

## Recent Research, Policy and other Resources A focus on victims, vulnerability and policing Horizon Scanning Report February 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<sup>1</sup>.

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](mailto:vkpp@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)

### About us:

The **Research and Review** team within the VKPP carry out:

- 1) Secondary research such as literature reviews;
- 2) Secondary analysis of case reviews (such as Child Practice Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and MAPPA Reviews) to extract learning for the police; and
- 3) Primary research into contemporary and perennial issues in policing.

The team seek to identify insights from this work, share learning and develop helpful resources for police. Our work continues to inform the evidence-base for the National Vulnerability Action Plan and other workstreams within the VKPP. Our work also seeks to inform national work, policy and debates relating to policing and vulnerability. The team consult regularly with policing and partner agency stakeholders and where possible victims and witnesses to help us make sense of our findings. Equity, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. Please contact [debra.allnock@norfolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:debra.allnock@norfolk.pnn.police.uk) for further information about our work.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Domestic Abuse and Stalking and Harassment

### **Criminal justice responses to domestic violence and abuse in England: an analysis of case attrition and inequalities using police data**

**Author(s):** McPhee, D. et al.

**Date:** 31st December 2021

#### **Abstract**

Responding to domestic violence and abuse (DVA) poses significant challenges for the criminal justice system, with recent studies highlighting a number of significant gaps and failings in the nature of the police response. This paper reports on findings from a component of the multi-stage ESRC funded project 'Justice, Inequality and Gender-Based Violence' (ESRC grant ES/M010090/1) that relates to 400 reported incidents of DVA involving intimate partners recorded by two police force areas in England in 2014. Drawing on this large data set concerning a wide range of incidents, this paper employs quantitative methods to analyse the trajectories of reports made to the police, and the factors that may influence their progress through, or attrition from the criminal justice system. In doing so, this paper finds that certain 'inequality' factors such as victim gender, vulnerability (including mental health) and incident type are found to impact the progression of cases through the criminal justice system. This work seeks to build on our understanding of what happens to incidents of DVA that are brought to the attention of the police by victims and survivors and reflects upon how the outcomes of such incidents impact the broader debate concerning the pursuit of a formal, or criminal 'justice' in cases of DVA.

**Link to Source (source is open access):** [VOR Criminal justice responses to domestic violence and abuse in England an analysis of case attrition and inequalities using police data.pdf](#)

## Adult Sexual Exploitation

### **Failing victims? Challenges of the police response to human trafficking**

**Author(s):** Dank et al.

**Date:** 31 July 2019

#### **Abstract**

The police have a duty to provide assistance to crime victims. Despite the importance of this role, scholars examining police effectiveness have historically been less attentive to the needs of victims. As the police are increasingly called on to combat sex and labor trafficking crimes, it is timely to explore how this new population of victims is served by the police. Information from a review of human trafficking investigations and in-depth interviews with police and service providers in three U.S. communities indicates that human trafficking victims often do not trust the police and rarely seek their assistance. When the police do respond, human trafficking victims seek affirmation of their experiences and safety from future harm.

**Link to Source (source is open access):** [Failing victims? Challenges of the police response to human trafficking - Farrell - 2019 - Criminology & Public Policy - Wiley Online Library](#)

## Mental health

### **Service evaluation of the South Wales police control room mental health triage model: outcomes achieved, lessons learned and next steps**

**Author(s):** Broome, L., Davies, J. and Lewis, M.

**Date:** 7th February 2022

#### **Abstract**

South Wales Police Mental Health (MH) Triage service was initiated to meet the Welsh Government MH priority of early intervention to prevent MH crisis. Community Psychiatric Nurses, based in the control-room, provide advice to police and control room staff on the management of MH-related incidents. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the first 12 months of operation (January-December 2019).

Service evaluation of the first 12 months of operation (January–December 2019). Data were analysed in relation to: MH incidents; repeat callers; Section (S)136 use/assessment outcomes. Police, health staff and triage service users were interviewed and surveyed to capture their opinions of the service. Policing areas with high engagement in triage saw reductions in S136 use and estimated opportunity costs saving. Triage was considered a valuable service that promoted cross agency collaborations. De-escalation in cases of mental distress was considered a strength. Access to follow-on services was identified as a challenge. Triage enables a multi-agency response in the management of MH-related incidents. Improving trust between services, with skilled health professionals supporting police decision-making in real time.

There is a gap in the research on the impact of police-related MH triage models beyond the use of S136. This project evaluated the quality of the service, its design and the relationship between health, police, and partner agencies during the triage process. Multi-agency assessment of follow-up is needed to measure the long-term impact on services and users.

#### **Link to Source (source is not open access):**

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JFP-09-2021-0049/full/html>

## Missing and Absent

### **The impact of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on missing person reports**

**Author(s):** O'Brien et al.

**Date:** November 2021

**Abstract** The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions imposed by governments pose short- and long-term challenges for the police, especially within resource-intensive areas of policing such as missing persons. However, the novelty of the pandemic means little research focus has been directed at understanding these challenges and how they may be overcome. Using archival reports from six UK police forces, the current study examined the extent to which missing persons cases changed during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown. Using a non-experimental fixed design, differences in the characteristics of reports of both children and adults who went missing between March and May 2020 and the same time period in 2019 were examined. Findings suggest a substantial reduction in missing reports overall, but a shift in the proportions of types of cases

reported. For example, there was a greater proportion of adults classified as high risk of harm during this period and a greater proportion of children who were deemed low risk, who were living in residential care, and who were not from a White British background. Although forces must consider the findings within their local context, the study has implications in terms of demand and allocation of police resources, as well as multi-agency working. Future research is discussed.

**Link to Source (source is not open access)** [Full article: The impact of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on missing person reports \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

### Managing of Sex and Violent Offenders

#### Criminal Justice Platform Europe (CJPE) webinar on Managing Sexual Offenders

**Date:** 30 November 2021

#### Abstract

Managing the reintegration of persons convicted of a sexual offence in the community is challenging for probation professionals, prison staff as well as restorative justice experts. Reintegration of so-called sex offenders in the community still can cause a lot of commotion and professionals have to deal with this from day to day.

However, in recent years valuable research has been done on effective management and treatment. Nowadays we know much more about 'what works'. Specific programmes such as Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) have been developed and successfully implemented. And even recently, recommendations have been adopted at a European level (Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe) regarding the assessment, management and reintegration of persons accused or convicted of a sexual offence. This document shows that being better prepared to respond to sexual violence in prison and probation should serve to improve the reintegration of sexual offenders into the community and eventually reduce victimisation rates.

Equal attention should also be paid to victims and tailor the support offered by the justice system to their needs as a means to address their harm. While restorative justice is not widely offered in these cases yet, where applied, it shows positive effects in the offender reintegration as well as in the victim's healing process. Still, restorative justice has to be delivered taking into account the specific harm caused in these cases.

**Link to Source (source is open access):** [CJPE Webinar on Managing Sexual Offenders | European Forum for Restorative Justice \(euforumrj.org\)](#)

### Adults at risk

#### Poor Police Response - Disabled victims of hate crime

**Author(s):**

**Date:** November 2021

#### Abstract

This report has been produced on behalf of the London Deaf & Disabled People Organisations' (DDPOs) Hate Crime Partnership. Disabled victims of hate crime are not getting the response from

the Metropolitan Police they expect or deserve. The report brings together an overview to provide context, the results of our survey, London-wide case studies, UK-wide experience, and our analysis that combined suggest a systemic failure by the Metropolitan Police and other UK police forces in their response to hate crime against Disabled victims. We then offer recommendations to improve outcomes for Disabled victims of hate crime when reporting to police.

**Link to Source (source is open access but may have been moved – this has been reported to the website):** [National Hate crime awareness week press pack \(inclusionlondon.org.uk\)](https://inclusionlondon.org.uk)

### Child Abuse

#### **What do the potential recipients of disclosure of OSA say? Perspectives from adolescent residents in Scotland and Chile**

**Author:** Manrai, R. et al.

**Date:** 2021

#### **Abstract**

Background: With the increase in internet use, new forms of child victimization like Online Sexual Abuse (OSA) have emerged. Children and adolescents rarely disclose these incidents and most disclosure happens around peers. Objective: This research addresses the perspective of adolescents (not victims of OSA), potential recipients of the disclosure, within the context of disclosure of OSA committed by either adult or peer perpetrators. Methods: The study was performed in two stages. We interviewed adolescents in Scotland and then conducted focus groups with adolescents from Chile. Participants and setting: 51 adolescents (6 from Scotland and 45 from Chile) aged 15–20 years participated. Results: Despite differences in age and cultural contexts, there were similarities in responses. Obstacles of disclosure included lack of clarity of OSA, prior levels of personal vulnerability, and gender factors (stereotypes and stigmatization). On the other hand, the disclosure process would be easier for adolescents with more personal resources (e.g., self-confidence) and when they have a supportive social environment, which includes parents, but especially peers. Conclusion: Disclosure of OSA is considered similar to the disclosure of offline sexual abuse. However, differences such as a lack of clarity regarding the boundaries of the relationships on the Internet, and presence of a generational gap between adolescents and their parents or tutors in the use of internet makes early disclosure of OSA highly challenging. Plans to facilitate disclosure should consider different components: behavioral (risky behaviors), emotional (feelings of fear and shame) and cognitive (lack of information, self-blame, stigma). This should be focused on adolescents, potential recipients of disclosure (parents, authorities and peers) and society, where the prejudices and practices that prevent disclosure begin.

**Link to Source (source is not open access):** [What do the potential recipients of disclosure of OSA say? Perspectives from adolescent residents in Scotland and Chile - ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

### Harmful sexual behaviour

### Harmful sexual behaviour: learning from serious case reviews

**Author:** the NSPCC

**Date:** 2021

**Key themes identified:**

- The children and young people in these case reviews had complex lived experiences which included a range of challenges and risk factors.
- HSB can involve several children. Sometimes the needs or behaviour of one child can distract practitioners' attention away from the needs of another.
- Practitioners didn't always seek to understand the individual lived experience of all children involved in HSB and tailor support to their needs.
- Not all practitioners understood the reasons why children display HSB. This meant children were sometimes viewed as the instigators rather than the victims of their behaviours and circumstances.
- Due to lack of resources, it can take time for appropriate therapeutic intervention to be offered to a child. Sometimes the support that services could provide within the limits of their capacity was not adequate or appropriate for the child's needs.

**Link to Source (source is open access):** [Harmful sexual behaviour: learning from case review briefings \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/briefings/harmful-sexual-behaviour-learning-from-case-review/)

### Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

**Commentary: Available evidence suggests that prevalence and risk of female genital cutting/mutilation in the UK is much lower than widely presumed - policies based on exaggerated estimates are harmful to girls and women from affected communities**

**Author(s):** Karlsen et al.

**Date:** January 2022

**Abstract:**

It is widely reported that 'tens of thousands of girls' are living in the UK with the risk of experiencing Female Genital Cutting or Mutilation (FGC/M). This paper reviews the data on which such claims are based. It finds that the data available with which to establish the scale of such risk is both sparse and problematic, and that the numbers claimed to be at risk are considerably overinflated. For example, data collected by the National Health Service suggests that as few as eight girls had FGC/M while resident in the UK since their records began, with as few as one or two experiencing FGC/M types 1, 2 or 3. Other data publicly available or retrieved from Freedom of Information requests to the Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service, Ministry of Justice, Department for Education, National Health Service and academic sources also suggest that the 'tens of thousands of girls' claim is misplaced. Current UK FGM-safeguarding approaches, though well-intentioned, appear to be based on inaccurate estimates of FGC/M prevalence and risk. Existing research shows that these approaches directly harm communities, contributing to

institutional discrimination, racially/religiously motivated victimisation and the criminalisation of innocent families. This is an issue which must be urgently addressed.

**Link to Source (source is open access):** [Available evidence suggests that prevalence and risk of female genital cutting/mutilation in the UK is much lower than widely presumed - policies based on exaggerated estimates are harmful to girls and women from affected communities \(nature.com\)](#)

#### VAWG related including Serious Sexual Offences

##### CPD and Reflective Practice: Improving investigations and wellbeing in rape and serious sexual offences

**Author(s):** Miller, N.

**Date:** 27th January 2022

**Abstract:** Reflective practice involves retrospectively reviewing an event to enable us to generate a better understanding of our actions, our current knowledge level, and our skill set and is a mechanism through which we can identify gaps and identify approaches to remedy issues. This can offer an important channel through which individual, team, and organisational learning and development can occur. A pillar of work by the Centre for Police Research and Learning is examining learning and development and officer wellbeing, and one of the strongest themes emerging from the work is the importance of reflective practice as a form of CPD for those involved in RASSO. Officers they spoke to reflected on the benefits of reflective practice, including improvement to the services delivered to victims and survivors as well an improvement in officer wellbeing. There was suggestion that learning from experiences that went well along with those that did not, is important for iterative approaches for learning, alongside a suggestion that this learning could provide case examples to connect research and practice. The article also suggested that these opportunities of reflection can help to challenge assumptions and patterns of behaviour which can adversely influence decisions and outcomes and emphasised the importance of organisations establishing a safe space for officers to talk about perceived mistakes and failures.

**Link to source (source is open access if you are registered to Policinginsight which is free):** [CPD and reflective practice: Improving investigations and wellbeing in rape and serious sexual offences - Policing Insight](#)

#### Child Sexual Exploitation

##### Child sexual exploitation by organised networks, Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse

**Author(s):** Jay, A et al.

**Date:** February 2022

**Abstract:**

This Inquiry investigated the sexual exploitation of children by organised networks (i.e., two or more individuals who take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child/young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator).

This investigation was based on areas which have not already been the subject of independent investigation following high-profile criminal cases (such as Rotherham, Rochdale and Oxford) to highlight the fact that the sexual exploitation of children by networks is not a rare problem confined to a small number of areas. The aim was to obtain an accurate picture of current practice at strategic level through examination of individual cases and drawing wider knowledge about child sexual exploitation in England and Wales. The six chosen case study areas were: Durham, Swansea, Warwickshire, St Helens, Tower Hamlets and Bristol.

Eight themes were examined in each area:

- problem profiling and disruption of child sexual exploitation.
- empathy and concern for child victims.
- risk assessment, protection from harm and outcomes for children.
- missing children, return home interviews and children in care.
- male victims.
- children with disabilities.
- partnership working; and
- audit, review and performance improvement.

In addition, the Inquiry undertook a detailed analysis of material held by the relevant local authority and police force in relation to 33 children from the six case study areas, in order to better understand the experiences of children who were currently being (or very recently had been) sexually exploited by networks.

**Link to source (source is open access):** [Child sexual exploitation by organised networks Investigation Report | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

#### Other

**Female perpetrators of child sexual abuse: A review of the clinical and empirical literature – A 20-year update**

**Author(s):** Augarde, S. & Rydon-Grange, M.

**Date:** January 2022

**Abstract:** A comprehensive and well-cited review on the topic of female child sex offenders was published by Grayston and DeLuca in 1999. Over the past twenty years, the clinical and empirical literature relating to female child sex offending has grown. In particular, more is now known about the characteristics of female child sex offenders, and the nature, type, and context of offences, as well as motivations underpinning offending. The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of the current clinical and empirical literature on female child sex offenders, and to update the summary profile on these offenders as originally proposed by Grayston and DeLuca (1999). Of particular note are updates to the co-offending literature and new research regarding the use of technology, abuse within the educational context, and recidivism in female perpetrated child sexual abuse. Implications for assessment and treatment of this offender cohort are also discussed, alongside limitations of this review.

**Link to Source (source is not open access):** [Female perpetrators of child sexual abuse: A review of the clinical and empirical literature – A 20-year update - ScienceDirect](#)



## Other

### Operation Hotton Learning Report

**Date:** 1st February 2022

**Abstract:** Operation Hotton was a series of 9 linked investigations concerning MET officers, the majority of who were based at Charing Cross Police Station and all served as police constables. The investigations identified allegations of bullying; sexual harassment of colleagues; failures to report and challenge bullying and sexual harassment claims; incidents of gross misconduct and misconduct; misogynist behaviour and allegations of a police officer assaulting his partner; and use of discriminatory language and behaviours. It was identified that bullying was commonplace, with 'banter' often used as a mechanism through which individuals justified and minimised their actions and observations were made of a culture that included toxic masculinity, misogyny, and sexual harassment. The report made a number of recommendations including appropriate and independent investigations of bullying and harassment; exploration of whether the attitudes and behaviours identified within the investigation were representative of wider attitudes within the MPS; and establishment of a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and harassment. It was identified that officers felt unable to report this behaviour for fear of being ostracised and that the culture of bullying was not challenged. The report further recommended that the MPS should review and ensure its current training and guidance on the use of social media is adequate, along with their training and guidance on bullying and harassment; and also recommended that the MPS should ensure it is taking sufficient steps to eradicate racism from the force. The investigation observed that officers from Black and Asian backgrounds reported experiences of being ostracised, and there was mocking of individuals from non-Christian religions and the Black Lives Matter movement along with evidence of negative racial, disability, sexist, and religious stereotypes that were derogatory and offensive. This communication was considered to form a normal part of the language officers used, and they appeared to fear no repercussions as a result of using this language. Investigations revealed evidence of toxic masculinity, with officers exchanging messages that made reference to domestic and sexual violence, and females who reported experiences of sexual harassment reported feeling unsupported. Recommendations were made for the MPS to ensure the adequacy of its training and guidance on the requirement of officers to report, challenge, and take action against the conduct of colleagues, and it was observed that officers were reluctant to report as they considered their reports would not be dealt with appropriately and expressed concerns that they would be ostracised. There was evidence of group loyalty and an 'us' vs 'them' culture. Further recommendations were made which included ensuring that sufficient steps are taken to ensure appropriate supervision and welfare is in place; to ensure there is quality assurance in place for officers; and recommendations that there should be a review of current guidance and policy in relation to acting up, to ensure there is transparency and clarity on how acting up positions are decided.

**Link to Source (source is open access):** [Operation Hotton Learning report - January 2022.pdf \(policeconduct.gov.uk\)](https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/operation-hotton-learning-report-january-2022.pdf)