NCVPP

National Centre for
Violence Against
Women & Girls and
Public Protection

Governance of Vulnerability in Policing

July 2025

College of Policing

NPCC
National Police Chiefs' Council

Contents

The governance project was developed following the request to review the National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP) and is supported by the VPP (Violence and Public Protection Board) & respective NPCC (National Police Chiefs' Council) Leads.

The governance project aims to conduct research examining governance principles and processes within policing that relate to vulnerability. To meet this aim, the Vulnerability and Knowledge Practice Programme (VKPP) were tasked with undertaking a review of current governance in relation to vulnerability practices within police forces across England and Wales. The objective of the review is to understand current practice and to identify opportunities for the development of local governance, as well as a governance framework. This will aim to support the newly developed National Vulnerability and Public Protection Strategy, recognising that governance is a key lever for achieving effective change.

This report gives a high-level summary of the research and insight review findings from participating forces across England and Wales. The insight review consisted of conducting surveys, document reviews, and interviews across strategic, operational, and tactical areas of governance related to vulnerability. This project is also aligned to the Professionalising Public Protection project being overseen by the College of Policing (CoP).

Background

In recent years, governance practices within policing have received heightened attention and have been the subject of much debate. With increased media attention on officer behaviour, policy failings, and high-profile cases public trust and confidence in policing has decreased, with calls for better accountability, integrity, and effectiveness of the police service.

The importance of governance in policing was reflected in the previous National Vulnerability Action Plan where governance is one of the sixteen actions identified, asking forces to 'optimise governance arrangements regarding vulnerability (in-house and multi-agency) to ensure synergy regarding understanding of threat, barriers, good practice, gaps and related forward work plan' (VKPP, 2023). However, without a single definition for governance within the public sector, where these structures and systems can be more complex due to legislation, structural change, and constitutional change, (CIPFA, 2016b) it is difficult to have any consistency in policing.

The challenge but also requirement for police governance to find a balance between accountability and fear of making mistakes or blame culture, was highlighted in the Policing Vision 2025 (APCC & NPCC, 2016). Blame cultures cause a lack of psychological safety or mutual trust to report concerns, inhibiting organisational learning and resulting in typical responses of covering up, sanction, or development of new rules (Metcalfe, 2017). Policing in England and Wales has a variety of formal processes to hold forces to account. For example, Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspections are a key mechanism for measuring police effectiveness. However, 'governance' whilst not being a specific theme investigated during an inspection, does consistently get highlighted within more recent inspection reports, and there is an association between what is perceived as effective or ineffective governance with related inspection judgements.

Aims of the project

The project aims to undertake a review of existing governance arrangements regarding vulnerability within policing with opportunities to streamline and improve current national, regional, and local approaches. The project is linked to, and supports, two other national work strands:

- The development of a new National Vulnerability and Public Protection Strategy, led by the VKPP, which builds upon the National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP).

- The Professionalising Public Protection Programme - led by the College of Policing which seeks to review and enhance training and leadership across policing at every level with an appropriate accreditation offer relating to public protection.

The overall aim of the project is to create a product that enables forces to understand and identify:

- Governance definition.

- Principles of effective governance including leadership and culture.

- Functions/responsibilities of governance structures.

- Interconnections from local to national governance arrangements.

Methodology

This project aims to looking at policing's national, regional, and local governance arrangements. We are not seeking to review the effectiveness of NPCC structures; however, we wish to be able to describe the system and the context in which decision making occurs and information flows at a local level in response to national drivers.

The review will seek to combine research, scanning, and analysis of information gained from insight review activity conducted within participating forces, to inform its findings.

The project initially conducted a horizon scanning exercise to see what information was available regarding governance, with a particular focus on governance within the public sector. The horizon scanning included open-source information, as well as information that was available through the College of Policing. Through this the project was able to identify the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Association (CIPFA), a professional accountancy body specialised in public services. As a royal chartered body and registered charity, CIPFA provide advisory and consultancy services to professionals within a wide range of public sector settings including the police. Several documents relating to governance within the public sector were identified that on further analysis were seen to be relevant and supported of the aims of the project.

The project then sought to engage with forces to explore their views on good governance and the challenges to this, as well as where possible provide documentation as to what their current governance looks like. A survey was sent to 43 forces and the project received 26 responses.

Police forces across the nine regions of England were invited to voluntarily take part in the governance project. The invitation and agreements set the terms of the project explaining the significant opportunities that exist to develop and coordinate this learning and that from other national programmes of work.

The project aimed to undertake an insight review within one Force for each of the nine regional areas. Participating forces were asked to submit all documents in relation to their existing governance structures and processes, these were then analysed and used to inform the context of the insight reviews. Observations of key meetings related to the Force governance structures were then completed again to add further context. A two-day visit to the Force area was arranged to conduct a series of interviews. Due to operational commitments the ambition was not fully fulfilled, and whilst 9 insight reviews were conducted, the Northwest and London region were not included.

Terms of Agreement were accepted between the VKPP and the participating forces.

Limitations

The scope of the project was to look at policing's local governance arrangements regarding vulnerability. Recognising the importance of incorporating partners to ensure effective governance arrangements are aligned and of benefit for all involved, time limitations within the project did not allow for a deeper insight review of partnerships to be completed.

This project recognises that good governance is a dynamic and continuous process that extends beyond the articulation of principles. Whilst governance frameworks provide the conditions and lever to enable change with control and most guidance refers to principles, processes and challenges, suggesting a prescriptive approach, this would be misleading. The real challenge for governance lies in the way that forces fully embody, how services and relationships evolve, and how they learn from experience. An overemphasis on processes and criteria for success fails to recognise that good governance is a reflection of the culture of the organisation.

Whilst every effort has been made to develop a detailed and comprehensive report, it is important to recognise that the project was operating in a dynamic environment subject to various changes. By acknowledging the potential for change we aim to ensure the project remains responsive, and aligned even as circumstances evolve.

Sample

The project team provided a list of suggested interviewees based on role and each of the nine forces self-selected. Each police force then self-selected who they believed to be best placed to answer the questions relating to governance and vulnerability.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by members of the VKPP and VKKP CADRE members, interviewees were asked a series of questions using a designed question set based on CIPFA principles, with a particular focus behaviours and outcomes that evidence good governance in practice. There are seven core principles identified (Figure 1.), these have been developed to encourage governing bodies and individuals within the public sector to be consistent with legislation and government policy governance requirements, act in public interest, avoid self-interest, and override an organisational interest if necessary (IFAC & CIPFA, 2014b).
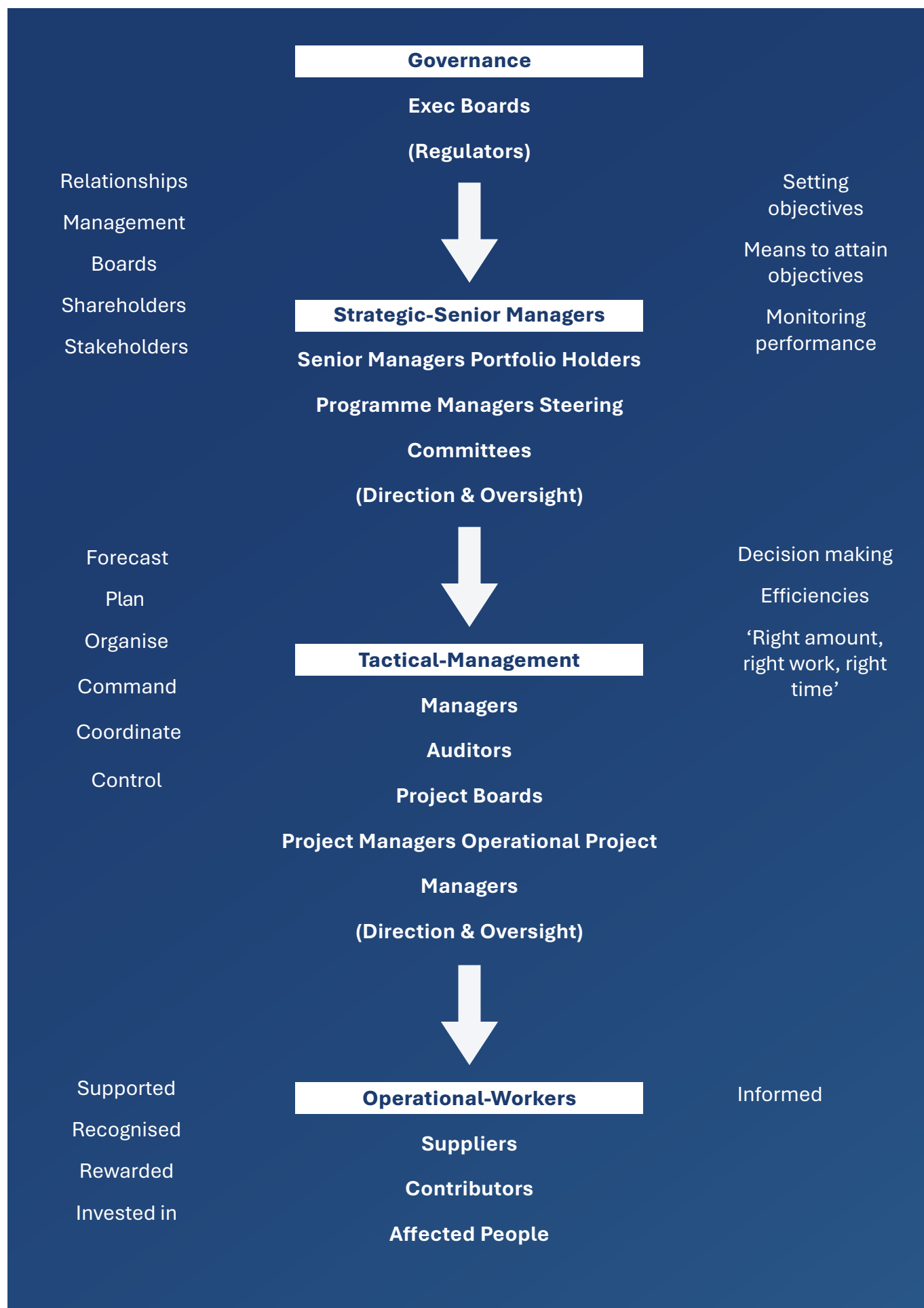
Achieving the Intended Outcomes 'While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times'

Figure 1. A diagram illustrating how the principles of good governance inter-relate (IFAC & CIPFA, 2014a).

Appendix 1 shows questions for the first two force visits, with Appendix 2 showing the updated questions that were updated for the remaining seven police force visits. Questions asked during the interviews were based on knowledge, experience, and understanding of governance. Other considerations were their current role and responsibilities. Therefore, not all questions were asked within every interview. As forces have differing structures based on resource availability, and within those structures are variations to the responsibilities held, a 'general' management structure chart **(Figure 2.)** was used to guide the interviews.

Figure 2: General management structure

Governance

Exec Boards

(Regulators)

Relationships
Management
Boards
Shareholders
Stakeholders

Setting objectives

Means to attain objectives

Monitoring performance

Strategic-Senior Managers

Senior Managers Portfolio Holders

Programme Managers Steering

Committees

(Direction & Oversight)

Forecast
Plan
Organise
Command
Coordinate
Control

Decision making

Efficiencies

'Right amount, right work, right time'

Tactical-Management

Managers

Auditors

Project Boards

Project Managers Operational Project

Managers

(Direction & Oversight)

Supported
Recognised
Rewarded
Invested in

Operational-Workers

Suppliers

Contributors

Affected People

Informed

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this interview analysis when considering its findings. An expansive list of Interview Methodology Caveats is included in Appendix (4).

Analysis

Analysis was conducted on written notes from the interviews. Identified emerging practice was then mapped against governance themes and CIPFA principles to produce a score (see Appendix 3).

Each score was then associated to a colour code shown in Table 1. A light-yellow colour showed limited evidence during the interview with a darker green indicating broader evidence discussed during the interview.

For this section of interview analysis, only positive and emerging practice was acknowledged. This is due to the limitations of the research timeframes, scope limitations, and the overall objective to support the National Vulnerability Strategy (see Appendix 4). Areas where gaps were identified and where further focus is required are highlighted within the **further analysis from insight review leads section of this report.**

Table 1: Outcome label
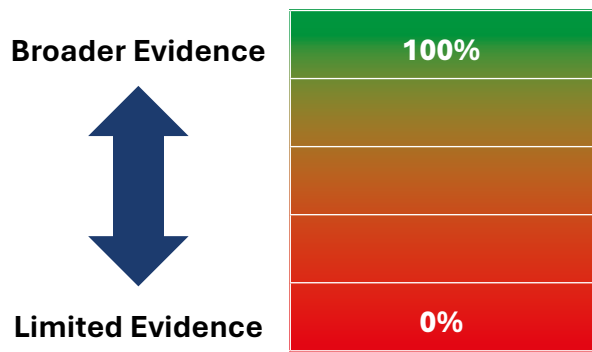
Results

The results are based on the responses from each interview across the nine participating forces across the country. A total of 156 interviews were conducted.

The results are broken down in to two sections, firstly showing the alignment to the VKPP governance question set, and secondary aligned to the CIPFA Principles of governance. Each table below shows each theme/principle in total for the nine participating forces combined, before being broken down by level of responsibility of the interviewee.

Table 2 shows the national combined response of all the forces and all levels combined:

Table 2: National outcomes (Staff combined)

Governance Question Themes	Outcome
Collaboration	47%
Strategic Direction	79%
Communication	34%
Leadership	42%
Risk Management	29%
Performance	27%
Data	24%
Training and Development	36%
Adaptability	37%
Strategic Planning	18%
Feedback	22%
Decision Making	26%
Audit	28%
Compliance	32%

The governance question themes are then broken down into levels of responsibility and shown on table 3.

Highest scores

- Performance (Operational)
- Collaboration (Tactical/Strategic)
- Strategic direction (Strategic/Tactical)
- Communication and adaptability (Operational)

Lowest scores

- Training and development (Operational)
- Audit (Operational/Tactical)
- Feedback (Tactical)
- Compliance (Strategic/Tactical and Operational)
- Risk management (Operational)
- Decision making (Strategic)

Table 3: National outcomes broken down by level of responsibility.

Governance Question Themes	Strategic	Tactical	Operational
Strategic Direction	52%	51%	38%
Collaboration	53%	58%	44%
Data	34%	38%	35%
Communication	46%	36%	50%
Adaptability	28%	26%	50%
Strategic Planning	32%	24%	30%
Decision Making	21%	26%	40%
Performance	36%	34%	60%
Risk Management	45%	39%	20%
Compliance	20%	18%	15%
Audit	27%	14%	14%
Feedback	31%	14%	29%
Leadership	44%	31%	33%
Training and Development	39%	21%	8%

Strategic level interviewees were able to demonstrate consideration and provide responses across the range of governance themes. This coverage of consideration reduced as interviews took place with tactical leads and further still with operational leads. Of note however, consideration of performance featured highest amongst interviews with operational levels.

The interviewees responses were then aligned to the CIPFA principles, firstly with all levels of responsibility combined, followed by the breakdown by police levels of responsibility. In both sets of analysis, the highest scoring CIPFA principle based on the interviewee's response was principle **B - ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.**

Across all levels, principle **C - defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits** scored the lowest.

Further analysis from insight reviews leads:

Responses to vulnerability

Despite the College of Policing definition for vulnerability allowing for the broader understanding and ownership across all areas of policing, the reviews found that

Vulnerability is mainly led by Public Protection Units (PPU) or Safeguarding leads. Whilst there was evidence of policing teams having a vast understanding of vulnerability, the direction and focus is often owned and decided within PPU and safeguarding governance structures. Therefore, creating a disconnect for local policing teams in relation to the Force strategic aims and objectives for vulnerability working. This risk increases when local policing is not included within those governance structures and processes.

Organisational governance often focuses upon the dominant strands of vulnerability, this was in most cases aligned to national agendas, and were lacking the ability to connect and bring oversight of the complete range of topics by not aligning with NVAP opportunity for stronger evidence is missed.

Several Forces were in the process of developing vulnerability strategy. At a strategic level there was an understanding of the direction and approach, with examples of forces redefining their approach/cultural intent in clear concise manner.

Structures

Forces recognised that existing governance structures are not fully fit for purpose and that changes are needed to effectively manage both local and national expectations.

Some had begun to make improvements, guided by executive oversight. Progress was supported by the introduction of simpler structures, streamlined meetings, clearer lines of accountability, and empowered leaders who were trusted to influence decision-making.

A range of governance models were observed, typically shaped by available resources. However, most vulnerability-related plans were aspirational and lacked robust business planning or effective monitoring frameworks.

The creation of various governance structures to manage different elements of the 'ask' has added to an already complex governance picture. While this brought some benefits for operational oversight of vulnerability, it was less effective in driving broader organisational change.

There were also inconsistencies in roles and responsibilities. Staff working within Public Protection Units tended to be more closely connected to governance structures for vulnerability than others.

Alignment and opportunities to direct focus often emerged through relationships rather than formal processes. Momentum and drive were more evident where there was clear executive ownership or oversight of vulnerability-related issues, particularly when portfolios included crime or had strong thematic alignment.

Hub-and-spoke models were not always inclusive and could be seen as exclusive. While thematic leads could take ownership of specific areas of business, they often lacked control over the resources required for delivery. Their ability to influence activity was frequently dependent on the priorities and buy-in of local operational leads.

In many cases, governance structures were either absent or not perceived as supportive of the intended outcomes. Reviews identified instances where standard agreements or procedures were bypassed, potentially conflicting with the overall aims and objectives.

More positive outcomes were observed where governance structures were simpler and agendas were aligned around a common purpose. This approach improved confidence among those involved and provided greater clarity on roles and responsibilities.

National Agendas

At times, existing governance structures were bypassed, and opportunities to involve enabling services in supporting delivery were missed. This may reflect a lack of robustness or flexibility within current structures to accommodate evolving needs. As a result, some forces established separate governance frameworks in response to national agendas, missing key opportunities to include enabling functions early and integrate existing workstreams—ultimately reducing the potential for impact. This placed additional pressure on thematic leads, who were required to focus on building governance frameworks rather than delivering outcomes.

The lack of succession planning, along with what was described as 'knee-jerk' responses to national priorities and local demand, often resulted in short-term, reactive approaches. A majority of forces adopted an 'operational order' style of response to national directives, rather than applying a structured project management approach. These initiatives often lost momentum once initial enthusiasm waned, despite continuing to consume resources and affect public perception of the organisation.

In one force, recent changes to governance arrangements demonstrated early signs of positive practice. Incoming work was overseen by the Strategic Vulnerability Board, which coordinated enabling functions to map across existing activity, use data to build a localised picture, align objectives, support change management, and facilitate performance monitoring. The most appropriate lead was identified to focus on delivery and resource allocation, while the Board maintained oversight and supported risk management and quality assurance. While still in its early stages, this approach showed promise.

Most regional governance structures were not perceived as very influential. They were mentioned less often than expected, and where referenced, they lacked clarity, defined purpose, or strategic direction. They were often viewed as forums for information exchange rather than decision-making—representing a missed opportunity when compared to governance models for areas such as Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) or Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Analytical Capability

The reviews found limited evidence of links between forces and regional or national analytical functions. Forces were not seen to fully utilise these resources to access broader data sets or to support the development of a localised understanding of vulnerability.

Some forces were able to provide analytical profiles relating to specific areas of vulnerability, typically in response to national priorities. However, there was a an absence of profiles for vulnerability as a whole or less prominent strands.

There was also limited use of internal analytical teams, with a general lack of understanding around their potential to support assessments of force capability and capacity. As a result, analytical resources were not being used to their full potential, impacting decision-making, risk management, operational efficiency, and organisational accountability.

While most forces had access to significant volumes of data—both internally and through partnerships—this was not being effectively translated into insights to inform the risk landscape around vulnerability. Beyond the Force Management Statement (FMS), there was little evidence of analytical functions being used for forecasting or future planning.

Performance

The reviews found that while some systems used to support performance management are becoming more sophisticated, they remain largely focused on quantitative data. There was limited use of qualitative data to assess impact or inform learning. At the tactical level, performance monitoring was often viewed as a data compliance exercise, lacking depth, reflection, or a qualitative approach.

In some cases, outside of national reporting requirements, forces failed to benchmark performance expectations for new projects. This made it difficult to track progress or measure benefits realised. There was also a noticeable absence of regular challenge to underperformance or structured reflection on whether delivery was meeting its intended objectives—and, if not, whether change was needed.

Governance structures not allowing for the application of normal controls, checks and balances to projects which can operate at arm's length. – Not sure what this means? How about this - Additionally, some governance structures did not allow for the application of standard project controls, checks, and balances. As a result, some projects operated at arm's length, limiting accountability and performance management.

Leadership

The visibility and engagement of Chief Officer Teams, whether in-person or digital enabled, was widely recognised as a positive factor. While there is still progress to be made, particularly in distinguishing leadership from day-to-day management, interviewees expressed strong support for the direction being taken. This included recognition of the leadership agenda, investment in development, and support for both current and future leaders.

The background and experience of individual leaders had a noticeable impact on the direction and prioritisation of work around vulnerability. However, some leadership roles, particularly within public protection and safeguarding, carried multiple responsibilities. While this could support professional development, the effective time management and ability to delegate, to avoid negative impacts on focus and decision making, was not forthcoming.

During the interviews there was evidence that relationships, rather than formal processes, were the key drivers for prioritisation and collaboration across business areas.

The absence of a clear 'golden thread' connecting strategic aims to operational delivery was significant theme. Understanding of vulnerability-related priorities often stopped at Superintendent or Chief Inspector level, with further disconnects observed, particularly in areas outside Public Protection Units (PPU) and Safeguarding.

Learning

The reviews identified evidence of gaps and weaknesses being overlooked, with limited assurance gained from internal stakeholders and external partners involved in service delivery.

There was also limited evidence of learning being captured and applied across vulnerability thematic areas, including from statutory reviews and case audits. Current governance and operational structures did not effectively support reflection or enable the identification of wider learning opportunities.

Communication

Communication strategies specific to vulnerability were not clearly visible across the forces reviewed. Common issues highlighted included duplication of key messages, lack of awareness of force governance arrangements, and ongoing change activity.

Operational staff frequently reported feeling overwhelmed by the volume of communications, particularly via email, which inadvertently reduced their awareness and understanding.

Collaboration

While partnership governance arrangements were outside the scope of this review due to their complexity and scale, it was clear that local partnerships had a significant impact on policing, particularly in relation to demand, capacity, and expectations.

There was some evidence of forces working inclusively with partners such as local authorities, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), and Mayors. Where agendas were not always aligned, strong communication and relationships helped to reduce disconnects. In some cases, national agenda created opportunities to support local partnership working.

There was a mixed picture in terms of internal collaboration. Some had effective, holistic oversight arrangements that included enabling services and supported coordinated delivery. However, in other cases, there was a disconnect leading to inefficient processes, particularly around force-wide change and improvement activity.

Voice of the Victim

A significant amount of work is being undertaken to capture the voice of the victim, including public-facing surveys, face to face contact with investigating officers, and increasingly through third-party providers such as commissioned services. However, there was limited evidence of this information being collectively collated and analysed in a way that meaningfully informs service delivery, supports strategic decision-making, contributes to organisational learning, or is communicated back to victims and the public to build trust and confidence.

Conclusion

While there is broad agreement that good governance is essential to the effective policing of vulnerability, the research and insight reviews highlight the ongoing absence of a common definition and governance framework across policing and its key partners. This gap limits the ability to align governance structures while still accommodating national, regional, and local differences. Similarly, there is a lack of consistent understanding across forces regarding vulnerability and public protection. Definitions and interpretations varied, including in relation to the role of partnerships.

Drawing from the analysis of existing governance definitions and the findings from this project, the following definition is proposed for the governance of vulnerability in policing:

"Governance encompasses the set of responsibilities, practices, policies, and procedures exercised by an agency to provide strategic direction, achieve objectives, manage risks, and use resources responsibly, with a clear leadership and accountability structure."
(VKPP Governance Project, 2024)

Political changes add complexity to an already complicated landscape and are likely to continue in the future, meaning that any governance in policing should be able to adapt to the changing landscape. Long-term sustainability must also be a priority, particularly in light of the intrinsic link between governance and public financial management.

To support this, a shift in focus from rigid structures to core principles is recommended. By embedding principles such as accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness, the police service can enhance the quality of service delivery and also strengthen public trust and confidence in the police.

CIPFA Principles
A - behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
B - ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
C - defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
D - determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
E - developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
F - managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
G - implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Recommendations

Following the completion of this project, it is requested that the following recommendations are considered to enable improved practice and outcomes at a national, regional and local level.

National

Despite there being definitions available relating to Safeguarding and Vulnerability, forces still struggle to understand what is 'in and out of scope' and still lack understanding of opportunities for agendas to be aligned. Public Protection and Safeguarding Units are being seen as separate entities within forces, this is further compounded by a lack of public protection definition. This confusion has the risk of extending to local multi-agency arrangements. Whilst clear definitions are crucial to ensure mutual understanding and efficiency it is the alignment of national agenda's that will provide most opportunity for forces to have a clearer understanding when delivering. Alignment will enhance communication, increase efficiency, improve collaboration, enable better decision making, provide clear direction and focus leading to better quality outcomes. There are some significant opportunities associated with the planned development of a national centre for public protection in the College of Policing to improve and coordinate the offer and ask to policing, which the findings from this report should inform as part of its design and future work plan. A key part of this involves defining the relationship, operating practice and support to NPCC leads who lead on individual thematic areas. Many NPCC leads are required to operate with limited dedicated capacity which is likely to be a barrier in this area.

Recommendation 1 - Agree a definition for public protection that provides direction as to what is in scope and gives clarity regarding terminology. This work is currently being progressed by the VKPP.

Recommendation 2 - A debrief session on the findings of this report with members of the Violence Public Protection Board (VPP) to identify opportunities to improve current practice, align national agendas and inform the design and future operating practice of the proposed College of Policing Public Protection Centre.

Governance is becoming more prevalent within national, local, and joint inspection reports. There is an increased focus upon Force governance structures and processes within inspections and other review processes, with recommendations being made with an expectation of forces to make improvements. At this time there is a lack of understanding of the inspection criteria and frameworks being used to assess effectiveness.

Recommendation 3 - The College of Policing and VKPP to publish an agreed national definition and related principles, with consideration of the CIPFA work and findings of this report to underpin responses and inspection methodologies.

Despite the numerous offers of training and development available to forces there remains a lack of professional development opportunities regarding effective governance, behaviours associated with leadership responsibilities within governance structures, and confidence to apply. Officers and Staff working within force structures are only exposed to governance at higher level ranks and grades. This knowledge is only being gained through experiential learning and not through traditional, academic, or theoretical methods. Whilst this has its benefits such as active engagement, enhanced critical thinking and real-world application, there are risks including inconsistency, misinformation and is dependent on the individual.

Recommendation 4 -   To more effectively prepare and equip policing leaders by integrating learning and principles of effective governance into planned revisions of the PPLSP course as part of the Professionalising Public Protection programme. Opportunities for principles relating to effective governance to be more broadly integrated into wider leadership curriculum and be accessible to operational roles to enhance opportunities for understanding and development should be considered.

Regional

There is evidence to suggest that there is a lack of regional opportunities for public protection/ vulnerability as a collective and where there was some evidence of this being undertaken for areas including VAWG and Op Soteria, this did not cover the full breadth of public protection or vulnerability. Forces connections to regional governance structures were inconsistent and not creating the opportunities for the relaying of information. Not having a regional structure presents several risks including, strategic misalignment, over centralisation and limited innovation.

Recommendation 5 -   Develop and implement a regional structure with commonality to other policing areas, this will help to mitigate these risks and ensure Forces remain responsive, effective, and efficient across all of it operating regions. The VKPP have a developing proposal in this space to scope, test and deliver in collaboration with other national policing programmes.

Local

Within forces reviewed there was a mixed picture regarding ownership of Vulnerability. This led to several risks and challenges being identified including, misalignment of interests, focus upon short term gains, reduced accountability, potential for conflict which negatively impacts on performance and overall making some governance processes less robust. Where there was Executive ownership of the Vulnerability agenda, more benefits were realised including alignment of interests, enhanced accountability, and long-term focus where needed. Collectively, this drives better performance and fosters a culture of shared success and outcomes.

Recommendation 6 -   Forces should use the National Vulnerability Strategy as a benchmark and seek the support of internal enabling functions, such as analytical resources to translate into local delivery. All Force Vulnerability Strategies should have Executive ownership.

Work of the project found that there was an absence of enabling functions within governance structures. Due to the lack of project management in forces, enabling functions were not being considered to inform planning and delivery at the earliest opportunity. Most of this was down to the lack of knowledge and understanding of what those enabling functions could provide to support the work. The key risk identified in excluding enabling functions were - lack of expertise and specialist knowledge, lack of standardisation and quality assurance, breakdown in communication and difficulty in identifying risk early. There was also evidence to suggest that this could also lead to failure to adhere to organisational policies, and inadequate change management that could lead to project disruption. This was particularly evident for analytical functions within forces where the capability was not being fully realised and was performing a statistician function rather than an analytical function.

Recommendation 7 - The Police Executive Leadership Programme (PELP) provides an opportunity for executive leaders to consider the principles of effective governance. By systematically taking steps to implement principles into practice forces can ensure their governance principles are effectively operationalised, and that governance structures create the conditions for creating an environment where governance principles are naturally adopted, practiced and embedded into the organisational culture.

Recommendation 8 - Project management frameworks should be considered for the implementation and management of all national agendas, which are inclusive of relevant enabling functions including analytics, change management, workforce development, IT, and communications. This will provide forces with the essential support, expertise and resources that will help to ensure projects are planned, delivered, and completed successfully. This will also enhance efficiency, consistency and quality whilst also managing risk and ensuring compliance.

The project was offered minimal evidence to suggest that forces had a formal process for the review of governance processes. Where there was evidence, these reviews were in most cases a reaction to an inspection, changes within management or a new area of business. In the absence of a formal review process the risks and challenges were outdated practices, lack of accountability, misalignment between strategy and goals, lack of oversight and missed opportunities. There was also cultural stagnation and inefficiencies that led to unnecessary bureaucracy and slower decision making. Inevitably there was an erosion of trust leading to governance being seen as a barrier rather than an enabler.

Recommendation 9 - Forces to conduct a 'Strategic Preparedness' exercise to support the implementation of the Vulnerability Strategy. Best practice would then be for forces to conduct an annual review of their governance structures using the preparation of their Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and Force Management Statement (FMS) as an opportune time for this to be conducted.

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Appendices
Appendix 1 - Question set one

PRINCIPLE - C & D **THEME - KNOWLEDGE** How is governance perceived in the organisation? Is it regarded as an enabler in terms of innovation or a barrier to it?	**CONSIDERATIONS:** Clear lines of responsibility Shared understanding Organisational memory Effective use of Data & Intelligence products to drive priorities and inform risk management Delivering outcomes Escalation Clear, effective leadership Clarity of purpose Strategic direction Time and energy Understanding the 'why' - Avoidance of: • Difficulty describing outcomes • Knee jerk responses • Priorities that are too broad • Blame culture Supporting mechanisms Analysis of data Performance monitoring EDI Considerations (Internally & Externally)
PRINCIPLE - E & F **THEME - OUR PEOPLE** How has the organisation tried to embed good governance in its culture? Has this been successful?	**CONSIDERATIONS:** Clear leads Lines of accountability Capacity to undertake role Understanding of arrangements (self) Oversight Communication Risk/Threat management
PRINCIPLE - G **THEME - INDIVIDUALS** Are the benefits of good governance transparent?	Better informed and improved decision making. Clear demonstration of integrity and probity Clear focus on outcomes Developing a risk management culture.

PRINCIPLE - B THEME - Partners & Communities How are the benefits of good governance communicated to those who may not be aware of them?	Engagement Scrutiny Public facing communication Victims EDI considerations
PRINCIPLE - E & F THEME - OUR PEOPLE	Open responses Briefings Shared vision/outcomes

How does the organisation engage with its staff and partners on governance and how might this be improved? Do those involved feel free to raise any concerns?	Influencing delivery Raising concerns/escalation - Confidence in doing so, awareness of processes. Communication plans Open sessions/Consultation Wider engagement/representation/consideration of smaller partners Benefits/Values Any agreements EDI considerations
PRINCIPLE - C, D THEME - INDIVIDUALS Is the organisation's code accessible and easy to understand? (Vision/ Strategy/Objectives)	Do you understand your Force: • VISION • PLAN • STRATEGY • PRIORITIES Effective use of Data & Intelligence products to identify root causes and support problem solving interventions. EDI is this incorporated. How does this influence your work? How does your role help to achieve?
PRINCIPLE - B THEME - PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES How are good governance principles communicated to the organisation's contractors and partners? How effective is that communication?	Shared vision/strategy Workforce investment Capability/capacity Risk management Performance Alignment to internal governance processes Inspection regimes Progress updates

PRINCIPLE - A, E, F, G **THEME - INDIVIDUALS & OUR PEOPLE** How is the importance of maintaining standards communicated? Is it successful?	Improvements Reviews Inspections Audit & Scrutiny What mechanisms are used? Performance frameworks (accessibility/systems to support) Victims voice influence standards/service delivery
PRINCIPLE - E, F **THEME - OUR PEOPLE** Is appropriate induction and training available to those who need it?	Scrutiny/Audit Counter fraud and corruption strategies Standards & ethical principles Value for money Risk management Strategic planning Resource allocation Monitoring & Performance management

	Consultations Communication strategies Effective management of partnerships Alignment of objectives between organisation (internal/external) Leadership/Development Programmes/CPD College of Policing Peer support/Handovers Coaching/Mentoring EDI - Are training opportunities equitable
PRINCIPLE - E **THEME - OUR PEOPLE** Does the concept of good governance have support from the top of the organisation, i.e. the PCC or the chief constable? How is this demonstrated?	Connectivity v's Visibility Honest/reflective Self-critical about mistakes made & lessons learnt/ No blame culture Ensures everyone's understanding of roles played within governance Supportive Empowering Inclusive & Supportive environment Explicit accountability and ownership Consistency & Stability Realistic expectations - Time and capacity

PRINCIPLE - G **THEME - INDIVIDUALS** How does the organisation ensure that governance structures continue to be up to date and relevant? Examples include decision making frameworks, roles and responsibilities and schemes of delegation or consent.	Reviews (Governance) Directory of strategic and thematic ownerships Evidence of policy/protocols reviews Risk management and improvement planning Learning Decision making frameworks Scrutiny of governance (Internal/External)
PRINCIPLE - F **THEME - OUR PEOPLE** What is the monitoring Officer's role in enabling and facilitating good governance?	How is this role fulfilled? By who? Doing what? Visibility Two-way engagement So what/benefits of? Supportive
PRINCIPLE - B **THEME - PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES** How is appropriate social media and other consultation and communication techniques, information, and communications technology (ICT) being used to promote good governance?	Increasing transparency, information, and accountability Facilitating accurate decision making and public participation Enhancing the efficient delivery of public goods and services Oversight of ICT Right skills will be required by the organisations both during and after implementation. ICT security EDI - accessibility

Anything else: is there anything you would like to add that you feel we have missed? How did you find the interview? Do you have any feedback on its delivery? We will send a Smart Survey link and would be grateful for you to send your thoughts.

Appendix 2 - Question set two

Question Set

Strategic Direction - Is there a clear commitment to the Force's mission and values?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
How are the Force vision/priorities decided?	Are you aware of how the Force vision/strategy decided?
Is there an overarching vulnerability strategy? Who is included in creating the vision/priorities/strategy?	Are you aware of who is included in creating the vision/strategy/priorities?
How are governance structures aligned to the vision/strategy/ priorities?	Are/How you made aware of your roles & responsibilities in achieving?
How are roles & responsibilities defined?	How is this communicated?
How are people held to account?	How are you held to account in relation to the Force vision/strategy/priorities?
How is this communicated?	Is there accessible information of strategic and thematic ownerships for areas of vulnerability?
Are there clear routes of escalation?	Are there clear routes of escalation?
Is there a diverse representation throughout the governance structures?	

Collaboration - How is alignment of differing business areas considered among differing governance structures and other stakeholders to achieve common goals?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
What is the engagement? (internally & with partners)	Is there clear alignment across operational business areas? Are responsibilities clear?
Are the Shared vision/strategy/ priorities collective/inclusive of partners?	Is there evidence of working together? (Joint meetings/Joint working)
Is there evidence of Workforce investment, Joint working, and consideration for capability/capacity to achieve?	Is there shared learning?
	What are the benefits of this?
Where is performance, Risk management, progress overseen?	Is this seen as supportive?
Is there a clear alignment to other internal governance processes? (Joint/representation at meetings)	
Are partners aware of Inspection regimes? How are members of the public communicated with? (Including Victims/Offenders) Is the learning shared?	
In relation to the OPCC, what is the monitoring Officer's role in enabling and facilitating good governance?	
How is this role fulfilled? By who? Doing what?	
Is there evidence of two-way engagement?	
What are the benefits of this? Is this seen as supportive?	

Data - Is there effective use of Data & Intelligence products to drive priorities and inform risk management & deliver outcomes using performance monitoring/accountability

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
Are analytical products used, such as community/problem profiles?	Are the analytical products such as community/problem profiles that help to inform your work?
How is analytical data used to inform decision making?	How is information & analytical data used?
Is the data is accessible/available?	Is the information/data is accessible/available?
Are there performance frameworks?	Are there performance frameworks?

Communication - is it open, transparent, shared, inclusive of all stakeholders (Internal/External)

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
Is the Shared vision/strategy/priorities collective/inclusive of partners?	How is information regarding vulnerability relayed to you?
Is this reflected within local agreements/commissioned contracts?	How are you made aware of objectives, current work regarding vulnerability?
How do Victims voices influence standards/service delivery?	What methods are used?
What is the engagement? (internally & with partners). How are members of the public communicated with? (Including Victims/Offenders)	How does this information you have access to inform/influence your everyday work?
What are the EDI considerations?	
Is the learning shared?	
How is appropriate social media and other consultation and communication techniques, information, and communications technology (ICT) being used to promote good governance? Do the communication methods used increasing transparency, information, and accountability? Facilitating accurate decision making and public participation?	
What is the consideration for EDI? (Internally/Externally, consider accessibility)	

Adaptability - How does the force adapt to changes both nationally, regionally, locally?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
Is there evidence of forecasting? How does the Force prepare itself for future demand? How are national/regional/local drivers, implemented within the Force? (This may be National Policing agendas' examples being Op Soteria/VAWG, Working Together) How are serious case reviews managed in terms of learning/changes?	Are responses to national, regional, local drivers made clear to you?

Strategic Planning - How does the force ensure that decisions and actions contribute to the overall objectives?

STRATEGIC
How do you ensure that all decisions regarding vulnerability align to the Force's vision? Are there regular reviews in place? How is impact of decisions/reviews assessed including short- and long-term measures?

Decision Making - Are processes and responsibilities clear? Do they involve all relevant stakeholders? Is there consideration for diverse perspectives? Is there consideration of ethical standards?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
What factors are considered when making decisions? How do you prioritise? What supports the decision making? How do you ensure your decisions are aligned to the long-term goals? How do you ensure the decisions are actioned? Ho wis organisational memory being used to influence decision making? Do areas of business/people feel better informed and reassured around improved decision making? Are there clear routes of escalation? Inclusion - Are open discussions encouraged and considered before making decisions?	Are you informed as to how decisions are made in relation to vulnerability that effects your everyday working? Do you feel reassured confident in the decision making processes? Are there clear routes of feedback/escalation?

Performance - How is performance monitored and assessed? How are areas for improvement identified?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
Are there clear accessible performance frameworks? Is there a focus on the strategy/vision/priorities and is there accountability in relation to achieving the outcomes? Is oversight provided and challenges made regarding progress? How is performance evaluated? What role does feedback play in performance management? How do you ensure fairness?	How is your unit's performance managed? (We are suggesting as a collective not as an individual for this question) Are you held accountable? How does this influence your work? How does your role help to achieve?

Risk Management - Effectiveness of being able to Identify, analyse and mitigate potential risks.

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
How is risk identified?	When you identify a risk how is this highlighted?
Is there oversight/ownership? How do you monitor and review risk?	Are there clear routes of escalation?
What are the internal controls? Is there a risk management framework?	Is risk management available through training?
Are there clear routes of escalation?	
How is risk management integrated into strategic planning to ensure it is addressed into the planning?	

Compliance - How does the Force stay informed and comply with relevant laws, legislation, regulations to maintain legal and ethical standards?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
How does the organisation ensure compliance? How are policies and procedures established and reviewed?	Is there accessibility in relation to the policies and procedures required to support you/your unit?
What measures are taken to stay updated on changes?	What measures are taken to stay updated on changes?
How are non-compliance matters managed?	
How is effectiveness measured?	

Audit & Scrutiny - How is the importance of maintaining standards within governance structures communicated? How does the organisation ensure that governance structures continue to be up to date and relevant?

STRATEGIC
How are improvements made to the current governance structures? Are there regular reviews of the governance structures? And work undertaken by those involved? Are there regular audit & scrutiny processes? What mechanisms are used? How do Victims voice influence standards/service delivery? Who else is involved? Does the force have clear improvement planning? Is learning factored into the planning?

Feedback - What mechanisms are in place for obtaining feedback both internally and externally to gauge satisfaction, address concerns, and continuously improve governance practices?

STRATEGIC/OPERATIONAL
How does the organisation engage with its staff and partners on governance and how might this be improved? Do those involved feel free to raise any concerns? Golden thread - How the vision/mission defines corporate plans, defines strategic and operational plans ultimately creating team/individual objectives and then how those objectives and plans can move back up to influence the vision? Can concerns be raised and escalated? - Is there confidence in doing so, awareness of processes to do so? Are there clear communication plans? Any evidence of open sessions/consultation? How does the force facilitate wider engagement/representation/consideration of smaller partners? How is this learning taken back into the governance processes? What do they feel the benefits/values are in doing so? Evidence of EDI considerations?

Leadership - Does the concept of good governance have support from the top of the organisation, i.e. the PCC or the chief constable? How is this demonstrated?

STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
What is the level of connectivity and visibility? Does leadership appear to be honest/reflective, and self-critical about mistakes made & lessons learnt/no blame culture? Does the executive ensure everyone understands roles played within governance? Is the leadership seen as supportive and empowering? Does the Force create an inclusive & supportive environment? Is diversity a key factor in succession planning for leaders? Is there explicit accountability and ownership? Is there consistency & stability (as much as can be achieved)? Are the expectations realistic (Time and capacity)?	What is the level of connectivity and visibility? Does leadership appear to be honest/reflective, and self-critical about mistakes made & lessons learnt/no blame culture? Does the executive provide clarity in relation to expectations? Is the leadership seen as supportive and empowering? Does the Force create an inclusive & supportive environment? Is there explicit accountability and ownership? Is there consistency & stability (as much as can be achieved)?

Training and Development - Is appropriate induction and training available in relation to governance & leadership?

For this we are trying to establish what provisions exist to support those involved in governance roles (now and future) to ensure there is ongoing education and development.

How is the Force considering succession planning? How is the Force identifying critical positions within the organisation and developing individuals to take on those roles?

Leadership/Development Programmes/CPD, College of Policing, Peer support/Handovers, Coaching/Mentoring.

Supervision, assessments, 1-1's, PDR's

Feedback

EDI - Are training opportunities equitable?

Does training raise awareness to equip people with skills to promote inclusivity?

Appendix 3 - Analysis and coding

During each interview, notes were recorded by the CADRE members present. These notes when then collated and saved to a secure file location within VKPP systems.

The notes were then analysed by the VKPP research team. Based on the interviewee's responses, each positive response* scored and coded. These scores are mapped across to a matrix developed by the research team.

These scores aligned to the matrix for the governance question themes and the CIPFA principles to produce a colour coded score between broader evidence and limited evidence shown in Table1. A light-yellow colour showed limited evidence during the interview with a darker green indicating broader evidence discussed during the interview.

Broader Evidence — 100%

Limited Evidence — 0%

*Positive response = notes stating that the area/theme shows promising practice or is spoken about in a positive light. For the purpose of analysis, only positive and promising practice was acknowledged. This means that any themes discussed in a negative light or not at all were excluded from analysis as to identify areas of promising practice within Forces. This is due to the limitations of the project such as time limits, scope limitations and the overall objective to support the vulnerability strategy (see Appendix 4).

Appendix 4 - Methodology Caveats

The limitations to the project include:

- Potential region and police Force differences, allows us to show a good indication of governance without giving a definitive answer. However, the positive to this is the national reach of the project.

- Selected Staff and Officers may not be Force representative due to time demand, so opportunity sampling with those selected available to interview attending.

- Analysis of positive practice only from notes taken during the interviews (no scores for policy/ strategy that was present but discussed in negative terms).

- Commitment by Forces overall: numbers interviewed varied between levels of responsibility and Forces, Forces' understanding of governance.

- Mapped against CIPFA specific criteria for coding - required certain points to be met.

- Changing question set after two Force visits (mitigated), this may impact themes as these questions are missing during the early question set.

- Incomplete interviews: time constraints, operational commitments, unavailability, staffing issues arising (sickness/absence).

- CADRE recording of information during the interviews is inconsistent and a times lower in quality specific to the individual - coding and analysis is based on this information.

- Quality of initial coding (promising practices, considerations for improvement, gaps)

- Collaboration theme in the old question set - overly negative due to the way the questions were mapped.

NCVPP

National Centre for
Violence Against
Women & Girls and
Public Protection

About the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection

We're a collaboration between the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

We work across law enforcement, the third sector and government to professionalise public protection and strive for a whole systems approach to prevent harm, give confidence to victims, survivors and witnesses to come forward and bring more offenders to justice.

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