



# **TAYSIDE** POLICE

## **POLICY**

# **CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING**

<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>15 September 1997</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>September 2006</b>
<b>Owning Department:</b>	<b>Human Resource Services</b>

## CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

### Policy Statement

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing is a recognised system of care used currently by other British Police Forces and Emergency Services. It is an organisational response to help reduce the onset of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Tayside Police has a duty of care to all employees and as such will implement the following system of post incident care into operational policing.

C.I.S.D. is not an operational debrief, counseling or psychotherapy. It is a meeting between trained debriefers and personnel involved in a traumatic incident to allow a ventilation of feelings, a provision of support and reassurance and information of future help or action should it be required.

### Critical Incidents

A particularly traumatic incident (a critical incident) involving employees of Tayside Police is one in which the experience of being involved may or does surpass the normal coping mechanisms of those involved whether directly or indirectly. The types of incidents which may be included in this description cannot by the nature of individuals reactions be definitively listed. The following types of incident however may require a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.

- Serious injury or death of a Police Officer in the line of duty
- Serious injury or death of a civilian resulting from Police Operations e.g. as a result of a road traffic accident or shooting by authorised firearms officers.
- Any incident charged with profound emotion such as the sudden death of an infant, particularly disturbing child abuse, certain sudden deaths, suicides or murders.
- Any incident considered to be a serious physical or psychological threat, particularly in incidents of extreme violence, or where life threatening risk has been taken.
- Any loss of life which follows extraordinary and prolonged expenditure of physical and emotional energy in a rescue.
- Almost any incident in which the circumstances are so unusual or the sights or sounds so distressing as to produce a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction which surpasses the normal coping mechanisms of Police or civilian personnel.

## POLICY DOCUMENT

### Instigating a Debriefing

It is anticipated that it will in the main be supervisory officers who will identify the need or potential for a C.I.S.D. however, any employee may make such a request. The following procedure will be adopted when instigating a request to hold a debriefing.

- Should it be recognised that due to the nature of an incident, the actual reactions of personnel involved or the potential reactions by personnel, a C.I.S.D. may be necessary or desirable then the employee requesting such will make contact with the designated C.I.S.D. Liaison Officer for the Division (Chief Inspector Operations). In addition and in all cases a form C.I.S.D.1 will be completed and forwarded to the Liaison Officer.
- Immediately upon receipt of a request for a C.I.S.D., the C.I.S.D. Liaison Officer will liaise with the Force Welfare Department and a decision whether or not to set up a C.I.S.D. will be reached. The C.I.S.D. Liaison Officer will have the final responsibility in the decision making process. This may require further contact with the officer making the original request. Any positive course of action will take cognisance of the recognised time scale of 48 - 72 hours after the incident concerned.
- A decision NOT to proceed will be recorded on the form C.I.S.D.1 and the reasons for not setting up a C.I.S.D. will be included. The completed form will then be forwarded to the Welfare Department for recording. The C.I.S.D. Liaison Officer will thereafter make contact with the officer making the original request to advise of the decision.
- A decision to proceed will be recorded on the form C.I.S.D.1 which will then be forwarded to the nominated debriefing personnel. The Force Welfare Department will be responsible for maintaining up to date lists of debriefing personnel and will make recommendations as to the most suitable debriefers, the most suitable location or other appropriate advice or recommendations.
- The responsibility for the organisation and setting up of the C.I.S.D. will lie with the C.I.S.D. Liaison Officer. Arrangements to be made will include the venue transportation where applicable, domestic arrangements and cover for those personnel attending.
- Attendance at the C.I.S.D. by nominated personnel will be mandatory. No personnel however will be required to actively participate.
- All matters discussed at a C.I.S.D. will be in the **strictest confidence and not recorded**. It is important in this regard that at the introduction of a debrief it should be emphasised that any issues relating to alleged misconduct should not be brought forward as the duty to report or investigate any allegation of misconduct which constitutes criminal conduct may compromise the rule of confidentiality.
- There will be a minimum of 2 debriefers for all briefings.

## POLICY DOCUMENT

- The following details only will be recorded by debriefing personnel on the rear of form C.I.S.D.1 - time/date
  - location
  - details of the incident
  - details of debriefers
  - details of personnel attending

No other details will be recorded.

### **Form C.I.S.D.1**

The attached form C.I.S.D.1 be adopted as the official record of all Critical Incident Staff Debriefings taking place within Tayside Police.

The Force Welfare Department will keep the original form and a copy will be inserted into the officer's personal file as a record of attendance at a debriefing.

### **Ratification and Ownership**

Responsibility for reviewing and amending this policy lies with Human Resource Services. Ratified at Policy Group Meeting on 15th September, 1997.