

Policing Vulnerability and Risk Assignment 1 – Evaluating examples of successful policing initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable individuals – Daniel Phillips

The following assignment will evaluate examples of successful policing initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable individuals. This assignment will also, in process, demonstrate an awareness of and a thorough understanding of the laws, regulations, and current procedures, or initiatives relating to persons who are vulnerable or prone to harm by others. It is these current policing initiatives that play a part in addressing repeat exploitation regarding victims and subsequent repeated offending. As there are various categories regarding a person's vulnerability. The policing initiatives designed for protecting vulnerable individuals will come under evaluation in this assignment. This will be done by critically evaluating the suitability and success of the policing initiatives. A policing initiative is an operation or scheme that solely prevents a specific crime and aids victims. This can be shown in (College of Policing, 2023). This source displays an example of a successful policing initiative. This initiative shown has the aim of reducing instances of residential burglary. This source also infers that for a policing initiative to be successful, many steps or objectives are required. Policing initiatives also must be suitable for the category of vulnerable individuals. This is because there are distinct factors that make individuals vulnerable. Those most vulnerable are those who lack the ability to defend themselves against severe harm or exploitation. Individuals with mental health disorders, physical disabilities, difficulties with learning, gender, or those of a young age may fall under this category. Supported by (West Somerset Healthcare, 2024). The previous reference supports the notion that different factors contribute to an individual being vulnerable. This shows that for policing initiatives regarding aiding vulnerable individuals to be successful then the initiative in question must be appropriate in regard to the victim's demographic. The first example of a successful policing initiative, aimed at protecting vulnerable individuals, that this assignment will evaluate is 'Operation Encompass'. Operation Encompass is an early information safeguarding cooperation between the police and education authorities that allows schools to provide swift support to children, in the school, who are victims of domestic abuse. As seen in, (Operation Encompass, 2024). This source displays the co-operation between the police and education authorities and explains the policing initiative in question. This policing initiative, of sharing information, is highly beneficial in protecting vulnerable children. This is because after a domestic violence incident, in which children are present and the police attend, schools that the affected children attend will be informed and can therefore provide immediate support to the child in question. This immediate support will seek to lessen the incident's effect on the young person. This benefit is shown in, (Devon County Council, 2023). This source supports the fact that a benefit of Operation Encompass is that immediate support could be given. The source mentioned also exhibits the notion that this policing initiative will lessen the stigma and secrecy surrounding the event that the child has experienced, therefore hopefully resulting in a more in-depth conversation about what happened and any other domestic

abuse in general. To sum up, children will feel more comfortable discussing domestic abuse with a trusted adult in the school, if the school is aware. However, although Operation Encompass is seen as a successful policing initiative, there are opportunities in which this initiative could end up doing more harm than good. These negative opportunities are when both the adult victim and the child in question may be at risk if information is withheld or shared insufficiently by the police force. The child may also unintentionally be retraumatized by staff attempting to comfort them. These negatives of Operation Encompass are supported by, (The Home Affairs Committee Inquiry into Policing priorities, 2023). This source gives great detail in to the need for operation Encompass whilst highlighting any potential dangers that could arise from this policing initiative. This source also informs that there is a continued temptation for the schools to approach the youngster for additional information and are frequently tempted to contact the adult that has been victim of the domestic incident. On the whole, this policing initiative is extraordinarily successful at protecting vulnerable individuals, not only does it give the opportunity for a child to be supported and feel safe at their school but its also fosters communication and aims to reduce the stigma around domestic violence. One other successful policing initiative worth mentioning is the domestic violence disclosure scheme otherwise known as Clare's Law. Through this program, people can ask for details about a partner's history of domestic abuse. It seeks to provide victims and future victims the knowledge they need to make wise choices regarding their relationships. This is emphasised in, (Sussex Police A, 2024). This source gives a direct definition of Clare's law. What makes Clare's law such a beneficial policing initiative is that it allows more people, including those considered vulnerable, to make wise and informed choices regarding their relationships and, if needed, leaving. This is supported by, (Home Office, 2023). This source explains the need for Clare's law and the subsequent benefit of giving an opportunity for women and girls to be informed. It is also worth mentioning that before Clare's law was created as an initiative, the police already had common law powers. However, In the case of domestic abuse, Clare's Law gives the police a well-defined framework and established protocol, with acknowledged and consistent procedures. This notion is highlighted in, (Home Office B, 2024). This online article further explains the need for Clare's law also known as the domestic violence disclosure scheme, (DVDS), although police already had the disclosure powers under common law. A disadvantage of this policing initiative however is that Clare's Law cannot address domestic violence on the whole. It can also not deal with the fact that the majority of domestic violence cases are unlikely to reach criminal justice agencies, nor can it offer a rapid frontline response to women who fear violence from an intimate partner. This is backed up in great detail in the publication, (Fitz-Gibbon and Walklate, 2017) This publication highlights that Clare's law cannot tackle domestic violence altogether and simply cannot aid or give a frontline response. This does not subtract from Clare's laws true purpose however, Clare's law is a vastly successful policing initiative and offers information to vulnerable individuals that are concerned about a

partner's history. Its popularity as a successful policing initiative is also made clear as there were staggeringly 45,334 applications in the past financial year. Shown in, (BBC, 2024). Furthermore, a recent policing initiative that has shown success are the creation of 'Mental Health Crisis Teams'. Across the United Kingdom a number of police forces have included paramedics and mental health nurses in their response units. This program helps to ensure that people going through a mental health crisis receive the right care and attention instead of being punished like criminals by offering them instant support. This initiative also offers training to police officers to advance their skills in dealing with vulnerable individuals, that suffer from mental health issues. This is extremely advantageous as ultimately this training will mean these officers are less likely to make an arrest and instead provide the vulnerable individual with help. This is shown in, (College of Policing, 2020). This source provides the inference that compared to their peers who were not trained in mental health, officers with mental health training were more likely to transport people with mental health disorders to more community-based facilities, such a hospital, rather than make an arrest. This makes the initiative of mental health crisis teams and training extremely successful as it directly protects vulnerable individuals, with mental health issues. A clear negative of this initiative however, is that not all police forces in the United Kingdom will be able to provide those that they serve with mental health crisis teams or training. What makes the implementation of mental health crisis teams a successful initiative is the clear benefit on those vulnerable individuals that suffer from mental health problems. If police forces were to decide against deploying this initiative then the impact on vulnerable individuals would be profound. This is because those with mental health conditions, who come into contact with the police are more likely to be treated as though they were breaking the law right away and are more likely to suffer injuries during the arrest process. This is supported in, (Fuller, et al., 2015). One final successful policing initiative, that protects vulnerable individuals, is 'Operation Signature'. This program attempts to safeguard those who are at risk of fraud, especially the elderly. The program consists of the police offering support and guidance that is specific to the vulnerable person in order to stop scams and assist any previous victims. Shown in, (Dyfed-Powys Police, 2024). One major advantage of operation signature is that the initiative encourages victims to come forward and report fraud without fear or shame by strengthening ties between the police and the community. This is carried out by neighbourhood policing teams and by utilising social media. As displayed in, (Sussex Police B, 2024). This source describes how neighbourhood policing teams are being used to inform vulnerable individuals of the dangers of fraud and to provide key advice. This therefore informs the vulnerable individual in the hope that any attempts at fraud will be noticed. A clear negative of this initiative however is given that the nature of fraud itself is dynamic, Because fraud strategies are always changing, because of advancements in technology, it might be difficult to maintain operation signatures' effectiveness and relevance over time. The fact that fraudsters are constantly changing their methods and tactics is shown in,

(Public Sector Fraud Authority, 2024). This source provides great information about how technology evolving creates new avenues that fraudsters can exploit. However, the source then details that it also gives the police and other organisations, such as the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), new opportunities to improve their counter fraud response. Although, there is not any data to show the success of operation signature, the impact of informing individuals that are vulnerable to fraud can only be viewed as positive. The fact that neighbourhood policing teams also play a vital role in delivering the initiative can maximise the chances of success. Overall, operation signature is a successful initiative that protects vulnerable individuals, in particular the elderly from fraud. To conclude, there are many policing initiatives that have the aim of protecting vulnerable individuals. However, certain initiatives like those mentioned in this assignment are tailor made to certain categories of vulnerable individuals. This is incredibly important as for a policing initiative to be successful it must focus on a particular area or category. Operation Encompass for example, it focuses on supporting children who have witnessed domestic violence first hand. By the police informing the child in questions school immediate support is then given to said child. Clare's Law is without question the most successful policing initiative mentioned. It gives vulnerable women and girls the amazing opportunity to be informed if they could be in any potential danger. This therefore presents the opportunity of stopping any further domestic violence by the perpetrator. The implementation of mental health crisis teams and training in regards to the police service is also very successful. Why should those with mental health problems be criminalised when their most vulnerable? This initiative stops that by taking steps to aid vulnerable individuals, such as using an ambulance to take them to a hospital instead of a police car or van.

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