



# Service Procedure

## OVERTIME APPROVAL AND ASSURANCE

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Abstract: The purpose of this Service Procedure is to provide auditable assurance on the use, approval, claiming and payment of police overtime. The Service Procedure is a rationalisation of processes introduced Service wide on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

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## 1. Purpose and Scope of Policy

- (1) Overtime approval, assurance and audit procedures are necessary to ensure the efficient, effective and economic control of available resources. Such procedures, appropriately applied, will provide for a consistent and corporate approach to Police overtime management and assurance that is in line with Police Regulations as well as the Working Time Regulations 1998.
- (2) This policy applies to Police Officer overtime for which Sergeants and Constables are currently eligible to claim, it does not include overtime worked by Police Staff.
- (3) This policy applies to both pre-detailed overtime and casual overtime (also known as spontaneous or unplanned overtime). Police Pay and Allowances defines these as follows:
  - (a) **Pre-detailed overtime** is where the officer has been informed of it prior to, or at the commencement of, the tour of duty. It includes briefing and de-briefing time.
  - (b) **Casual overtime** is retention overtime, which the officer has not been advised of prior to, or at the commencement of, the tour of duty. Casual Overtime cannot follow pre-detailed overtime (with the exception of briefing or de-briefing time).

## 2. General Principles of Overtime Usage

- (1) The Police Service of Northern Ireland is committed to making the best use of all available resources. There are occasions when the use of overtime is the most effective and efficient way to ensure that the right resources are correctly deployed to target prevailing demand or to address local policing issues.
- (2) All overtime worked must be **essential, approved and fully recorded**.
- (3) Overtime should only be approved when it is necessary, after other reasonable alternatives have been considered and excluded, and always in advance of the overtime being worked. The use of overtime should always be minimised.
- (4) The organisational drivers for overtime usage should be focused on the safety of the public and police, mitigation of prevailing threats or organisational risks and delivery of the strategic and local policing priorities identified through the National Intelligence Model (NIM) processes.

### 3. Staff Welfare and Resilience

- (1) The use of overtime, by its very nature, requires officers to work hours additional to their salaried hours. Any decision to deploy officers on overtime must take into consideration officer welfare and resilience, the legislative provisions of the Working Time Regulations 1998 and any Work Place Agreement entered into by an individual with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (Flexible Working).
- (2) An officer's willingness to work overtime does not mitigate the organisational duty of care to employees, as such no officer will work overtime without the appropriate prior approval **(this includes overtime 'swapping')**.

### 4. Approval of Overtime

- (1) Overtime which can be claimed will only be worked with prior approval. For pre-detailed overtime this will be recorded on Options prior to deployment if possible. For casual overtime this will require pre-approval by an officer not below the rank of Inspector or staff grade equivalent. In exceptional circumstances, when an urgent and imminent deployment is necessary and an Inspector is not immediately available, a supervisory officer may provide the prior approval. The supervisor should inform an officer not below the rank of Inspector or staff grade equivalent of the approval as soon as is practicable. The informed officer should review the requirement and inform the Operational Resourcing Office of the approval confirmation in writing (see Appendix 'A').
- (2) Approving officers must ensure that reasonable alternative resourcing options have been considered prior to approving overtime whilst having due regard to issues of safety, staff welfare and the requirement to provide an effective level of service.
- (3) Before deciding to approve overtime consideration must be given to the policing imperative being addressed, resources otherwise re-deployable, alternative tactical options available or any other viable option that will deliver the requirement whilst minimising the overtime expenditure. Overtime should not be the default option to meet a resourcing demand.
- (4) Approving officers must be specific in terms of how many officers they are approving for overtime deployment and for exactly how long. If the overtime requirement extends beyond the original approval then a review of all options should be undertaken before a further specific approval is made.

## 5. Overtime Recording

- (1) The use of overtime accounts for a significant budgetary demand on PSNI's finances. For the 2013/2014 financial year this amounted to £63 million (Corporate Report March 2014 v2). It is therefore essential that the organisation is, at all times, positioned to explain how and why it is using overtime and to provide confidence and reassurance that it is doing so effectively and prudently.
- (2) The use of appropriately managed reporting codes on OPTIONS provides the basis to report on the organisational reasons for overtime spend and the operational or administrative activities being undertaken when overtime is being worked. It is a managerial responsibility to ensure that processes and procedures are in place to effectively administer the system using the corporately agreed reporting codes.
- (3) All Police Overtime must be recorded and managed using the OPTIONS system. All overtime must be clocked and converted on OPTIONS. As per the Police Pay and Allowances Code claiming officers should ensure that this process is completed **no later than three days** after the overtime has been worked. Overtime should not be clocked or approved for payment on OPTIONS before it has been worked.

## 6. Overtime Claim Assurance

- (1) The police pay and allowances code provides guidance to officers on the correct entitlements in relation to overtime claims. The code states:

***In the first instance, the honesty and accuracy of the information provided by the Claiming Officer is paramount. All staff must understand that they are personally responsible for ensuring their eligibility and entitlement to any claim, and not to permit continued payment of any allowance, entitlement or payment beyond their period of eligibility. Where Countersigning or Approving Officers have a documented role in the processing of any particular claim, they have a responsibility to actively assess and satisfy themselves as to the honesty and accuracy of the information provided***
- (2) Police officers shall ensure that accurate records are kept of their duties as required by relevant codes of practice and Police Service policy and procedure.

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- (3) It is the responsibility of the individual claiming overtime to ensure that the hours worked have been appropriately pre-approved. This will mean that the hours have been detailed on OPTIONS or approved by an officer of at least Inspector rank or equivalent staff grade. It is the responsibility of the individual approving overtime to inform the relevant Operational Resourcing Office, in writing, of the hours approved and reasons for overtime (see appendix 'A').
- (4) It is the claimant's responsibility to ensure that the overtime claimed is for the approved and worked hours only, and that the appropriate conversion rate is applied in accordance with Police Pay and Allowances.
- (5) Supervisors have a responsibility to be aware of excessive hours being worked by their staff and should address any resultant welfare, resilience or disciplinary concerns.
- (6) Local Finance Offices will undertake a monthly check of 10% of claims to ensure that the correct rate of overtime has been claimed. Further monthly checks on TOIL, Highest Earners and Highest Reward to Work Ratio may also be undertaken.
- (7) To ensure a high level of assurance an additional 10% audit will further check that overtime claimed on Options are the actual hours of overtime worked. The audit will take place after the overtime processing period each month. Local Finance Offices will select the Officers for audit, ensuring an even spread across their District/Dept. The dip sample selection will ensure that all officers are subject to a documented audit review not less than once per annum (see Appendix 'A').
- (8) Local Finance Office staff will co-ordinate the circulation of the names of Officers selected for audit to Supervisors. Supervisors will undertake a detailed check of their selected officer's overtime on OPTIONS including further checks using notebook entries, liaison with other Supervisors and checks of Command and Control, Locate and Niche as required.
- (9) The Supervisor will complete the Service Overtime Authorisation and Audit form, detailing the specific checks conducted and outlining if the overtime claim was compliant, non-compliant or under investigation. The completed overtime audit check will be returned to Finance Dept **within 10 days** of notification of the audit requirement (see Appendix 'A').
- (10) Any discrepancies found during the audit will be investigated by the Supervisor and may be brought to the attention of the relevant Discipline Champion for further action as necessary.
- (11) This process is a quality assurance audit of overtime claims and processing. It will not delay the process of overtime claims for payment. Should any discrepancy be identified during the audit then the appropriate action will be taken to retrospectively deal with the payment issue.
- (12) **Local Finance Offices will retain all overtime audit reports on file.**

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**7. Monitoring and Review**

- (1) Operational Policy Unit will be responsible for reviewing this Service Procedure on an annual basis.
- (2) Any derogation to the Instructions contained within this Service Procedure must be approved by the Service Executive Board or other agreed corporate governance body.
- (3) A request for derogation must follow consultation with the Policy Owner to consider whether the derogation request is valid and could apply to other business areas. The Policy Owner will review the Service Procedure to ascertain whether the issues leading to the derogation request can be incorporated into the Procedure. If not, the request should proceed to Service Executive Board for agreement.

# OVERTIME APPROVAL AND ASSURANCE COMPLIANCE

## INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions provide the basis for implementation of the approved Service Procedure on Overtime Approval and Assurance. They include processes to consistently implement approval, overtime 'swapping' and monthly supervisory checks.

Overtime is categorised into **Pre-detailed** and **Casual** overtime.

A **Service Overtime Authorisation and Audit Form** has been created on Outlook to enable these guidelines to be corporately and consistently implemented. This form is located in the following location:-

**Microsoft Outlook > Developer > Choose Form >Organizational Forms Library> Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form**

*(The form has a front email message page, a middle page incorporating a form designed to enable completion in sections of approval, overtime swapping and monthly supervisory checks and a final page of advisory notes. Users can jump between the three pages using the 'show' instruction above the email address box.)*

## Overtime Approval Instructions

### 1.1 Pre-detailed Overtime

Pre-detailed overtime is overtime where the officer has been informed of it prior to, or at the commencement of, their tour of duty. It includes any briefing & de-briefing time. All overtime must be submitted using the OPTIONS system. The process is as follows -

- Pre-detailed overtime use is authorised by the Budget Owner (person as delegated by Departmental Head / District Commander) and managed, approved and detailed, within understood parameters, by Operational Planning/Resourcing staff.
- Overtime will be detailed on options by the Operational Planning/Resourcing staff and should include the reason for the overtime. **Overtime should never be self-detailed.**



- If overtime is pre-detailed outside of normal office hours and therefore cannot be logged on OPTIONS it is the responsibility of the Authorising Officer to Inform Operational Planning of the details via email so that a record can be retained for Audit purposes. This will allow the officer to clock and convert the overtime within three days. The pre-detailed Officer should, when applying the process on Options, reflect time of notification and who authorised in the message box.
- As per the Police pay and Allowances Code the claiming Officer should clock and convert their overtime '**at the earliest opportunity thereafter and in any case not later than 3 days after**' completing the period of duty. This requirement ensures that the organisation has an accurate and updated record relating to its financial liability and is in a position to identify and address officer welfare concerns. Any reasons as to why this requirement could not be met should be recorded in the OPTIONS message box during claim.
- Overtime should never be clocked and converted by the officer, or approved for payment by Operational Planning/Resourcing staff before it has been worked. (The only exception to this being clockings made during the final 15 minutes before termination of a period of overtime).
- The Operational Planning/Resourcing staff will either grant and submit the overtime for payment; or deny the application pending further information.
- Operational Planning/Resourcing staff should never approve or self-detail their own overtime. Section 1.5 lists the checks to be conducted by Operational Planning/Resourcing staff when processing overtime claims.
- Should pre-detailed overtime not be worked or a request to exchange the overtime be made by another officer - the procedure on '**overtime not worked**' at section 1.3 should be followed.
- If an officer fails to work a period of detailed overtime supervisors should ensure that Ops Planning/Resourcing offices are informed.

## **1.2 Casual overtime**

Casual (unplanned overtime) is retention overtime, which the officer has not been advised of prior to, or at the commencement of, the tour of duty. **All casual overtime must be authorised by an officer not below the rank of Inspector or staff grade equivalent** Casual overtime will only be processed when the below processes have been complied with (the approval process will also apply to any hours in excess of a period of pre-detailed overtime).

- The Officer requiring overtime will advise an Inspector or staff grade equivalent of the explanation as to why overtime is necessary.
- In exceptional circumstances, when an urgent and imminent deployment is necessary and an Inspector or staff grade equivalent is not immediately available a supervisory officer may provide approval. The supervisor should inform an officer not below the rank of Inspector or staff grade equivalent of the approval as soon as possible.

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- The Inspector or staff grade equivalent must confirm the duty requirement and check if alternative resources or other options are available prior to considering approval of overtime. If alternative resources or options are available, the overtime request will be declined and the officer will terminate at the original detailed time.
- If the duty is required and an alternative resource or option is not suitable or available the Inspector or staff grade equivalent will approve the overtime, ensuring that it is Working Time Regulation compliant.
- The Inspector or staff grade equivalent will approve and submit the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form**, the completed form should include a brief explanation as to why the overtime is required, the specific officers (or unit) involved and period of time anticipated. The **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** should be sent to the relevant Operational Planning/Resourcing Office e-mail address. For operational effectiveness it may be appropriate to cc the Duty Supervisor.
- It is the responsibility of the officer working casual overtime to ensure that the duty supervisor is informed of an early termination of a period of approved casual overtime.
- The Claiming Officer will clock and convert their overtime claim on OPTIONS with a full explanation in the message box; including C&C reference number if applicable, approving officer, any extensions if appropriate and which Supervisor was informed re any early termination time.
- As per the Police pay and Allowances Code the claiming Officer should clock and convert their overtime **'at the earliest opportunity thereafter and in any case not later than 3 days after'** completing the period of duty. This requirement ensures that the organisation has an accurate and updated record relating to its financial liability and is in a position to identify and address officer welfare concerns. Any reasons as to why this requirement could not be met should be recorded in the OPTIONS message box during claim.
- Operational Planning/Resourcing Office staff will check the overtime clocked and converted on OPTIONS by the claiming officer and confirm the contents against the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** submitted by the Inspector/Staff grade equivalent and the Supervisor.
- Operational Planning/Resourcing Office staff must check that the overtime is in accordance with Service Policy and is Working Time Regulation compliant. In the event of any query, Operational Planning/Resourcing Office staff will escalate the query via line management for resolution.
- The overtime application will be granted and submitted for payment or the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** may be returned to the authorising officer for further information.
- Overtime should never be clocked and converted by the officer or approved for payment by Operational Planning/Resourcing staff before it has been worked. (The only exception to this being clockings made during the final 15 minutes before termination of a period of overtime).

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- Operational Planning will store completed **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Forms** in a dedicated mailbox on Microsoft Outlook for future audit.
- **The retention of the documentation is a requirement for future audit.**

### **1.3 Overtime not Worked**

It is the responsibility of any officer who cannot work pre-detailed overtime to find a volunteer replacement of the same rank, skills and who can work at the same rate of overtime as that originally detailed. These details should be forwarded to the Operational Planning/Resourcing Office e-mail address for consideration. The notification should be made to the Operation Planning/Resourcing Office as soon as is practicably possible.

- **During Operational Planning/Resourcing Office Hours** - the originally detailed officer should email the Operational Planning/Resourcing office of the changes suggested using the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form**, copying the email to the proposed replacement officer.
- Operational Planning/Resourcing staff will routinely check the office email inbox during office hours.
- Operational Planning/Resourcing staff will conduct a suitability check in relation to the proposed volunteer. This includes checking the following information: –
  - \* Volunteer's details
  - \* Volunteer has the appropriate skills or training for the role
  - \* Availability of volunteer (not restricted by adjustment/leave/sick)
  - \* Compliance with working time regulations and any associated welfare concerns.
- If the volunteer officer is found to be unsuitable the request is declined and both officers are emailed the original **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** to inform them. The originally detailed officer remains detailed for the overtime and is required to work the hours originally pre-detailed.
- If the volunteer is approved, the overtime at the original rate of overtime is detailed on OPTIONS. OPTIONS will be amended to remove the original officer's detailing.
- Any changes are not confirmed until they are detailed on OPTIONS or the following provision applies:-
- If amendments are required **outside of the Operational Planning/Resourcing Office Hours** and/or it is not practicable to inform Operational Planning/Resourcing staff due to the imminence of the required change, the detailed officer will email the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** to the Duty Supervisor for approval. If approved the Supervisor will forward the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** to the Operational Planning e-mail address advising of the change of overtime and the volunteer's details.

The obligation rests on the supervisor to conduct the necessary checks prior to approval -

- \* Volunteer's details
- \* Volunteer has the appropriate skills or training for the role
- \* Availability of volunteer (not restricted by adjustment/leave/sick)
- \* Compliance with working time regulations and welfare concerns

The volunteer will claim this overtime on OPTIONS at the original rate and include an explanation, details of the officer changed with and details of the approving officer. The officer originally detailed is required to clock and convert the overtime, applying the code of **NOT WORKED**.

#### **1.4 General Guidance**

At the termination of a large deployment / operation, the senior officer in charge should ensure that the relevant Operational Planning/Resourcing Office is informed (via email) of stand down time for officers involved (this may include OSD Ops Hub). Operational Planning/Resourcing staff will calculate the actual termination time based on stand-down and return travelling time to any officer's local station depending on the location of the operation (Locate can be used to assist).

Officers who terminate overtime duty earlier than detailed are obliged to clock the full pre-detailed hours on OPTIONS but only convert the correct worked overtime for payment using the Overtime Conversion function. Then, using the **SHOW PARTIAL CONVERSION** function, they should convert the remaining unworked portion to **NOT WORKED** with reasons for early termination included.

**It is the personal responsibility of claiming officers to ensure that overtime being worked has been approved and the necessary processes have been complied with. Failure to comply may lead to non-payment.**

#### **1.5 Guidance for Operational Planning/Resourcing Staff**

Operational Planning/Resourcing Staff will ensure that the following compliance checks are conducted before any overtime is processed for payment.

- Check that the overtime hours clocked and converted on OPTIONS match the overtime hours approved on the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form**.
- Check that any casual overtime was correctly approved by an Inspector or staff grade equivalent.
- For a period of casual overtime ensure that the officer has recorded the correct overtime reason on OPTIONS.
- Check that the message box within OPTIONS includes the detailed reason for the overtime claimed and who authorised it. This may include one or more of the following:
  - Command & Control reference

- Niche reference
- LOCATE
- If the information supplied is not sufficient to validate the appropriate approval of the claim or incorrect details are provided then it should be denied. It is the responsibility of the claiming officer to resubmit.
- The overtime reason applied by Operational Planning/Resourcing staff will be in accordance with the OPTIONS corporate coding guidelines.
- **Overtime should NEVER be self-detailed or self-approved by a member of Operational Planning/Resourcing staff.**
- **Overtime should never be clocked and converted by the claiming officer or approved for payment by Operational Planning/Resourcing staff before it has been worked.**
- **It is the claiming officer's responsibility to resubmit a denied overtime claim on OPTIONS once a non-compliance issue is resolved.**

## **Monthly Audit Process Instructions**

### **2.1 Police Pay and Allowances Code**

The police pay and allowances code guides officers to the correct entitlements in relation to overtime claims. The code states:

***In the first instance, the honesty and accuracy of the information provided by the Claiming Officer is paramount. All staff must understand that they are personally responsible for ensuring their eligibility and entitlement to any claim, and not to permit continued payment of any allowance, entitlement or payment beyond their period of eligibility. Where Countersigning or Approving Officers have a documented role in the processing of any particular claim, they have a responsibility to actively assess and satisfy themselves as to the honesty and accuracy of the information provided.***

Police officers shall ensure that accurate records are kept of their duties as required by relevant codes of practice and Police Service policy and procedure.

### **2.2. Audit checks conducted by Finance.**

- Local Finance Offices will undertake a monthly check of 10% of claims to ensure that the correct rate of overtime has been claimed. Further monthly checks on TOIL, Highest Earners and Highest Reward to Work Ratio may also be undertaken.

- To ensure a high level of assurance an additional 10% audit will further check that overtime claimed on Options are the actual hours of overtime worked. After the overtime processing period of each month, Finance offices will select 10% audit will further check that overtime claimed on Options are the actual hours of overtime worked. After the overtime processing period of each month, Finance offices will select 10% of claimants for the monthly supervisory audit.
- The list of selected officers will be circulated via email to all supervisors who must undertake the relevant checks for their selected staff and email the details using the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** to the Finance Office within 10 days. (See 2.3 for Supervision checks).
- When Finance Offices receive the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form** returns electronically from supervisors they will be collated and the forms filed into a dedicated Mailbox on outlook.
- If a supervisor fails to submit a return within 10 days, the matter will be expedited to their line manager. Any non-return after a further 5 days will be forwarded to the appropriate Chief Inspector/equivalent line of Command for further action.
- Finance will retain all completed audit returns electronically.

**This process is a quality assurance audit of overtime claims and processing. It will not delay the process of overtime claims for payment. Should any discrepancy be identified during the audit then the appropriate action will be taken to retrospectively deal with the payment issue.**

### **2.3 Audit checks conducted by Supervisors.**

- Upon receipt of the monthly overtime audit requirement spreadsheet, the Supervisor shall make arrangements to meet with each individual officer identified for monthly audit. Supervisors can print out staff F40s by using the My Staff Overtime Summary. This report is retained on COGNOS.  
**Policenet > Options Duty Rostering > Options Reports > COGNOS > My Reports folder > My Staff Overtime Summary**
- The supervisor will review the monthly OPTIONS F40 with the claiming officer. A minimum of 5 dates should be subject to detailed checks per officer per month (or 100% if less claimed).
- The claiming officer will produce (as required by the supervisor) documentary evidence verifying overtime worked which could include a notebook entry, Command & Control reference, NICHE log or LOCATE details.
- If a supervisor identifies any issues such as excessive working hours, regular working on rest days or unusual claims, this shall be discussed with the officer. Any concerns identified should be acted upon and documented.
- The officer will be informed of any discrepancies and requested to provide an explanation or clarification for the claimed overtime.

- The supervisor must confirm the hours worked as claimed by the officer, document the specific checks (minimum 5 dates unless fewer worked) on the **Outlook Service Overtime Authorisation & Audit Form**, and will email the completed form to the relevant Finance Office inbox within 10 days.

Overtime management is a basic supervisory responsibility. The audit process is a necessary compliance assurance process and will be conducted diligently and expeditiously. Non-compliance reports will be forwarded to the relevant Chief Inspector/equivalent line of Command for action.

Any discrepancies in an officer's claim should be investigated by the officer's supervisor and, where necessary, will be escalated to the local Discipline Champion for resolution.

**This documented check is in addition to a supervisor's responsibility to regularly and routinely monitor staff overtime and address issues or concerns as they arise.**