

Frequently asked questions

Psychological Risk Assessment screening programme



What is the Psychological Risk Management Assessment?

The Psychological Risk Management Assessment is a new tool that is being rolled out by the National Police Wellbeing Service. The assessment is a way of measuring psychological health and wellbeing using a number of questionnaires. All of the questionnaires used in the process have been thoroughly tested and have been proven to clearly identify where people may be having difficulties which means that your force can then provide help and support for you if needed.

The initial part of the assessment is a questionnaire which has been trialed across several police forces over the past 14 years.

Why am I being assessed?

Although policing in itself is a high risk occupation, it has been found that some roles in policing can carry a higher risk than other roles. All the roles in the police have been assessed and your role has been found to be in one of the highest risk categories, roles in the top two categories are noted in Table 1 below.

Serial	Role	Estimated number nationally (Home Office forces)	Screening priority
a	Hostage and Crisis Negotiators		Tranche 1
b	Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) and Internet Child Abuse Team (ICAT) (includes SC40 from MPS)	750	
	Serious Collision Investigation (SCIU) and Force Collision Investigation Unit (FCIU)	800	
c	Family Liaison Officer - Traffic (FLO-T)	1900	
d	Family Liaison Officer - Crime (FLO-C)	1200	
e	Violent and Sex Offender Register (VISOR) and Offender Management	1500	Tranche 2
f	Digital Forensic Teams (DFT)	1000	
g	Counter Terrorism - Downloaders	375	
h	Firearms	5000	

Table 1: High risk roles

Your organisation has a duty to take care of your health and has chosen to use Psychological Risk Assessments to help them pick up if there are any signs that you may need additional help and/or support. Being assessed is a benefit to you and to the organisation as no one should become unwell as a result of their work.

How does it work?

The process is very simple. When it is time for you to do the assessment, you will receive an email with a secure link to the screening, **this is bespoke to you and assures the confidentiality of your responses which can only be seen by you and the analysis team who create the screening results**. You can open this link on a laptop or on a mobile phone if you prefer. If you do not finish at one sitting, you can save what you have done and return when you have more time. The results are fed back to the analysis team who will create a report with your screening results. Your forces' occupational health (OH) team will communicate the results to you and, if necessary, will arrange follow up with an OH Nurse, counsellor or psychologist.

How long will it take?

Typically, it takes up to an hour to complete the initial assessment and around 20 minutes to complete the follow-up.

What happens to the information?

The flow chart below shows how the process works. Your information is encrypted and sent securely to a confidential OH hub where it is stored. You will receive a copy of your report, **no one else will see anything**. Your management team will only receive a Highlight Report, which only shows quantitative data so that management can identify trends and provide appropriate mitigation.

If the results show that you need a follow up, an appointment will be arranged by OH. If counselling or role adjustments are required, OH will provide advice to management. In order for your OH Team to provide a report to your manager, you will need to provide written consent and you will see any information that goes to management **before** it is sent.

Can I "fail" the assessment?

No, there is no pass or fail mark in the assessment. The analysis is carried out on free text and numerical scores to give an overall picture of your psychological wellbeing.

What if I provide false answers the questions?

You should not pre-empt the result by putting what you think is required – be honest as the analysis will pick up inconsistencies. It may also result in you requiring a follow up which may not have been necessary. The best approach has been shown to be from those that complete the questionnaires without over-analysing the question or response; the process is not trying to trick you or trip you up.

How does it help me?

It has been established that most officers and staff who have been through the process have found it to be very helpful. There have been many occasions when Psychological Risk Assessment has identified an underlying problem, which the individual has then been able to address before it developed into something more serious. The Case Study is a compelling example of the utility of this process.

A former detective, SIO, qualified Strategic Firearms Commander and Gold Public Order Public Safety Commander who was also involved in DVI provided this recommendation: *“In 2015 I had undertaken the Myers Briggs type indicator assessment and was very sceptical; I held the same level of scepticism for this screening. Sitting with the Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager to discuss the findings of my initial screening I found them to be extremely accurate, and of great use to me. Like with the Myers Briggs test, the findings did reflect my personality and I would commend the use of the initial screening test to others.”*

Who else is going through this process?

As noted above your role is one of a number that have been identified through risk assessment as carrying a higher risk of psychological harm. A number of forces already successfully conduct regular Psychological Risk Assessments on officers and staff in high risk roles and NPWS is supporting all Home Office forces to conduct Psychological Risk Assessments for Tranche 1.

Hampshire Constabulary have been using psychological screening for approximately seven years, including for role risk assessed high risk groups in order to ensure that officers and staff stay fit in the workplace and it has been well received. A force representative noted: *“Annual statistics currently show those who have previously been screened are becoming fitter and the number of referrals for psychological assessment and structured interview are falling”*.

What happens if I am feeling stressed?

If you are feeling stressed or burnt out when you complete the assessment, it will show up in the results if you are honest with your answers. You may wish to postpone your completion but are commended to discuss this with your Occupational Health team; they can provide timely and appropriate advice, help and/or support.

Why am I being asked about my childhood and past history?

It is recognized that this seems overly invasive but it has been found that early life events can have a big impact on physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing, which is why a section of the Psychological Risk Assessment examines childhood and past experiences. The questions are purely to help get a good and holistic understanding of you so that the best possible support can be offered; it has been shown that past experiences often improve personal resilience. **Nothing will be shared as what you say is governed by medical confidentiality.**

What kinds of symptoms could be identified?

The symptoms that are identified by the assessment include anxiety, depression, burnout and trauma. Trauma can be further divided:

- Avoidance which includes avoiding people, places or things associated with a trauma;
- Arousal which includes feeling jumpy, irritable and unable to sleep;
- Re-experience where you have dreams, flashbacks and constant thinking about an aspect of the trauma;
- Negative thoughts about yourself or the future or feeling isolated or detached from others.

What happens following the assessment?

Most people will require no further action however, about 10% of the assessments recommend some follow up. A Structured Interview (SI) is an appointment with a specially trained Occupational Health nurse or counsellor who will go through the assessment with you; it may be purely to seek clarity or context to your responses. A SI will allow some simple advice and support to be offered. Occasionally a follow-up Psychological Assessment (PA) is recommended and you will be offered an appointment with a psychologist, who will make a more in-depth assessment. If you do need any further help, your OH will be advised and will prepare a confidential report to your line manager advising of any work place adjustments. You will be asked to provide signed consent for this and will receive a copy of the report before it is sent to your line manager. **Please note that a follow up recommendation does not mean that you are ill or unable to do your role.**

What happens if I need extra help?

If your nurse or counsellor thinks that you need extra help, a recommendation will be made for you to access further support, this will depend on the arrangements your force has in place. As noted above, often all that is required is some advice and support to get you back to health – **the force contends that nobody should be made unwell by their job.**

How can I become more resilient?

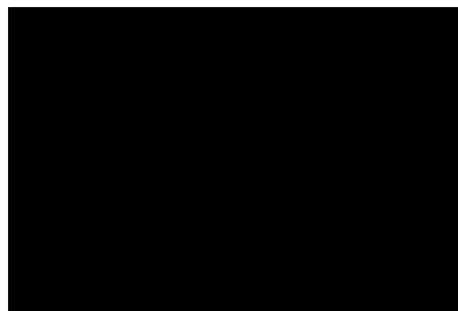
Building coping skills, adopting a healthy lifestyle and feeling confident and capable in your role all help to make you resilient. Wherever possible your force will recommend education programmes to help you build your wellbeing and resilience.

What if I think I have problems?

It is important that if you are noticing that you are not coping at work you raise it as soon as you feel able. The National Police Wellbeing Service is working with forces and providing training, raising awareness, helping people to build resilience, feel more comfortable and more able to discuss their mental health at work either with managers or peers.

You may be able to associate with the officer in this short film:

<https://oscarkilo.org.uk/thin-blue-mind-film-launched/>



What happens if I don't want to do the assessment?

The assessment is designed and has been made available to help you, **but it is not compulsory**. You can, of course, choose not to do the assessment however, this will be captured in the Highlight Report. If you choose not to take part initially, it will not preclude you from doing it in the future should you change your mind.

Can I ask to be seen?

If you feel you need to be seen or want to discuss your results with OH you can ask for an appointment with an OH counsellor or advisor who will explain the results to you and discuss your psychological health and wellbeing.