



Module Specification

Revealing Risk and Vulnerability

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Contents

Module Specification	1
Part 1: Information	2
Part 2: Description	2
Part 3: Teaching and learning methods	11
Part 4: Assessment.....	12
Part 5: Contributes towards	14

Part 1: Information

Module title: Revealing Risk and Vulnerability

Module code: UZSYG3-30-2

Level: Level 5

For implementation from: 2023-24

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

Faculty: Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences

Department: HAS Dept of Social Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Sociology and Criminology

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: The key themes for this module centre around vulnerability, risk intervention and prevention in an operational policing context to members of the public and, the environment in which they live. Learners will explore and understand the national drivers for the police service based on real life case studies. These case studies will offer a deep insight into the consequences of situations where individuals who are or may be vulnerable have suffered harm or have been put at risk of harm.

The meaning of vulnerability in the context of operational policing includes police constables themselves as well as and members of the public. Why vulnerability may occur, its link to criminality and the role police has in interacting with vulnerable people and communities is also explored.

Features: Real life case studies will be explored within this module. To support this learning students will gain access to official and sensitive material related to adults at risk, mental health, domestic abuse, child abuse and sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. This is a highly emotive module and clear signposting will be available (without request) to all students should they need support.

Educational aims: At the heart of this module is the aim to encourage the development of professional curiosity as relevant to policing which supports the overarching driver of a Police Officer which is to keep people safe from harm.

This module aims to develop understanding of the factors that can make a person vulnerable and at serious risk of harm. The module introduces the police definition of 'vulnerability' and describes the physiological and sociological characteristics of vulnerable people and how their exposure to harm can impact on the wider community. Definitions of vulnerability can differ between organisations and the module provides context as to why the police work to one specific definition.

The police use several models and threshold tests that are applied to measure risk of harm and the module explains these in detail to provide a focused comprehension of the diverse and complex nature of vulnerability whilst recognising when personal vulnerabilities are combined with extrinsic factors such as environmental, situational, and circumstantial influences along with the presence of an abuser, these can lead to harm or a risk of harm, and may also result in a person being both a victim and/or perpetrator and susceptible to a range of harms. The module explores the police role in managing these factors and introduces the national drivers for the police service in providing a professional and ethical service to individuals who are, or may be vulnerable, have suffered harm, or be at risk of harm.

Introducing the College of Policing's 'what works' guidance that relates to vulnerable people or those at risk of harm will provide valuable crime prevention strategies and highlights key legislation and codes of practice guidance. Topic areas to be covered consist of the National Overview PEEL (Police Efficiency Effectiveness and Legitimacy) Police Effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) report, the National Police Crime Prevention Strategy (2015), Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (2014), cross-governmental approaches for managing vulnerability. The module provides opportunities for learners to discuss the increase in the reporting of child sex abuse following several high-profile cases and evaluate the identify the changing in demand arising from the complexity of some vulnerability cases.

Analysing concepts and theories of how a person becomes vulnerable will enable learners to recognise the impact of early life events and establish the link to poly-victimisation, including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). Learners will examine the effect of multiple adversities and recognise the symptoms of posttraumatic stress, nightmares, insomnia, flashbacks, and nervousness that are often associated with the condition 'Stockholm Syndrome' and how victims can form a psychological bond with their abuser(s). The Supporting Families Programme (formerly Troubled Families) will spotlight the support for victims enabling them to leave abusive relationships, obtain the right support for those with mental health issues and assist with helping those in long term unemployment back into work along while evaluating 'what works' in relation to tackling repeat victimisation, multi-victimisation and repeat offending.

The module addresses the limitations of risk factors, risk assessments and protective factors while highlighting the complexity of risk and protective factor relationships. This will include exposure to the forms of violence that may lead to substance abuse, and mental ill-health, but also a risk of becoming a victim of child sexual exploitation. The module explains how risk factor weightings vary and how some personal vulnerabilities and situational risk factors may pose greater risks of harm than others as well as comparing the difference between risk, and actual vulnerability.

The module outlines the importance of vulnerable people being appropriately

supported by the police and spotlights the professional policing drivers for dealing more effectively with vulnerable people, including Early Help strategies and understand the potential implications of perceived lack of support from the police along with the study of recent high-profile cases where a lack of support has resulted in questions being asked of the police. The module provides learners with several serious case studies to work through such as Fiona Pilkington, Baby P, Victoria Climbié, and Daniel Pelka. These case studies will highlight to learners the consequences for not managing or controlling the environments/situational factors for the vulnerable person and the consequences of the failure to share key information, but also acknowledge recent cases where a positive outcome has resulted from police involvement.

The module provides an overview of how a vulnerable person may respond to a police presence at an incident and how the combination of personal vulnerabilities and situational/environmental factors may also impact on communication with authority figures, for example people with learning differences, and those with mental health illnesses. The module details the situational factors and perceptions that may cause a problem to proliferate and escalate due to power imbalance, coercive and controlling behaviour, multiple vulnerabilities, a change in the seriousness of incidents, and multiple victims and poly-victimisation. The module signposts to content on the Early Intervention Foundations website which provides information on how to work with other organisations to provide support to children and families to tackle problems before they become more difficult to reverse.

The module looks at the appropriateness of taking different approaches by professionals and the police in supporting or managing vulnerable people or people at risk of harm through the a case study of the high profile online-grooming and murder of Breck Bednar (2014), the involvement of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Bulletin 'Learning the Lessons' in conjunction with the Department of Education's 'Pathways to Harm, Pathways to Protection: A Triennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews' (2011-2014).

Outline syllabus: CoP Curriculum:

Vulnerability and Risk:

1 Define 'vulnerability' in the context of operational policing

1.1 Definition of 'vulnerability':

- 'A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care or protect themselves, or others, from harm or exploitation.'

1.2 How definitions of vulnerability can vary between organisations

1.3 Importance of the police working to one specific definition of vulnerability

1.4 How vulnerability applies to victims, witnesses and suspects throughout the criminal justice process

1.5 Different thresholds that exist for assessing vulnerability

1.6 Complex nature of vulnerability e.g. presence of some situational/environmental factors can combine with personal vulnerability resulting in a person possibly being both a victim and/or perpetrator and susceptible to a range of harms

2 Explain the national drivers for the police service in providing a professional and ethical service to individuals who are, or may be, vulnerable, have suffered harm or be at risk of harm

2.1 National drivers for dealing professionally and ethically with people who are vulnerable, have suffered harm and/or are at risk of harm:

- The Rotherham enquiry (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997-2013)) and/or other large scale reviews
- PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) - A National Overview
- National Policing Crime Prevention Strategy
- Making Safeguarding Personal: What might 'good' look like for the police? 2017
- Vulnerability-related Risk Guidelines (College of Policing) 2021
- 'Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy' 2021 (Home Office) and College of Policing Toolkit
- Cross-governmental approach for managing vulnerability
- Increase in reporting of child sex abuse following high-profile cases
- Changing demand arising from complexity of some vulnerability cases
- Commissioners for:
 - victims
 - domestic abuse
 - children

- independent anti-slavery

- Continuing inspection activity by HMICFRS in relation to vulnerability-related policing

2.2 Legislation, policies and 'what works' in relation to vulnerable people, or those at risk of harm, including:

- Mental Health Act 1983: Code of Practice (2015)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice Guidance 2009
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Information sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers 2018
- Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2021
- Achieving Best Evidence 2022

3 Explain the personal aspect of vulnerability and trauma

3.1 Intrinsic personal characteristics (that may lead to harm/risk of harm)

3.2 Historical factors that can contribute to, or cause current vulnerability:

- Adverse childhood experiences
- Effect of impact trauma on emotional development
- Link between perpetration and victimisation: the cycle of abuse

3.3 Personal vulnerabilities, when combined with situational/environmental factors, that can result in harm or risk of harm, including:

- Lack of ability to understand a situation through circumstance e.g. age, mental ill health, learning disabilities, dementia, substance misuse
- Poverty
- Disability
- Ethnicity and/or faith
- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Isolation caused by:
 - lack of support
 - language/communication barriers
 - coercive controlling behaviour

- dependency/reliance upon abuser(s)"

3.4 How the police cannot alter those personal factors that make an individual vulnerable

3.5 Why vulnerable people may be targeted by perpetrators

3.6 How a vulnerable person may become known to the police only after suffering harm, or being at risk of harm

3.7 How a vulnerable person may be at risk of coercive control by others, to commit crimes or become radicalised

3.8 How individuals respond differently to trauma

4 Understand how extrinsic factors can result in harm, or risk of harm to a vulnerable person

4.1 Factors that, when combined with personal vulnerability, can lead to harm or a risk of harm:

- Environmental influences
- Situational influences
- Circumstantial influences
- Presence of an abuser

4.2 The relationship between the factors (e.g. situational) and the personal characteristics and vulnerabilities that may lead to harm/risk of harm to an individual

4.3 Police role in managing the factors (e.g. environment) to reduce risk

5 Understand concepts and theories of how a person becomes a victim

5.1 The impact of early life events and the link to poly-victimisation, including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

5.2 The effect of multiple adversities

5.3 Stockholm Syndrome

5.4 Troubled Families initiative

5.5 Strategies to prevent repeat victimisation

5.6 Victimisation and perpetration: common risk factors that may be present

5.7 How victimisation may lead to future perpetration (Cycle of Abuse theory)

5.8 Risk factors associated with multi-victimisation

6 Explain the influences of risk factors on vulnerability

6.1 Limitations of risk factors and risk assessments

6.2 Limitations of protective factors

6.3 Complexity of risk and protective factor relationships (e.g. exposure to violence)

may lead to substance abuse, mental ill-health, but also a risk of being a victim of CSE

6.4 How risk factor weightings vary (e.g. some personal vulnerabilities and situational risk factors may pose greater risks of harm than others)

6.5 The difference between increased risk and actual vulnerability

7 Outline the importance of vulnerable people being appropriately supported by the police

7.1 Professional policing drivers for dealing more effectively with vulnerable people, including Early Help strategies

7.2 Potential implications of perceived lack of support from the police

7.3 Recent high-profile cases where a lack of support has resulted in questions being asked of the police

7.4 Consequences of not managing or controlling the environmental/situational factors for the vulnerable person

7.5 Consequences of failure to share key information e.g.:

- Fiona Pilkington
- Baby P
- Victoria Climbié
- Daniel Pelka

7.6 Recent cases where a positive outcome has resulted from police involvement

9 Understand how a vulnerable person may respond to a police presence at an incident

9.1 How the combination of personal vulnerabilities and situational/environmental factors may affect a person's reaction to, and communication with authority figures e.g. people with diagnosed conditions such as autism

9.2 How situational factors and perceptions may cause a problem to proliferate and escalate:

- Power imbalance
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Multiple vulnerabilities
- Change in seriousness of incidents
- Multiple victims and poly-victimisation

11 Understand the impact upon the offending curve of early intervention

11.1 What works from the Early Intervention Foundation website

11.2 Working with other organisations to provide support to children and families to tackle problems before they become more difficult to reverse

12 Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches (by professionals and the police) in supporting or managing vulnerable people or people at risk of harm

12.1 Recent high profile cases e.g. Breck BEDNAR (2014)

12.2 Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Bulletin – ‘Learning the Lessons’

12.3 Department of Education: Pathways to Harm, Pathways to Protection: A Triennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews (2011-2014)

14 Evaluate what works in relation to tackling repeat victimisation and repeat offending

14.1 Identifying repeat patterns/problem solving:

- Multi-agency working
- Risk assessments that look at data from all agencies

14.2 What works in tackling or reducing the occurrence and/or seriousness of repeat victimisation (the frequency of):

- Domestic abuse
- Missing from home

14.3 What works in tackling repeat offending:

- The impact of tackling youth gangs
- Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) tackling gangs and youth violence

4.4 Importance of targeted and effective situational problem solving and crime prevention

Criminal Justice:

7.6 Importance of considering impacts on victims, including:

- Needs assessment
- Vulnerabilities
- Intimidation
- Victim and perpetrator dynamic for children.
- Appropriate special measures required

- Factors required to pursue a charge or other outcome, should the victim not support the police investigation, or a prosecution

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module will employ a combination of lectures, seminars, and workshops, each broadly with a focus on a different case study which draws out the module curriculum.

As with all modules in this programme, the pedagogy is interactive, discussion-based, and student-facing so students are an active part of the learning process, and will be asked to contribute ideas, questions, and critical standpoints. The learning environment is designed to promote peer-to-peer support and exchange which in this context will support the discussion of the key case studies and allow students to share ideas about different threat and harm levels.

While teaching and learning will be predominantly classroom based, appropriate use will be made of online resources and learning environments.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Critique key legislation, policies, guidance and 'what works' in relation to vulnerable people or those at risk of harm.

MO2 Articulate the policing definition of vulnerability including how and why definitions can vary between organisations.

MO3 Recognise the personal, situational, and environmental factors which can make a person vulnerable and the role of the police in managing risk.

MO4 Evaluate concepts and theories on how a person becomes a victim, the impact of early life events and the link to poly-victimisation.

MO5 Recognise the importance of valuing difference and inclusion and the various considerations that are important when supporting a vulnerable person.

MO6 Discuss relevant casework and the importance of vulnerable people being appropriately supported by the police and other organisations.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Lectorials = 72 hours

Total = 300

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsyg3-30-2) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsyg3-30-2>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Summative assessment for this module is a written task.

Assessment part A is a 3000-word Vulnerability Case Study Report.

This assessment gives students an opportunity to explore key vulnerability issues by placing themselves in the shoes of a response police constable and to consider what real life actions they would take in a safeguarding scenario of their choice. To provide a more realistic feel, and to provide learners with a broader scope of subject matter to choose from, the report may be based on a recent real-life high-profile case where a lack of support has resulted in questions being asked of the police, or a case where a positive outcome has resulted from police involvement. The assessment structure will allow learners to evidence their knowledge and theoretical application of powers, policies, models, and theories, and provide a clear action plan that will maintain future support for the victim and their families.

Formative assessment of learning will take place during scheduled teaching building on content taught and independent study tasks. Methods comprise of workshops, question and answer sessions, group discussions and debates, in-class knowledge

checks, and work products as produced. Additional formative support will be provided in study skills workshops on research, literature reviews, creation of abstracts, and referencing.

Assessment tasks:**Written Assignment (First Sit)**

Description: 3000-word Vulnerability Case Study Report.

This assessment requires learners to write a 3000-word academic report which explores key vulnerability issues and what real life actions learners would take. The report will be based on a recent high-profile case where a lack of support has resulted in questions being asked of the police, or a case where a positive outcome has resulted from police involvement.

Learners will provide clear evidence of academic reading and include good quality references to academic literature, research, and/or official statistics.

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: 3000-word Vulnerability Case Study Report.

This assessment requires learners to write a 3000-word academic report which explores key vulnerability issues and what real life actions learners would take. The report will be based on a recent high-profile case where a lack of support has resulted in questions being asked of the police, or a case where a positive outcome has resulted from police involvement.

Learners will provide clear evidence of academic reading and include good quality references to academic literature, research, and/or official statistics.

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Professional Policing [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23