

**Welsh Government Traffic Officer Service & Control
Room
North Wales Traffic Officers and
Control Room Operator/Dispatchers:
Special Terms and Conditions**

This document applies to the Traffic Officer Service and Control Room Operator/ Despatchers and the material in this section supplements the Authority's Terms and Conditions, Policies and Procedures.

The terms and conditions of employment outlined in this document are contractual and supplement the guidance in the existing Agency Induction Handbook for those undertaking Traffic Officer Service and Control Room Operator/Despatcher posts.

Initial Training Policy

The initial training process applies to everyone recruited to undertake the Traffic Officer and Control Room Operator/Despatcher posts. Individuals will be required to attend and pass all scheduled training courses and adopt the standards of the Agency throughout the course of their duties.

For Health and Safety reasons individuals recruited will be offered employment conditional on them satisfactorily completing their Initial Training.

Throughout the initial training programme, individuals will be required to pass a variety of modules. These are designed to equip them to perform their basic duties within the workplace effectively and safely. All modules are subject to assessment, the outcome of which will determine whether the individual can move on to the next part of the programme. Dependant upon performance, the Agency and/or assessor reserves the right to require the individual to re-sit a module at a later date. Should there be any final assessment this may be delayed until such time that all modules are completed to a satisfactory standard.

Regular reviews will take place throughout the training programme, appropriate feedback given and performance recorded in line with the Training Policy. These reviews are designed to highlight any area(s) where an individual may need extra support. Assistance and support will be given to individuals to assist in meeting standards.

Probation

In addition to the requirement to complete the Initial Training and before appointment, new employees will be required to serve a period of probation in accordance with Gwynedd Council policy.

The purpose of the probationary period is to ensure that employees meet the requirements relating to the job role and that performance and conduct, including timekeeping and attendance, are satisfactory.

Employees must attain a satisfactory assessment by the end of the probation period before employment can be confirmed in accordance with the Authority's Probationary Scheme. A decision may be taken not to confirm employment at any time within the scheduled probationary period eg, if there were to be a breach of statutory requirements relating to an employee's job role, failure of health or security checks, gross misconduct, serious poor performance and/or a failure to meet any required training standards. At the end of the probationary period, employees will be notified in writing whether appointment is being confirmed. In the event of the probationary period not being confirmed an appeal may be made following the arrangements outlined by the Authority.

Health and Fitness (including Medical Checks)

The trunk road network is a hazardous environment, often involving high noise levels, fast moving traffic and the possibility of chemical spills and noxious fumes. Employees may find themselves immobile for periods of time. It is essential that individuals employed in this position, are fit and healthy to undertake duties so as to safeguard the welfare and safety of themselves' their colleagues and the public. The Agency needs to be sure that employees have no medical conditions that might be exacerbated by working in the this environment, that it does not put the health and safety of staff or public at risk and that staff have the physical fitness to cope with the work.

Pre-employment medical checks

Before commencing employment all successful candidates for Traffic Officer roles, will undergo a medical assessment.

Drugs and Alcohol

Employees must not put their own or others' safety at risk by attempting to work when their performance is impaired through alcohol or drugs (whether recreational or prescribed).

Employees have a responsibility to attend work in a fit state. That is to say, not under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Any employee who realises they are unfit for work must not report for duty. It is considered less serious to admit to being unfit for work, rather than attempting to work and putting your life, as well as the lives of colleagues and the public at risk. Employees should telephone their line manager and explain the situation. Absence of this nature will be considered authorised sickness absence in the first instance and the line manager will arrange a return to work meeting.

The consumption of alcohol or the misuse of drugs during work time, including all breaks is forbidden. Furthermore, serious incapacity through alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs is a gross misconduct offence under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Employees must note that smelling of alcohol or appearing to be, or having been under the influence of drugs or alcohol does not project the Assembly in a positive light. Where appropriate an employee in these circumstances may be deemed unfit for duty and may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Any employee suspected of any illegal activity concerning alcohol or drugs will be reported to the Police. Any employee subsequently found guilty of any drug related offence might render them liable to dismissal.

Any employee who is prescribed drugs by their medical advisor should ensure that the medical advisor is aware of their role and has confirmed that the drugs will not compromise the ability of the employee to carry out their role safely. If, for whatever reason, a drug is prescribed that will affect the ability of the employee to carry out their role safely, the line manager must be informed immediately.

This information will be kept confidential. The Line Manager may then make suitable alternative work arrangements for the employee as the circumstances require.

When taking non-prescription drugs (eg. Antihistamines, etc.), an employee must ensure that the drug will not compromise their ability to carry out their safety role. If in any doubt, professional medical advice should be sought. If there are any adverse side effects then these should be discussed with the employee's Line Manager who will keep that information confidential and if necessary appropriate suitable alternative work arrangements may be made.

Breach of any area of this policy will be treated with utmost seriousness and may be regarded as a matter of serious misconduct under the Authority's established disciplinary procedures. The implication is that possession of drugs or loss of driving license will mean the termination of employment

Employees may attend discussions with managers in issues relating to this policy with their Union representative or with one work colleague should they so chose.

On-going fitness

All employees are encouraged, for their own safety, as well as their ability to carry out the work, to maintain their health and fitness levels. Employees will receive medical checks at regular intervals while they are in a Safety Critical post. In addition, employees or their line manager may request a check if their health begins to have an impact on their work, well being and that of others.

Working procedures have been designed to avoid contact with noxious chemicals and contagious diseases. However, employees may request vaccinations/inoculation against Hepatitis B, Tetanus and Tuberculosis (TB). All requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Uniform, Presentation, Dress Code and Identification Policy

Given the high public profile of the role, it is essential that employees wear the designated uniform in accordance with latest policy and carry the Identification Card at all times when on official duty.

The wearing of current uniform is a condition of employment for individuals employed in the post of Traffic Officer and Control Room Operator/Despatcher. Employees will also be issued with an Identification Card, which signifies powers to undertake certain tasks associated with their post where it is appropriate and is a condition of employment for individuals employed to Safety Critical posts.

Overview

The Authority is an Equal Opportunity employer and recognises the importance of having a diverse workforce, however, the following must be adhered to at all times:

Religious dress and/ or body piercings:

Any item of dress or any body piercing that you are required to wear by reason of your religion or culture will be permitted – subject to strict adherence to the following conditions:

- You must continue, so far as possible, to wear your full uniform whilst on duty as you must be seen by the general public to exercise the proper powers relevant to your post and;
- Your proposed item(s) of dress or body piercing must be discrete and not conflict with any health and safety obligation either to yourself, your colleagues and/or the general public.

Respective Responsibilities

All employees must comply with the following:

Uniform:

- Wear the full uniform while on duty, that is issued to you from time to time
- Not substitute any item of uniform clothing for another not officially issued to you without prior agreement
- Not wear any additional visible item of clothing, headgear and/or fashion accessories not provided to you by the Agency without prior written approval of your line manager
- Keep your uniform clean, neat, tidy and properly maintained at all times
- Seek the prompt replacement of any uniform item that becomes damaged or permanently soiled, and make suitable alternative arrangements in consultation with your line manager to operate effectively and safely in any interim period
- Wear the designated uniform only when on official duty, or when travelling to and from your place of work, and;
- Return the uniform when you are officially requested to do so (as it shall at all times remain the property of the Agency).

Identification:

- Keep your Identification Cards and other official articles safe and secure at all times, reporting any loss at the earliest opportunity
- Use your Identification Cards only for official purposes and only when undertaking official duties
- Return your identification Cards to your line manager when you leave your post, or at times when any absence from duty extends beyond 6 weeks

Presentation/Personal Appearance: Wear uniform properly so as to ensure safety at all time and keep your personal appearance neat and clean so as to properly reflect the responsibility of the post and the Agency

Potential disciplinary action: Recognise that either a serious and/or persistent breach of any of the above policies regarding Uniform, your Identification and/or your Presentation/Personal Appearance without good reason may lead to disciplinary action.

Personal Appearance: Employees will maintain a high standard of personal appearance and must be clean, neat, tidy and well groomed. Employees must not chew gum or smoke whilst engaging with members of the public. (in accordance with the Council's No Smoking Policy, smoking is also prohibited in the Agency vehicles).

Tattoos: Tattoos on the face or visible above the collar are not permitted. To retain a professional image, where feasible, all other tattoos must be covered.

Anyone who has a tattoo which could be construed as being offensive to any religion or belief, or is in any way discriminatory, violent or intimidating, will not be accepted to join the Traffic Officer Service or Control Room. Likewise, an existing member of staff who gets themselves tattooed in this way may, after investigation, become subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Hair: Hair must be neat, not allowed to cover the ears and, unless on identifiable religious or cultural grounds, worn above the collar. For safety reasons, ponytails are not permitted and long hair must be neatly and securely fastened up and worn relatively close to the head. Any hair bands or ties must be plain and the colour in keeping with the main uniform.

Hair must not be shaved or shaped into patterns or motifs. Moderate layering is acceptable but a sharp dividing line between long and short sections of hair is not allowed. Hair must not be dyed in conspicuously 'unnatural' colours. With the exception of faint modest highlighting, hair may only be dyed one colour.

An 'unshaven' appearance is not desirable therefore, beards or moustaches must be grown whilst off duty or when there will be no contact with the public.

Personal Items: Expensive personal items, including jewellery, must not be worn at work. A plain watch, items of religious significance and no more than two rings may be worn. Rings with prominent stones or settings must not be worn on duty, because of the risk of injury. Necklaces must not be visible.

Any item worn should be as unobtrusive as possible and must not conflict with any PPE provided. The above personal items will be permitted only where there is no significant health and safety risk. Separate instruction may exist for training activities. If staff are physically unable, or feel unable to remove items of religious significance, there may be occasions where they need to be securely covered to minimise any risk.

Rings, studs or sleepers must not be worn through the ears, nose, eyebrows, tongue or any other visible part of the body. Staff who have body piercings that are not visible when clothed, should be aware of the associated risk of injury and remove jewellery as necessary.

Cosmetics: Cosmetics may be worn in moderation and should be appropriate to the work environment. Nails must be kept to a length that will not interfere with duties. Any nail varnish worn must be colourless.

Clothing and Equipment issued by the Agency

Provision: Only authorised items, are to be issued to and worn by that individual.

Responsibility for determining appropriate garments and kit lists lies with the Agency. Where there is a perceived need for additional or alternative clothing or personal protective equipment (PPE), a business case must be submitted. Staff must not approach or enter into discussions with individual manufacturers or suppliers.

Ownership and Responsibility: Items of uniform and equipment issued, remain the property of the Trunk Road Agency (TRA). Every member of staff has a duty to take care of official property. Negligence leading to loss or damage may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Uniform must not be sold neither should they it be given as memorabilia unless otherwise authorised by the Agency.

Replacement or Surrender: When an item of clothing or equipment becomes unserviceable, staff should make the appropriate arrangements for return, replacement, or repair. On termination of employment with the TRA, or when the item becomes obsolete, all items must be surrendered, in reasonable condition, and disposed of according to instructions. (See>Returns and exchange procedure)

Where a Traffic officer or Control Room Operator/Despatcher is suspended, any uniform should be surrendered, in accordance with the suspension instruction. (NPT discipline procedures)

Security and Confidentiality

Given the high public profile of the role, the level of trust invested in our staff by the public, and the importance of the trunk road network to the national economy, it is essential that our staff are, and are seen to be honest and impartial in the exercise of their duties. Staff must only use official, approved protocols, and deviation from official procedures may, where appropriate, result in disciplinary action. All successful applicants to Traffic Officer Service and Control Room Operator/Despatcher posts will undergo security and criminal record checks as proper to the post. After employment, repeat checks will be made at intervals as determined by the Agency policy on security and vetting.

Responsibility and Accountability

Traffic Officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers are personally responsible and accountable for their actions. They do not neglect the duties or responsibilities that they know or ought to know they have.

When deciding if a Traffic Officer or Control Room Operator/Despatcher has neglected their duties all of the circumstances should be taken into account. Traffic officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers are to prioritise the demands on their time and resources. This may involve leaving a task to do a different one, which in their judgement is more important. This is accepted and in many cases essential for good practice.

Traffic Officer Team Managers and Control Room Supervisors are role models for delivering a professional, impartial and effective service. They have a particular responsibility to maintain professional standards and integrity by advice, remedial or other relevant and appropriate action.

Traffic officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers ensure that accurate records are kept of the exercise of their duties and powers as required by relevant legislation, force policies and procedures.

In carrying out their duties Traffic Officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers have a responsibility to exercise reasonable care to prevent loss or damage to property of others including Agency property.

Honesty and Integrity

Traffic Officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers are honest, act with integrity and do not compromise or abuse their position.

Traffic Officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers act with integrity and are open and truthful in their dealings with the public and their colleagues, so that confidence in the Traffic Officer Service and Control Room is secured and maintained.

Traffic Officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers do not knowingly make any false, misleading or inaccurate oral or written statements or entry in any record or document, kept or made in connection with any police activity.

Traffic Officers and Control Room Operators/Despatchers never accept any gift or gratuity that could compromise their impartiality as a Traffic Officer or Operator/Despatcher. During the course of their duties Traffic Officers or Operators/Despatchers may be offered hospitality (e.g. refreshments) and this may be acceptable as part of their role. However, Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers always consider carefully the motivation of the person offering a gift or gratuity of any type and the risk of becoming improperly beholden to a person or organisation.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers never use their position or ID card to gain advantage (financial or otherwise) that could give rise to the impression that the officer is abusing their position. An ID card is only for identification and to express authority.

Authority, Respect and Courtesy

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers do not abuse their powers or authority and respect the rights of all individuals.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers act with self-control and tolerance, treating members of the public and colleagues with respect and courtesy.

In exercising their duties, Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers never abuse their authority or the powers entrusted to them.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers use appropriate language and behaviour in their dealings with their colleagues and the public. They do not use any language or behave in a way that they know, or ought to know, is offensive or is likely to cause offence.

Confidentiality

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers treat information with respect and access or disclose it only for a legitimate purpose.

The Traffic Officer service and Control Room shares information with the police and other agencies. Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers never access or disclose any information that they know or ought to know is not for a legitimate purpose.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers who are unsure if it is legitimate to access or disclose information always consult with their line manager that deals with data protection or freedom of information before accessing or disclosing information.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers oppose any attempt by a third party to gain access to any information that they are not entitled to. This includes for example, requests from family or friends, approaches by private investigators and disclosure to the media.

General Conduct

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers, on duty, act in a professional way.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers do not behave in a manner which brings, or is likely to bring, discredit on the Traffic Officer service or Control Room or that undermines or is likely to undermine public confidence in the Welsh Government, whether on or off duty.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers report any action taken against them for a criminal offence, conditions imposed by a court or the receipt of any penalty notice. Bringing discredit on the Traffic Officer service or Control Room is when public confidence or the reputation of the Traffic Officer service or Control Room is damaged or could be damaged by the actions of a Traffic Officer or Operator/Despatcher or group of Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers. In the interests of fairness, consistency and reasonableness the test is not solely about the amount of media coverage but having regard to all the circumstances.

Actions which could bring discredit to the Traffic Officer service or Control Room and which may result in disciplinary action include arrest, summons for an offence, a penalty notice for disorder, an endorsable fixed penalty notice for a road traffic offence, or a charge or caution for an offence by any enforcement agency in the UK or elsewhere. This also includes convictions and conditions imposed by a court.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers are required to report as soon as reasonably practicable to their force any occasion where these have occurred.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers on duty display a positive image of the Traffic Officer service and Control Room in the standard of their appearance which is appropriate to their operational role.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers attend punctually when rostered for duty or other commitment (eg attendance at court).

Off-duty conduct

Even when off duty, Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers should never behave in a manner that brings or is likely to bring discredit upon the Traffic Officer service or Control Room.

In determining whether an officer's off-duty conduct brings or is likely to bring discredit to the Traffic Officer service or Control Room, the test is not whether the officer brings or is likely to bring discredit on herself or himself but on the Traffic Officer service and Control Room as a whole.

Traffic Officers and Operators/Despatchers are particularly aware of the image that they portray when representing the Traffic Officer service or Control Room in an official capacity even though they may be off-duty (e.g. at a conference).

Reporting Personal Arrest or Conviction

To maintain public confidence in the integrity of the operation, staff must promptly report, in writing to their line manager any occasion when they are arrested or cautioned for, charged with or convicted of any offence (and this includes driving penalties and offences).

Staff must recognise that if they are convicted of an offence that materially affects their official Agency position and/or duties, they will be subject to the Authorities disciplinary procedures. This could include immediate suspension and, after appropriate investigation, termination of employment.

For its part, the Agency will provide appropriate advice and support to the individual concerned so that the matter is resolved as soon as is reasonably practicable.