

WYFRA	PERSONNEL & TRAINING COMMITTEE	29 FEBRUARY 2008	ITEM No
--------------	-----------------------------------------------	-------------------------	----------------

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: TO SEEK APPROVAL FROM THE AUTHORITY TO ADOPT
THE ATTACHED FITNESS AT WORK POLICY AND THE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

**RECOMMENDATION: THAT MEMBERS APPROVE THE ATTACHED FITNESS AT
WORK POLICY AND THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS
IMPLEMENTATION**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT DETAILS

Exemption Category: NONE

**Contact Officer: MR A HUGHES
DHR
(01274) 655703**

Background Papers: NONE

1. Background

- 1.1 In April 06, a multi-disciplinary working group was established, at the request of the DHR to review the level of fitness provision/training for operational fire-fighters across the Authority. The group was made up of the following representatives:
- Occupational Health
 - Health & Safety
 - Operations (Group Manager & Station Manager level)
 - Training Centre
 - FBU
 - FOA
 - Station based Fitness Instructors
 - RDS Watch Manager
- 1.2 This group met over several months and undertook a review of current arrangements and made recommendations for improvement in a number of fitness related areas, from the introduction of 6 monthly mandatory fitness assessments for all operational personnel, to the upgrade and standardisation of gym equipment across the Authority. These recommendations along with best practice have been incorporated into the Policy.

2. Information

- 2.1 Until the production of this Fitness at Work Policy, there was no documented policy setting out the fitness requirements for operational personnel, nor the arrangements in place for them to keep fit. A number of key elements are included within the policy:

6 monthly Fitness Assessments

All operational personnel from CFO down will undertake a mandatory fitness assessment against an agreed standard. The standard will be role related and anyone failing to meet this standard will be provided with an improvement plan to improve their fitness to the required level.

Fitness training

All station based wholetime firefighters shall be allocated 1 hour fitness training per shift. These sessions shall be supervised by a trained Fitness Advisor (or in their absence the duty Crew or Watch Manager) and shall be role related, concentrating on aerobic fitness, upper body strength and core stability. A number of recommended exercises have been produced and are provided to support the watch based Fitness Advisors.

Fitness Advisors

The level of training provided to watch based Fitness Advisors has been improved to give them the necessary skills to safely supervise group training sessions and also to work with individuals to improve their fitness. Successful completion of the training will provide the Advisor with a nationally recognised qualification.

Upgrade and maintenance of fitness equipment

It is vital that personnel have access to the right equipment, of the correct quality which will allow them to maintain/improve their fitness. A capital scheme has already been approved for the upgrade of station gym equipment to provide a consistent level of commercial quality equipment. A revenue budget has also been approved to provide a planned preventative maintenance programme to cover all Authority fitness equipment.

Gym Safety

The policy details do's and don't's for undertaking safe fitness training, including arrangements for training alone, first aid provision, pre-exercise safety checks and prohibited activities.

- 2.2 Use of Authority fitness facilities and access to fitness/health advice will be offered to FRS on a voluntary basis.
- 2.3 Although the policy states that mandatory six monthly fitness assessments will take place in March and September, it is intended that the first fitness assessment in March 2008 will be used as a benchmark to determine the actual overall fitness levels across the service. This will also allow time for the new fitness equipment to be installed and additional Fitness Advisors to be trained. From September 2008 the procedure will be as per the policy.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 A capital allocation of £150k has previously been approved by the Authority for the provision of replacement fitness equipment, as has a revenue budget for the maintenance of it. Other costs associated with the policy have been funded from existing departmental budgets.

4. Equality and Fairness Issues

- 4.1 Wholetime operational firefighters are allocated 1 hour fitness training per shift, however a decision has been made not to make a similar provision for RDS personnel.
- 4.2 It is the intention to provide both retained and wholetime stations with the same standard equipment, as they will be assessed to the same standard. RDS personnel will then have access to good quality fitness equipment which they will be able to use in their own time. Silsden station has no space to house any fitness equipment and they will therefore have the option of using their nearest wholetime station facilities, and will be paid travel expenses for such journeys.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The policy is comprehensive and its implementation will ensure the Authority has done all that is reasonable to ensure we have a fit, healthy and safe workforce.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That the Authority approve the Fitness at Work Policy and the arrangements for its implementation.