



**Vulnerability Knowledge
& Practice Programme**



**College of
Policing**

NPCC
National Police Chiefs' Council

National Vulnerability and Public Protection Strategy

A common framework approach to vulnerability including public protection.

Governance

February 2025

This aim of this document is to support forces in the establishment and direction of governance for activities connected to Vulnerability and Public Protection. The embedding of a clear governance approach that gives direction, drives activity and gives oversight in a consistent way helps to ensure that Vulnerability is seen as a core area of business rather than in individual separate parts.

The definition of governance has been agreed as;

Definition: "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 report 2024)

The evidence base for this is drawn from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). They provide guidance across public sector organisations and while its origin is connected to finance the aims and principles are equally matched to wider working and applicable to governance across the area of Vulnerability.

How to use this document

This document has been produced as an indicator for forces to establish an overview and governance framework for the management of Vulnerability and Public Protection. It provides areas of positive activity that forces can look for within their own organisation for the oversight and development of vulnerability.

There is no one size approach and forces will operate various models so the document can be adapted to fit the policing approach used. The principles are indicators for the force to use to identify change.

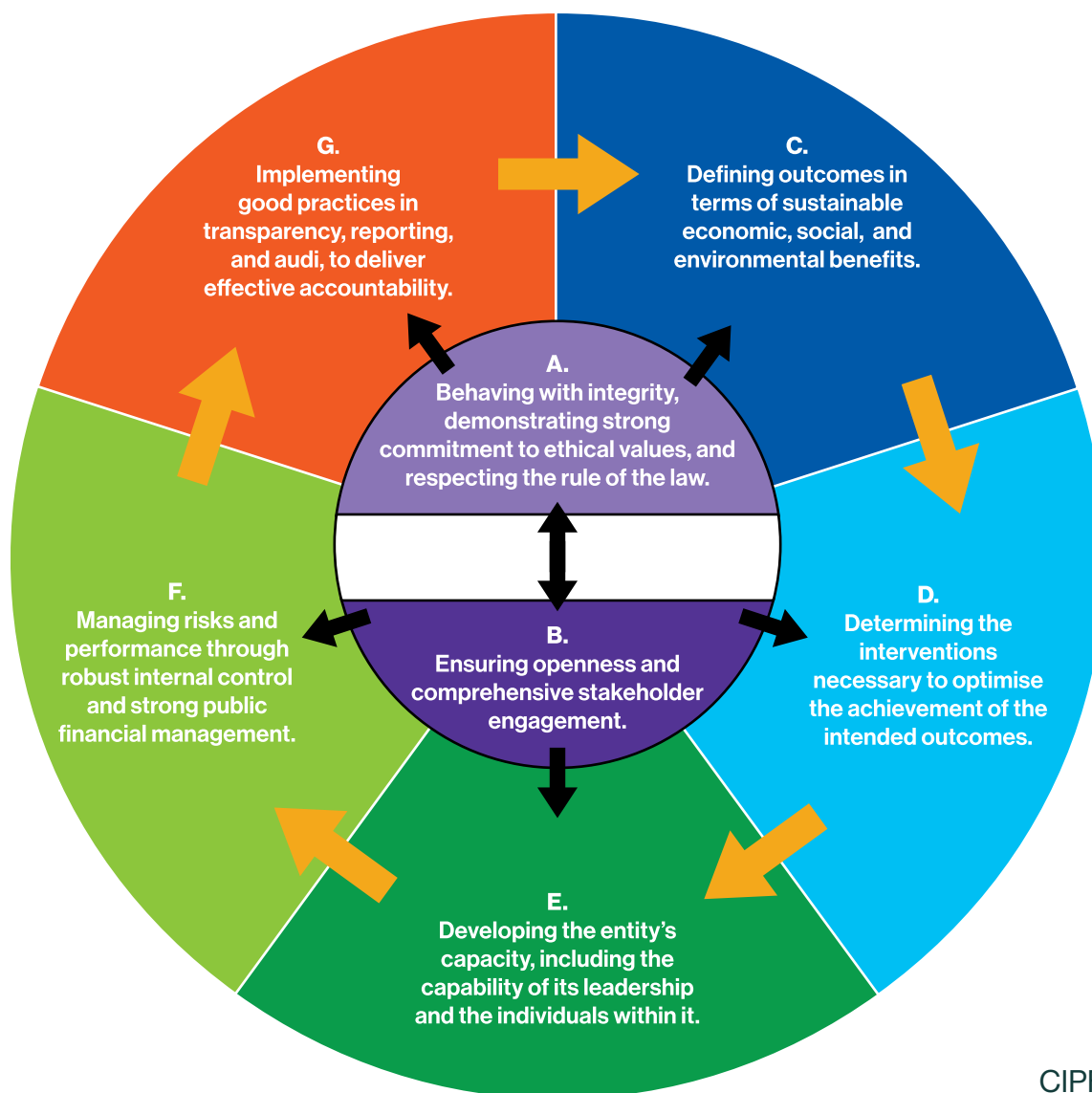
To give clear oversight, forces should identify a lead executive officer to provide strategic direction. This role will then provide leadership of vulnerability governance in the force directing thematic leads, key enabling services such as recruitment, finance and training, key internal stakeholders and those with operational influence.

The governance and oversight process should ensure accountability for the Vulnerability and Public Protection Strategy at a strategic level to ensure here is clear capacity, capability and competence across policing to respond, identify and reduce vulnerability. This process will bring together the learning and understanding in forces from case management to prevention and Problem-solving. Leads will then develop approaches bringing in wider emerging practices from the Centre for VAWG and Public Protection.

This document has taken the CIPFA Principles designed for the public sector and applied them here to support the governance of vulnerability as a force-wide approach, and not just activity limited to those within Public Protection Units. The approach consists of 7 principles of which Ethics and Openness are the foundation layers for the others.

This document aims to therefore provide guidance and indicators for strategic leads to use in the oversight and governance of vulnerability.

Achieving the Intended Outcomes 'While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



CIPFA, 2004

Proposed principles to support definition:

- Ethics & Integrity
- Ensuring openness & stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes
- Determining the interventions necessary
- Developing leadership
- Managing risk and monitoring performance
- Demonstrating effective accountability

Principle	Positive Indicators
Ethics and Integrity	<p>Courage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Officers take responsibility and ownership in establishing the operating policies for vulnerability and public protection across the organisation. • Unacceptable behaviour, performance and / or service provision that is discriminatory or that undermines equality of opportunity is challenged.
	<p>Respect and Empathy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force has a clear and visible statement of expectations around behaviour. • The force has a whistleblowing policy in place that is understood internally and externally. • Officers take a 'victim centered' approach where victim's rights, needs and safeguarding are seen as a core task of those who respond or support victims, so they feel valued and believed.
	<p>Public Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Code of Ethics is embedded in all policing activity – it can be seen, felt, heard. • Policies and operating procedures in place take into account the Voice of the Victim, equity, diversity and inclusion and are compliant with the code of ethics and rule of law. • The force plays an active part in multi-agency governance working with external providers. This gives wider oversight of agencies where services are provided for vulnerable persons ensuring they act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards.

Principle	Positive Indicators
<p>Openness and Engagement – clear trusted engagement with stakeholders and the public.</p>	<p>Openness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Force is proactive in sharing data to understand and address vulnerability with strong information sharing agreements in place to share and receive information at operational, tactical and strategic levels. The force looks for where there is difference in service or performance such as charge rates and outcomes to delivery improvements and reduce disparity in these areas. The force engages with inspection and review processes accepting actions and recommendations from learning opportunities to reduce future harm and improve the service provided to vulnerable people. (eg. Critical incidents, HMICFRS, Statutory reviews)
	<p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Force takes a whole system approach and engages external partners through clear multi-agency working arrangements in place that are effective and efficient in responding to local need. Force has effective engagement with local third sector organisations and victims’ groups to enable a holistic picture of vulnerability. The force understands the Voice of the Victim and uses this is used to influence service response and design. Force prioritises engagement with Black, Underrepresented, Minoritised LGBTQ+ and other communities with protected characteristics in society as part of its approach.
<p>Defining Outcomes – The outcomes meet the force vision through effective planning and are sustainable to outside pressures.</p>	<p>Define Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has a clear data collection strategy that includes audit and benchmarking activity. This not only allows it to understand its current performance but future demand and threats. The force is realistic in defining its targets and understands the effectiveness of its policies and operating model to set achievable goals.
	<p>Sustainable outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Force vulnerability planning process is aligned to other force processes such as thematic frameworks, business planning cycles and the Force Management Statement. Decision making is robust and influenced by academic / Practice Bank what works to ensure that interventions are effective and efficient. The force understands the risks that are present that could affect delivery and has effective internal control frameworks in place to manage these. Financial Planning reflects the commitment to tackling Vulnerability through both medium and long term.

Principle	Positive Indicators
<p>Determine the Interventions – clear decision making to identify and support effective interventions.</p>	<p>Determine Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force has a developed strategic assessment, problem profile and / or partnership view of the problem engaging expertise of others where available. • The force learns from others in design of interventions.
	<p>Planning Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force understands the impact on its staff and takes a proactive approach to wellbeing to mitigate the traumatic and stressful impact of responding to vulnerability. • The force plans for monitoring and ensures there is capacity to measure performance, impact and benefits. • The force ensures budgeting arrangements are in place to manage the project and maintain it should cost-benefit analysis identify positive performance.
	<p>Optimising Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Protection Projects are aligned to wider policing activity and incorporate both overt and covert tasking meetings linked to the force Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TTCG).
<p>Developing Leadership at all levels – policing understands its ongoing requirement to develop in a changing landscape.</p>	<p>Developing Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of incidents and operations is seen as normal business. This ensures that they remain effective and any learning for individuals or organisation is captured. • The force seeks to collaborate as part of its review process with external stakeholders to inform its understanding of impact. • Leaders spot the signs of trauma and stress so that early intervention can be taken to reduce the risk of long-term absence.
	<p>Developing Capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The force understands that the identification and reduction of vulnerability is a whole team approach and embeds a culture of continuous learning across all teams revisiting training where required. • The force knows its current capability of specialist investigation skills (eg PiP2, SSAIDP, SCAIDP, ABE). • Leaders are connected to the front line so that their front line can see what senior leaders do. There is a clear line of sight across the system with checks and balances to ensure the system is safe and sound.

Principle	Positive Indicators
<p>Managing Risk and Monitoring Performance – provides identification and control of risks to help achieve outcomes.</p>	<p>Managing Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governance of Vulnerability has a risk register in place where actions are clearly allocated, owned and given oversight at tactical and strategic levels.
	<p>Managing Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance processes clearly monitor the capability, capacity and competence of resources recognising the link between these and effective outcomes around suspect focus and victim centered. The force is actively engaged with partners in a whole systems approach and has checks and balances in place that give a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the system and how it responds to vulnerability.
	<p>Internal Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management has oversight with escalation to wider force ownership when required. The force identifies and responds to complaints and conduct matters effectively, making appropriate referrals to IOPC where appropriate and supporting those who need it when issues are raised.
	<p>Managing Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has plans to improve the quality of the data it collects for vulnerability both internally and through external information sharing processes. The force audits the quality and accuracy of this to ensure that a good standard is met. Systems look to have national data alignment through a consistent way of recording and adopt NPCC standards such as Protected Characteristics.

Principle	Positive Indicators
<p>Demonstrating Effective Accountability – decisions makers are answerable through effective transparency and audit both internally and externally.</p>	<p>Financial Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects are monitored through governance processes to ensure they have clear oversight, are effective and offer value for money.
	<p>Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force, through its communication strategy, provides reassurance and clarity of its approach to vulnerability and responds positively to requests for information, creating a feedback loop where it reports back on changes that have been made.
	<p>Implementing Good Practice in reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force maintains its commitment to Vulnerability and Public Protection including it in force annual plans such as the force management statement keeping it as a priority and evolving process.
	<p>Assurance and Effective Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The force has a monitoring process including audit to measure its effectiveness across Vulnerability that informs governance oversight and provides reassurance that the force is meeting its aims.



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