



# Adults at Risk Policy

**OFFICIAL**

<b>Publication Scheme Y/N</b>	Policy section can be published on Force Website
<b>Department of Origin</b>	Investigation
<b>Policy Holder</b>	D/Chief Superintendent Investigation
<b>Author</b>	Detective Sergeant Public Protection Unit
<b>Related information</b>	<a href="#">NPIA Safeguarding and Investigating the Abuse of Vulnerable Adults 2012</a> <a href="#">Authorised Professional Practice-Major Investigation and Public Protection</a> <a href="#">Domestic Abuse Policy</a> <a href="#">Calls and Response Policy</a> <a href="#">Child Abuse Policy</a> <a href="#">Responding to People with Mental ill Health or Learning Disability</a> <a href="#">Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage Policy</a> <a href="#">Rape and Serious Sexual Assault Policy</a> <a href="#">Body Worn Video Policy</a>
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# Policy

## Statement

Vulnerability is a top priority for policing services, and both police officers and staff play a critical part in safeguarding adults at risk who live in and visit our communities.

Investigations relating to such individuals can be linked to some of the most serious crimes that the police deal with including murder, sexual offences and domestic abuse.

We must ensure that our officers and staff are equipped to safeguard and protect vulnerable victims of crime through early identification of risk and a robust response to identified criminality.

Merseyside Police will provide a standardised and coherent response to all allegations of abuse against adults at risk, in a manner which ensures that the best possible protection is afforded to victims and witnesses.

## Aims

This policy aims to support a common framework that helps all responsible partner agencies to work together for the protection of Adults at Risk, to ensure that reported incidents are responded to and investigated through the Criminal Justice system from initial reporting through to the disposal stage. In so doing, the policy aims to ensure that crimes against Adults at Risk are successfully investigated and prosecuted and that Adult at Risk offenders are held accountable for their actions and that victims receive the best possible service and support.

This policy is underpinned by procedures designed to give clear, definitive and unambiguous direction for all those involved in its implementation.

## Objectives

The main objectives of this policy are to;

- Identify an adult at risk at the earliest opportunity.
- Protect the lives and preserve the safety of all adults at risk who may be at risk of harm;
- Investigate all safeguarding concerns regarding adults at risk of harm;
- Ensure a consistent referral mechanism to Adult Social Care or appropriate agency.
- Facilitate effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system; and
- Adopt a proactive and multi-agency approach to preventing offences against adults at risk.

The specific aim is to provide assistance to Merseyside Police staff who have a responsibility to investigate and take action when an adult is believed to be at risk of, or suffering abuse.

## Application and Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all police officers, members of police staff, and volunteers, where appropriate, dealing with adults identified as:

- Meeting the definition of an Adult at Risk as per the Care Act 2014
- An adult with care and support needs as defined by the statutory guidance of the Care Act 2014 (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs)

- An adult with care and support needs and in addition is experiencing or is at risk of being abused or neglected
- An Adult at Risk that has been subject to a crime that has been perpetrated on them by a person:
  - In a position of authority, or
  - Where there is an expectation of trust, or
  - Who has been providing them with care either in a care setting (e.g. care home, hospital) or in their own home, or
  - Where there are particular concerns about the risk to or vulnerability of the victim or the impact of the incident on the community.

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. Non statutory policies provide guidance only and there is currently no College of Policing Approved Professional Practice for Adults at Risk. They are living documents and it is recognised that there may be a better way of doing this. Accordingly if staff depart from a policy but are able to give good rationale for their actions, and have acted with honesty integrity and professionalism to make the best decision for the community we serve they will be trusted and supported. <sup>1</sup>

The Chief Officer lead for this policy is the Assistant Chief Constable with responsibility for Investigation and Intelligence.

### **Outcome Evaluation**

Progress against specific objectives should be measured on a routine basis. The head of crime/chair of PVP performance will determine responsibilities and actions involved in measurement.

### **Statutory Compliance**

#### **Equality Act (2010)**

This Policy and Procedure is designed to deal with adults who are defined as an adult at risk or an adult that has care and support needs that is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and is a key means by which Merseyside Police will work to safeguard victims who are at risk of serious harm or even death.

It is recognised that protected characteristics such as age and disability may have an adverse impact on some members of our community. The procedures in this document, have been designed to identify people with protected characteristics so that the support they receive from Merseyside Police is tailored to meet their specific needs.

#### **Data Protection Act (2018)**

This policy and procedure has been assessed for compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018 by the Data Protection, Corporate Support and Development Unit. Any victim data obtained and/or shared will be subject to General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph inserted 21/06/2016 to emphasise appropriate use of discretion. Version number remains unchanged.

**Freedom of Information Act (2000)**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 grants a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. Any requests made for this policy should be forwarded to [freedom.of.information@merseyside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:freedom.of.information@merseyside.pnn.police.uk)