

MOPAC

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

DIRECTORATE OF AUDIT, RISK AND ASSURANCE
Internal Audit Service to LFEPA

**Development and Maintenance of Operational
Professionalism (DaMOP)**
Internal Audit Report - Final
February 2018



**LONDON FIRE
AND EMERGENCY
PLANNING AUTHORITY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Background

- 1.1 This review was completed as part of the 2017/18 annual audit plan.
- 1.2 The objectives of the Development and Maintenance of Operational Professionalism (DaMOP) framework is the maintenance of core firefighting skills through the provision of station based activities. Generally, theory sessions are completed during night shifts and drills/ practical sessions during day shifts.
- 1.3 The use of DaMOP may also identify deficiencies in skills, which can then be addressed either by further support or through a personal development plan.
- 1.4 The review seeks to provide assurance that the framework in place to support station based training is effective.

2. Audit Assurance

LIMITED ASSURANCE

The control framework is not operating effectively to mitigate key risks. A number of key controls are absent or are not being applied to meet business objectives.

3. Areas of Effective Control

- 3.1 PN427 (The development and maintenance of operational professionalism – training note) is available on the Hotwire intranet site. The policy note is owned by the Head of Fire Stations, was last reviewed in September 2016 and next due for review in September 2019. Operational staff are able to ascertain where changes have been made to any policy in the Station Circulation Folder, which is accessible through the Operations area of Hotwire, and all are responsible for their own review of this area to identify changes to existing policy or the publication of new policies. Our review of PN427 found that it is adequately detailed and covers the who, what, when of DaMOP, and how it should be managed.
- 3.2 Babcock deliver a course entitled Supervisory Managers Development Programme which is mandatory for crew and watch managers. The course is delivered over eight hours and includes a section on DaMOP which is delivered by staff from Information Management. Our review of the training slides found that they adequately covered the subject of station based training.
- 3.3 Roles and responsibilities for DaMOP are clearly defined in PN427. While all staff should take responsibility for identifying and delivering training, the watch managers are responsible for ensuring that their watch's training programme encompasses the core risk critical areas necessary, and that there is opportunity for their staff to address areas identified as development needs. Station managers are responsible for oversight of the process, and ensuring that station/ borough plans are being taken into consideration. Evidence of coverage can be

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ascertained through the individuals training records and the station diary appointments.

- 3.4 Appointments for DaMOP training automatically appear in each watch's work queue in the Station Diary. They comprise of a two-hour slot for each day shift and a one hour slot for each night shift, which the watch officer with responsibility for training drags from the work queue into the diary itself. They then populate the diary entry with the planned training content. Generally, the night shift training consists of lectures and the day shift of drills, which are based on the previous tours lectures. The existing process could result in insufficient coverage of the core skills syllabus, as the watch officers may provide more training in areas that they feel comfortable in delivering. However, a pilot programme has been running since April 2016 in the south-east area, which incorporates pre-determined lectures and drills where all watches complete the same training on the same day across the area.
- 3.5 The initial pilot ran between April 2016 and March 2017, after which users were consulted and the programme was tweaked. A second pilot commenced in April 2017, and Internal Audit received favourable feedback from officers who had used it, and they all supported full roll-out across the Brigade, with a few further tweaks suggested (see section 4).
- 3.6 The content of the pilot was appropriately considered, and based on the top 10 types of incident that crews attended in a 12 month period. Each incident type was allocated to one month within the pilot's Operational Training Plan, with the remaining two months of the year being dedicated to crew safety and incident command. The crews use the Operational Training Plan to populate the training content in the Station Diary appointment.
- 3.7 We identified a number of key benefits with the pilot:
 - All watches will be delivering the same training on the same day, therefore limiting the need for catch up sessions when a member of the watch was on a standby at another fire station, and not in attendance for their own watch's scheduled training.
 - It includes seasonal training preparations for busy periods such bonfire night.
 - Pressure is taken off watch officers and station managers in ensuring that a full syllabus of core skills training is delivered, freeing up time to complete other tasks.
 - The content of the training is clearly documented in the "notes" section of the diary entry.
- 3.8 Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) firefighters have specialist skills which also require regular station based maintenance sessions, in addition to the basic core skills training. Although specialist skills were not included in the pilot, a crew manager at Lewisham FRU station has developed a six-week rolling programme for

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equipment on their hazmat appliance. We were advised that a programme was underway within the south-east area to develop rolling training programmes for the other FRU appliances, which it was anticipated would be rolled out around April 2018.

- 3.9 Records of who has attended the DaMOP sessions are recorded by the watch officer in the “participants” area of the Station Diary appointment by ticking or unticking those attending the training. The “training” area of the appointment is also completed to show the outcomes of the training. For lectures, this is a tick against the individuals name, but for drills records show what role each individual played and whether they were considered competent (by inputting a tick) or requiring development (by inputting a cross). The watch officer is responsible for ensuring that their entries are accurate, as there is no review process in place.
- 3.10 Development can take the place of support and guidance from more experienced watch members, or can be more formal such as the instigation of Personal Development Plan (PDP). Although it is possible to run reports on PDPs in place, it is not possible to ascertain from the report if these relate specifically to core skills training issues, therefore we did not conduct any testing in this area.

4. Key Risk Issues for Management Action

- 4.1 Whilst the content of PN427 (The development and maintenance of operational professionalism – training note) was found to be sufficiently detailed, we identified that it contained reference to “Your Operational Professionalism” within Hotwire for more information around developing a training needs analysis for staff who have been absent for an extended period, and the programming of training from the rota. This area of Hotwire no longer exists and this information is no longer available to support watch and crew managers in specific areas of managing DaMOP. There is a resulting risk that inappropriate or inconsistent actions will be undertaken across the Brigade.
- 4.2 We also identified that section nine of the policy, which covers the programming of training at technical centres, has some missing information. Paragraph 9.2 states “Programming of training at technical centres will be as per the training rota at (enter where training schedule can be located)”. The policy does not provide adequate guidance if the link is not provided, resulting in a risk that inappropriate or inconsistent actions will be undertaken at technical rescue centres.
- 4.3 The DaMOP training plan was initially based on consultation with operational station based personnel and by using the health and safety services ‘risk mapping project’ findings, as published in 2005. We could not find any evidence that the effectiveness of the programme had been reviewed until around 2015, which resulted in the pilot programme which has been running in the south-east area since April 2016. Failure to periodically monitor the effectiveness of station based training could result in it becoming less effective over time, potentially impacting on the maintenance of the core skills required by firefighters.

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4.4 The south-east area pilot has proven to be successful with watch officers, however it has been running for almost two years. Delays in rolling out the pilot could impact on the effectiveness of core skills station based training, particularly as it has not been reviewed for some years. Prior to roll out a further review of the programme will need to be undertaken so that any further tweaks can be made prior to dissemination. Through discussion with staff we identified the following issues:

- The training may be too generic in some areas, and could provide more time for borough specific topics. An example provided was grass fires, whereby stations with limited grass areas but more risk in high-rise blocks may wish to reduce the grass fire training and increase the high-rise training.
- File paths for recording the training appropriately in the Station Diary are not easy to select, which can result in it appearing that the training has not been completed. This increases the workload of a number of individuals; the area teams identify the missing training as part of their monitoring process, they then contact the station manager who conveys this to watch manager who in turn looks at the reasons. If this is an incorrect file path the watch manager is required to go back into the Station Diary and correct the entry.
- There may be issue with obtaining equipment, such as vehicles for RTC training, if the too many stations require them on the same day.

4.5 Attendees at sessions are recorded in the appointment in the Station Diary, which in turn updates their training records. We reviewed the diary entries at five fire stations during the period 1st to 7th May 2017 (inclusive) and identified that there are inconsistencies with the records submitted. For example:

- One firefighter was shown as attending training, but was showing in StARS as being on LILO for the entire shift, which if correct meant that they could not have been present for the training session.
- Another firefighter was shown as being at training sessions between 09:30 and 15:30, however StARS also showed that they were booked to attend a medical appointment between the hours of 09:30 and 13:00. If the training was completed during the hours stated in the diary, then they could not have been present.

There is a risk that staff will have been recorded as attending training session for which they have not been present, potentially leading to gaps in their core skills knowledge.

4.6 The completion of station based training is monitored through a suite of performance indicators. Non-FRU stations are required to spend 24% of their time training, while FRU stations should spend between 50% and 53%, dependent on whether they are technical rescue, technical skills or hazmat. Monitoring reports are produced by the area teams using the duration of the appointment and number of participants as recorded in the Station Diary appointment. We have

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identified above that the participants may not always be recorded appropriately, and there are also potential problems with the use of the appointments duration. While the appointment may have been in the Station Diary for the specified duration, there is no evidence to support that this was actual time spent training. This actual time spent on the training could be minimal if the topic area being covered was relatively small potentially resulting in a lack of basic core skills in the long term.

- 4.7 Performance indicator data may give a false record of training if sessions are not fully completed for operational reasons. Incomplete sessions from one shift are often incorporated into another session that tour, or during another tour.
- 4.8 Use of targets to monitor the effectiveness of DaMOP may not be the most appropriate method of measurement as it focuses on the quantity of training rather than the quality. Targets are also used to measure other station based activities such as community fire safety, home fire safety visits and fire hydrant inspections. There is a risk that when time availability is limited, and there are competing priorities then staff may feel pressurised into falsifying records to ensure that targets are met.
- 4.9 There is no formal process for the provision of feedback on the quality of the DaMOP training sessions being provided. In practice, any perceived deficiencies could be raised with the watch officers. However, individuals may not feel comfortable enough to raise issues with their direct line managers, who are likely to be the persons who are delivering the training. Service Standard Support Officers (SSSOs) include a review of DaMOP within their coverage of Service Standard 3 (Training). Through discussion with one SSSO we identified that this includes watching a drill and a lecture while at the fire station, and discussing these with the individuals who delivered the sessions. Although there is the opportunity for feedback from the rest of the watch, no direct request is made. Failure to ensure that the training delivered is fully understood by all participants could result in inappropriate actions being taken as there is no process in place to evaluate the effectiveness of DaMOP.
- 4.10 We reviewed a sample of SSSO records for Service Standard 3 and identified that the outcomes of their visits are recorded as either red, amber or green, and although there is an area for narrative this is either not used, or not very detailed. Opportunities for organisational learning may not be identified if insufficient narrative is available to support the outcomes of SSSO visits.

A summary of agreed actions to mitigate the above risks have been included in the tables below. Detailed audit testing and findings are available upon request.

ACTION PLAN

1. Policies and procedures (Medium Priority)

Rationale	Agreed Action
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.1 refers)</p> <p>The content of PN427 (The development and maintenance of operational professionalism – training note) was found to be sufficiently detailed, we identified that it contained reference to “Your Operational Professionalism” within Hotwire for more information around developing a training needs analysis for staff who have been absent for an extended period, and the programming of training from the rota. This area of Hotwire no longer exists and this information is no longer available to support watch and crew managers in specific areas of managing DaMOP.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>There is a resulting risk that inappropriate or inconsistent actions will be undertaken across the Brigade.</p>	<p>As part of HR Management's recent People Services Review a two year project has been approved to look at the issues associated with station based training. The findings from this review will be considered as part of this project.</p>
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.2 refers)</p> <p>We identified that section nine of the policy, which covers the programming of training at technical centres, has some missing information. Paragraph 9.2 states “Programming of training at technical centres will be as per the training rota at (enter where training schedule can be located)”.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>The policy does not provide adequate guidance if the link is not provided, resulting in a risk that inappropriate or inconsistent actions will be undertaken at technical rescue centres.</p>	
Action Responsibility	AC Fire Stations in conjunction with the Project Lead
Responsible Head of Service	Director of Operations
Deadline	31 March 2020

ACTION PLAN

2. The focus of station based training (Medium Priority)

Rationale	Agreed Action
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.3 refers)</p> <p>The DaMOP training plan was initially based on consultation with operational station based personnel and by using the health and safety services 'risk mapping project' findings, as published in 2005. We could not find any evidence that the effectiveness of the programme had been reviewed until around 2015, which resulted in the pilot programme which has been running in the south-east area since April 2016.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Failure to periodically monitor the effectiveness of station based training could result in it becoming less effective over time, potentially impacting on the maintenance of the core skills required by firefighters.</p>	<p>As part of HR Management's recent People Services Review a two year project has been approved to look at the issues associated with station based training. The findings from this review will be considered as part of this project.</p>
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.4 refers)</p> <p>The south-east area pilot has proven to be successful with watch officers, however it has been running for almost two years. Delays in rolling out the pilot could impact on the effectiveness of core skills station based training, particularly as it has not been reviewed for some years. Prior to roll out a further review of the programme will need to be undertaken so that any further tweaks can be made prior to dissemination. Through discussion with staff we identified the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The training may be too generic in some areas, and could provide more time for borough specific topics.• File paths for recording the training appropriately in the Station Diary are not easy to select, which can result in it appearing that the training has not been completed.• There may be issue with obtaining equipment, such as vehicles for RTC training, if the too many stations require them on the same day. <p>Risk</p> <p>If the pilot is rolled out without first addressing known problems, then there could be a lack of buy in from staff.</p>	
Action Responsibility	AC Fire Stations in conjunction with the Project Lead
Responsible Head of Service	Director of Operations
Deadline	31 March 2020

ACTION PLAN

3. Monitoring attendance at training (Medium Priority)

Rationale	Agreed Action
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.5 refers)</p> <p>Attendees at sessions are recorded in the appointment in the Station Diary, which in turn updates their training records. We reviewed the diary entries at five fire stations during the period 1st to 7th May 2017 (inclusive) and identified that there are inconsistencies with the records submitted. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One firefighter was shown as attending training, but was showing in StARS as being on LILO for the entire shift, which if correct meant that they could not have been present for the training session.• Another firefighter was shown as being at training sessions between 09:30 and 15:30, however StARS also showed that they were booked to attend a medical appointment between the hours of 09:30 and 13:00. If the training was completed during the hours stated in the diary, then they could not have been present. <p>Risk</p> <p>Staff training records will be inaccurate if staff are shown as receiving training which they have not attended, and gaps in knowledge will be unlikely to be identified. This could result in adverse publicity if this was identified as part of an investigation into an incident.</p>	<p>As part of HR Management's recent People Services Review a two year project has been approved to look at the issues associated with station based training. The findings from this review will be considered as part of this project.</p>
Action Responsibility	AC Fire Stations in conjunction with the Project Lead
Responsible Head of Service	Director of Operations
Deadline	31 March 2020

ACTION PLAN

4. Use of performance indicators (Medium Priority)

Rationale	Agreed Action
<p>Finding (paragraphs 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 refer)</p> <p>The completion of station based training is monitored through a suite of performance indicators. Non-FRU stations are required to spend 24% of their time training, while FRU stations should spend between 50% and 53%, dependent on whether they are technical rescue, technical skills or hazmat. Monitoring reports are produced by the area teams using the duration of the appointment and number of participants as recorded in the Station Diary appointment. We have identified above that the participants may not always be recorded appropriately, and there are also potential problems with the use of the appointments duration. While the appointment may have been in the Station Diary for the specified duration, there is no evidence to support that this was actual time spent training. This actual time spent on the training could be minimal if the topic area being covered was relatively small potentially resulting in a lack of basic core skills in the long term.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Performance indicator data may give a false record of training if sessions are not fully completed for operational reasons. Incomplete sessions from one shift are often incorporated into another session that tour, or during another tour. Use of targets to monitor the effectiveness of DaMOP may not be the most appropriate method of measurement as it focuses on the quantity of training rather than the quality. Targets are also used to measure other station based activities such as community fire safety, home fire safety visits and fire hydrant inspections. There is a risk that when time availability is limited, and there are competing priorities then staff may feel pressurised into falsifying records to ensure that targets are met.</p>	<p>As part of HR Management's recent People Services Review a two year project has been approved to look at the issues associated with station based training. The findings from this review will be considered as part of this project.</p>
Action Responsibility	AC Fire Stations in conjunction with the Project Lead
Responsible Head of Service	Director of Operations
Deadline	31 March 2020

5. Adequacy of the training delivered (Medium Priority)

Rationale	Agreed Action
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.9 refers)</p> <p>There is no formal process for the provision of feedback on the quality of the DaMOP training sessions being provided. In practice, any perceived deficiencies could be raised with the watch officers. However, individuals may not feel comfortable enough to raise issues with their direct line managers, who are likely to be the persons who are delivering the training. Service Standard Support Officers (SSSOs) include a review of DaMOP within their coverage of Service Standard 3 (Training). Through discussion with one SSSO we identified that this includes watching a drill and a lecture while at the fire station, and discussing these with the individuals who delivered the sessions. Although there is the opportunity for feedback from the rest of the watch, no direct request is made.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Failure to ensure that the training delivered is fully understood by all participants could result in inappropriate actions being taken as there is no process in place to evaluate the effectiveness of DaMOP.</p>	<p>As part of HR Management's recent People Services Review a two year project has been approved to look at the issues associated with station based training. The findings from this review will be considered as part of this project.</p>
<p>Finding (paragraph 4.10 refers)</p> <p>We reviewed a sample of SSSO records for Service Standard 3 and identified that the outcomes of their visits are recorded as either red, amber or green, and although there is an area for narrative this is either not used, or not very detailed.</p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Opportunities for organisational learning may not be identified if insufficient narrative is available to support the outcomes of SSSO visits.</p>	
Action Responsibility	AC Fire Stations in conjunction with the Project Lead
Responsible Head of Service	Director of Operations
Deadline	31 March 2020

Audit Assurance Criteria Definitions

Overall Rating	Criteria	Impact
Substantial	There is a sound framework of control operating effectively to mitigate key risks, which is contributing to the achievement of business objectives.	There is particularly effective management of key risks contributing to the achievement of business objectives.
Adequate	The control framework is adequate and controls to mitigate key risks are generally operating effectively, although a number of controls need to improve to ensure business objectives are met.	Key risks are being managed effectively, however, a number of controls need to be improved to ensure business objectives are met.
Limited	The control framework is not operating effectively to mitigate key risks. A number of key controls are absent or are not being applied to meet business objectives.	Some improvement is required to address key risks before business objectives can be met.
No Assurance	A control framework is not in place to mitigate key risks. The business area is open to abuse, significant error or loss and/or misappropriation.	Significant improvement is required to address key risks before business objectives can be achieved.

Agreed Action Criteria Definitions

Agreed Action Priorities	Criteria
High priority rating	Risk issues which arise from major weaknesses in controls that expose the business to high risk of loss or exposure in terms of fraud, impropriety, poor value for money or failure to achieve objectives. Remedial action should be taken urgently.
Medium priority rating	Risk issues which, although not fundamental, relate to shortcomings in control which expose the individual systems to a risk of exposure or loss.
Low priority rating	Risk issues which could be implemented to strengthen the control environment and demonstrate best practice.