

4 December 2006

Agenda Item No 8

**CRIME REPORTING AND RECORDING POLICY UPDATE - VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

**A Report by the Chief Constable**

**1. SUMMARY**

The Force policy on Crime Reporting and Recording is being updated to reflect the needs of vulnerable and intimidated victims.

This report explains the terms 'vulnerable and intimidated' and highlight how the changes are already reflected within current practices.

**1.1 RECOMMENDATION**

That members note the contents of this report.

**2.1 DETAIL**

**Background**

The Victims' Code of Practice was drawn up in 2005 to provide the Police Service (and other Service Providers) with guidance in dealing with vulnerable and intimidated victims. Vulnerable and intimidated victims are defined in the Code as:

*'(a) If under the age of 17 at the time of the offence; or  
(b) (a) that the victim (i) suffers from mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983, (ii) otherwise has a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning; (b) that the victim has a physical disability or is suffering from a physical disorder.'*

This definition is to be included in the Crime Reporting and Recording Policy.

A review of the current Crime Offence Report used by Cumbria Constabulary has shown that the Constabulary already complies with the Victims' Code of Practice by identifying vulnerable and intimidated victims *at the time of the offence* with salient 'interest markers'. This information is retrievable and assists in the analysis of crime and victims.

Where vulnerable and intimidated witnesses are identified at the initial stage, the Constabulary already has provisions in place for dealing with these situations, e.g. where a victim has hearing difficulties or is deaf, they use

'TYPE TALK', a third party organisation who pass on their information to the police. Where a person has language difficulties, the Communications Centre automatically sends a police officer to their location; the officer will then utilise 'Language Line' to facilitate understanding. The Victims' Code of Practice further describes victims who may have specific vulnerabilities relevant to their culture, ethnicity, religious beliefs, political opinion and domestic circumstances. Where such victims are identified by the Crime Recording Policy, they will be served by the Constabulary's Hate Crime Policy.

Whilst Cumbria Constabulary recognises our increasingly diverse communities, belonging to a minority group doesn't automatically denote vulnerability. For example, our migrant work force may have some communication issues but are not automatically 'vulnerable'. Where issues other than vulnerability are identified, the appropriate provisions are made available to address their specific needs by investigating officers. Where minorities are both 'victims and vulnerable', this would be captured as part of the crime recording process via use of interest markers and robust application of the Hate Crime policy.

The Constabulary is to review the Victim Questionnaire and assess the need for it to be produced in different languages. The Force Crime Reporting and Recording Policy is currently being updated to reflect the provisions of the Victims Code of Practice, as detailed above.

**Michael Baxter**  
**Chief Constable**