



May 2024

The VKPP Bulletin

Coordinating and improving the policing response to vulnerability

Welcome to the May edition of The VKPP Bulletin from the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme designed, to keep you updated with our work.

Dear Colleagues,

I write to you to follow up on the success of the Vulnerability and Exploitation 2024 conference which took place at the College of Policing on March 7th and 8th, jointly hosted by the Hydrant Programme, Tackling Organised Exploitation (TOEX) Programme, and the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme.

The two-day hybrid event, which saw more than 500 delegates from across law enforcement and third-sector organisations attend in person and/or online, heard from many key speakers highlighting the incredible work that has been achieved across the vulnerability space to further protect victims and survivors and bring those who seek to abuse and exploit victims, to justice.

The key theme was one that I have spoken about on many occasions when it comes to the Child Protection and Abuse Investigation - namely of working together across law enforcement, with our stakeholders and partners to provide hope and light to those who have lived in darkness and despair from the abuse they have suffered.

continued over the page



Visit us online:
www.vkpp.org.uk

*Please note
our new
email* →



Email us:
vkpp@college.police.uk

Follow us:



To achieve this, the voices of those with lived experience were essential in instilling improvements for both practitioners and strategic leaders. It sought to deliver on this commitment by:

- Reflecting on the importance of belief
- Asking victims and survivor to trust us
- To use the right language that is compassionate and clear
- Addressing where there have been systems of injustice
- Exploring where we need to improve
- Listening to where we continue on our journey of improvement

Throughout all the sessions, the overarching themes of the Power of the Voice of the Victim/Survivor and the significance of belief of victims reporting abuse were embedded, subtly shaping the discourse and underpinning the collective resolve to address vulnerability and exploitation comprehensively.

As such I thought it helpful to briefly outline some of the key learning's that came from the conference.

The session led by NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood) shed important light on the varying perspectives of justice, particularly from the viewpoint of survivors. Drawing on exclusive contemporary research and their extensive experience supporting survivors, NAPAC effectively solidified these outcomes throughout the session, which encompassed: heightened awareness of the positive impact of appropriate engagement and communication, a deeper understanding of survivors objectives within the justice system and recognition of the importance of open, survivor-led interaction for both policing outcomes and survivor wellbeing.

In addition to this another stand out session featuring former footballers Gary Cliffe, Dion Raitt, and Jamie Cartwright, who all endured non-recent child sexual abuse, served as a poignant reminder of the prominence of the victim's voice and the power of belief. Their courageous accounts vividly illustrated the resilience of survivors and their remarkable ability to navigate through immense adversity. By delving into the lasting effects of such abuse and identifying the key elements that aid survivors in their journey towards recovery and engagement, this session further emphasised the importance of acknowledging and validating survivors' experiences. It underscored that whilst we pursue criminal justice outcomes of those who have inflicted such abhorrent abuse that running powerfully alongside this is the profound impact that belief in survivors can have on their well-being process and empowerment, highlighting the transformative potential of supportive and empathetic responses from individuals and institutions alike.

Integrated within the conference was a presentation that delved into Professionalising Public Protection and work being led through the College of Policing and the VKPP to support front line delivery. This segment also

outlined a vision for enhancing analysis to understand vulnerabilities better and improve policing responses. It emphasised consistency and support for analytical professionals, and collaboration with partners.

An important session delivered by TOEX, showcased its nationally coordinated intelligence/analytics capability, addressing complex threats related to the exploitation of children and vulnerable individuals. With access to data across all 43 forces, TOEX assists in identifying, mapping, and coordinating responses to organised exploitation threats, reinforcing the belief in the effectiveness of collaborative efforts to combat such crimes. They collaborate with ROCU teams to transcend regional boundaries, providing technical solutions that empower investigators in delivering effective outcomes in force investigations amidst evolving challenges. TOEX is currently subject to a national review of its capability reporting into Chiefs Council.

Furthermore, a key session on suspected suicides among individuals with a history of domestic abuse captured the profound impact of the victim's voice. This session provided new insights into changes in identification and reporting, highlighted the risk factors associated with such cases, and stressed the crucial role of multi-agency collaboration in supporting victims and pursuing posthumous prosecutions for domestic abuse-related offences. By centring on the experiences and needs of victims, this session exemplified the importance of amplifying their voices and beliefs in shaping effective responses to domestic abuse and its consequences.

A session regarding the importance of children's voices from the IOPC/Leaders unlocked emphasised the importance of listening to the voices of children to inform both strategic and operational responses. YourPolice. UK, a trusted digital platform engaging young people on social media, highlighted how it builds trust, provides information, and fosters transparency in policing interactions. It adheres to procedural justice theory principles, ensuring honesty and human interaction in its engagement with young people. Additionally, the session discussed Yourpolice.UK 's role as a national police Instagram channel targeting 13 to 16-year-olds, providing free access to content and targeted social media production. These initiatives effectively leverage digital platforms to amplify children's voices and inform policing responses.

Finally, sessions dedicated by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's findings and the work of the Hydrant Team, CPS and National Organised Child Sexual Abuse unit provided invaluable insights into various challenges surrounding safeguarding, prosecution, and victim support. These sessions underscored the



significance of cross-sector partnerships and early engagement with authorities, reflecting a steadfast belief in the collective effort to address child sexual abuse and safeguard vulnerable individuals. The power of the victim's voice and the belief in their experiences were key themes throughout these sessions, highlighting the importance of centring survivors' perspectives in the pursuit of justice and protection.

Events like these conferences provide invaluable opportunities for us to not only listen to the voices of survivors and stakeholders but also to deeply reflect on our practices and take decisive action. Following Chiefs Council in December, much work is ongoing to continue to shape the vulnerability landscape through the Violence and Public Protection Portfolio led by DCC Maggie Blyth. The collective engagement and networking from the conference allowed us to gain new insights, share best practices, and forge stronger

partnerships, all of which are essential steps towards effecting meaningful change in our approach to combating vulnerability and exploitation.

I have attached below for your consideration and dissemination the session notes along with a short compilation of some of the highlights for your use as you consider appropriate within your force - I hope this is of assistance to you.

My continued thanks,

Ian Critchley QPM

Please find sessions, recordings and montage on the following [link](#).

Passcode: **VK070824**

