

Human Resources

HEALTH & FITNESS MANAGEMENT (UNIFORMED EMPLOYEES)

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South Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue
WORKING FOR A SAFER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

HEALTH AND FITNESS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

1. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) is committed to the development of a fit and healthy workforce who are able to meet the demands of the organisation throughout their career. The aim is to encourage all employees to adopt a healthy and physically active lifestyle; this will be supported by a programme of education, appropriate training equipment, advice and assessment provided by the Occupational Health Unit and the Fitness Instructors.
2. The role of a firefighter can be physically demanding, and consequently firefighters are required to maintain good general levels of physical fitness throughout their careers. It is vital in helping in the prevention of injuries and illness. As such physical training is an important part of a firefighter's ongoing development, in order to maintain the training effect, exercise must be continued on a regular basis.
3. It is widely accepted that all individuals can substantially improve their health and quality of life by including moderate amounts of physical activity in their daily lives. The risk posed by physical inactivity is almost as high as several well-known coronary heart disease risk factors such as cigarette smoking, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. All SYFR employees will benefit from increasing their physical fitness.
4. As a member of the Dignity at Work Partnership¹, SYFR is committed to promoting a positive working environment where the dignity and respect, to which all employees are entitled, is not undermined. No employee should be treated less favourably on the grounds of race, gender or gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or spiritual belief, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, marital/parental status, family ties, trade union or political belief, hours worked, or any other reason either directly or indirectly.

POLICY STATEMENT

5. SYFR recognises that all operational staff are required to maintain a level of physical fitness, strength and stamina in order to fulfil their role and meet the physical demands of the service.
6. It is acknowledged that an optimum level of physical fitness can play an important role in reducing ill health, injuries and accidents.

¹ The Dignity at Work Partnership is a partnership between the Government, Unite (the UK's largest union) and major public and private organisations. For further information on the Partnership see www.dignityatwork.org

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7. SYFR will take the following measures to assist all personnel in achieving, maintaining and improving their level of physical fitness:
 - A safe environment for training, suitable for the type of physical training being undertaken.
 - Compulsory 12 monthly fitness assessments for all operational staff.
 - Inclusion of fitness training periods within work routines for operational staff as detailed in this policy.
 - Provision of a fitness and occupational health service to provide advice on all aspects of health and fitness, especially where rehabilitation is required following injury, illness, or failure to meet the required standard.
8. This policy applies to all uniformed employees of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and should be read and used in conjunction with the associated documents listed below:
 - Health and Safety Manual Part A – Section 11 Fitness Training
 - Firefighter Fitness Programme - FireFit Steering Group, Guidance on Physical Training for Firefighters

BACKGROUND

9. The Health and Safety Commission's long term occupational health strategy is looking to achieve a significant improvement in the physical and mental health of individuals from better management of workplace health, and from using the work environment to promote health, by promoting 'active lifestyle' messages.
10. 'Fit for Duty' thematic review recommendation 22 and the steering group FireFit has recommended national standards of aerobic fitness for all firefighters, stating that all Fire and Rescue Services should have a suitable health and fitness policy that identifies how fitness issues are to be managed. To include the introduction of routine fitness checks, this should be compulsory for all operational employees and offered on a voluntary basis to all other employees. This will not replace the compulsory 3 yearly medical assessment.

LEGISLATION

11. The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 imposes a general duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.
12. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states that it may be unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person in the arrangements made for determining who should be offered employment, the terms on which the disabled person is offered employment or by refusing to offer or

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deliberately not offering the disabled person employment. There is also a legal requirement for an employer to consider adjustments to a role in order to facilitate a disabled person being in that role and whether or not these adjustments are reasonable.

13. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 require employers to make decisions about ability or fitness based on assumptions connected to a person's age. Where such a judgment is required, an occupational health or medical practitioner should be consulted. Age should not be used as a factor in physical test requirements.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

14. Physical fitness is often described as the overall physical condition of the body, ranging from peak condition for performance at one end of the spectrum to extreme illness or injury at the other.
15. The key fitness components for firefighting are aerobic (long-term) endurance, muscular strength, muscular (short-term) endurance and flexibility. Optimum physical fitness for firefighters translates into being able to carry out firefighting activities successfully and without undue fatigue.
16. Aerobic Endurance – allows an individual to continue to exercise for prolonged periods of time at low to moderate/high intensity (e.g. running out a number of 70 mm hoses to provide a water supply for a fire). It is dependant upon the body's heart, lungs and blood to get oxygen to the muscles, providing the sustained energy required to maintain prolonged exercise. Work tolerance to heat is closely associated to aerobic endurance. Typical aerobic activities include walking/hiking, running/jogging, cycling, aerobic dance/group exercise, rope skipping, rowing, stair climbing, swimming or skating.
17. Muscular Strength – allows an individual to lift, lower, pull, push and carry heavy objects over very short distances/periods of time (e.g. lifting a 13.5 m ladder back on to an appliance). Muscular strength is determined by the muscles ability to generate large forces and is best trained using resistance such as that offered by machines, free weights or own body weight. It is important to remember that weight training will not necessarily make an individual look overly muscular; most of the improvements in strength will take place without the muscles getting any larger they will just become firmer and more toned. When resistance training a whole body approach should be adopted with adequate rest taken to allow the muscles to recover before performing further exercises. Correct technique is important for safe and effective resistance training, individuals are strongly recommended to seek professional fitness advice on this aspect of training. Lifting light weights until the correct technique has been mastered.
18. Muscular Endurance – is closely linked to both aerobic endurance and muscular strength but allows an individual to continue to lift, lower, pull,

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push and carry heavy objects for more prolonged periods of time (e.g. carrying a light portable pump (33kg) from an appliance across a field to an external water source). Muscular endurance is best trained using more moderate resistances over a more prolonged period of activity, such as circuit training using own body weight as the resistance.

19. Flexibility – refers to the ability to move limbs and joints into specific positions at the end of their normal range of movement. Flexibility is important as it allows the body to work in cramped positions without unduly stressing the muscles, tendons and ligaments (e.g. crawling through small spaces or openings whilst se arching the floor space for a casualty in a house fire) and may reduce the risk of injury. Flexibility is best developed using slow controlled stretching exercises.

PROVISION OF FITNESS TRAINING WITHIN THE WORK ROUTINE - TRAINING PROGRAMMES

20. A good fitness programme should be varied, enjoyable, progressive and provide participants with a sense of achievement. Psychological motivation is as much a part of fitness training as the physical activity itself. The training should aim to improve all round fitness but with an emphasis on improving cardio vascular function, (aerobic capacity), muscular endurance and developing a sense of team spirit.
21. Warm up and Cool Down form an essential part of any training programme and are vital for the prevention of injuries. The warm up prepares the muscles for activity by increasing blood supply to them; the cool down rids the muscles of unwanted toxins which are produced during physical activity. The warm up and cool down should last a minimum of five minutes each.
22. Training sessions should be varied and focus on increasing aerobic capacity and muscular endurance. Programmes should be motivational and enjoyable. Aerobic training equipment is available on all stations however there are a wide range of activities which do not require use of specific equipment e.g. circuit training,
23. Training should last a minimum of 30 minutes not including warm up and cool down. Firefighters and other personnel should refer to the FireFit guidance on physical training for further information and advice.
24. On each station firefighters who have expressed an interest in the Health and Fitness Programme and who have relevant and appropriate skills or qualifications in this area will be identified as Physical Training Instructors.
25. Provision of fitness training periods (incl warm up and cool down) will be made as follows:

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Wholetime stations

1 hour per shift subject to the exigencies of the service

Day Duty and Flexi- duty personnel

2 hours per week subject to the exigencies of the service

Retained Stations

No provision, however facilities are available on station for use on drill nights

Control and support staff

No provision, but encouraged to use any facilities available during statutory breaks

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

26. The following activities are prohibited during training sessions due to the unacceptable risk to injury:
- Volleyball
 - Team sports likely to involve uncontrolled physical contact for example, football, rugby, hockey, basketball and any other similar games/sports

SAFETY

27. Any fitness training should be undertaken with respect to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Due regard must be given to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Training activities should be appropriate to the level of fitness of all individuals participating.
28. The training area should be risk assessed to determine that no hazards are present prior to training.
29. All fitness equipment should be assessed for damage prior to training, according to the organisation policy for maintenance of equipment.
30. Prior to carrying out fitness assessments, the Fitness Instructors will ensure that a dynamic risk assessment of the area is carried out.
31. Appropriate clothing, loose or stretchy clothing that allows the skin to breathe and suitable footwear should be worn.

FITNESS ASSESSMENT

32. Adopting the following test procedures will enable an objective, consistent and reliable assessment to be made of an individual's general fitness for

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work.

33. The assessment programme will be managed and co-ordinated by the Fitness Instructors.
34. All operational personnel will undergo a 12 monthly fitness assessment carried out by the Fitness Instructors.
35. The assessments will be undertaken either on station or at the Training and Development Centre. Review and monitoring will be undertaken on a 12 monthly basis, unless results indicate otherwise.
36. Employees who have been on long term sick, maternity leave or modified duties must be assessed as being medically fit to undertake a fitness test by Occupational Health.
37. Individuals who have been on long term sick, maternity leave or modified duties for more than 6 months must pass a fitness test prior to returning to operational duties.
38. Individuals who feel that they are not medically fit to undertake the fitness test are to be referred to Occupational Health for assessment by either; self-referral, their line-manager or Fitness Instructors.
39. The fitness test will consist of a pre-test assessment of suitability to undertake the fitness test, including measurement of heart rate and blood pressure. Height, weight, body mass index, waist-hip ratio and measurement of body fat. A pre-test questionnaire will be completed by the individual (**appendix 1**).
40. All results will be kept confidential between the individual, the Fitness Instructors and the Occupational Health Unit.
41. The results will be recorded using the confidential fitness assessment record form (**appendix 2**) and stored on the individuals occupational health records. Results will not be held on station or on the personal record files (PRF).
42. Information will be made available to management as to an individual's fitness to continue in role, i.e. fit/not fit; the actual assessment results will not be disclosed (**appendix 3**).
43. Control and support staff will be offered health and wellbeing screening appointment by the Nurse Advisors.

METHODS AND STANDARDS OF ASSESSMENT

44. **Aerobic fitness** - will be measured using gas analysis (COVOX2) the recognised gold standard in fitness assessment, as recommended by the

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steering group Firefit. The assessment can be carried out on an exercise cycle or cross trainer.

45. SYFR have adopted the recommended national standard of aerobic fitness - **42 mlsO₂/kg/min**. This is applicable to all operational personnel irrespective of age, gender, duty system or role.
46. Due to the risks inherent in the job of operational personnel they will be withdrawn from operational duties where an aerobic capacity is below **35 mlsO₂/kg/min** and remedial steps taken.

	POOR	LOW	AVERAGE	GOOD	HIGH
Males					
15 - 30	<39	39 - 43	44 - 51	52 - 56	>56
31 - 40	<35	35 - 39	40 - 46	47 - 51	>51
41 - 50	<31	31 - 35	36 - 41	42 - 46	>46
51 - 60	<26	26 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 42	>42
61 - 70	<24	24 - 26	27 - 33	34 - 38	>38
Females					
15 - 30	<29	29 - 34	35 - 43	44 - 48	>48
31 - 40	<26	26 - 31	32 - 39	40 - 44	>44
41 - 50	<25	25 - 30	31 - 37	38 - 41	>41
51 - 60	<22	22 - 26	27 - 34	35 - 40	>40
61 - 70	<20	20 - 23	24 - 30	31 - 37	>37

47. **Resting Pulse** - Measured with a pulse rate monitor, manually using a stop watch or a watch with a second hand. A high resting or an irregular pulse may indicate health problems. The Fitness Instructors will assess whether the individual should undertake aerobic testing or whether a referral to the Occupational Health Unit is required.

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Males				
20 - 30	85+	70 - 85	60 - 69	<59
30 - 39	86 +	72 - 85	64 - 71	<63
40 - 49	90+	74 - 89	66 - 73	<65
50+	90+	76 - 89	68 - 75	<67
Females				
20 - 30	96+	78 - 85	72 - 77	<71
30 - 39	98+	80 - 97	72 - 79	<71
40 - 49	99+	80 - 98	75 - 79	<73
50+	103+	84 - 102	77 - 83	<75

48. **Blood pressure** - 'Hypertension' is often referred to as a systolic pressure of 140 mmHg or more and diastolic pressure of 90mmHg or more but the true management of an individual must take in to account the complete risk profile.

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49. Correct conditions for measuring blood pressure are to have the patient seated, relaxed, with tight clothing removed from the arm. The arm should be supported at heart level. Avoid talking during the procedure. The pressure is slowly lowered at 2mmHg per second, reading to the nearest 2mmHg. The diastolic is measured as the disappearance of sounds (phase V).
50. Individuals with a blood pressure that exceeds 160mmHg systolic and 100mmHg diastolic should be referred to Occupational Health and the fitness assessment deferred. Firefighters will be withdrawn from operational duties if their resting blood pressure persistently exceeds **180mmHg systolic and 110mmHg diastolic.**

CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC	DIASTOLIC
Optimal	<120	<80
Normal	120 – 129	80 – 84
High Normal	130 – 139	85 – 89
Grade 1 Hypertension (Mild)	140 – 159	90 – 99
Grade 2 Hypertension (Moderate)	160 – 179	100 – 109
Grade 3 Hypertension (Severe)	>180	>110
Isolated Systolic Hypertension	>140	<90

51. **Body Mass Index (BMI)** - The BMI is calculated as follows:

$$BMI = \frac{\text{Weight in Kg}}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ in metres}}$$

52. When assessing BMI the individual frame size and body composition should be considered, for example, does the individual carry more muscle than fat or, alternatively, does the individual carry an excess of fat. A score of under 30 is generally acceptable, individuals with a score above 30 taking into account the above information will be given dietary advice and if deemed necessary referred to Occupational Health for further advice.
53. Waist circumference and waist-hip is now thought to be a better indicator of central obesity, which is associated with some medical conditions i.e. type 2 diabetes and raised low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.
54. An increased waist circumference in males of **>94 cm** and in females **>80 cm** is associated with some medical conditions i.e. type 2 diabetes and raised low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.
55. Waist-hip ratio in males **>0.95** and in females **>0.80** is associated with obesity and greater risk from some medical conditions.

$$\text{Waist hip ratio} = \frac{WC}{HC}$$

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56. Obesity may affect the following factors relevant to the workplace:
- **Physical capability** in jobs requiring a high level of fitness, e. g. emergency services
 - **Mobility** in posts involving manual handling or entry to confined spaces
 - The use of **personal protective equipment** and other equipment such as ladders
 - The risk of **heat stress** in individuals working at high temperatures
 - Concentration in safety critical work as a result of the increased risk of **sleep apnoea**

CATEGORY	BMI	HEALTH RISK
Underweight	< 18.5	Low Health risk
Ideal	20 - 25	No Health Risk
Overweight	25 – 29.9	Low Health Risk
Obese	30 – 40	Moderate Health Risk
Morbid Obese	<40	High Health Risk

57. **Body Fat** - This assessment will be used in conjunction with the other test results in determining overall fitness levels. High levels of body fat are linked to increase risk of health problems e.g. diabetes, and also to musculoskeletal disorders. In addition high body fat levels are likely to compromise other components of fitness i.e. aerobic capacity, agility and flexibility. Body fat can be measured using callipers or bio-electrical impedance analysis. Callipers are sent to be too invasive to some individuals therefore bio-electrical impedance is the choice of test procedure.

58. Individuals whose results indicate that they are not within an acceptable range i.e. High or Very High will be given dietary advice by the Fitness Instructors and may be referred to Occupational Health.

	LOW	NORMAL	SLIGHTLY HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Males					
<25	<12%	12-17.9	18-22.9	23-26.9	>26
25-29	<12%	12-18.9	19-23.9	24-28.9	>28
30-34	<14%	14-20.9	21-25.9	26-29.9	>29
35-39	<14%	14-21.9	22-26.9	27-30.9	>30
>39	<15%	15-22.9	23-27.9	28-31.9	>31
Females					
<25	<19%	19-24.9	25-28.9	29-32.9	>32
25-29	<19%	19-25.9	26-29.9	30-34.9	>34
30-34	<21%	21-27.9	28-31.9	32-35.9	>35
35-39	<21%	21-28.9	29-32.9	33-36.9	>36
>39	<22%	22-29.9	30-33.9	34-37.9	>37

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OUTCOMES

59. Following the fitness assessment possible outcomes are:
- Employee achieves above recommended standard. Review in 12 months
 - Employee fails to meet recommended standard but meets the minimum standard, Fitness Instructors will provide fitness development programme, including cardiovascular prescription. Review in 12 weeks
 - Employee fails to meet minimum standard, Fitness Instructors will provide fitness development programme, including cardiovascular prescription and the individual will be withdrawn from operational duties. Review in 3 months. In all cases individuals will be expected to reach the required aerobic standard by following fitness assessment.
 - Pre-test assessment highlighted concerns, aerobic assessment deferred and referred to Occupational Health for further advice.

PRE-TEST ASSESSMENT CAUSE FOR CONCERN

60. All employees prior to a fitness test will be required to complete the Pre-test questionnaire. Where anomalies are highlighted by the employee, i.e. they answer yes to any of the questions the employee will be referred to the Occupational Health Nurse and the fitness assessment will be postponed pending the outcome of the medical review.
61. On completion of a fit medical review the employee will then be required to undertake the fitness test as per the policy.
62. NOTE: An employee may be referred to the OH Nurse at any subsequent stage by the Fitness Instructors if medical concerns are identified.

EMPLOYEE ACHIEVES RECOMMENDED STANDARD

63. During the fitness test the Fitness Instructor will complete a confidential fitness assessment record form. If the employee meets the required standard in all the relevant areas the fitness instructor will inform the employee that they have successfully achieved the required fitness standard and will remain in operational duties.
64. The fitness instructor and employee will sign the assessment record (Appendix 2). The original form will be recorded by the Fitness Instructors and stored confidentially a copy will be sent to the OHU Section for inclusion on their OHU File and a copy should be presented to the employee where they have requested.
65. The employee will be informed by the fitness instructor that they will be reviewed in 12 months time.

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EMPLOYEE FAILED TO MEET RECOMMENDED STANDARD BUT MET MINIMUM STANDARD (INFORMAL STAGE)

66. Where an employee meets the minimum standard of the aerobics test **35 mlsO₂/kg/min** but does not meet the recommended national standard **42 mlsO₂/kg/min**, in the first instance this will be dealt with informally. Where this occurs the Fitness Instructor must inform Transactional HR.
67. The employee will be required to attend a meeting with a Fitness Instructor where a fitness development programme will be produced that is tailored to meet the needs of the individual.
68. At the meeting the Fitness Instructor will confirm with the employee that they are not aware of any underlying medical reasons for their failure to meet the required standard. Where a medical reason is raised by the employee, the Fitness Instructors will refer the employee to the Occupational Health Nurse Advisor for assessment.
69. Where there are medical reasons why the employee can not reach the recommended national standard of aerobic fitness, their condition will be managed by the OHU Nurse Advisor and HR accordingly as to whether their condition will prevent them from being operationally fit to continue in their post.
70. Where there is no medical reason the employee will remain in operational duties and will be issued with a fitness development programme. If an employee subsequently discovers that there may be a medical reason for their failure to meet to required standard, they will notify the Fitness Instructor as soon as possible.
71. It is recognised that some employees may be nearer the higher end of the recommended national standard and need less time to meet the standard than an employee at the lower end of the recommended national standard. However all employees will be given a maximum of 12 weeks to reach the recommended national standard from the date of the meeting with the Fitness Instructors.
72. The Fitness Instructor will at the meeting provide the employee with a date and time for a re-assessment.

EMPLOYEE FAILED TO MEET MINIMUM STANDARD (INFORMAL STAGE)

73. Where an employee fails to meet the minimum standard of the aerobics test **35 mlsO₂/kg/min** in the first instance this will be dealt with informally. Where this occurs the Fitness Instructor must inform Transactional HR.

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74. The employee will be automatically removed from operational duties and placed on modified duties (9 day fortnight) and referred to the OH Nurse for assessment.
75. The employee will be asked to attend a meeting with a Fitness Instructor where a fitness development programme will be produced that is tailored to meet the needs of the individual.
76. The Fitness Instructor at the meeting will confirm with the employee that they are not aware of any underlying medical reasons for their failure to meet the required standard. If there are medical reasons why the employee can not reach the recommended national standard of aerobic fitness, their condition will be managed by the OHU Nurse and HR accordingly as to whether their condition will prevent them from being operationally fit to continue in their post.
77. Whilst on modified duties time will be allowed within their working day to perform the fitness development programme.
78. It is recognised that some employees may be nearer the higher end of the recommended national standard and need less time to meet the standard than an employee at the lower end of the recommended national standard. However all employees will be given a maximum of 12 weeks to reach the recommended national standard from the date of the meeting with the Fitness Instructor.
79. The Fitness Instructor will at the meeting provide the employee with a date and time for a re-assessment.

RE-ASSESSMENT

80. On re-assessment if the employee meets the recommended national standard **42 mlSO₂/kg/min** in all the relevant areas the Fitness Instructor will inform the employee that they have successfully achieved the required fitness standard and will remain in operational duties.
81. The Fitness Instructor and employee will sign the assessment record (appendix 2). The original form will be recorded by the Fitness Instructors and stored confidentially at TDC a copy will be sent to the OHU Section for inclusion on their OHU File and a copy should be presented to the employee where they have requested.
82. The employee will be informed by the Fitness Instructor that they will be reviewed again at the next 12 monthly assessment. NOTE: This may be only 9 months away, however the assessment must fall in line with the station/function programme.

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EMPLOYEE FAILS TO MEET RECOMMENDED NATIONAL STANDARD AT INFORMAL STAGE (FIRST FORMAL STAGE)

83. Where an employee fails to meet the recommended national standard on re-assessment after the 12 week fitness development programme, the employee will be required to attend a meeting under Stage 1 of the fitness management process (the Improvement meeting). The Fitness Instructor in liaison with Transactional HR, will initiate and investigate where an employee has appeared to have failed to meet the minimum standard.
84. Where, following an Improvement meeting, the employee has not been able to present good reason for not meeting the minimum standard, the individual will be given a Notice of Improvement with a fitness development programme. The Notice of Improvement must give details and an explanation of the decision and fitness targets.
85. The improvement notice should inform the employee that failure to meet the national recommended standard may lead to further formal action, and advise them of their right to appeal.
86. The improvement notice should be disregarded for monitoring purposes after six months but will start from the date of the improvement meeting.
87. The employee as part of the improvement notice will be presented with another fitness development programme. The employee will be given a maximum of 12 weeks to reach the recommended national standard from the date of the meeting with the Fitness Instructor.
88. Where the re-assessment showed that the employee has achieved the minimum standard **35 mlSO₂/kg/min** the employee will remain in operational duties whilst on the fitness development programme. Where the employee failed to meet the minimum standard they will be removed from operational duties and placed on modified duties (9 day fortnight).
89. The Fitness Instructor will provide the employee with a date and time for a 2nd re-assessment.
90. On re-assessment if the employee meets the recommended national standard **42 mlSO₂/kg/min** in all the relevant areas the Fitness Instructor will inform the employee that they have successfully achieved the required fitness standard and will remain in operational duties.
91. The Fitness Instructor and employee will sign the assessment record (appendix 2). The original form will be recorded by the Fitness Instructors and stored confidentially at TDC a copy will be sent to the OHU Section for inclusion on their OHU File and a copy should be presented to the employee where they have requested.

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92. The employee will be informed by the fitness instructor that they will be reviewed again at the next 12 monthly assessment. NOTE: This may be only 6 months away, however the assessment must fall in line with the station/function programme.
93. Where the employee fails to meet the recommended national standard after the second re-assessment, the employee will be referred to the second formal stage of this policy.

SECOND FORMAL STAGE

94. Where an employee fails to meet the recommended national standard on the second re-assessment after the 12 week fitness development programme (total 24 weeks), the employee will be required to attend a meeting under Stage 2 of the fitness management process (the Improvement meeting). The Fitness Instructor in liaison with Transactional HR, will initiate and investigate where an employee has appeared to have failed to meet the minimum standard.
95. Where, following an Improvement meeting, the employee has not been able to present good reason for not meeting the minimum standard, the individual will be given a final notice of improvement with a fitness development programme. The final notice of improvement must give details and an explanation of the decision and fitness targets.
96. A final improvement notice may only be given to an employee by an Area Manager/Function head or above.
97. The final improvement notice should inform the employee that failure to meet the national recommended standard may lead to dismissal or to some other sanction, and advise them of their right to appeal.
98. A final improvement notice should be disregarded for monitoring purposes after 18 months and will start from the date of the improvement meeting.
99. The employee as part of the final improvement notice will be presented with another fitness development programme. The employee will be given a further maximum of 12 weeks to reach the recommended national standard from the date of the meeting with the Fitness Instructor.
100. Employees at this stage will be removed from operational duties regardless as to whether they have reached the minimum standard and will be required to work with the Fitness Instructor on their fitness development programme. The Fitness Instructor should if the employee is to be removed from operational duties liaise with Transactional HR to arrange a suitable base.
101. The Fitness Instructor will provide the employee with a date and time for a third re-assessment.

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102. On re-assessment if the employee meets the recommended national standard **42 mlSO₂/kg/min** in all the relevant areas the Fitness Instructor will inform the employee that they have successfully achieved the required fitness standard and will return to operational duties.
103. The Fitness Instructor and employee will sign the assessment record (appendix 2). The original form will be recorded by the Fitness Instructors and stored confidentially at TDC a copy will be sent to the OHU Section for inclusion on their OHU File and a copy should be presented to the employee where they have requested.
104. The employee will be informed by the Fitness Instructor that they will be reviewed again at the next 12 monthly assessment. **NOTE:** This may be only 6 months away, however the assessment must fall in line with the station/function programme. Employees will automatically fall under the third formal stage of this policy where they fail to meet the recommended national standard on their annual fitness test and have a live final written warning on their PRF under this policy.

THIRD FORMAL STAGE

105. Where an employee fails to meet the recommended national standard on the third re-assessment after the 12 week fitness development programme (total 36 weeks), the employee will be required to attend a meeting. There should be an investigation (e.g. if an employee fails to achieve the attendance targets set under the third formal stage). The sanctions available may include dismissal on the grounds of capability or conduct, or a further final improvement notice. The Fitness Instructor must inform Transactional HR. prior to starting Stage 3 of the process.
106. Where following the meeting the employee is found to not have met the recommended national standard the employee may be dismissed on the grounds of capability or conduct. In these circumstances, the manager hearing the case will consider alternatives to dismissal including redeployment.

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

107. The timing and location of the meeting should where practicable be agreed with the employee and or /their representative. The length of time between the written notification and the meeting should be long enough to allow the employee and/or their representative to prepare and shall in any event be not less than:
 - seven days for first formal stage
 - ten days for the second formal stage

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- twenty-one days for the third formal stage and where dismissal is to be considered.
108. The meeting should be held in a private location, where there will be no interruptions.
109. At the meeting, the process will be explained to the employee. The reason(s) for considering an improvement notice will be stated by the Fitness Instructor/Manager. The employee and/or their representative will be given every opportunity to set out their case. The employee will be allowed to ask questions, present evidence and/or information and be given an opportunity to raise points about any information provided by the manager.
110. An employee and/or their representative who cannot attend a meeting should inform the Fitness Advisor, Manager and/or Transactional HR in advance, as soon as possible. If the employee fails to attend through circumstances outside their control and unforeseeable at the time the meeting was arranged (e.g. illness), the manager should arrange another meeting.
111. A decision may be taken at a meeting in the employee's absence if they fail to attend the re-arranged meeting without good reason. An employee's representative may attend on their behalf, if the employee is unable to attend. If an employee's representative cannot attend on a proposed date, the employee has a statutory right to suggest another date so long as it is reasonable and is not more than seven days after the date originally proposed by the employer. The seven-day time limit may be extended by mutual agreement.

APPEALS

112. An employee can appeal against a formal improvement notice or a final improvement notice to a manager at the same role or level or higher who has not been involved in the case.
113. An employee can appeal against a decision at the Third Formal Stage to a manager at a role higher who has had no involvement in the case where a sanction short of dismissal has been imposed.
114. In the case of dismissal the employee can only appeal to the Fire Authority Appeals Committee (as per the SYFR Authority's Scheme of Delegation).

RE-DEPLOYMENT

115. Where re-deployment to a suitable alternative role is considered the reference will be made to the appropriate re-deployment policy.

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RECRUITMENT

116. Applicants should be asked to demonstrate the national standard of aerobic fitness – **42 ml O₂/kg/min** at the entry stage, this should be carried out around the time of the medical assessment.
117. The National Firefighter Selection Tests only indicate that an individual has the potential to become a trainee. Meeting the required standard will reduce the risk of injury to the trainee during the training course, and will reduce the risks of capability issues or back coursing due to fitness related problems.
118. There is no evidence to suggest that the training course develops the aerobic fitness of trainees, thus the requirement to meet the standard at entry.
119. Should an applicant fail to meet the standard they will be provided with a cardiovascular prescription and advice on how to attain the standard. They will be allowed to reapply in the future.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

120. The Fitness Instructors play a key role in the implementation of this Health and Fitness Policy. Their role in this policy is to:
 - Advise management on fitness related issues and produce reports as required
 - Assist the Occupational Health Unit in the dissemination of health related information
 - Co-ordinate, implement, administer and evaluate the Physical Fitness Monitoring Programme on an annual basis.
 - Design and deliver fitness/health promotion presentations and material.
 - To liaise with the Fitness Instructors in the implementation of the Physical Fitness Programme
 - To liaise with the Occupational Health Unit on all issues causing medical concern and make referrals to the OHN where applicable
 - To provide the Occupational Health Unit with all fitness results for recording on the Occupational Health file
 - To provide fitness programmes and support to individuals who do not reach the required aerobic capacity
 - Monitor individuals who have not reached required levels of aerobic capacity
 - Provide advice on fitness issues to all personnel as required
 - Provide statistical reports and analysis of the physical fitness programme to HR and Management
 - Provide information at formal stages within the process as per the fitness management policy with the assistance of a HR Advisor.

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- Review the policy to make sure that it is fit for purpose on an annual basis or when required.
- Ensure the policy is adequately resourced, both in terms of capital and revenue requirements
- Ensure systems are in place to deliver fitness testing and rehabilitation training programmes
- Monitor and ensure management are provided with statistical information in relation to acceptable/unacceptable standards

121. The role of the Physical Training Instructor (voluntary basis on station) is to:

- Co-ordinate the fitness training sessions on Station
- Mentor or motivate individual Watches or individual firefighters.
- May assist the Fitness Instructors when carrying out the assessments on Station.

122. The role of the Occupational Health Nurse Adviser/MO is:

- To provide advice to HR and Management on health related matters associated with the fitness policy.
- To liaise with the Fitness Instructors, re referrals to the Occupational Health Unit of individuals with unsatisfactory aerobic levels or where the pre test assessment gave cause for concern
- To liaise with individuals, their line-managers and HR on rehabilitation of individuals who are deemed as operationally unfit following an aerobic fitness test
- Referrals to other health care professionals, as necessary, for further advice of individuals whose fitness levels give cause for concern

123. The role of Station Managers and Watch Managers is to support the ethos of the Fitness Policy and support the work of the Fitness Instructors by:

- Ensuring that time for scheduled fitness training is given
- Ensuring that the fitness equipment is maintained according to Organisation policy
- Reporting any defects in fitness equipment following Organisation procedures
- Ensure fitness training is regularly monitored in respect of its effectiveness and safe conduct on station
- Ensure all fitness training accidents are reported and investigated in accordance with SYFR Accident Reporting procedure and that the relevant forms are completed and submitted to Health and Safety.

124. The role of Human Resources Function is to:

- Formulate, implement and monitor the process of the overall policy
- Ensure that guidance, advice and support is available when required

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- Ensure that the appropriate support is provided for employees who do not meet the required standard.
- Manage the Performance (Fitness Development Programmes) with the Fitness Instructors and where applicable manage the process in accordance with the fitness management policy in cases where an employee fails to meet the required standard as stipulated.

125. Employee's responsibilities are:

- Required to maintain a level of personal physical fitness, strength and stamina relevant to their role, to enable them to perform their duties in accordance with the Firefighters National Occupational Standards
- To adhere to all instructions given on the safe conduct of fitness training and use of physical training equipment.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for all physical activities. Jewellery should be removed or made safe prior to training.
- Individuals are not to use physical training equipment located on station premises unless they have received instruction in its safe use of form from an appropriately trained Fitness Instructor or PTI. It is the employee's responsibility to make sure that they are proficient in the use of the equipment.
- Individuals must avoid excessive exercise that would compromise their operational readiness.
- Individuals should remember to replace fluids lost through exercise by taking sufficient appropriate drinks to ensure that they remain adequately hydrated.
- Any individual who believes that they are not fit to participate in training/fitness testing must inform the Fitness Instructor who will inform the OHU section.
- No individual should misuse or interfere with the safe use of gymnasium equipment. Any individual found doing so may be subject to disciplinary action.
- No personally owned items of gymnasium equipment should be brought onto SYFR premises unless it has been purchased by the Sports and Social club and has a written risk assessment.

If you require any further guidance on this document, please contact the Fitness Instructors at TDC, the Occupational Health Nurse Advisor, or Human Resources.

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APPENDIX 1

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE CONFIDENTIAL PRE- FITNESS TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your doctor ever said that you have heart trouble?	Yes	No
2. Do you frequently suffer from pains in your chest?	Yes	No
3. Do you often feel faint or have spells of severe dizziness?	Yes	No
4. Has a doctor ever told you that you have a bone or joint problem such as arthritis that has been aggravated by exercise or might be made worse with exercise?	Yes	No
5. Has your doctor ever told you that your blood pressure was too high	Yes	No
6. Are there any other reasons not mentioned why you should not undertake the fitness test.	Yes	No

*If a **yes** answer is given to any question, aerobic fitness assessment should be postponed and the individual referred to Occupational Health. If all the answers are negative then the following declaration should be read and signed:*

I am of good health and do not know of any reason as to why I should not undertake the fitness assessment.

Name Printed _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Fitness Instructor

HEALTH AND FITNESS POLICY

APPENDIX 2

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE
CONFIDENTIAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT RECORD**

NAME _____ RANK/ROLE _____

STATION/DEPT _____ WATCH _____

AGE _____ DOB _____ EMPLOYEE NO _____

PRE-TEST ASSESSMENT

RESTING HEART RATE	bpm		
BLOOD PRESSURE	mmHg		
HEIGHT	Kg		
WEIGHT	metres		
BMI			
WAIST HIP RATIO			
BODY FAT	%		
RECOMMENDED AEROBIC CAPACITY	MINIMUM ALLOWED AEROBIC CAPACITY	AEROBIC CAPACITY ACHIEVED	
42 mlsO ₂ /kg/min	35mlsO ₂ /kg/min		

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APPENDIX 2

RESULTS

ACHIEVED ABOVE RECOMMENDED STANDARD. REVIEW IN 12 MONTHS	
ACHIEVED ABOVE MINIMUM STANDARD ADVICE PROVIDED INCLUDING CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCRIPTION. REVIEW IN 12 WEEKS	
FAILED TO MEET MINIMUM STANDARD, ADVICE PROVIDED INCLUDING CARDIOVASCULAR PRESCRIPTION, RECOMMEND WITHDRAWAL FROM OPERATIONAL DUTIES, REVIEW IN 12 WEEKS	
PRE TEST ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTED CONCERNS, REFERRED TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH FOR FURTHER ADVICE	

Name Printed _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Firefighter

Signed _____ Date _____

Fitness Instructor

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

CONFIDENTIAL

From: HEALTH AND FITNESS INSTRUCTOR

To: HUMAN RESOURCES cc OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

RESULT OF 12 MONTHLY FITNESS ASSESSMENT/RE-ASSESSMENT

1. EMPLOYEE:

Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Rank: _____ Station: _____ Watch: _____

2. RESULT

The above employee attended a 12 monthly fitness assessment and:

- a) Achieved the required standard, fit for operational duties
- b) Did not achieve the required standard, not fit for operational duties
- c) Did not achieve the required standard but met lower level to remain on operational duties with performance plan
- d) Assessment deferred

3. ACTION REQUIRED

- a) Review in 12 months
- b) Review in 3 months
 - Informal Stage
 - 1st Formal Stage
 - 2nd Formal Stage
 - 3rd Formal Stage
- c) Referral to Occupational Health

Signed _____ Date _____
Fitness Instructor