



HEDDLU GOGLEDD CYMRU
Gogledd Cymru diogelach
NORTH WALES POLICE
A safer North Wales

FITNESS ASSESSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Governance:	People and Resources Committee
Policy Owner:	Head of People and Organisational Development
Department:	Finance and Resources
Policy Writer:	Human Resources
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1. Aim of Policy & Procedure

This policy and procedure details the requirements for individuals within North Wales Police (NWP) to undertake a fitness assessment, either as a new recruit, as part of a selection process or as an annual requirement during the course of their service prior to completing Personal Safety Training. The procedure describes the fitness assessment, who should undertake one and what support can be offered to those who are unable to complete or pass the fitness assessment.

2. Policy Statement

The health and wellbeing of our officers and staff is vitally important to enable us to deliver an effective and efficient service to the communities of North Wales. This policy supports individuals to maintain the required level of fitness for them to carry out their duties effectively and safely.

In line with all Force Policies, the overarching purpose of this document is to directly support the North Wales Police and Crime Objectives. Overall the intention of this policy is to provide a Safer North Wales.

In the writing of this policy cognisance has been taken of the College of Policing Code of Ethics (2014) particularly the standard of professional behaviour - fitness for work.

NWP policies will be written in accordance with the approved corporate format and published on the Force Intranet, allowing access to staff and, where appropriate, on the pages of the public facing Internet site under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3. Scope

This policy encompasses all officers, specials and PCSO's who are required to complete Personal Safety Training.

4. Procedure

Below are links to flowcharts outlining the key elements of this policy and procedure. This should be read alongside the procedure which provides important supporting detail.

Fitness Assessment Process Flowchart



Fitness Assessment
Process Flowchart.doc

Fitness Assessment Supportive Measures Flowchart



Fitness Assessment
Supportive Measures

5. Why Is A Fitness Assessment Required?

The fitness assessment is a measure to ensure that the individual is fit enough to meet the physical demands of the Personal Safety Training (PST) and therefore that the individual is fit to perform operational duties. It is important to ensure that all individuals performing operational duties can apply defensive tactics in a safe manner and in accordance with the [Health And Safety At Work Act 1974](#) and [Police \(Health and Safety\) Act 1997](#).

The Home Office sets out the requirement for a Fitness Assessment or Job Related Fitness Test (JRFT) such as the Bleep Test used by NWP and provides guidance on this requirement along with [NPCC](#) and the [College of Policing](#). There is also an ACPO manual of guidance for PST which sets out the areas of training which must be covered during the training.

6. Who Undertakes A Fitness Assessment?

- 6.1 **New Police Officer** recruits currently complete a five day initial PST course. They then complete a PST refresher course on an annual basis. On the day of the PST course they must successfully pass the Bleep Test as scientific research completed on behalf of NPCC shows that this is a good indicator of the level of fitness required to safely complete the PST course. All Police Officer roles require PST and there are no exemptions on the basis that they might be called on at any time to fulfil operational duties.
- 6.2 **Specials** currently complete a five day initial PST course. They then complete a PST refresher course on an annual basis alongside PC's, and participate fully in all of the training. On the day of the PST course they must also successfully pass the Bleep Test as per Police Officers.
- 6.3 **PCSO's** currently complete a three day initial PST course. They then complete a PST refresher course on an annual basis alongside Police Officers. They are only required to participate in particular parts of the PST to provide them with unarmed skills, conflict management, personal management, communication and hand-cuffing techniques. They will also observe other parts of the training such as use of a baton or captor spray, as they may find themselves close by when they are used operationally. The unarmed skills and handcuffing modules are among the most physically demanding sections of the ACPO manual and are equally or more physically demanding than the areas they do not complete. Therefore they must successfully pass the Bleep Test on the day of the PST course, prior to undertaking PST.
- 6.4 **Police Officers in particular specialist roles** may be required to achieve a higher level of fitness and may complete a fitness assessment as part of a selection process and refresher training. The suggested levels of Bleep Test according to the College of Policing and which are applied by NWP during initial training and refresher training are:

Role/Unit	Recommended Endurance Standard (Level : Shuttle)
Dog Handler	5 : 7
Police Support Unit	6 : 3
Authorised Firearms Officer	7 : 6
Armed Response Vehicle	9 : 4
Dynamic Intervention AFO	10 : 5

7. What Is The Fitness Assessment?

The Bleep Test (also known as the Multi-Stage Fitness Test) is a fitness assessment designed to match the aerobic demands of PST. It requires participants to walk then run between two fixed points, keeping in pace with a metronome (a 'bleep') the pace of which steadily increases. The distance between the two points is 15 metres and participants have to achieve a level of 5:4 which is the equivalent to the level of aerobic capacity reached in PST (defined in terms of VO2 max).

Prior to taking the Bleep Test, there is an option for individuals to be taken to Level 3 of the Bleep Test as a warm up exercise, followed by appropriate stretching exercises, particularly of the calves, hamstring and quad muscles. There is no pass or fail for the warm-up and it is optional for individuals to complete it to ensure they are sufficiently warmed up and as a preventative measure against injuries. Individuals can instead choose to complete their own warm up prior to attempting the test. Advice on preparing for the Bleep Test and PST is available by clicking on the link below.

[Fitness Assessment Guidance](#)

8. Requirements Prior To Completing Fitness Assessment

8.1 If at any time an individual has any concerns about their health and their ability to attain the required fitness level to continue as an operational officer and complete the Bleep Test and PST, then they should take the following action:

- Initially they should advise their Line Manager and arrange an appointment with their GP to seek medical advice. The summary of the Bleep Test in Section 7 above may be useful to assist the GP in providing advice.
- Following advice from their GP, they may need to seek a referral to the Occupational Health Department via their Line Manager so that suitable advice and guidance can be sought.
- If an individual is pregnant, then they should liaise with their Line Manager who will carry out a risk assessment and in most cases individuals will become non-operational and will not be required to take the Bleep Test and complete PST until they return to work following maternity leave.

8.2 Prior to attending PST, all individuals booked onto training will be sent the below **Fitness Declaration Form** to review. The form provides guidance on conditions which may prevent the individual from completing the fitness assessment and what action to take.

[Fitness Declaration Form](#)

If there are any issues then the individual should carry out the actions detailed above under 8.1 above which are also referred to on the Fitness Declaration form. It may be the case that following advice, the individual is allowed to complete the Bleep Test. Consideration may also be made to recommending that they complete an alternative fitness test as described under 9.2.2 and 10 below.

If there are no issues then the individual should attend the PST and they will be asked to sign a declaration.

9. Failure to Complete The Fitness Assessment

- 9.1 Any individual who fails the Bleep Test will not be allowed to take part in the Personal Safety Training. As the completion of the PST is a pre-requisite for operational duties, the officer will be withdrawn from operational duties until the Bleep Test and PST have been successfully completed.

In certain cases a Chief Superintendent or a relevant representative (i.e. Superintendent Service Area Lead) will have the authority to extend an individual's PPE authority up to a maximum of 3 months, subject to a risk assessment.

- 9.2 The organisational response for anyone who fails the assessment will be one of support. The relevant Line Manager and HRTSO should be advised of failure to complete the Bleep Test so that an **OHU referral** can be made and the individual invited to an appointment. The Line Manager is responsible for monitoring the individual in conjunction with the HRTSO to ensure that relevant support is provided and action taken.
- 9.2.1 If a failure is due to the **lack of fitness** of the individual, advice and support will be made available by the Force PTI through OHU. In such cases two hours duty time per week for a period of no more than eight weeks will be allowed for physical training. This will apply for each failure of the fitness assessment, to a maximum of two failures.
- 9.2.2 If a failure is due to **short or long term injury or ill health**, OHU / Force Medical Adviser will provide guidance as to whether the individual is medically fit to take the Bleep Test or alternatively, if they have injuries that would affect their running / turning, to undertake an alternative assessment. If the individual is not medically fit to take the Bleep Test or alternative test, then the relevant HRTSO should be advised in order to consider potential restrictions in conjunction with OHU or for a case to be taken to Case Review to consider.
- 9.3 In any case where an individual fails to complete the Bleep Test or is unable to complete the Bleep Test then a supportive improvement plan should be considered detailing the support that will be provided and the expectations of the individual.
- 9.4 Following failure of the Bleep Test, an individual is allowed two re-takes with at least six weeks between each re-take to allow the individual time to train and develop. An individual may re-take the test earlier than six weeks if they are fit and able to do so. If the individual is still unable to achieve the required standard and pass the Bleep Test then unsatisfactory performance procedures will commence.

10. Alternative Fitness Assessment

- 10.1 The Force offers two alternative fitness assessments which both require individuals to demonstrate the same level of fitness as the Bleep Test.

The Chester Treadmill Walk and Run Tests are the primary alternative fitness assessments which were validated by the College of Policing in November 2016. The Chester Treadmill tests involve walking or running on a treadmill for a specified period of time, with increasing gradients until reaching the level required for the role. See the summary table below for more detail.

The FITECH Assessment is the secondary alternative fitness assessment. The test involves cycling with increased resistance/power output until the required work rate is achieved. See the summary table below for more detail.

- 10.2 The alternative fitness assessments are only available to those who have been referred by OHU and is mainly for people who have difficulty turning on the Bleep Test due to long term injuries / risk of injury. In most cases the primary alternative test will be recommended (the Chester Treadmill Test) and the secondary only offered where there are specific reasons why the Chester Treadmill test is not suitable. If OHU confirm that the individual can attempt an alternative fitness assessment, then the Force PTI will be advised and will arrange a date with the individual to attempt the fitness assessment once a PST date has been confirmed. The assessment must be attempted within three weeks of the PST date to ensure that it is a current assessment of the individuals' fitness.
- 10.3 Any individual who fails the fitness assessment will not be allowed to take part in PST and the Training Administration team will be advised so that their place on PST can be cancelled and the trainer made aware. Failures of the alternative assessment will be treated as per failures of the Bleep Test and will follow the appropriate actions contained in section 9.

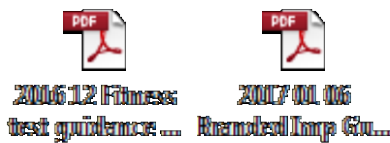
11.1 Summary of Fitness Assessments

Type of assessment	Details	Estimated Aerobic Capacity	Equipment Required
Standard Fitness Assessment: Bleep Test (also known as the Multistage Fitness Test – MSFT or Shuttle Run).	Suitable warm up; 15m shuttle run in which a series of shuttle runs are completed in time to 'bleeps', each time requiring a gradual increase in running speed; The standard level of 5:4 equates to a VO2max of 35 mls/kg/min; Higher levels are required for specialist roles.	Standard is 35 mls/kg/min. Highest capacity reached is by AFO's at 7:6 and 41 mls/kg/min.	A 15 metre long track with a non-slip surface. A method of playing the 'bleeps' at a volume that can be heard around the room.
Alternative Fitness Assessment 1: Chester Treadmill Walk Test	An alternative test offered via referral to OHU for individuals with medical conditions which prevent them from completing the MSFT Suitable warm up; Subject walks at a brisk pace (6.0km/hr); Every 2 minutes the gradient is raised by 3%; The test takes ten minutes. It doesn't require monitoring of the heart rate during the test.	On completion of Level 5 (10 minutes) a level of 35 mls/kg/min will have been reached (equivalent to Bleep Test).	High quality motorised treadmill, calibrated, regularly serviced and capable of operating accurately at 10.4km/hr and at inclines up to maximum of 15%; A Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Chart (Borg 1982).
Alternative Fitness Assessment 1: Chester Treadmill Run Test (for specialised roles)	An alternative test offered via referral to OHU for individuals with medical conditions which prevent them from completing the MSFT . As per Chester Treadmill Walk Test but the test is continued for a further period of time up to a max of 2 minutes.	Between 35 -41 mls/kg/min depending on time reached.	

Not Protectively Marked

Type of assessment	Details	Estimated Aerobic Capacity	Equipment Required
Alternative Fitness Assessment 2: Fitech Bike (a type of Cycle Ergometer also known as Astrand Cycle Test)	An alternative test offered via referral to OHU for individuals with medical conditions which prevent them from completing the MSFT. The power output/resistance of the bike is gradually increased until a particular work rate is reached and maintained for a specified period. Measurements of heart rate, blood pressure, weight, age and gender are used to determine the score achieved. The test has to be completed without exceeding a maximum heart rate.	Standard is 35 mls/kg/min (equivalent to Bleep Test).	Cycle ergometer – Fitech. Used solely for Fitech assessments.

11.2 College of Policing Chester Treadmill Test Guides



12. Recording of Fitness Assessments

All details of fitness assessments completed including whether passed or failed, will be recorded on the individual's personal record.

13. Monitoring

This policy is governed by the People and Resources Committee and will be owned by the Head of People and Organisational Development and monitored through the post of HR Lead for Policy. The policy is to be reviewed at intervals no later than that determined by the Policy Risk assessment tool.

14. Legal Requirements

The following main legal requirements have been identified within this policy:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Health and Safety Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010

This policy has been written giving due regard to the above legislation and has considered the risk of unfair and/or disproportionate impacts on individuals or groups (actual or perceived) and has done so via an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).