

SP1816

# Vulnerability

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Protecting vulnerable people is a priority for the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Police Service of Northern Ireland follows the national definition of a vulnerable person which is – a person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation.

# 1. Policy Statement

Whatever the cause, and wherever it occurs, harm caused to vulnerable adults and children by violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect is not acceptable. It is vital that the right support is provided to vulnerable people whenever they come into contact with police officers or police staff, whether a victim, suspect or witness.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) recognises the 13 strands of vulnerability as defined by the College of Policing. The strands are – domestic abuse, child abuse, child sexual exploitation, adult sexual exploitation, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation, honour based violence, forced marriage, adults at risk, management of sexual and violent offenders, serious sexual offences, modern slavery and human trafficking, and missing and absent people.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland will work in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organisations and the community, as part of a whole-system approach to vulnerability, to ensure that the correct support is provided to those who are vulnerable; to affect the safe recovery of vulnerable people who go missing; to investigate criminal offences committed

against those who are vulnerable and to gather evidence that may be later used in court.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Recognise, understand and respond appropriately to those who are vulnerable;
- Provide appropriate support, supervision and learning and development to officers and staff in responding to those who are vulnerable;
- Reduce the incidence of harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect;
- Encourage more victims who are vulnerable, or third parties on their behalf, to have confidence to report harm and exploitation;
- Provide access to justice for vulnerable adults and children;
- Maximise the standard of investigations of crimes against those who are vulnerable; and
- Effectively assess and manage risks to vulnerable people through partnership working and timely, appropriate and lawful information sharing.

## 2. Policy Links

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The Corporate Policy Framework refers.

## 3. Contact

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If you have any comment to make on the content of this Service Policy please contact:

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