

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide explains different applications of a new experimental tool, the Police Traumatic Events Checklist (PTEC).

The checklist might be useful for starting conversations or proactively monitoring trauma exposure. It may be used with individuals, teams and in force-wide strategy and operational practice. We offer some initial ideas on how PTEC can be applied and developed, manually or digitally, and provide example scenarios of PTEC being used in practice.

HOW PTEC WAS DEVELOPED

In 2020, researchers read and categorised 1531 descriptions of the the most troubling incidents reported by UK police and police staff via a 2018-19 survey called '*Policing: The Job & The Life*,' in which 18000 officers and staff took part.

The University of Cambridge, Police Care UK and the Police Federation of England and Wales team ranked the common events and themes of these worst jobs according to how frequently they featured in the descriptions.

The result was PTEC: a matrix of the most frequently reported 'worst experiences' listed on one axis and the most common situational factors (that may have exacerbated trauma impact at the time) on the other axis.

So, how do we know it's useful?

A steering group comprising College of Policing, National Police Wellbeing Service, GPs, Occupational Health experts, leading academics and the *What Works Centre for Wellbeing* oversaw a consultation with 30 individuals in 2021 about how PTEC might be used to best effect to support those working in UK policing.

Gathering feedback from expert practitioners enabled us to develop this 'how to' guidance as a way of supporting forces to use PTEC to monitor, maintain, and improve the health and wellbeing of their officers.

PTEC has also been updated in 2022 to reflect the impact of Covid 19 on policing and to consider contemporary discussions around suicide, bullying and moral injury.





WHAT PTEC DOES

Police	Traumatic Events Checklist	A	В	С	D	E	Covid19		
· once	Traditional Events officialist	Gruesome scenes	Organisation pressure	Cumulative exposure	Being a first person on	Personal resonance	Victim vulnerability	OTHER (please	NONE
'worst' ex policing.	rix shows the most common speriences described in UK It also offers situational factors at that can exacerbate any event.	(eg disrupted bodies, gory injuries)	(eg lack of resources, support, bullying)	(eg a build up of smaller		(eg victim was known, it was a birthday, etc)	(eg elderly, deprivation)	describe)	
1	Incidents involving children (eg fatalities, abuse or exploitation)								
2	Sudden or unnatural death (eg murder, suicide or hanging)								
3	Road Traffic Collision or rail incident								
4	Dead bodies (seeing or working with one or several)								
5	Serious injury / physical assault to yourself								
6	Major incident (eg terrorism or transport disasters)								
7	Supporting families (eg death messages, family liaison)								
8	Incidents involving weapons (eg knives, firearms, taser)								
9	Vicarious or secondary trauma (eg calls, files, images, audio, BWV)								
10	Incidents involving fire or explosions								
Covid19	Exposure to toxic or infectious hazards								
	OTHER (please describe)								

You will find PTEC in full at the back of this guidance.

In short, PTEC briefly categorises and describes the most commonly reported 'worst incidents' on the job.

The list of incidents covers about 75% of the 1531 experiences reported by via the 2018-19 survey, which means that even those at the bottom of the list are still familiar to many on the job.

PTEC also offers along the top row a list of the most frequently described **situational factors** reported in the descriptions (with the most frequent first). Essentially, these are the conditions at the time that were reported to have exacerbated trauma impact.

Situational factors can go some way to explain why some types of job effect us in one way on *one* day, and yet in a completely different way on *another*.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

This guide describes different applications of PTEC and offers examples of scenarios to demonstrate how it can be used in different situations by different people.

Further guidance is available for Individuals, Peer Support, Leaders, Supervisors, Wellbeing Leads, TRiM, Force Systems, Recruitment, and Trauma Triage.

For more information, contact hello@policecare.org.uk





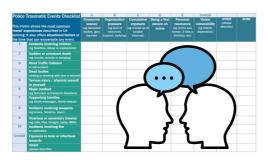
THE CONVERSATION STARTER FOR INDIVIDUALS, TEAMS, PEER SUPPORT

The fact that over 18000 officers and staff took the opportunity to address trauma in an anonymous online survey in 2019 (7000 in great detail) is perhaps evidence in itself that trauma exposure in policing is something that deserves attention. Yet this doesn't mean that trauma is easy to *talk about*.

We know from brain research that being able to talk isn't always down to whether we are natural 'sharers' or not (although this can be the case). Rather, neuropsychology shows that when we are hypervigilant or under stress, language centres in our brain quieten (so that we can focus on action and keeping ourselves safe). Our brains are not wired to talk about stressful experiences when we are being affected by them. Furthermore, finding the right time with the right person to even *think* about talking can feel impossible on the job. *So, what to do?*

We can nudge our brain with a simple tool: PTEC. Having this graphic in front of us with words describing common experiences can activate our brain to start to make sense of incidents and the circumstances at the time.

PTEC takes the pressure of us trying to find the right words and can kick-start conversations with others, including peers, line managers, TRiM, Occ Health or wellbeing practitioners, therapists, online support platforms and helplines.





Andy is a well-respected inspector with years of difficult jobs under his belt. When 'just another suicide' hit him hard, he didn't know how to address it (if at all). Eventually, he picked up PTEC and marked 3 situational factors that he realised were at play on the day in question: the force's struggle with resources, the global pandemic and the long term vulnerability of the victim. It soon became clear that his unease wasn't about the particular suicide as such, but a sense of general helplessness that he was not used to. Andy approached the senior leadership board to suggest the force use PTEC to better monitor how external conditions such as Covid and low resources may be limiting everyday trauma resilience..





THE LOG DATES, NUMBERS OR NAMES

PTEC is a simple, flexible tool that can be used in pragmatic and dynamic ways. It can monitor exposures from which there has been a negative impact as well as exposures to which there has been a resilient response. It can be used manually or digitally by individuals, teams and managers to monitor wellbeing.

Here are some practical examples of how to utilise PTEC:

Exploring and logging individual incidents by recording all the elements of the incident in question.

Recording dates of exposures over a period of time to monitor traumatic load (on individuals and teams) and fluctuations in incident types.

Creating a tally of certain exposures which negatively effect an individual, team or job role. This can support psychological risk-assessments of roles.

Inserting names of individuals, units, or operations could help to target support towards those that might need it most, and identify where insights into resilience might reside.

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1	Incidents involving children (ng fatalities, abuse or exploitation)								
2	Sudden or unnatural death (ng murder, suicide or hanging)					X			
3	Road Traffic Collision or rail incident								
4	Dead bodies (seeing or working with one or several)	X							
5	Serious injury / physical assault to yourself								
6	Major incident (eg terrorism or transport disasters)				X				
7	Supporting families (ng death messages, family liaison)								
8	Incidents involving weapons (rig knives, firearms, taser)								
9	Vicarious or secondary trauma (eg calls, files, images, audio, BWV)								
10	Incidents involving fire or explosions								
Covid19	Exposure to toxic or infectious hazards								
	OTHER (please describe)								





Example of a major fatal incident with personal resonance (eg a birthday).

31

Example of recording an individuals experience over a year using dates

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	OTHER (please describe)								





Example of creating a tally of exposures for an individual/team/role



Example of inserting initials to explore team experiences of a single incident





THE LOG DATES, NUMBERS OR NAMES



SCENARIO 1

Simon coordinates his force's 12 week mentoring period for probationers.

After a particularly challenging incident locally, it becomes clear some new recruits had been 'thrown in at the deep end' more than others. To identify anyone whose trauma exposure was much higher than other people's, he used PTEC in a training session to tally up officers' experiences so far. He assessed overall load of exposure across the cohort to see if targeted support may be needed or if the program can continue as planned.

SCENARIO 2

Candice is a strategic insights manager in her local force.

After reading about PTEC she realised that it could be used to help tally-up incident rates and identify individuals that might have a high cumulative exposure to trauma.

Her team integrated the PTEC into their local command and control system by linking their computer aided dispatch (cad) codes to the items within PTEC and then matching the data to team members.

Local supervisors now have access to an automated monitoring tool that helps them to identify individual team members who might benefit from a check-in or additional support.

OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

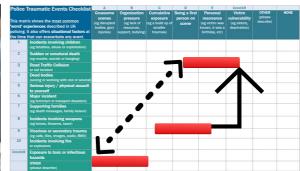
As the PTEC is a flexible tool that can be used in any number of ways depending on the situation, context, and need; many other ways to use and apply the PTEC will become evidence as it becomes more familiar in forces.

So, if you have any ideas on alternative uses, please share them by emailing hello@policecare.org.uk with the subject heading "PTEC".



UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES INVESTIGATING THEMES AND PATTERNS





PTEC can also be used as a reflective tool to work through why some incidents may have impact on some days (or people) more than others. Here are some ways PTEC can help get to the bottom of challenges:

- Revealing connections and themes between incidents over time
- Identifying social conditions which can make trauma exposure harder
- Noticing incidents that inadvertently touch on earlier life sensitivities

Using PTEC in this way is a personal choice and there are different ways to take it forward:

- Using PTEC in a quiet moment (perhaps at the end of the day whilst you're in the car, or before getting into bed) to reflect on what stands out to you about your experiences and why that may be
- Sharing PTEC with a loved one to show how life's *ups* and downs outside of policing matters and can affect one's resilience on the job, or to help talk about the challenges that you might face at work
- Completing PTEC with a TRiM practitioner, force counsellor, or therapist to help explore and better understand the factors that made an incident difficult
- Making managerial decisions based on dynamics or influences that might influence a team's resilience than others at certain times.

SCENARIO

Kirsten is a female public protection officer who volunteered to investigate child sexual exploitation and was un-phased by repeated exposure to the harmful material for 4+ years. Even after her maternity leave, she continued to do so without issue. One day, after serving a warrant, she began to feel increasingly uncomfortable, with no obvious explanation as to why. It was only by using PTEC 2 weeks later that she saw a connection: the elderly father of the suspect that day had the same name as her own father, with whom she had argued shortly before he died a month earlier. With this insight she was able to reconcile herself with her vulnerability, open up to her family and realise this wasn't about the job as such, but the fact that she was a daughter and she was human.





THE TECHNICAL TOOL DIGITISING FOR PROACTIVE MONITORING



PTEC is a versatile tool which can be digitised using survey software as well as some existing force systems.

This might not be without its challenges, but its potential benefits may be worth considering. For more ideas on applications in force systems, see our specialist guidance.

FORCE CONTROL ROOM TECHNOLOGY

TRiM processes: prioritising triggers for TRiM using PTEC Job allocation systems and call handler support: using PTEC to flag cumulative exposure in individuals

Peer Support: collecting data and names of those with similar experiences

OFFICER AND STAFF WELLBEING PROVISION

Self-Assessment Application: digitising interactive PTEC for phones Force TRiM experience repository: data collection to support practitioners

HUMAN RESOURCE TECHNOLOGY

Sickness monitoring: collecting PTEC data as part of absence recording to help develop Psychological Risk Assessment frameworks for high-risk roles

FORCE COMMUNICATIONS

Using force wide PTEC data to flag high levels of exposure to particular incidents or prominent situational factors to generate internal messages of support for officers and staff on intranet platforms.

GOOD PRACTICE IN FORCES

Sussex Police have used PTEC to create an automated trauma tracker using Microsoft software integrated with their command and control system to match exposure to individuals and quantify cumulative exposure.



Derbyshire Constabulary are using PTEC to develop a digital trauma tracker, accessible to line managers to be integrated into TRIM.

PTEC





Police	Police Traumatic Events Checklist	A	8	o	Q	3	Covid19		
		Gruesome	Organisation	Cumulative	Being a first	Personal	Victim	OTHER	NONE
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