

 West Mercia POLICE		POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

POLICY TITLE	Vulnerability & Safeguarding (Overarching Policy)
REFERENCE NO.	WMP010
VERSION	1.0

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	CRIME & VULNERABILITY
BUSINESS AREA	VULNERABILITY & SAFEGUARDING

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	December 2019
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	December 2022
RISK RATING	LOW
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	LOW

West Mercia Police welcome comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy. Please e-mail
contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

The primary role of the police is to prevent crime and disorder and to protect people. Victims of crime and anti-social behaviour who are vulnerable in some way are often those who are at the greatest risk of harm and so are in particular need of the police's protection and support. The extent to which a police force is successful at identifying, protecting and supporting those who are vulnerable is therefore a core indicator of its overall effectiveness.

We now recognise that 75%-80% of incidents that we attend involve people who are vulnerable because of their situation or circumstances, and this demand continues to change in an ever evolving society. Cases involving vulnerable victims are often both complex and sensitive, and their resolution frequently requires the police to work closely with partner organisations such as local authorities, health and education services.

The vision of West Mercia Police is to 'protect people from harm' and to achieve this we positively promote the effective recognition and response to vulnerability by their officers and staff. This means our officers and staff understanding the situation and circumstances of every person that they come into contact with and responding appropriately. 'Seeing past the obvious' and displaying 'professional curiosity' are cornerstones to this approach.

We recognise that every interaction with a member of our community leaves an impression. Building on our principle of 'right first time', the more effective we are at addressing the needs of the most vulnerable at the first interaction, the less they may need us in the future.

Understanding vulnerability as a whole and responding to it in a cohesive and thoughtful way will build on our expertise and mean that we can continuously improve our services. Our ability to engage with those who are vulnerable and the effectiveness of that engagement, will ultimately impact on policing demand by preventing those who are vulnerable from becoming victims or offenders in the future. We know that early identification of vulnerability is of the utmost importance. In the past our response to vulnerability has been limited to a silo approach focused on identified groups of people, with the services we provide tailored to each category. Although it remains important to understand and respond to the unique factors that manifest within particular strands of vulnerability, a more holistic 'whole vulnerability' approach is required to ensure that all circumstances are taken into account and that the provision of service is consistent and tailored to individual needs.

We need to be open-minded and understand individuals' complex lives, recognising where underlying issues exist such as Adverse Child Experiences (ACE) or a possible Mental Health diagnosis. Providing a tailored service, which takes account of a person's vulnerability, will allow the right agencies to develop approaches which will support vulnerable people to protect themselves and others from harm. To look at issues in isolation risks missing important matters that in the worst circumstances could result in serious harm or even death.

1.1 Definitions

Vulnerability

West Mercia Police have adopted the College of Policing definition for vulnerability, which is:

- A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances they are unable to take care of, or protect themselves or others, from harm or exploitation

The following equation underpins our approach:

- Personal Factors + Situational Factors = Harm/Risk of Harm

Any person could be vulnerable – it is extrinsic factors acting with intrinsic factors that can make someone suffer or be at risk of harm. First responders most often encounter people when they have already suffered harm or are at risk of it. Indeed, our officers/staff meet the public often at their most vulnerable and in moments of true crisis or trauma. In these situations their role is often to deal with the environmental features creating the immediate risk of harm, such as arresting the suspect or enabling support from other people or organisations. We can prevent the failure of environmental controls and protect vulnerable people from harm by identifying vulnerabilities early on and working with partner organisations.

Harm

An escalating degree of impact upon a victim: Distress – Loss – Injury – Death.

Exploitation

Where an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive someone. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

THRIVE

West Mercia Police have adopted the THRIVE+ methodology to guide managers and staff in assessing reports to police.

T	– Threat
H	– Harm
R	– Risk
I	– Investigation
V	– Vulnerability
E	– Engagement

THRIVE will determine the most appropriately trained department and persons for responding to crime and incidents, in the interest of effective investigation and meeting the needs of the victim. THRIVE should be used in conjunction with the National Decision Making Model (NDM).

Please follow the attached links:

THRIVE NDM Slides

<https://intranet.westmerpolice01.local/smii/s00search.asp?task=search&area=ip&adv=0&qu=THRIVE>

THRIVE Poster

https://intranet.westmerpolice01.local/smii/doclib/1556_1.pdf

Vulnerability Strategy

<https://intranet.westmerpolice01.local/smiiupload/n/1648/2053.pdf>

NPCC Vulnerability Action Plan

https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/crime/2018/National%20Vulnerability%20Action%20Plan_18_21.pdf

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Understanding the perspective and experiences of a victim/potential victim/survivor will enable us to contribute to providing joined up services with statutory partners and third sector providers and ensure the most appropriate and effective outcomes are reached.

Effective Outcomes

A caring culture focused on early identification of vulnerability and intervention to support the individual.

Working closely with statutory partners and non governmental agencies to provide a 'multi-service response' in the best interests of the individual.

An effective outcomes culture where early intervention / prevention actions by staff are duly recognised.

A culture of 'professional curiosity' and continuous learning.

West Mercia Police – Vulnerability Strategy

This policy and its related procedures support and underpin the Vulnerability Strategy of West Mercia Police.

- [Link: Vulnerability Strategy](#)

- We consider the vulnerability of any person we come into contact with and respond accordingly to reduce the victimisation of the most vulnerable people.
- We reduce exploitation of the most vulnerable.
- We prevent unnecessary criminalisation of those who are vulnerable.
- Our people have the skills, knowledge, confidence and support to take a problem solving approach to vulnerability.
- We will be fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and demonstrate this through our actions.
- We work proactively with Police & Crime Commissioners and other appropriate partners to protect the most vulnerable.
- We continue to develop our policing model to ensure the effective response to vulnerability.

National Vulnerability Action Plan

This policy and its related procedures also support and underpin the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) National Vulnerability Action Plan. This plan is aimed at supporting police forces to deliver 7 identified key themes:

1. Early Intervention and Prevention
2. Protecting, Supporting, Safeguarding and Managing Risk
3. Information, Intelligence, Data Collection and Management Information
4. Effective Investigation and Outcomes
5. Leadership
6. Learning and Development
7. Communications

- [Link: NPCC Vulnerability Action Plan](#)

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Vulnerability & Safeguarding is everyone's business. All our officers and staff should understand how their role contributes to the West Mercia Police vision of 'protecting people from harm'; and how they can undertake their responsibilities in a way that identifies, safeguards and supports vulnerable victims and individuals.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

The legal obligations which underpin this policy include those within the Human Rights Act 1988 and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These are to:

- Protect life
- Protect individuals from inhuman and degrading treatment
- Uphold the right to liberty and security of the person
- Uphold the right not to be discriminated against, and
- Uphold the right to respect for private and family life.

5.0 PROCEDURES

Procedures adopted by West Mercia Police in relation to Vulnerability & Safeguarding are as follows:

Vulnerability & Safeguarding Procedures	Location
Adult Safeguarding	Link
Child Protection & Abuse Investigation	Link
Child Rescue Alert	Link1 , Link2
Domestic Violence and Abuse	Link
Honour Crime	< Pending Link >
Integrated Offender Management	Link
MAPPA & MOSOVO	< Pending Link >
Mental Health	Link
Missing Persons	Link
Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking (MSHT)	Link1 , Link2 , Link3
MSHT Clandestine Entry	< Pending Link >
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH)	< Pending Link >
Online Sexual Exploitation	< Pending Link >
Prostitution and Sex Working	< Pending Link >
Rape and Serious Sexual Offences	< Pending Link >
Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)	< Pending Link >
Stalking & Harassment	Link
Vigilante Groups	Link

NOTE: Vulnerability & Safeguarding Procedures may be subject to different levels of Government Security Classification and each should be handled accordingly.

6.0 CONSULTATION

This policy has been circulated to relevant stakeholders including the staff associations, unions and critical friends group.

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

A combined health and safety, risk and equality assessment has been completed.

8.0 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on ongoing basis and will be subject to a formal review every 12 months.

9.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Approval / Adoption
12/12/2019	DCI P3743 L Wall	Review – No changes, reverted back to West Mercia Policy	Dec 2019