

Voice of the child:

A new resource for officers and staff who work with children and young people

We are writing in our national policing capacities to share a new resource designed to enable more effective engagement and responses to children and young people who come into contact with the police. The resource has been produced by the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP), drawing together a range of research and practice advice to support officers and staff and build their confidence in engaging with children and young people.

Victim engagement and care is an identified perennial issue in policing, requiring action to drive improvement for the public (College of Policing). Missed opportunities are consistently flagged in HMICRFS inspections and reviews into death and serious harm for police and other professionals to speak to children and understand their lived experiences. Recent VKPP research suggests that a number of officers feel ill equipped and lack confidence to capture the voice of the child in safeguarding and investigations. In more isolated cases, motivation may be an issue, underpinned by a range of influencing factors.

Voice of the child is nationally recognised as key priority for both policing and partners. The work of the Victim's Commissioner and the forthcoming Victim's Bill seeks to centralise victim's rights. It is encompassed in Action 2.4.1 'Voice of the Victim' within the joint NPCC College of Policing National Vulnerability Action Plan (NVAP). It is emphasised by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel as central to good safeguarding practice. It is also a theme that runs through the recently released Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) report.

This resource is designed to draw upon the latest research and accepted practice to empower officers to engage, capture and respond to children's voices to prevent harm and build trust and confidence in the police.

We request your support in disseminating this resource locally through all available means, particularly those on the frontline who encounter children and young people in their roles, and your Learning and Development teams to embed in training as a resource.

If you would like to discuss this work further, please contact the VKPP (vkpp@norfolk.police.uk). Feedback on the product, how it has been used and any associated impact would also be gratefully received.

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