exercise time, **in agreement with their line manager**, at any time outside of the recognised core hours. Therefore the training cannot take place between 10.00am and noon or between 2.00pm and 3.00pm. In addition, the training cannot commence before 7.00am or end after 7.00pm.
- This time must be used in one session and cannot be spread over a number of different sessions.
- The 45 minute allowance includes changing and shower time.
- There is no carry-over facility in the scheme i.e. sessions cannot be accumulated and carried over from one week to the next, except as outlined below.
- The time allowed for part time employees is pro-rata. In this respect it is acknowledged that it will not be possible for employees to undertake a worthwhile fitness session in less time than 45 minutes. Subsequently, part time employees may, in agreement with their line manager, accumulate a maximum of two weeks entitlement should they wish to do so. Therefore, in this instance they would participate in the scheme every other week.

## 6.3 Acceptable forms of Exercise

- It is acknowledged that there are various forms of exercise available to personnel who wish to participate in this scheme. In order to ensure that the form of exercise is appropriate, individuals must contact the Health & Fitness Advisors beforehand. This applies to all employees in advance of their first training session under this scheme. Any employee who wishes to organise an exercise class on fire service premises must first contact a Health & Fitness Adviser to assess its suitability. Where an exercise class is deemed suitable the Health & Fitness Adviser(s) will identify the appropriate health & safety and insurance procedures to be followed.
- To qualify, the fitness session must be undertaken at a Fire Service establishment or, In the case of outdoor activities e.g. running, it must commence and conclude at a Fire Service establishment.

## 6.4 Gym Induction

It should be noted that in accordance with the Service's Health and Safety policy, employees wishing to use the Service's fitness equipment for the first time **must** contact the Health & Fitness Advisors beforehand. This applies to all employees, regardless of which facilities they wish to use.

## **6.5 Procedures for recording Physical Activity**

Employees should record the time taken for physical activity in the appropriate time sheets and should be approved by their line manager.

## **6.6 Lifestyle Advice/Support**

Support staff will have access to the services offered by the Health & Fitness Advisors. These services include weight management, dietary, lifestyle and fitness advice.

## **6.7 General Notes**

- Management reserves the right to withdraw this scheme at any time should it feel that there are appropriate reasons for doing so.
- Abuse of this scheme will result in the employee(s) concerned facing disciplinary measures.

# **7 Sports Massage Therapy Procedures**

## **7.1 Introduction**

Sports massage therapy is the term applied to the use of massage for the specific benefit of all sports and exercise participants. It covers the management, manipulation and rehabilitation of the soft tissues of the body e.g. muscles, ligaments and tendons. Additionally, sports massage therapy may be appropriate for reducing muscular tension / stiffness in certain individuals.

A Health & Fitness Advisor will be able to identify anyone for whom sports massage therapy would be ill-advised or detrimental to their short or long-term, well being. They will assess each person individually and provide the appropriate massage techniques, and will advise on further action if required.

## **7.2 Quality Assurance and Professional Standards**

Where appropriate, sports massage therapy will be provided by the Service Health & Fitness Advisors only. The sports massage practitioners will be members of the Sports Massage Association (MSMA), the professional body for sports massage in the UK and hold the appropriate qualification to deliver this service.

Consultation for sports massage will be conducted in private facilities and will be confidential. The removal of clothing to perform sports massage will be discussed with the individual prior to any massage being delivered and religious and cultural beliefs will be respected at all times.

### 7.3 Suitability of Sports Massage Therapy

- Sports massage therapy may be suitable for employees who have suffered soft tissue injuries. Additionally, it may be appropriate for reducing muscular tension and/or stiffness. However the decision to massage will be based on an initial assessment to determine appropriate action.
- There are a number of conditions for which an employee may not receive sports massage therapy, these include:
  - Trauma/acute inflammation (48-72 hours following injury)
  - Cardiovascular/blood pressure problems
  - Certain medications
  - Infections
  - Conditions (certain cardiovascular, neurological, respiratory and skeletal conditions)
  - Surgery (up to 12 months for certain surgery)
- If you are unsure as to whether it would be appropriate for you to receive sports massage therapy then please contact the Health & Fitness Advisors or Occupational Health Physician / Nurse.

### 7.4 Accessing Sports Massage Therapy

- Self Referral

Any employee may self-refer to the Health & Fitness Advisors for sports massage therapy if they feel that it may be of benefit to them. The Health & Fitness Advisor will then assess these employees for the suitability of massage. Prior to any self-referral, organisational policy and procedures for accident reporting must be followed if it is as a result of an accident at work.

Prior to self-referral an individual must approach their line manager to inform them that they wish to self-refer for sports massage therapy. Their line manager should then contact the Health & Fitness Advisors to arrange an appropriate time for the individual to attend for an initial assessment.

When the Health & Fitness Advisor recommends further sports massage therapy then the Health & Fitness Advisor shall liaise with the individual(s) line manager. The line manager should then arrange successive appointments. Appointments must not affect the operational effectiveness of the service. If an individual wishes to attend sports massage therapy outside of their normal working hours then they will not need to inform their line manager.

- Referral from Occupational Health Physician / Nurse

The Occupational Health Physician / Nurse may refer employees for sports massage therapy when they consider that sports massage therapy will be of benefit to them. On referral, the employee should liaise with their line manager and the Health & Fitness Advisor Physical Training Adviser to ensure the most convenient date and time can be arranged.

***Note: Sports massage therapy is not a substitute for conditions for which the employee would normally seek medical advice.***

## 7.5 Safeguards

Prior to sports massage therapy the Health & Fitness Advisor will conduct a client assessment to identify any conditions that may contraindicate the delivery of sports massage. In circumstances of possible contraindication, individuals will be referred to the Occupational Health Physician / Nurse for further assessment.

## 7.6 Evaluation

Following a period of sports massage therapy each employee will be required to complete a sports massage therapy evaluation questionnaire in order to assess the outcome of sports massage therapy.

# 8 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- It is recognised that specific information relating to employees will be of a sensitive nature. The principle of confidentiality will therefore be fully respected in the implementation of this procedure.
- Confidential information will never be disclosed in response to requests or enquiries from third parties without the consent of the employee to whom the information relates.
- If it is considered that the disclosure of confidential information may be necessary to prevent serious harm to the employee concerned, or to others, two precautionary steps will be followed:
  - Advice may be sought from the Occupational Health Physician. It may be possible to resolve concerns without the need to identify employees or disclose confidential information. In all circumstances, the Health & Fitness Advisors would only divulge information that is relevant and appropriate to the specific situation.
  - Where necessary, every effort will be made to gain the agreement of the employee concerned stating the reasons for disclosing the information.

- If the above steps are followed and there are still serious concerns about the employee's safety, or the safety of others, it would be justifiable to disclose the relevant information to a person who has a legitimate interest.
- All records will be held securely. Access to these records will be restricted to the Health & Fitness Advisors and if necessary to the Occupational Health Physician / Nurse with the consent of the individual concerned. The records will not be accessible to any other Service staff. All information will be treated with strictest confidentiality.

**Appendix A, Statement of Commitment**

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to undertake the appropriate physical training regime / lifestyle changes in order to meet the requirements of my role.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff No: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to support the above individual.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Health Professional)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to support the above individual.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Line Manager)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B, Health and Fitness Information Pack

Health and Fitness Information Pack.

Link Here: [Health and Fitness Info Pack](#)

**Appendix C, Fitness Standards Process Flowchart**

