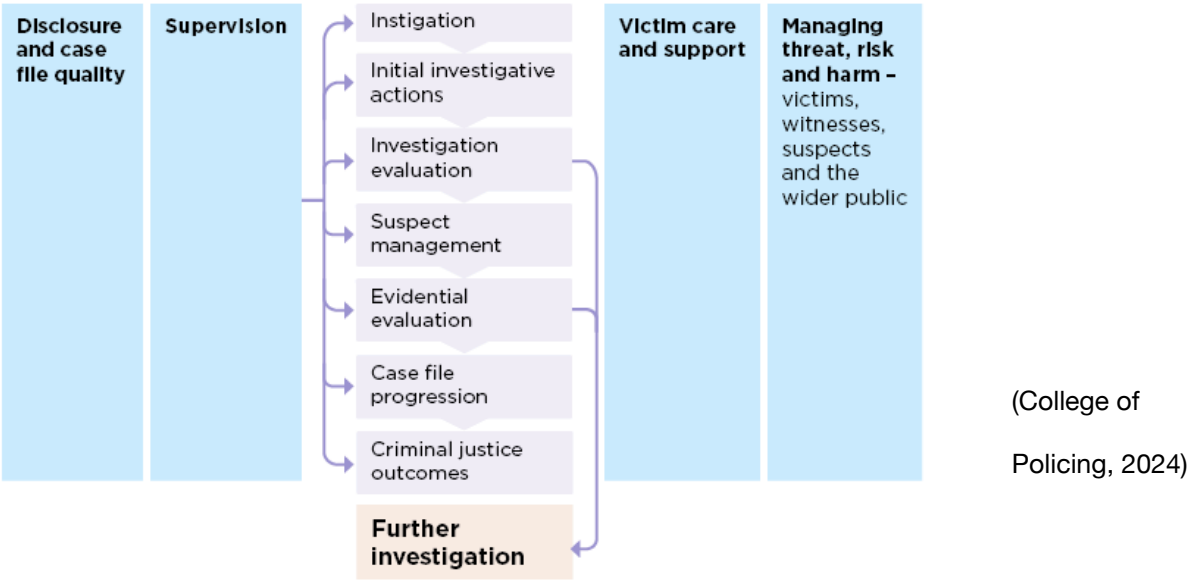


Workbook - Task 1 (2000 words) Draft Submission

In this assignment, I will reflect on a serious and complex investigation in which I played a significant role with a victim of crime. The Code of Practice to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA) (1996) defines a criminal investigation as, “an investigation conducted by police officers with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence, or whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it” (Ministry of Justice, 2015). The investigation that I have chosen to discuss is based on the alleged offences of (historic) Rape contrary to Section 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, Domestic Abuse contrary to Section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and Coercive Control contrary to Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. I will begin with a brief description of the investigation drawing on social and legislative contexts and relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues. I will then critically evaluate different approaches used by professionals and the police in supporting and managing people at risk of harm during the investigation assessing their effectiveness. I will explore the approaches to tackling repeat victimisation and repeat offending that I considered during this investigation drawing on the use of evidence-based policing namely, Operation Soteria.

The instigation stage of the investigation began with the neighbour of the victim making a 999 call to the police. The phases of an investigation are shown in the diagram below:



As defined by The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales, a victim is “a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly

caused by a criminal offence” (Ministry of Justice, 2020). In this case, the victim had sought refuge in her neighbour’s house where she disclosed that she had been raped by her husband some years ago, that he was physically abusive towards her and that he controlled her finances. Rape is defined as, “A person (A) commits an offence if - (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents” (Sexual Offences Act, 2003). The victim was distressed and in fear. The cultural, ethnicity and language issue was that the victim was a member of the Muslim community and that although she could speak some English, her first language was Arabic. I therefore arranged for an interpreter through whom to communicate with the victim and to update the victim throughout the investigation. I arranged this through Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS). It was important to have different interpreters for the victim and suspect to maintain the integrity of the case. Response officers initially attended the scene, the suspect was promptly arrested and the case was handed on to the Rape Investigation Team (RIT) to progress. In the RIT, initially the team works on the case before an Officer In Case (OIC) and Victim Engagement Officer (VEO) are allocated as per Operation Soteria which I will discuss later. I identified the victim as belonging to section 17.4 of Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999) (Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999). The victim was then spoken to by RIT officers, an initial account recorded on a PPD3 and a Video Recorded Evidence In Chief (VREIC) interview as per Achieve Best Evidence (ABE) was arranged to take place at the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

When critically evaluating the suitability of different approaches in supporting and managing the risk of harm to the victim during the investigation, it is important to understand that risk taking is at the core of policing and that policing is based on the management of risks. There are ten principles on taking and reviewing risks; principle 4 states, “harm can never be totally prevented” and principle 9 states, “sharing information about individuals between public authorities is essential to keeping people safe” (College of Policing, 2013). This highlights the importance of the police working with partner agencies to support and safeguard victims and manage the risk to them.

An approach used by the police to manage the risk of harm to victims and witness during the investigation is by managing the suspect through pre-charge bail conditions. Bail conditions allow for officers to continue to investigate without the suspect being detained and the conditions “protect complainants or witnesses, preserve evidence and mitigate the risk of further criminality” (College of Policing, 2022). In this investigation, following the suspect interview, I contacted the victim to inform her that the suspect was to be released on bail and of the bail conditions that were to be put in place. These

included conditions not to contact the victim directly or indirectly or through any third party and not to attend her home address or street on which she lived. The victim approved of the bail conditions since she was scared of any repercussions following the allegations that she had made. I explained to her that the bail conditions were there to safeguard her and that should the suspect breach these to contact 999 immediately as he would be liable for arrest. These conditions were effective in reassuring and safeguarding the victim and preventing repeat victimisation and repeat offending by keeping the suspect away from the victim.

Another approach used by the police and partner agencies to support victims and mitigate the risk of harm to them is to submit a public protection notification (PPN). In this case, I submitted a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment. This is a series of questions which the victim is asked and then assessed as low, medium or high risk. In this case, the victim was deemed to be of high risk. In response to this, a multi agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) was held. This is a meeting of partner agencies who discuss how best to support the victim and manage the risk to them through safeguarding. A referral was made to Women's Aid which is, "the national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children" (women's aid, 2024). An additional approach used by the police is to refer the victim to New Pathways which is "the largest sexual violence support provider in Wales" (New Pathways, 2024). Following this, the victim was allocated an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA). ISVAs are an invaluable resource in supporting victims of sexual offences since they offer support and advice and can sign post victims to additional services such as counselling. I also advised the victim of Live Fear Free helpline, a service which provides, "help and advice about violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence" (Welsh Government, 2024).

At the start of this investigation, I identified as being at risk of honour based abuse since she was from a Muslim community and because of the allegation that she had made against her husband who was a high-standing member of the Muslim community. This was coupled with the fact that the suspect had not been made incommunicado in custody. This meant that he had been able to contact members of the Muslim community who had since contacted the victim's children to persuade her to withdraw her complaint. Honour based abuse is "a form of domestic abuse" and is commonly defined as "a crime or incident which has, or may have been, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or communities" (Karma Nirvana, 2024). It is important to understand that, "for some communities, the concept of 'honour' is prized above the safety and wellbeing of individuals. To compromise a family's 'honour' is to bring dishonour and shame - which can have severe consequences." (Karma Nirvana, 2024)

In order to manage this heightened risk to the victim, I worked with the Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU) who specialise in safeguarding victims of domestic abuse and who offered the victim a place in a women's refuge. I also arranged for a police watch package to be put in place with increased patrols of her address to provide further reassurance and I arranged for a critical marker to be put on her address. These approaches reduced the likelihood of repeat victimisation.

When exploring how to disrupt repeat victimisation and repeat offending during this investigation through evidence-based policing (EBP), it is important to understand what EBP is. EBP refers to the way "the best available evidence is used to inform and challenge policing policies, practices and decisions" (College of Policing, 2024). EBP has informed this investigation through Operation Soteria. Operation Soteria, which is led by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), is an example of evidence-based policing since "police forces have collaborated with academics to use research, evidence and new insight to develop the model and transform the response to victims" (College of Policing, 2024). Based on the work of Operation Soteria, there is a new national operating model for the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO). This model "offers a transformational change approach to support improvement in police investigations" (College of Policing, 2024). As in the investigation discussed, the new model is "victim-centered, suspect focused and context-led" (College of Policing, 2024). Pertinent to my investigation is the objective of the new model to "reduce disparity in charge volumes between victims of different protected characteristics" with the victim here being of an ethnic background (College of Policing 2023). Another aim of the model is the reduction and prevention of RASSO with the objective of "routine and reliable identification of repeat suspects" and "stopping known perpetrators from offending again" (College of Policing 2023). Operation Soteria informed and structured my investigation from the very beginning to tackle repeat victimisation and offending.

In conclusion, this serious and complex investigation in which I played a significant role with the victim is based on the offences of rape, domestic abuse and coercive control. This investigation, with the victim being of an ethnic origin and with Arabic being her first language raised many cultural, ethnicity and language issues and highlighted the risk of honour based abuse. I critically evaluated the suitability of different approaches taken by the police and professionals to support and manage people at risk of harm. I discussed police bail conditions, PPNs, DASH risk assessments and approaches taken by police in conjunction with partner agencies such as MARAC meetings, New pathways referrals and signposting to Women's Aid and Live Fear Free. On reflection, these approaches are more effective in safeguarding victims when they are used to support one another. These approaches are beneficial to reducing repeat

victimisation as they provide advice, support and guidance and also to reduce re-offending with specific reference to the bail conditions. This investigation was informed by Evidence-based policing through Operation Soteria which ensued that the investigation was centered on the victim and will continue to transform sexual offence investigations into the future.

Word count - 1825

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Workbook - Task 2 Draft submission

This assignment is based on a serious and complex investigation in which I played a significant role. The investigation focuses on an allegation of Rape contrary to section 1 of Sexual Offences Act 2003. I will critically evaluate the investigative actions as well as the fast-track actions that I took. In order to understand the phases of an investigation, I will first discuss the investigation model and building blocks and define the terms “fast-track actions” and “golden hour”. I will then evaluate the support that I provided to victims drawing on the Victim’s Code, as well as the support that I provided to witness and offenders during this complex investigation. I will also reflect on how I managed my own personal values and attitudes throughout the investigation and investigations in general referencing the Code of Ethics.

An investigation has eight phases: Instigation, Initial investigative actions, Suspect management, Evidential evaluation, Case file progression, Criminal justice outcomes, and Further investigation (College of Policing 2024). And when planning an investigation, it is important to consider the five building blocks of Victim, Witness, Suspect, Scenes, Passive Data Generators. As stated by the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act (CPIA) (1996), “the investigator should pursue all reasonable lines of inquiry, whether these point towards or away from the suspect” (Ministry of Justice, 2015). In the Initial investigation phase, “fast-track actions” are identified. These are “actions that, if pursued immediately, may help to establish important facts, identify the suspect, preserve evidence or lead to the early arrest and resolution of the investigation” (College of Policing, 2024). Fast-track actions are wide-ranging and can sometimes require the use of additional or specialist resources such as forensics (College of Policing, 2024). These actions are completed within the “golden hour” which is “the period immediately following the report of an offence or incident, when positive action should be taken” (College of Policing, 2024). The “golden hour” provides the best opportunity to secure and preserve evidence.

This investigation focuses on an allegation of rape made by a teenage girl against a teenage boy. The initial 999 call was made by the victim’s step-mother the morning after the alleged incident. This is the instigation phase of the investigation. The first action taken was that response officers attended to speak with the victim. The response officers took an initial account from the victim which was recorded on a PPD3. This is the who, what, where, when of what happened. The victim recalled that she and a male friend had been sitting on a park bench smoking cannabis when she fell asleep. When she woke up she felt pain in her vagina and she did not know what had happened. The case was then handed on the RIT team. I was

allocated as Officer In Case (OIC) of this investigation and a colleague as the Victim Engagement Officer (VEO) as per Operation Soteria.

During golden hour, the first investigative action that I took was to speak to the victim and I considered the use of an Early Evidence Kit (EEK). An EEK provides the opportunity for non-intimate forensic samples to be taken. RIT officers attended and took these samples as well as a DNA Elimination Kit. I asked officers to seize the clothing that she was wearing that night in order to secure and preserve evidence. The report to court process was explained to the victim in the presence of her step-mother and the victim agreed to attend the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). At the SARC, intimate samples were taken by the Force Medical Examiner (FME). As soon as practicable, I called the Joint Scientific Investigations Unit (JSIU) and discussed which samples were best to submit for analysis. In cases where the suspect is not known, these samples are often fast-tracked. To avoid cross contamination, it is important that officers dealing with the victim do not come into contact with the suspect.

Another fast-track action which I identified was to complete house-to-house and CCTV enquiries. The objective of which is “the early identification of those with material that could enable the investigation to progress” (CoP, 2020). I was aware that since the incident had not been reported straight away we had lost any forensic evidence in the park due to bad weather. However, I attended the scene to scope out potential CCTV and house to house opportunities. The park was situated in a residential area and surrounded by houses. I conducted extensive house to house enquiries and recorded which addresses I had attended and who I had spoken to in my electronic pocket notebook (EPNB). I returned to the houses with no answer later that day. I also enquired whether the occupants had any CCTV which captured the scene of the park. I ensured that I briefed my colleague who was assisting with what information we were to tell the residents. I also made enquiries with the local authority to ask whether they had CCTV which covered the park which they did not. These enquiries did not provide any further lines of enquiry.

A key investigative action is the arrest and interview of the suspect. I arrested the suspect on suspicion of the rape of the victim and escorted him to custody where he was booked in and seized his mobile phone. The Digital Media Investigators (DMIs) were unable to examine his phone immediately and so I tasked an officer who was Kiosk trained so that we could retrieve any data relevant to the investigation prior to interview. I interviewed the suspect in the presence of his Appropriate Adult (AA) and solicitor and ensured that the interview was PACE compliant. I interviewed the suspect using the PEACE model which stands for Planning and preparation, Engage and explain, Account clarification and challenge, Closure and Evaluation (College of Policing, 2022). The suspect provided his account and denied the allegation. He

mentioned that they had been with a friend earlier that evening and so this became a line of enquiry. He was then released on conditional bail and I spoke to the victim and her step-mother to inform them of this.

At the outset of the investigation, I identified that the victim came under S.17.4 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999) and was entitled to a Video Recorded Evidence In Chief Interview (VREIC) as well as special measures. I arranged for the victim to attend a video-recorded interview at the SARC. This is the victim's opportunity to tell us in detail what happened to them. By providing a VREIC, the victim does not have to attend court to give evidence as they have already done so. In the meantime, another investigative action which I took was to obtain a statement from the victim's step mother who was a disclosure witness and also a statement from the suspect's friend.

Throughout this complex investigation, I provided support to the victim, witness and offender. As stated by CoP, "victims should be supported according to their diverse needs, allowing them to give their best evidence. Any risks should be effectively managed and they should be directed to appropriate support services" (College of Policing, 2013). A victim of crime is supported by the Victim's Code. This code "sets out the services and a minimum standard of these services that must be provided to victims of crime" (Ministry of Justice, 2024). The code sets out twelve rights which include the right "to be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs" (Right 4) (Ministry of Justice, 2024). This right is particularly important in ensuring that the victim feels supported and remains engaged with the investigation. As per Operation Soteria, the victim is at the centre of the investigation and in many cases without the support of the victim there is no case. This highlights the importance of providing the victim with the appropriate support and regular updates so that they do not disengage from the process.

In this investigation, with the victims's consent, I submitted a public protection notice (PPN). This allows for referrals to be submitted to partner agencies and in this case referrals were made to education, social services and health to provide support to the victim. I also submitted a New Pathway's referral for the victim which allowed her to access an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) who can offer support and advice and signpost to additional services such as counselling as required. In addition, when the victim attended the SARC, a crisis worker was present who supported the victim through the process there. As mentioned, a colleague was allocated as the Victim Engagement Officer (VEO). The role of the VEO is to provide a single point of contact during the initial stages of the investigation before this role is passed on to a Victim Progression Officer (VPO). The victim was also given the VEO's contact details should she have any questions about the investigation. I believe that the victim was well supported throughout this investigation.

In this case, the witness was the victim's step-mother to whom she disclosed what had happened to her. CoP observes, "by building a relationship with victims and witnesses, the investigator is able to keep them informed about the various resources available to them, for example, victim support, crime reduction advice and reparation schemes" (CoP, 2023). I ensured that the witness was kept up to date about the investigation and submitted a Victim Focus referral for her. I also provided her with a QR code to access further information on reporting sexual offences.

In terms of the suspect, CoP states that, "by engaging with suspects, the investigator has an opportunity to obtain material relating to criminality in the local and wide community" which assists in reducing crime (CoP, 2023). Unlike for the victim, there is no code of practice which supports the suspect. However, whilst in custody, the suspect was treated in accordance with PACE. At the end of the interview, I provided him with Lucy Faithful Foundation documentation which is a charity that works to stop child sexual abuse and "protect[s] children by working with people who pose a sexual risk and diverting them from causing harm" (Lucy Faithful Foundation, 2024) as well as suicide prevention documentation. The suspect was released on three-month bail and during this time, I ensured that the investigation progressed as expeditiously as possible so as not to keep the suspect on bail longer than necessary.

On my own personal values and attributes, throughout the investigation, I ensured that I remained an impartial investigator following all lines of enquiry whether they point away or towards the suspect. I did not believe one side of the story over another but worked diligently to secure and preserve evidence and expeditiously to ensure that the investigation progressed at a good pace. I acted professionally and confidentially and did not disclose anything about the investigation to anyone who was not involved except to ask colleagues for advice or support. As of 2024, the Code of Ethics has been updated and is based on courage, respect, empathy and public service (CoP, 2024). The Code of Ethics remains at the centre of the National Decision Making Model and at the centre of all the decisions I made during this investigation.

In conclusion, in this discussion of a serious and complex investigation, I have critically evaluated the investigative including fast-track actions that I took. I have discussed the investigative fast-track actions taken during the Initial Investigation phase such as obtaining an initial account from the victim and identifying the suspect, taking an EEK and taking the victim to the SARC and sending those samples for forensic analysis. I also conducted the fast-track action of house to house and CCTV enquiries. It was important to do this without delay as CCTV footage is only held for a limited amount of time. It was also important to obtain the samples for forensic analysis as soon as practicable to remain within the forensic

window and ensure that evidence is not lost. In terms of support, I ensured that the victim was aware of the report to court process so that she could make an informed decision, I submitted a PPN and referral to NewPathways so that she could be allocated an ISVA without delay. I ensured that she was safeguarding and was supported so that she remained engaged with the investigation. I also provided appropriate support to the disclosure witness and suspect. I ensured that I conducted the investigation expeditiously and in line with the revised Code of Ethics.

Word count - 2091

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