



National Vulnerability Action Plan 2018-2021

It is our intention to co-ordinate and drive the delivery of the National Vulnerability Action Plan across England, Wales and N. Ireland.

The National Action Plan is aimed at supporting police forces to deliver 7 identified key themes that have specific actions:

1. Early Intervention and Prevention

By adopting the principle of 'professional curiosity', potential indicators of vulnerability can be identified at an early stage, presenting an opportunity for early intervention with partners so that the risk of harm is reduced. This does not always mean referral to other statutory agencies but does mean taking a caring approach to reduce the risk of further harm. E.g. this could be as little as knowing what local and national support services are available and signposting accordingly.

2. Protecting, Supporting, Safeguarding and Managing Risk

By investigating fully, officers and staff develop a comprehensive understanding of the causes of risk of harm and together with partners, take effective measures to manage them.

3. Information, Intelligence, Data Collection and Management Information

Forces have effective processes in place to gather information and intelligence. Officers and staff use the tools to effectively assess risk to consider an appropriate and proportionate response. Each force develops appropriate data and related evidence to ensure that its response to vulnerability is as effective as possible.

4. Effective Investigation and Outcomes

Officers and staff use 'professional curiosity' to recognise and respond to vulnerability in order that effective steps can be taken to make vulnerable people safer. In doing so, officers and staff to consider the most appropriate support available and what action is required, proportionate to the circumstances.

5. Leadership

Leadership is not rank specific! All officers and staff should recognise they are leaders and be empowered to exercise their professional judgement in determining the most appropriate response and support to vulnerable people. Leadership includes ensuring that the correct governance is in place to manage risk relating to vulnerability effectively.

6. Learning and Development

Officers and staff are supported to attain and maintain the skills and knowledge that they need to effectively recognise and respond to all forms of vulnerability. The outcome will be that staff will be able to work in partnership to take a problem solving approach in addressing vulnerability.

7. Communications

Use sophisticated communication techniques to understand the needs of all internal and external audiences. Utilise information to ensure that people understand how to reduce potential risks, and our officers and staff understand what is expected of them. Vulnerability should be recognised as relating to witnesses, victims, suspects and our staff.

Vulnerability Action Plan Overarching Principles:

1. Recognising and responding to vulnerability requires partners to work together effectively
2. The concept of vulnerability encompasses the person and their circumstances
3. Responding to vulnerability includes empowering people to seek their own support networks
4. Prioritising prevention reduces harm and demand
5. To be better at recognising and responding to vulnerability requires a change in culture within and across service providers

	Action	Objective	Proposed Action Owner	Timescales (To be determined by action owner)	Current Position	Reference	Key Theme
College of Policing Actions							
1.2	Define the meaning of 'professional curiosity' PRIORITY	For officers and staff to fully understand the term 'professional curiosity' and what is expected of them and why	COP				4. Effective investigation & outcomes 1. Early Intervention and Prevention
1.3	All existing training modules to be reviewed to ensure the golden thread of vulnerability runs throughout PRIORITY	To ensure that vulnerability is embedded as a core element of policing and not a specific topic	COP and All Forces L&D teams				6. Learning & Development
1.4	Develop a vulnerability training product that includes initial and follow up continuous learning modules / refreshers PRIORITY	To provide a consistent standard of training across the police service nationally and other agencies Consideration should be given to this product being available to partners as joint agency vulnerability training	COP		This should attract CPD		6. Learning & Development
1.5	Develop a vulnerability tool kit / investigators guide	To assist staff in their understanding of all forms of vulnerability, related procedure and what is expected of them. Please note; At this time, Existing tool kits that are used effectively in forces relating to such things as CSE, DA should continue This is a medium to longer term proposal to evolve the existing tool kits to incorporate forensic innovation, new technology and wider aspects of vulnerability - to benefit officers, staff and volunteers in the early identification of vulnerability and subsequent investigation and intervention. Will link to work completed under 3.2	COP				4. Effective investigation & outcomes
1.6	Develop Authorised Professional Practice for all vulnerability portfolio areas. To include the creation of a single guidance document for professionals from existing products	To support Forces Vulnerability Delivery Plans and assist in frontline investigations Review guidance to ensure best use of intermediaries/advocacy and advisory services to enable the most vulnerable to engage with the criminal justice agencies.	COP/CPS/NPL				2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk

1.7	Create and disseminate advice and guidance in relation to revised legislation and key academic learning	To ensure that legal reference materials used by forces are current, shared and accessible	COP				6. Learning & Development
1.8	Develop a 'minimum standard' training requirement and CPD specific to vulnerability, and link this to positive outcomes.	This minimum standard may incorporate various N-Calt packages, Courses, written materials etc.	COP				6. Learning & Development

All Force Actions

2.1	<p>Develop an investigative principle that understanding, recognising and responding to vulnerability is everyone's business, not just specialist units</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>To increase / develop an ethos of professional curiosity to better understand, recognise and respond to vulnerability</p>	All Forces				4. Effective investigation & outcomes
2.2	<p>Ensure staff are equipped to identify and manage risk, as well as support and safeguard those requiring it. In doing so, recognising that opportunities to identify and respond to early indicators of vulnerability apply equally for victims and perpetrators and that related training materials should reflect this</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>Working in partnership with other statutory and third sector agencies to reduce threat and risk to protect the vulnerable</p> <p>To ensure that vulnerability and opportunities to intervene is widely recognised and that we do not become too victim focused in this regard. [e.g. Early recognition of perpetrator vulnerabilities and appropriate intervention can prevent escalation and subsequent further harm]</p>	All Forces				4. Effective investigation & outcomes
2.3	<p>Ensure that vulnerability forms part of the tasking and review process at a local, force and regional level using problem profiles, tactical & strategic assessments in order to effectively manage threat, risk and harm</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>1. To identify vulnerable people and related threat, risk and harm at an early stage</p> <p>2. To ensure that key threats are identified and (where possible) activity planned for and delivered to reduce such threats</p> <p>3. To have cognisance of and raise awareness of the identified regional and national threats and cross cutting themes</p>	All Forces				2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk
2.4	<p>Ensure that MASH staff (where implemented) fully understand the principles relating to vulnerability and 'professional curiosity' and that it is embedded within MASH processes</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>To ensure that the principles relating to vulnerability and 'professional curiosity' are well embedded within MASH</p>	All Forces				2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk
2.5	<p>Ensure sufficient training/procedures in place to recognise vulnerability at the earliest opportunity at first point of contact</p>	<p>Whether from personal interactions with the public/staff or through the control centre forces must ensure that they recognise vulnerabilities at the earliest opportunity and take action on what they find.</p>	All Forces				2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk

	PRIORITY						
2.6	Develop clear processes to ensure that 'the voice of vulnerable victims and witnesses' are heard PRIORITY	To ensure that 'the voice of vulnerable victims and witnesses' are heard relating to service provision and victim / witness feedback [Making Justice Work]	All Forces				2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk
2.7	Acknowledging that mental health can impact across all forms of vulnerability. Forces to consider in their assessment of vulnerability as to whether indicators of MH are apparent and signpost / refer accordingly PRIORITY	To ensure early consideration of existence of indicators of MH in order that early intervention can be put in place This should incorporate all persons that police come into contact with (i.e. victims / offenders / general public)	All Forces				2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk
2.8	Have in place welfare policies and provision to support staff, recognising that they themselves can become vulnerable PRIORITY	To ensure that forces recognise the vulnerabilities of their own workforce and put in place robust measures to recognise and respond to these	All Forces				5. Leadership
2.9	Work with PCC's with regard the wider vulnerability agenda in order that they can consider this in setting their priorities PRIORITY	To raise individual PCC awareness of the wider vulnerability agenda in order that they can consider supportive / preventative priorities / investment	All Forces				5. Leadership
2.10	Ensure that forces have strong governance procedures relating to vulnerability PRIORITY	To ensure that a strategic and operational governance structure exists to set objectives and monitor effectiveness	All Forces				5. Leadership
2.11	Work with communities to make reporting easier PRIORITY	Ease of access, third sector reporting / gateways, access to services Recognition of the impact of reporting may have on a vulnerable person and what support mechanisms are in place	All Forces				7. Comms
2.12	Prioritise early evidence gathering in order to consider maximising the use of victimless prosecutions where appropriate to do so. This should go beyond the scope of child offences and victims of domestic abuse	Forces to work with CPS to optimise, where appropriate to do so, victimless prosecution opportunities in relation to all vulnerable victims. i.e.; gang related violence, recognising that victims may also be involved in criminality, which increases their reluctance to support police action	All Forces Nominated NPL in consultation with relevant partners				4. Effective investigation & outcomes

2.13	Gather better intelligence and utilise this in targeting of vulnerable persons. Consider utilising a broad range of covert options to investigate both crime and non-crime incidents	To deploy intelligence analysts in line with threat, harm and risk with a consideration of the most vulnerable. To consider the utilisation of covert options across a broad range of investigations relating to vulnerability	All Forces				4. Effective investigation & outcomes
2.14	Develop analytical capability and capacity to identify high risk areas of vulnerability to target intervention / prevention activity including identification of emerging threats such as Cyber. Work with partners to improve: - Problem profiles - Mapping of local service provision - Vulnerable locations / Hotspots relating to victim and offenders	1. Early intervention before criminality occurs 2. Recognition that vulnerability to becoming involved in crime or a victim of crime can increase due to association, geography, school, family etc 3. To enable agencies working in partnership to effectively target local contexts and problems and monitor shifting patterns 4. To predict future risk and therefore enable a multi agency approach to early intervention and prevention and where appropriate diversion and exit strategies for offenders	All Forces				3. Intelligence, Information, Data collection & Management Information
2.15	Work proactively with partners and local services to better assess and improve recording of data relating to risk and devise transparent data collection plans. [It is especially important to identify and record concerns about vulnerability as early as possible even when a criminal or social care threshold is not necessarily met]	1. To establish a strategic and focussed data collection strategy 2. To ensure that there is an agency response to all forms of vulnerability (including when it does not meet a criminal threshold), thus improving earlier identification 3. To ensure that data is routinely available: i.e. context, age and perpetrator for intervention, monitoring and analysis purposes and tasked effectively 4. To improve the data quality for shared multi-agency intelligence	All Forces				3. Intelligence, Information, Data collection & Management Information
2.16	Wherever possible and appropriate to do so, consider compatible systems that operate across forces / partners	This would ensure a commitment to partnership accessible products	All Forces				3. Intelligence, Information, Data collection & Management Information
2.17	Work closely with local authorities and partners to improve information and intelligence sharing relating to vulnerability as early as possible	To increase early cross agency awareness of vulnerable people, in order that the relevant lead agency can put in place an early intervention action plan, thus reducing risk of harm	All Forces				3. Intelligence, Information, Data collection & Management Information

2.18	<p>Forces to map in conjunction with the NPL what therapeutic service provision exist for victims, witnesses, suspects, vulnerable person or families. Having done so, communicate this and relevant referral processes to all staff. This should be subject to regular updates to ensure that it remains current</p> <p>NPL to map what national level therapeutic service provision exists for victims, witnesses, suspects vulnerable person or families and circulate this to all forces to compliment the local part of this action</p>	To improve awareness amongst police officers, staff and volunteers as to what therapeutic service provision exists and what it does in order that they can advise / signpost accordingly	All Forces/NPL				1. Early intervention & Prevention
2.19	Develop clear pathways of support so that officers, staff and volunteers know what support is available and how to get it	To improve awareness amongst police officers, staff and volunteers as to what support provision exists and what it does in order that they can advise / signpost accordingly	All Forces				1. Early intervention & Prevention
2.20	Undertake work with agencies such as the equalities commission, community leaders and IAGs to increase reporting of vulnerability	To encourage reporting amongst marginalised groups and thus provide early intervention and support	All Forces				1. Early intervention & Prevention
2.21	<p>Re-examine local management processes with a view to instil a supervisory approach at all levels that encourages debriefing / review to a mindset of 'What did we do well' and 'How can we do better' approach as apposed to blame</p> <p>National and Regional Vulnerability groups should work together with the IPCC to promote the 'Just Culture' response to vulnerability</p>	<p>At a local level, to encourage a culture of officers / staff exercising 'professional curiosity' and early identification of threat, risk and harm within an environment that allows staff to challenge their norms and do the right thing</p> <p>At a National and Regional level create an environment which is reflective and promotes openness and organisational learning rather than blame</p>	All Forces/ Nominated NPL/ Regional leads				5. Leadership
2.22	<p>Senior leaders should develop recognition and reward for officers displaying positive performance relating to vulnerability</p> <p>NPL to consider options for national recognition of good work</p>	This will reinforce the principle that vulnerability is a priority for the service and desire to recognise and respond positively and in a more caring fashion	All Forces/ Nominated NPL				5. Leadership
2.23	Contribute to and support regional vulnerability meetings	To support regional governance and dissemination of good practice. To	All Forces				5. Leadership

		encourage regional collaboration where appropriate					
2.24	Develop a clear policy which recognises that officer norms will change from exposure to aspects of criminality/vulnerability and that these need to be re-set so that thresholds of acceptability are maintained	Redefine thresholds to better equip officers to recognise and respond to vulnerability. This could be through leadership or training/communication	All Forces				5. Leadership
2.25	All officers / staff to recognise that as 'first responders' to many incidents, that the police have an important role to play in the early identification of vulnerability, regardless of whether a crime has been committed or not	To ensure that officers / staff recognise their responsibilities with regard identification and opportunities for early intervention upon all public contact / engagement	All Forces				6. Learning & Development
2.26	All officers / staff /volunteers within posts that are virtual front line such as L&D, CCR & analytical roles / Intelligence to undertake specific vulnerability training	To ensure that other critical posts relevant to operational policing are subject to training to ensure that relevant staff understand the significance of the cultural change that the organisation is seeking to undertake and thus ensure that that is then reflected within their roles	All Forces L&D teams				6. Learning & Development
2.27	Recruitment process to show / test understanding of vulnerability for potential new employees entering the service	To have a workforce that value vulnerability from inception into the service	All Forces				6. Learning & Development
2.28	Review current strategies, and materials to ensure that they reflect a focus upon early recognition and response to vulnerability		All Forces				7. Comms

National Police Lead Actions

3.1	<p>Academic evaluation of current early intervention / prevention models that exist and consider how they could influence improved practice [e.g. ACEs]</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>To carefully consider existing intervention / prevention models to protect vulnerable people</p>	<p>Nominated NPL with academic support</p>				<p>1. Early intervention & Prevention</p>
3.2	<p>Work with relevant partners to find a common agreement and solution to defining and recording incidents which clearly set out what constitutes an 'Effective Outcome', to include work towards an effective performance framework.</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>1. To ensure that outcomes do not just rely on traditional criminal justice outcomes</p> <p>2. Recognition that early intervention for vulnerability will more often require personal engagement to understand related vulnerabilities and subsequent signposting to relevant support agencies or working with partners to provide intervention</p>	<p>Nominated NPL in consultation with relevant partners</p>				<p>4. Effective investigation & outcomes</p>
3.3	<p>National Policing Lead for VPP to work with all vulnerability related NPLs to implement a comprehensive communication strategy for all Forces</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>To support / reinforce organisational awareness with regard the identification of vulnerability and risk across all related portfolios</p>	<p>VPP Lead and Nominated NPL</p>				<p>7. Comms</p>
3.4	<p>Nominated NPL/VPP to work in partnership with relevant partners to formulate a multi-agency vulnerability strategy which will drive partnership working at a national/regional and local level.</p> <p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>To work with partners to seek out better ways of working and to coordinate our response across the vulnerability landscape.</p>	<p>Nominated NPL/VPP</p>				<p>2. Protecting, supporting, safeguarding and managing risk</p>
3.5	<p>Develop improved processes to identify and ensure the dissemination of organisational learning in whatever form it takes</p>	<p>To develop a national process relating to SCR's/DHR's/R28's/IPCC reports etc. to facilitate the sharing of relevant learning across organisations</p> <p>VPP Lead/Nominated NPL to scope creating a post for someone to complete this on a National level once and thus prevent duplication within forces, dependent on</p>	<p>VPP lead and Nominated NPL</p>				<p>6. Learning & Development</p>

		external funding being sourced.					
3.6	Evaluation of what industry options exist or could be developed relating to early identification and prevention of vulnerability	To carefully consider what industry solutions exist to assist police and partners in the early identification and prevention of vulnerability	Nominated NPL with academic support				1. Early intervention & Prevention
3.7	Data collection on strands of vulnerability needs to be consistent, comparable, accessible and accurate.	To establish a consistent process nationally, to include partnership data. This will assist comparison work for identification of cases, repeat victimisation, serial perpetrators and outcomes.	Nominated NPL				3. Intelligence, Information, Data collection & Management Information

Appendix 1

Longer Term Actions

3.8	Academic review to be completed to identify existing research/legislation and guidance in relation to vulnerability and determine its effectiveness and potential for positive change.	All commissioning work for research to be directed through the NCOCC/VPP or PRTB for vulnerability to ensure effective use of research time.	NCOCC/VPP lead.				6. Learning & Development
3.9	Reviews to be completed into policing tools such as civil orders and legislative change to bring about positive outcomes for vulnerable people and simplify the legal process.		Commander Balhatchet, Metropolitan Police				6. Learning & Development
3.10	NPL to work together with partners to consider the development of a national information sharing protocol to address all forms of vulnerability.	To streamline all information sharing protocols relating to the differing strands of vulnerability. For consideration of this being made cross-governmental department statutory guidance in order to support developed protocol.	Nominated NPL				3. Intelligence, Information, Data collection & Management Information
3.11	Work together with CPS, Courts, MOJ, HO and other key partners to; - identify what key themes across vulnerability portfolio are slowing CJ process down - once identified work with key partners to address them - establish a joint Police and CPS National Protocol to provide clarity around early CPS	To ensure that CJ processes are streamlined wherever possible thus developing a more joined up understanding and approach regarding vulnerability.	VPP Lead CPS				4. Effective investigation & outcomes

	consultation on cases involving vulnerability, and the nature of advice provided.						
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Appendix 2

Completed and Signed Off Actions

1.1	To clearly define the meaning of 'vulnerability' PRIORITY	For officers and staff to fully understand the term vulnerability and what is expected of them and why	COP		COP established national definition in conjunctions with the Home Office.		4. Effective investigation & outcomes 1. Early Intervention and Prevention
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