Recent Research, Policy and other Resources
A focus on victims, vulnerability, and policing
Horizon Scanning Report
April to June 2022

The VKPP *Research and Review* workstream scan literature on a monthly basis to identify key academic journal articles, reports, policy documents, blogs/ podcasts, news articles and other materials relevant to victims, victim engagement, victim voice, policing and the criminal justice system. The team collate these thematically and include the most recently published material, although older pieces may be included where relevant[1].

The citations contain title, author, date of publication, an abstract or summary of key points and a link to the resource. Resources that are international in scope can be easily identified by this icon:

The team try to identify open access links, so they are easily accessible, but this is not always possible. You may be able to access these pieces via the College of Policing library, however. If you have a police/pnn email address, you can sign up for free to access the College Library and request help from the librarians – See link here to request an account.

We would welcome any feedback, or if readers are aware of other relevant pieces you would like to flag for inclusion in future circulations, please do get in contact with us at vkpp@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

Domestic Abuse and Stalking and Harassment

Title: Faster information for victims of domestic abuse
Author(s): Home Office
Date: 7th May 2022
Abstract:

Information about someone's violent or abusive behaviour will be disclosed faster under changes to Clare's Law proposed by the Home Office today (7 May).

Link to Source (source is open access):
Faster information for victims of domestic abuse - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Title: No honour in abuse: harnessing the health service to end domestic abuse
Author(s): The Centre for Social Justice
Date: May 2022
Abstract:

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) has released a report which explores the role of the health service in ending domestic abuse in England. Findings include: 80% of a sample of 46 local child safeguarding reviews published in England in 2021 contained elements of domestic abuse; estimates suggest more people disclose experiences of domestic abuse to health professionals than to the police; and there is evidence of an increase in domestic abuse during the pandemic. Recommendations include introducing statutory training for health professionals to help identify and refer victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and their children

Link to Source (source is open access):
No honour in abuse: harnessing the health service to end domestic abuse - The Centre for Social Justice

Adult Sexual Exploitation

Title: Prevention of adult sexual and labour exploitation in the UK: What does or could work.
Author(s): Such, E., Aminu, H., Barnes, A., Hayes, K., Ariyo, M. D., & Brierly, R.
Date: March 2022
Abstract:

Preventing modern slavery is a global goal yet remains elusive. We know little about 'what works' for whom in different contexts and what prevention means in principle or practice. This project sought to address these challenges by exploring what does or could work in the prevention of two forms of modern slavery among adults in the UK: labour and sexual exploitation. It examines what has been tried in prevention programmes, projects, and initiatives, outside of policy

intervention(s). The study draws on a participatory rapid evidence assessment that included the synthesis of 33 evaluative studies, 19 theoretical papers, 18 survey responses and six consultation panel discussions with people working in the counter-slavery sector and with people with lived experience of exploitation. It proposes a definition of prevention, sets out a typology of interventions and their functions and makes recommendations for a more comprehensive and effective system.

Link to Source (source is open access):
[Modern-Slavery-PEC-prevention-report-final.pdf (modernslaverypec.org)](Modern-Slavery-PEC-prevention-report-final.pdf)

Mental health

Title: Protecting the Protectors
Author(s): Duran, F., & Woodhams, J.
Date: 2022
Overview: (*A set of video resources*)

To mark Mental Health Awareness Week, Birmingham University have launched new video resources to help support the psychological wellbeing of staff in the criminal justice system. The two video resources focus on non-frontline law enforcement staff, primarily those who work in analytical, intelligence and secondary investigative roles to combat crime. The videos portray how daily exposure to information concerning the traumatic experiences of victims of crime (such as rape, murder and terrorism) can cause vicarious trauma to individuals working within these sectors of the criminal justice system. In turn, this has a debilitating impact on their psychological well-being and general day-to day-lives, directly influencing their perceptions, emotions and behaviour towards others. The University of Birmingham have been working with law enforcement agencies to further understand the nature of this problem. The aim of these resources is for organisations to use them in order to begin dialogues around wellbeing and mental health with peers and employees, so that individuals who may be suffering in the workplace can be granted the right support to carry out their role.

Video 1: The impact of exposure to traumatic material

The video highlights the various thoughts, feelings and the effect that being exposed to traumatic material has on non-frontline law enforcement personnel. Daily work tasks such as watching victim interviews and reading detailed reports of crimes are extremely disturbing processes that can leave staff feeling saddened, angered and prone to "emotional meltdown". Staff report being more sceptical and paranoid of people, as well as more socially aware and cautious of their surroundings, due to finding difficulty in trusting people given the material they are exposed to daily. These thought processes can negatively affect their ability to form new relationships or trust unfamiliar people around their loved ones (such as the parents of classmates supervising their children).

The video highlights how this heightened awareness of danger through regular exposure to traumatic material reinforces the difficulty staff face in disconnecting work from the comfort of their own homes. Further, the nature of the material staff are exposed to makes it difficult to converse with friends and family about their work. This in turn may lead to staff feeling distant from those close to them, with limited avenues to discuss their experiences in a safe, non-judgemental setting, both of which could exacerbate the emotional distress associated with their jobs. In spite of these various challenges, non-frontline staff report feeling motivated to continue the work they carry out due to its rewarding nature, the positive impact it has on society and their genuine desire to protect the public from harm.

Video 2: How we can support to protect the protectors

Non-frontline law enforcement personnel who are exposed to traumatic material need to be supported appropriately to continue the work they do to keep society safe. The video begins by outlining how analytical professionals report coping with the distressing nature of their work. This includes: physical activities and hobbies; creating distance between work and home; safety behaviours; communication; and support.

The video suggests that workplaces could be improved to support their teams through:

Training managers and supervisors as mental health champions, and allocating them sufficient time to fulfil this role

Incorporating mindfulness approaches within the workplace to teach staff exercises aimed at refocusing the mind from something stressful to something calmer

Simple gestures of kindness in the workplace, such as bringing a colleague a cup of coffee when they are working with traumatic material

Normalising discussions of mental health so that staff can have a safe/stigma-free work environment to talk about the challenges they are facing

Link to Source (source is not open access):
https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/psychology/research/protecting-the-protectors/resources.aspx

Missing and Absent

Title: The Rights of the families of missing persons: Going beyond international humanitarian law
Author(s): Baranowska.G.
Date: March 2022
Abstract:

The main aim of the article is to test how states implement international humanitarian law (IHL) with regard to the families of missing persons. The article shows relevant IHL shortcomings and compares them with rules applicable in cases of enforced disappearance. The national legislation collected in the section titled 'The Missing and Their Families' of the National Implementation Database of the International Committee of the Red Cross is then examined. The analysis addresses three core questions that are particularly relevant for families of missing persons: (1) Who is considered a missing person under each law? Approaching this question allows the testing of whether states follow the understanding of 'missing persons' under IHL treaty law. The second and third questions address two issues that are crucial for families of missing persons that are not addressed in IHL: (2) How is the legal status of the missing person regulated? (3) Are family members provided with measures of reparation and/or assistance? This approach reveals that states rarely apply the IHL understanding of 'missing persons' and predominantly exceed IHL by addressing some of the identified shortcomings. It further shows that states provide families of missing persons either with reparation measures – in cases of human rights violations – or, less often, with measures of assistance in post-conflict situations.

Link to Source (source is open access):
S0021223721000182jra 25..49 (cambridge.org)

Adults at Risk

Title: Experiences of elder abuse: a qualitative study among victims in Sweden.
Author(s): Ludvigsson, M., Wiklund, N., Swahnberg, K., & Simmons, J.
Date: 28th March 2022
Abstract:

Background: Elder abuse is underreported and undertreated. Methods for prevention and intervention are being developed, but the knowledge guiding such measures is often insufficiently based on the victims' own voices due to a paucity of studies. The aim of this study was therefore to explore experiences of elder abuse among the victims themselves.

Methods: Consecutive inpatients ≥ 65 years of age at a hospital clinic in Sweden were invited to participate, and 24 victims of elder abuse were identified. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted, and transcripts were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Results: The analysis generated four themes that together give a comprehensive picture of elder abuse from the participants' subjective perspectives. The participants' experiences of abuse were similar to previous third-party descriptions of elder abuse and to descriptions of abuse among younger adults, but certain aspects were substantially different. Vulnerability due to aging and diseases led to dependence on others and reduced autonomy. Rich descriptions were conveyed of neglect, psychological abuse, and other types of abuse in the contexts of both care services and family relations.

Conclusions: Elder abuse is often associated with an individual vulnerability mix of the aging body, illnesses, and help dependence in connection with dysfunctional surroundings. As individual differences of vulnerability, exposure to violence, and associated consequences were so clear, this implies that components of prevention and intervention should be individually tailored to match the needs and preferences of older victims.

Link to Source (source is open access):
Experiences of elder abuse: a qualitative study among victims in Sweden | SpringerLink

Child Abuse

Title: The emergence of political priority for addressing child sexual abuse in the United Kingdom
Author(s): Shawar, R.Y., Truong, P.P., & Shiffman. J.
Date: June 2022
Abstract:

Background: Child sexual abuse (CSA) is widespread. Few countries, however, prioritize the issue. The United Kingdom is an exception, ranked first in its response to the issue in a 2019 country comparison. In 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron designated the issue one of three national threats. Funding commitments and policies to address CSA followed.

Objective: To investigate how CSA emerged as a national political priority in the United Kingdom, and to identify insights for proponents seeking to advance priority for addressing the issue.

Participants and setting: Documents were analysed, and semi-structured interviews conducted with actors in the United Kingdom central to CSA advocacy, research, and/or programming, as well as with policymakers.

Methods: Drawing on the multiple streams public policy model, a thematic analysis was conducted on collected documents (n = 160) and 21 interview transcripts.

Results: Our analysis delineates three critical developments that led to national prioritization for addressing CSA. First, high-profile scandals and the re-framing of CSA survivors as deserving of support raised public awareness of the problem. Second, champions concerned with CSA developed evidence-based and politically-feasible solutions. Third, the Prime Minister's concern and other political developments opened a policy window.

Conclusions: The case provides insights for proponents on generating political priority for addressing CSA. Proponents need to (1) ensure survivors are not seen as culpable but rather as

deserving of support, (2) be ready with solutions and (3) cultivate high-level political support, so that when policy windows open, they can jump to push the issue onto the national agenda.

Link to Source (source is not open access):
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213422001211

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Title: Treating and managing stalking offenders: findings from a multi-agency clinical intervention
Author(s): Jerath, K., Tompson, L., & Belur, J.
Date: 1st April 2022
Abstract:

The Multi-Agency Stalking Intervention Programme (MASIP), piloted in three police forces in England, delivered a range of risk management interventions, including bespoke psychological treatment to a subset of convicted stalkers. The interim aim was to equip offenders with tools to address their behaviour, as well as to support their transition towards full desistance. This study explores how offender-related interventions were conceived and implemented by stakeholders in this multi-agency partnership and examines whether the personal journeys of stalking offenders involved fulfilled the intended aims. Semi-structured interviews conducted with six clinicians, who delivered direct interventions, and six stalking offenders, who received such interventions, were analysed thematically. Clinicians conveyed that the multi-agency partnership working informed risk assessment, and design and delivery of bespoke therapeutic interventions. Offenders reported improvements in their own reflective, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Additionally, therapeutic interventions assisted them in recognizing the seriousness of their behaviour; its impact on their own lives and their victims; in developing motivations to desist; and self-regulating with learned coping mechanisms. These findings are discussed and give rise to important considerations for practitioners with regards to targeted treatment and risk management of stalking offenders.

Link to Source (source is open access):
Full article: Treating and managing stalking offenders: findings from a multi-agency clinical intervention (tandfonline.com)

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Title: Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify Statistics UK, Quarter 1 2022 – January to March
Author(s): GOV.UK
Date: June 2022
Abstract:

3,777 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office in quarter 1 2022, representing a 13% increase compared to the preceding quarter (3,334) and a 29% increase from quarter 1 2021 (2,939).

The number of referrals received this quarter is the highest since the NRM began in 2009 (the previous highest number was 3,343 in quarter 4 2019).

79% (2,999) were sent to the Single Competent Authority (SCA) for consideration and 21% (778) to the Immigration Enforcement Competent Authority (IECA).

77% (2,906) were male and 23% (870) were female.

54% (2,036) of potential victims claimed exploitation in the UK only and 35% (1,340) claimed exploitation overseas only.

The number of potential victims that claimed exploitation overseas this quarter is the highest since the NRM began (the previous highest number was 1,173 in quarter 3 2021).

54% (2,054) of referrals were for potential victims who claimed exploitation as adults and 39% (1,471) claimed exploitation as children.

The number of potential victims that claimed exploitation as adults this quarter is the highest since the NRM began.

Adult potential victims most commonly claimed labour exploitation (33%; 681), whereas child potential victims were most often referred for criminal exploitation (46%; 670).

The most common nationalities referred this quarter were Albanian, UK and Eritrean.

The number of Albanian nationals referred is the highest quarterly figure since the NRM began.

3,675 reasonable grounds and 1,214 conclusive grounds decisions were issued this quarter; of these, 89% of reasonable grounds and 92% of conclusive grounds decisions were positive.

The Home Office received 987 reports of adult potential victims via the DtN process, the highest quarterly figure since this began.

Link to Source (source is open access):
[Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, Quarter 1 2022 – January to March - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

VAWG related including Serious Sexual Offences

Title: New non-fatal strangulation offence comes into force
Author(s): GOV.UK
Date: 7th June 2022
Abstract:

Non-fatal strangulation has become a specific offence under the Domestic Abuse Act. From the 7th June, abusers who strangle their partners in an attempt to control or induce fear will face up to 5 years in prison.

Link to source (source is open access):
[New non-fatal strangulation offence comes into force - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

VAWG related including Serious Sexual Offences

Title: Implementation: What's stopping it: An exploration of police response to rape investigation, and the implementation of the 2015 Joint CPS and Police Rape Action Plan
Author(s): Lovell, E.C.
Date: February 2022
Abstract:

Tackling rape and serious sexual offences remains a key priority for policing, it is one of the most serious offences that a person can survive. There has been extensive and valuable research centring on the complainants' experiences, but fewer studies which focus on the police response, and fewer still that examine the relationship and correlation between the two. Up to now the focus is directed towards the lack of standards pertaining to the quality-of-service delivery, which arguably has led to an inconsistent experience for the victim. Notwithstanding the physical and emotional stress this causes, this inconsistent victim 'journey' can have a significant and detrimental impact on the administration of justice and remains a national issue.

The findings from this research questions the continued path the Criminal Justice System is taking with sexual offences, with so many reforms, reviews, guidance documents, the residing issues remain with the complainants of these serious offences reporting many of the same issues. The policing effort is often shaped through the lack of resources and complexities across the whole of

the justice system. In order to make real change and move forward there is a need to look back and understand the history of what worked and more importantly what didn't. As it currently stands the victims journey is far from consistent and the change cannot be delivered effectively without everyone in the CJS getting better

Link to source (source is open access):
Implementation, what's stopping it? — University of Portsmouth

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Other

Title: The Impact of Online Abuse: Hearing the Victims' Voice
Author(s): Storry and Poppleton
Date: 1st June 2022
Abstract:

The Online Safety Bill represents the government's manifesto commitment to 'make the UK the safest place in the world to be online'.1 The Bill will introduce regulation to online service providers, overseen by OFCOM. It will attempt to ensure these internet service providers protect the people using these sites. The Bill has been criticised for both being too complex and for not providing enough detail, as the powers of the Bill are heavily reliant on secondary legislation, making it difficult to be clear about the intent of the Bill. Prior research has shown that women are more likely to be harassed online and that misogyny is now commonplace on the internet. Yet the Bill has been criticised for failing to fully address the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls in the legislation. This means that in its current format the Bill does not address these specific problems that many women encounter on a daily basis.

This research has been undertaken to bring the victims' voice firmly into the centre of the debate around the Online Safety Bill. The voices and words of victims of online abuse are used liberally throughout this report to ensure that a vivid picture of their experience is painted. We hope that their words can present a clear vision of the abuse they suffer and the difficulties they face when attempting to get this abuse stopped. Five hundred and thirty four people responded to our request for information about their experience of online abuse, which was open for almost six weeks, commencing 20th January 2022. Participants were sought through the Victims' Commissioner website and social media, with further dissemination by victims' service agencies who kindly agreed to support this research. We cannot claim that this self-selecting group of respondents is representative of all people who have experienced online abuse and we know that some groups were over and under-represented in our data.

Link to Source (source is open access): Hearing-the-Victims-Voice.pdf

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Other

Title: Messy victims and sympathetic offenders: the role of moral judgments in police referrals to restorative justice
Author(s): Hoekstra, M.S.
Date: 3rd June 2022
Abstract:

While restorative justice enjoys increasing popularity in a variety of national contexts, it is not yet a structural part of police work. Implementation is often piecemeal, with only a small minority of cases deemed suitable for a restorative approach. This paper draws on literature on the moral dimensions of street-level bureaucrats' everyday work to analyse how police officers in the

Netherlands decide to (not) refer victims and offenders to restorative interventions. In-depth interviews with police officers who are involved in these interventions show that what they present as pragmatic considerations also involve judgments of the deservingness of victims and offenders. Contrary to the literature on 'ideal' victims and offenders of restorative justice, police officers in this study are more likely to offer restorative interventions to 'messy' victims – who are seen as partly responsible for the crime due to their behaviour and/or relationship to the offender – and to offenders who are considered pitiable or sympathetic. These judgments partly map unto existing cultural norms and biases, and the resulting selective deployment of restorative interventions may therefore conserve and reproduce inequities in the criminal justice system.

Link to Source (source is not open access):
Messy victims and sympathetic offenders: the role of moral judgments in police referrals to restorative justice: Contemporary Justice Review: Vol 0, No 0 (tandfonline.com)

[1] The aim of this document is to share new resources of relevance to vulnerability to promote awareness of current research, debates and practices in the field. Whilst we review each piece to ensure relevance, we do not make claims about the robustness of findings or arguments within each piece and as such do not explicitly endorse or critique what is shared.