

Post incident officer and staff support (PIOSS)

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 Owner: **Assistant Commissioner, Operational Resilience & Control**
 Responsible work team: **Operational Planning Resilience Collaboration**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the arrangements of how the brigade will support and promote good mental health, following an assault, hate crime or potential traumatic incident, to a member of LFB staff.
- 1.2 The project will be coordinated by the PIOSS Team located within the Operational Resilience and Control Department.
- 1.3 Peer to peer support have been discussed in numerous forums and the following articles indicates that this method of support is effective with reducing poor mental health.
 - Scoping review to evaluate the effects of peer support on the mental health of young adults - <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/8/e061336>
 - The effectiveness of peer support for individuals with mental illness: systematic review and meta-analysis - <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/psychological-medicine/article/effectiveness-of-peer-support-for-individuals-with-mental-illness-systematic-review-and-metaanalysis/92E0C2FA17EC13A33193B05CFB8D4179>
 - A review of the literature on peer support in mental health services - <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21770786/>
- 1.4 PIOSS practitioners will be situated strategically throughout the LFB to ensure that a consistent standardised approach following an assault, hate crime or potential traumatic incident is available in every borough, with the ultimate aim of preventing poor mental health.
- 1.5 The Brigade's commitment to mental health is outlined in internal publications; the Delivery Plan, Togetherness Strategy, People Services Strategy and Wellbeing Strategy and various policies, as well as being independently supported by the engagement with external stakeholders, the results of which include the Brigade being a signatory to the Time to Change¹ pledge promoted by the mental health charity MIND, and being accredited by the GLA's London Healthy Workplace Charter award to Excellence level (highest award)².

2 What is PIOSS?

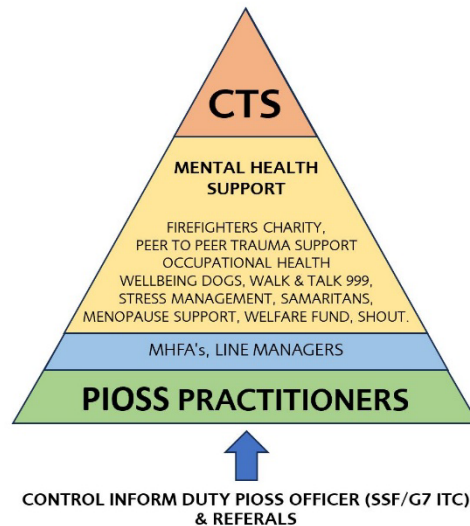
- 2.1 Following the successful implementation of the Assault on Emergency Workers (AoEW) Policy, regular meetings with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are held to ensure that the AoEW legislation is being utilised. It was apparent that there was an area of improvement of how we initially support our staff after an assault, hate crime or potential traumatic incident.
- 2.2 Initially PIOSS was created by the MPS to tackle the issues of assaults on staff and reduce the consequences of these incidents. Through Blue Light Collaboration, the PIOSS project has been adapted for implementation within the LFB.
- 2.3 The PIOSS team have expanded on the original MPS work by taking the basic principles and tailoring these to our own values, polices and unique incidents to provide effective practical peer to peer support.
- 2.4 A training course is available that has been adapted specifically for all ranks and grades within the LFB. The course will offer both the individual staff member and the LFB reassurance, that staff are being supported post incident and therefore reducing poor mental health.

¹ Signed by the Commissioner in February 2017 committing to challenge mental health stigma and promote positive wellbeing within the service.

² Awarded in April 2017 demonstrating that health and wellbeing are embedded in LFBs corporate culture and values.

- 2.5 PIOSS practitioners are trained to communicate with staff to build professional relationships and develop trust to enable them to effectively support or signpost to other internal and external support mechanisms.

Support groups



People and teams:

- (a) **Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS)** – the Brigades in-house team will promote its professional counselling service provision to all staff using written materials, audio/visual resources, and face to face engagements. Information on CTS can be found on Hotwire. Direct contact can be made using counselling@london-fire.gov.uk.
- (b) **Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Team Lead** – this officer will take responsibility for promoting, recruiting, and supporting the work of LFB Mental Health First Aiders (LFB MHFA) using written materials, audio/visual resources, and face to face engagements. Contact LFBMHFA@london.fire.gov.uk.
- (c) **Wellbeing Team** – this team will promote and offer a wellbeing service provision to all staff focused not only on mental health, but also physical and workplace wellbeing using written materials, audio/visual resources, and face to face engagements. Contact wellbeingteam@london-fire.gov.uk.
- (d) **Equality Support Groups (ESGs)** – these groups are essential to the delivery of the LFBs commitment to promoting equality, embracing diversity, and fostering inclusion and togetherness. They are all able to provide advice, guidance and sign posting support to staff about mental health wellbeing matters. A list of LFBs ESGs and contact details are available [here](#).
- (e) **LFB Mental Health First Aiders (LFB MHFA)** – LFB MHFAs will proactively engage with staff on a face-to-face basis and/or via Teams to account for any working from home status to begin conversations related to mental health. LFB MHFAs will be promoted via poster images, by the wearing of LFB MHFA pin badges and e-mail LFB MHFA sign off banners.
- (f) **Trade union representatives** – trade union representatives will continue to engage with LFB to ensure that mental health wellbeing is a primary consideration in developing policies/guides/strategies, and when dealing with staff who may require additional performance support.

- (g) **Wellbeing dog** – the wellbeing dog handler and dog will visit LFB establishments and promote mental health wellbeing via face-to-face engagements and be available to talk on a one to one basis if requested by staff.
- (h) **Safe to Speak Up** – this initiative allows all staff, and anyone working on LFB premises, to raise a concern and/or suggest improvements about any matter related to working for LFB, including mental health wellbeing, without fear of reprisals or consequences. Contact: CCSafeToSpeakUp@london-fire.gov.uk.

3 PIOSS Strategy

- 3.1 At the centre of the PIOSS will be the Co-ordination Team that will have the responsibility to train, manage information and support the PIOSS cadre to ensure support can be delivered effectively.
- 3.2 The PIOSS cadre will consist of in excess of 220 PIOSS Practitioners across all ranks and grades within the LFB, with a minimum of two PIOSS Practitioners on duty, located at station, per borough, being supplemented by flexi-duty and FRS staff.
- 3.3 Following an assault/hate crime/potentially traumatic incident/referral or from a request for a PIOSS Practitioner, Control will action a G7 and/or Special Service Fatality (SSF) Incident Type Code (ITC). This will trigger Control to inform the Duty PIOSS Officer of incident number, staff involved who in turn will inform a PIOSS Practitioner of these details.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of the PIOSS Practitioner to make contact.
- 3.5 Each duty will have two specific PIOSS practitioners at SC/GC rank to perform the role of the 'DUTY PIOSS OFFICER'. Once informed by Control, it will be their responsibility to locate the nearest PIOSS Practitioner via StARS/PIOSS rota book who in turn will make initial contact.
- 3.6 PIOSS will deliver support within the first 24 hours of being informed by the Duty PIOSS Officer.
- 3.7 Following a discussion over the telephone the PIOSS practitioner will assess whether their attendance is required, or support can be given via telephone. Should their attendance be required, Control should be contacted, and provisions made to take the appliance off the run for a maximum of two hours, to allow for travel and discussion at the neighbouring station.
- 3.8 The OOD should be contacted as a priority to ensure that the Duty PIOSS Officer has been paged and is dealing with the incident in question. Close communication between the PIOSS Practitioner and OOD should be maintained throughout this period of support.
- 3.9 After the facilitated conversation, the PIOSS Practitioner will assess what support is required and any requests should be made in conjunction with the OOD who will have the strategic view of the LFB.
- 3.10 Continued support should be maintained for up to one month and should be escalated to other support mechanisms at any time internally and externally if required.
- 3.11 The PIOSS Practitioner has a responsibility to collate the information and email the PIOSS inbox.
- 3.12 When support is no longer required from the PIOSS cadre or a person has been referred to a different support group, the PIOSS Co-ordination Team will be informed to review and close the file.
- 3.13 The PIOSS Practitioner will be continually supported throughout every referral by the PIOSS Co-ordination Team. Additional PIOSS Practitioners maybe assigned or additional support given if required.

- 3.14 PIOSS support is completely voluntary, and anyone can withdraw from the process at any time with no notice, and a request to delete any information held can be made to the PIOSS Co-ordination Team.

4 Definition of an assault

- 4.1 An **assault** is any act (and not mere omission to act) by which a person intentionally or recklessly causes another to suffer or apprehend immediate unlawful violence. The term **assault** is often used to include a battery, which is committed by the intentional or reckless application of unlawful force to another person. For example:

- Threats of violence.
- Use of weapons (knives, fireworks, etc).
- Physical attacks (punching, kicking, etc).

5 Definition of a hate crime

- 5.1 Any criminal offence that is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived:

- Race.
- Religion.
- Sexual orientation.
- Disability.

Or any crime motivated by the hostility or prejudice against a person who is/perceived to be transgender.

- 5.2 The MPS are dedicated to ensuring that all victims of racial, religious, or homophobic abuse can expect full victim support combined with LFB support mechanisms already available such as: Counselling and Trauma Service Policy number 0915 – Recognising and coping with potentially traumatic events. The MPS and LFB will ensure that a thorough investigation will be conducted, and investigators will ensure that:

- All evidence is obtained at the earliest opportunity.
- Prosecutions will be actively pursued against all offenders.
- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will be consulted with all charging decisions.
- The victim is aware of their right to review (VRR).
- Community orders with a Mental Health Treatment Requirement (MHTR).
- Community treatment orders (CTO).
- Alcohol treatment.
- Drug rehabilitation.

- 5.3 Mental health and the suspect's ability to know right from wrong at the time of offence is something the MPS does not want victims to be concerned with and would seek the victim to support the criminal justice process. Not all prosecutions will lead to a custodial sentence or fine, in some instance's punishment may not be given but the outcome may benefit the individual such as:

- Community orders with a Mental Health Treatment Requirement (MHTR).
- Community treatment orders (CTO).
- Alcohol treatment.
- Drug rehabilitation.

6 Potentially traumatic incident

6.1 The Post Critical Incident Contact (PCIC) policy and the Recognising and coping with potentially traumatic events policy - policy number 0915 - recognising and coping with potentially traumatic events currently has a number of categories that initiates a response. It is recognised that everyone is unique and the PIOSS will respond to any potentially traumatic incident identified by a Control operative or referred in addition to categories in the PCIC policy.

6.2 PIOSS potentially traumatic incident triggers:

- Single fatalities including RTC's or serious/horrific injuries.
- Death or serious injury to LFB staff.
- Terrorist activity, where life has been endangered or lost.
- Attendance at a series of incidents over a short period of time, creating cumulative impact.
- Incidents which are disturbing or shocking e.g., murder scenes, suicide incidents involving operational difficulties e.g., flashovers, near misses, contamination.
- Major/catastrophic incidents.
- Incidents where there may be a personal meaning of the incident/casualty to an individual or individuals.
- Incidents which have had a public response/media attention.
- Control staff taking difficult calls e.g., Fire survival call.
- Any other incident where need for Counselling Trauma Services (CTS) contact might be indicated.

7 Data handling

7.1 It is important that all personal information regarding the incident or support given is kept confidential following the initial reporting.

7.2 The PIOSS Co-ordination Team in conjunction with the PIOSS Practitioner will collate the information to give a detailed overview of the support given. The data will be stored on a shared document within SharePoint only accessible by the PIOSS Practitioner and the PIOSS Co-ordination Team.

7.3 Policy number 0351 - LFB Data protection and privacy policy will be applied throughout our process.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA		SDIA		HSWIA		RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification