

## **Graduate Diploma Professional Police Practice**

### **LEVEL 6 - 40 Credits**

**Workbook title: Competency Based  
Workbook 2 (DHEP)**

**(SOUTH WALES POLICE, GWENT POLICE AND  
UWTSD)**

**Learner name: Rhys Powell**

**Learner's University Registration Number: 2117674**

## **FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME**

***Module title: Policing in the Workplace 3 (DHEP) - BMPP6001D***

## Workbook Guidance

Please read these notes carefully. They provide essential information. The documents you will use in developing your workbook are on the following pages.

### What is the workbook for?

The purpose of this workbook is to enable learners to demonstrate and provide evidence of how they meet the learning outcomes set by the College of Policing, for the Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice. You are being asked to outline your experiential learning based upon your theoretical understanding in a range of operational situations.

- Wellbeing and Resilience
- Criminal Justice
- Conducting Investigations
- Decision making and discretion
- Maintaining Professional Standards
- Leadership and Team working
- Policing the roads
- Information and Intelligence

You may wish to use the same incidents as you have outlined in the Occupational Competence Portfolio.

### How should the workbook be presented?

Blank electronic copies can be found on Moodle of this workbook. You must submit this document electronically therefore it is important that you save your work regularly and upload the final typed version through Turnitin on Moodle.

**Word count policy** can be found in chapter 7 of the Academic Quality under section 7.7 (this applies to presenting work above and under the specified word count).

[https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/academic-office/agh-chapters/chapters---en/Chapter\\_07\\_Assessment-Taught\\_Programmes\\_Pages\\_72-79-UPDATED-05-11-2019.pdf](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/academic-office/agh-chapters/chapters---en/Chapter_07_Assessment-Taught_Programmes_Pages_72-79-UPDATED-05-11-2019.pdf)

Reflective practice is a core aspect for your workbooks and although there is a variety of useful resources on Moodle, there is one particular book, that is specifically based on reflective practice in policing, here is a link to one chapter from Selina Copley's Reflective Practice for Policing Students:

[https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/298870/mod\\_resource/content/1/Reflective%20Practice%20for%20Policing%20Students%20-%20Selina%20Copley%20Chapter5.pdf](https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/298870/mod_resource/content/1/Reflective%20Practice%20for%20Policing%20Students%20-%20Selina%20Copley%20Chapter5.pdf)

### How is the workbook assessed?

Advice and support about the completion of this workbook is available to you. Please contact Kelly Andrews direct using [k.andrews@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:k.andrews@uwtsd.ac.uk) with any questions or queries you may have.

Dates of workbook submission can be located within the General information tile within Moodle.

Once submitted your workbook will be assessed and marked independently. You will be provided with individual feedback once the work has been marked.

## Confidentiality

It is important that no individual can be identified either directly or indirectly from the information in the workbook. However, you must:

- adhere to guidance in the Candidate Handbook about confidentiality.
- not identify individuals including witnesses, victims, or offenders by name.
- not write information that enables any individual to be identified indirectly through the description you provide. This includes references to names, colleagues, places (including hospitals, schools, town, villages, streets) specific incidents which were high profile and could be identified due to past publicity, other professionals or any other personal information including medical or other conditions.
- take personal responsibility for adhering to confidentiality rules.
- not include any dates of any incidents or anything that specifically identifies an actual incident.

**Please be aware that any content that is deemed to be inappropriate, disrespectful, or abusive will not be tolerated. Following review of any content of this nature the information will be shared with the employer of the student responsible.**

**Should any health and wellbeing concerns be raised because of disclosures made by the student within this workbook, the employer of the student will be informed.**

## NOTE

Your workbook will be submitted electronically via Turnitin on Moodle. Guidance on this is in the Candidate Handbook.

***Remember that the workbook is YOUR responsibility you must not rely on the assessor or anyone else to pick up any confidentiality breaches as this is your work and you must accept full responsibility for confidentiality. Meeting all the confidentiality requirements is particularly important.***

## Dyslexia and other special circumstances

If you have any condition that you feel may affect your ability to deal with any part of the programme, please see the Candidate Handbook for further guidance. The University has a Student Services Unit that may be able to help but ***it is the learner's individual responsibility to contact them.***

## Competency Based Workbook 2 - Learner Workbook

### Guidance:

- Your workbook must contain items 1 - 5 below (in the order given).
- You should use the pro-forma to insert your text within each section.
- Note that this module has 2 components with each weighted at 50% of the overall 100% marks total.
- You should upload your completed document as a saved pdf file of this workbook; if this is not possible then a Word Doc file is acceptable. Do not send a scanned file from a photocopier, an apple.dot file, or a Microsoft publisher file as Turnitin will not be able to assess them, despite you being able to upload them.

### Contents

| Component 1<br>50% | Area of Professional Practice                                                                                                                            | Word count                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Task 1             | <b>Vulnerability and Risk<br/>Evidence-based policing</b>                                                                                                | <b>2000</b>                           |
| <b>Task 2</b>      | <b>CHOOSE ONLY 1 OF THESE<br/>'ADVANCED LEARNING AREA'<br/>OPTIONS. IT SHOULD BE ONE THAT<br/>HAS BEEN AGREED WITH THE<br/>FORCE TO STUDY IN YEAR 2.</b> | <b>All options are<br/>2000 words</b> |
| Task 2             |                                                                                                                                                          | <b>2000</b>                           |
| Option 1           | <b>Response Policing</b>                                                                                                                                 |                                       |
| Option 2           | <b>Policing Communities</b>                                                                                                                              |                                       |
| Option 3           | <b>Road Policing</b>                                                                                                                                     |                                       |
| Option 4           | <b>Information and Intelligence</b>                                                                                                                      |                                       |
| Option 5           | <b>Conducting Investigations</b>                                                                                                                         |                                       |
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## Task 1

### Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Vulnerability and Risk, Evidence-based policing

You must choose **a policing incident** in which you played a significant role with a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour and reflect on what happened.

**Give a brief description** of the incident including social and legislative contexts and any relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues.

**Critically evaluate** the appropriateness of different approaches (by professionals and the police) in supporting or managing vulnerable people or people at risk of harm.

**Explore** what works in relation to tackling repeat victimisation and repeat offending. Consider the use of evidence-based policing.

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

### ANSWER:

The incident that I have chosen to write this essay on is an attempted rape investigation that I am officer in charge (OIC) for (CPS, 2021a). The incident involved the suspect meeting the victim after she became separated from her friends and he walked her back to his hotel room. Hotel CCTV shows the victim flee, half dressed, from the suspects hotel room and run into the hotel lobby before police are called. A description from the victim, CCTV enquiries and the assistance of the hotel staff meant the suspect was identified and arrested in his hotel room which was preserved as a scene. Based on the initial account of the victim to attending officers the suspect was arrested on suspicion of attempted rape. The available evidence suggested that he had committed acts which were more than merely preparatory towards the commission of a rape (CPS, 2021b) without penetrating the vagina, anus or mouth of the victim with his penis (legislation.gov.uk, 2012).

The suspect was interviewed and golden hour fast track actions (National Police Chiefs Council, 2021) were identified and completed such as a CCTV trawl, obtaining witness statements and searching of the suspects room. The available evidence was submitted to the CPS who authorised a charging decision for attempted rape. This decision was made on the basis that there was sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction and the prosecution was considered to be in the public interest (CPS, 2020).

The social context of the incident was that it took place in a city centre location on the evening of a concert, this meant there was an influx of additional tourists and guests in the hotel. The suspect was also a refugee who had been placed in the hotel by the Council. Due to the arrest of the suspect late at night in the hotel, the presence of crime scene investigators in the suspects room and investigators conducting CCTV and witness enquiries the following day there had to be an awareness of the public reaction to the incident. I considered that the incident could attract significant public interest and had the potential to be considered a critical incident (College of Policing, 2013) due to the impact on the community. The topic of refugees and asylum seekers staying in hotels has been a politically sensitive issue for some time and recently protests have been growing at hotels containing asylum seekers across the country fuelled by supporters of far right groups such as Britain First (Taylor, 2023). Due to this, relevant internal (local Inspector and media teams) and external stakeholders (Council) were informed and kept updated as the investigation progressed.

Language was also a key consideration in the early stages of the investigation. The suspect's first language was not English and although he spoke good English I decided that an interpreter was required for him to be interviewed for compliance with PACE Code C 13.2 (Home Office, 2019). I knew that the interview would be lengthy and complex, addressing issues such as consent, mens rea (LexisNexis, 2023) and body language in detail and I didn't want the nuances of such issues to be lost in translation.

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The initial response taken by response and CID officers on the night of the incident needed to balance the needs of the victim with the golden hour principles. The golden hour principles state that key actions taken in the very early stages of an investigation can play a key role in the outcome and evidence needs to be preserved, a suspect identified and cross contamination considered (College of Policing, 2013b). In my opinion this was done effectively as the suspect and victim were identified early and his hotel room was secured as a scene. The difficulty with balancing the golden hour principles against the needs of the victim was that key information needed to be obtained from the victim whilst she was still in a very distressed state. Due to the public location of the incident the victim was taken to a police station where she provided her initial account (College of Policing, 2019b) and an early evidence kit was used to obtain initial forensic samples such as a urine sample (Smith et al., 2014). The immediate needs of the victim were also met and she was provided with drinks, spare clothing, a phone charger and a lift home.

The next main interaction the victim had with the investigative process was attending a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) the following day (NHS, 2022). If the victim consents to their details being shared a SARC referral will always be completed in the early stages of an investigation. My experiences of utilising the SARC is that they have expertise the police don't have and have been invaluable in explaining the process and providing ongoing support to the victim. The difficulty I have

personally found as an investigator is striking the balance between engaging with the victim, without completely siding with the victim and ignoring evidence that might point away from the current suspect or assist their defence. I am required to keep a balanced approach and gather all available evidence under the CPIA 1996 (CPS, 2021a). SARC staff are able to fully engage with the victim by being removed from the criminal justice process.

As well as conducting a medical examination to obtain forensic evidence the SARC staff can provide medical advice, arrange appointments at the sexual health clinic and provide emotional and counselling support that the police do not have the expertise to provide (NHS, 2022). The main hurdle I have experienced with the SARC is that they will only usually provide counselling after a criminal investigation has been completed, which due to the often protracted nature of the criminal justice system means that it will be several months at the earliest.

After the first few days of the investigation Victim Focus has also been an important part of keeping the victim updated and preparing her for the trial by answering questions in relation to the court process. Both I as OIC and Victim Focus have been providing the victim with regular updates as the investigation has progressed (Victim Support, 2021). I, alongside victim focus, have explained to the victim the options for special measures (CPS, 2021c) so that the victim has been able to make an informed decision regarding how she wants to provide evidence in court.

Whilst of course the majority of the resources and effort has been placed in the victim the suspect too is in a vulnerable position. After being arrested for such a serious offence this is a much higher likelihood of suicide and as the victim may want to speak to a trained professional at the SARC the suspect may also wish to speak to someone trained in emotional support. For these reasons following the interview the suspect was provided with documentation explaining support organisations such as the Samaritans (Samaritans, 2022) he could contact for support.

**631**

The public awareness of the number of sexual offences committed has arguably never been higher. The death of Sarah Everard in 2021 at the hands of a serving Metropolitan Police Officer led to intense scrutiny of how previous sexual allegations against him had been investigated and resulted in national debate around the safety of lone females across the UK (Lullo, 2022). In response the Government implemented the 'Tackling violence against women and girls strategy' (Home Office, 2021). The report implementing the strategy stated that "no single factor causes violence and there is no single route to how people become perpetrators of these crimes" (Home Office, 2021). It states that there has been some encouraging

research from outside the UK that educating children on healthy relationships led to reduced sexual violence being reported (Wolfe et al., 2009).

In relation to tackling repeat offenders the College of Policing's (2019) meta-analysis of studies on electronic tagging of sex offenders found very strong evidence that it had an overall reduction in repeat offending compared to offenders that were not electronically monitored. It noted that it allowed offenders to remain in the community for longer and avoid lengthy prison sentences, which afforded them better access to their support networks.

I am currently working on a specialised Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) team. Specialist RASSO teams both in the police and CPS are one of the approaches being taken to address the incredibly low charge and conviction rates for rape (CPS, 2020b). In 2021 only one in a hundred recorded rape offences resulted in a charge within the same year (Rape Crisis, 2023). The aim of the CPS RASSO 2025 strategy (CPS, 2020b) is to improve public trust and confidence in how RASSO cases are investigated and prosecuted. According to the research (Dalton et al., 2022) specialist RASSO teams improve investigative effectiveness in five different ways, "improving the efficacy of the individual components of the investigation; better engagement with victims; better officer wellbeing; and overall improved policing outcomes". Logically if the teams investigating RASSO offences are operating more effectively and positive outcome rates are improved this in turn may lead to increased public confidence in the investigative process and an increased willingness to report such offences, knowing they will be investigated appropriately. Dalton et al. (2022) however acknowledge that RASSO teams are a relatively new development and more research is required in this area. The ongoing review of RASSO teams by Operation Soteria Bluestone (Stanko, 2023) found that significant improvements still need to be made in the quality of rape investigations. The operation was allowed access to officers of all ranks and to review in detail evidence gathered at each stage of an investigation. Key themes show a lack of specialist training for officers, a high burnout and low retention rate of staff and a disproportionate focus on testing a victim's credibility rather than testing the suspect's account. Although the findings of the operation make for challenging reading as someone currently in a RASSO unit, the resources being placed into the research and the detailed recommendations as a result of the Operation show that steps are being taken in a positive direction.

Another way of tackling repeat victimisation is to focus on areas where there is a statistically high reoffending rate. According to research by Rumney and McPhee (2021) where rape occurs between partners such behaviour is likely to be repeated, and offenders are more likely to commit further offences against future partners. According to Rumney and McPhee (2021) one way of addressing this is for investigating officers to have an 'offender-centric' approach that closely looks into the private life of the suspect and their relationships which has the potential to reveal additional victims. There is also a significantly lower conviction rate for rape offences committed in a domestic relationship context (Davies et al., 2022). Due to this work has been done to try and develop intervention programs designed at working with offenders and victims to try and change the underlying causes of their offending

behaviour. Research conducted by Scott et al. (2013) found that offenders who attended appointments with therapists who specialise in working with domestic abuse perpetrators and were given help in accessing local support services to assist with issues such as housing and addiction were far less likely to commit further domestic offences against their partner or come into contact with the police again in any capacity. Similar support in this study was of course also provided to victims. This holistic, multi agency approach utilising resources outside of the police is the exact model that is currently being employed when a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) takes place. Usually in attendance at such meetings are agencies such as social services, health, probation, housing and domestic abuse advisors who will work together to find ways of safeguarding a victim from repeat offending (Torbay Domestic Abuse Steering Group, 2023). The MARAC process is one which has been implemented all across the UK and there has been significant research showing their value in reducing offending. According to the research of Robinson (2006) the effectiveness of MARAC's in Cardiff, where I currently work, found multi-agency working resulted in six out of every ten victims being prevented from becoming repeat victims.

As well as trying to prevent re-offending some police forces are also pioneering new approaches to try and prevent sexual offences before they occur. Proactive night time economy patrols are something that is currently being trialled in South Wales Police as part of Operation Soteria Bluestone (Stanko, 2023). These patrols target areas in the city such as outside nightclubs where lone, intoxicated females are likely to congregate and potentially become victims of sexual offences. Such approaches have been trialled in Thames Valley Police with over two hundred males being stopped (Richardson, 2022). Due to the success of the project Thames Valley Police have been awarded additional funding (PCC Thames Valley, 2022) and have tied in with some of the ideas of Scott et al. (2013) by referring those displaying predatory behaviour to a support agency that works with them to address their issues.

**1018**

**Total - 2176**

## Task 2

This is a reminder that this TASK 2 section is an opportunity for you to answer one question which should be relevant to the “advanced learning” area that you have chosen. The advanced learning lecture that you choose to attend will assist you in answering this task.

Choose 1 of these 5 options to answer

(Note for officers who have an interest in becoming a detective and wish to specialise in this role, you **MUST** choose option 5)

1. Response Policing.
2. Policing Communities.
3. Road Policing.
4. Information and Intelligence.
5. Conducting Investigations.

### **Task 2 Option 1:**

#### **Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:**

##### **Response Policing**

A core part of the policing mission is to prevent crime and disorder. Domestic abuse causes both serious harm and constitutes a considerable proportion of overall crime

You should choose **a domestic abuse incident** that was of a complex nature, in which you played a significant role in providing a response.

Critically assess the challenges associated with a domestic abuse incident that you have attended, and the strategies developed for effective policing in such challenging situations.

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

**ANSWER:**

## **Task 2 Option 2:**

### **Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:**

#### **Policing Communities**

Criminal justice faces ever more challenges from society. While official figures show a drop in police recorded crime in the UK the distribution of crime shows a more complex pattern with violent crime showing a rise.

In regard to community policing chose an incident that you have attended that presented a complex issue for the community, and that you played a significant role in providing a response.

**Critically evaluate** a range of interventions that you have employed to promote community engagement that assisted in resolving the issue.

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

**Answer:**

## **Task 2 Option 3**

### **Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:**

#### **Road Policing**

**The police are the lead agency for collision investigation and have the primary duty to investigate and establish the circumstances that have led to road deaths and life changing injuries.**

Describe a serious collision that you attended and in which you took a significant role (e.g., initial reporting officer, scene manager, lead investigator).

**Critically evaluate** the evidence base that you dealt with and strategies that could be implemented to reduce the likelihood of it reoccurring.

2000 words (+/- 10%: *include your actual word count at the end of each section*)

**Answer:**

## **Task 2 Option 4**

### **Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:**

#### **Information and Intelligence**

You should choose an investigation that you have been involved in **that was of a complex nature**, in which you played a significant role.

**Critically analyse** an investigation, that you have led, commenting on the effectiveness of the National Intelligence Model and the importance of the role played by cross border cooperation in relation to your information and intelligence.

Reference how effective information and intelligence was used within your operation, and how you used specialist intelligence tools to support your complex investigation.

2000 words (+/- 10%: *include your actual word count at the end of each section*)

**Answer:**



## **Task 2 Option 5**

### **Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:**

#### **Conducting Investigations**

You should choose an investigation that you have been involved in **that was of a complex nature**, in which you played a significant role.

**Critically evaluate** the processes employed in a complex investigation you have been involved in, and the fast-track actions that you have utilised.

Evaluate the support you have provided to victims, witnesses, and offenders (where appropriate) during a complex investigation and reference the management of your own personal values and attitudes in relation to this.

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

#### **Answer:**

A complex investigation that I have worked on is a stranger rape investigation that I am OIC for. This incident involved a taxi driver taking a lone intoxicated female back to her home address in the early hours of the morning. The victim alleges that on arriving at the property the driver locked the doors of the taxi, before sexually assaulting her and then entering her property and having non-consensual sex with her (legislation.gov.uk, 2012). The matter was reported to the police five days after the incident and fast track actions took place to identify the suspect, arrest him and gather evidence surrounding the incident. I will focus on fast track actions that took place within forty-eight hours of the victim making the report to police.

The first awareness the RASSO team (CPS, 2020b) I was working had of the incident was an anonymous intelligence report made to the police via the SARC the victim had attended (NHS, 2022). At this stage due to the victim not consenting to the full details being passed to the police very limited information was provided, and we had no way of identifying or contacting the victim. We were provided with a rough area where the offence happened and were told that a female had got into a taxi outside a specific nightclub. This was insufficient information to identify a suspect or victim as CCTV enquiries showing numerous potential victims. According to the research (AllAboutLaw, 2020) over half of domestic abuse cases were unsuccessful because the victim failed to support a prosecution, highlighting the difficulty in proceeding without the information and testimony in court a victim can provide.

Once an online report had been received from the victim and a link was made with the anonymous intelligence a key priority in the investigation was identifying the taxi driver. A CCTV trawl (College of Policing, 2013c) was conducted and a good working relationship with the council allowed us to access numerous potential cameras in the city centre and along the route. We also attended the nightclub the victim had visited and although no details of the incident were passed to staff it was explained that we were investigating a serious incident and needed to identify an individual as soon as possible which meant we were able to obtain the CCTV straight away. The footage showed the victim leaving the nightclub and the make and model of the taxi and the route it took. The footage did not however capture the number plate of the vehicle. A specialist team was therefore utilised to conduct ANPR checks (South Wales Police, 2023) on the route to identify the vehicle. This information was obtained on a Friday afternoon and due to the potential risk to the public by this driver taking other lone females home over the weekend the number plate was circulated and specialist traffic and firearms officers that can stop a vehicle were notified. The male was arrested later that evening and his taxi was seized.

As this was a case involving a stranger, a forensic strategy was drawn up covering the three potential scenes. A scene is broader than simply the area an incident took place, according to the College of Policing (2021) it can also include the victim, vehicles and locations associated with the suspect. The victim had attended the SARC and therefore intimate samples had already been obtained by a Doctor. These could be sent off with the aim of establishing whether sexual intercourse had taken place. As the victim had attended the medical examination within seven days she was still classed as being inside the forensic window (Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine, 2017).

The second potential scene was the taxi itself where the victim stated she had been assaulted before the suspect entered her property. I discussed this with a scene of crime supervisor and it was decided that there would be no evidential benefit in obtaining samples from the taxi. The CCTV obtained showed the victim entering the taxi and other CCTV obtained showed the victim and suspect leaving the taxi. The vehicle was also registered in the name of the suspect and had a taxi licence in his name attributed to it. Due to the passage of time (several days since the incident) and the possibility of cross contamination from numerous other passengers that would have been in the taxi during this time it was decided there would be no benefit in taking forensic samples from the taxi (Forensic Science Regulator, 2020).

Thirdly the victim had provided a detailed account of what had happened in a video recorded interview. Using video recorded evidence in chief is a provision available in rape trials under section 27 Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Ministry of Justice, 2022). In this the victim identified the toilet in her house and the area of her bedroom where the suspect had been. She also stated that the male had ejaculated on her carpet. CSI officers attended the address and various samples and photographs were taken. Of key importance an area of carpet was identified as potentially containing semen. I spoke with my Supervisor and authorisation was granted to cut the carpet and remove a sample. The forensic submission was fast tracked and I drove the sample of carpet straight to our external forensic provider. The early work in the lab confirmed that the carpet sample contained semen and the

DNA was then cross referenced and showed a match with the sample lawfully obtained under section 63 PACE (Legislation.gov.uk, 2011) from the suspect.

Another fast track action was a review of the victim's phone. In many investigations a victim's phone is likely to contain relevant evidence relating to the offence such as location data, messages/call logs and recorded media. There is a fine balance between securing this important evidence and pressurising the victim who may rightly be concerned that a download of their phone will contain private and personal information. The media has highlighted many examples of cases where failure to disclose messages or images on phones has led to trials collapsing, such as the case against Sampson Makele (Bowcott, 2018). However on the other end of the spectrum forces have been criticised for demanding a victim hands over their phone and closing investigations if they fail to do so (Victims Commissioner, 2021). I believe I managed to strike the appropriate balance by securing the appropriate consent from the victim whilst limiting the download to a short timeframe of five day and focussing only on information required to follow reasonable lines of enquiry (HM Government, 2023). The review of the phone allowed me to obtain key information, namely disclosures the victim had made to friends in the period between the incident and her reporting the matter to police. I was able to secure these conversations and then speak to the victims friends and family individually and obtain statements.

Section wordcount - 1152

A major aspect of the investigation has been providing support to the victim especially due to their early reluctance to report the incident to the police. The initial support involved visiting the victim in person and reassuring her that the matter would be investigated promptly and discreetly, outlining the support that would be available to her such as victim focus and special measures. South Wales Victim Focus is an organisation separate to the police and criminal justice system that help victims feel empowered to proceed with criminal investigations and provide advice and support on matters such as the court process, criminal injury compensation and can also provide emotional support (South Wales Police, 2023). Special measures are an option available to victims of sexual offences under section seventeen of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (YJCEA) (Legislation.gov.uk, 1999). One of the measures we commonly use in rape investigations is for the victim to give video recorded evidence in chief under section twenty seven of YJCEA (Legislation.gov.uk, 2012). The benefit of this is that the victim felt much more comfortable speaking to police officers she had already met in a safe, controlled environment at the SARC. She was able to have a supportive friend in attendance and be offered support from the SARC staff. This benefitted both her ability to engage with the process and to allow her to recall the incident fully without feeling under unnecessary pressure that a courtroom would add. The video recorded interview can then be played at court meaning that if the matter goes to trial the victim does not have to spend so long recounting a traumatic event, which due to delays in matters progressing to court may have happened months or years previously.

Engaging with the victim through regular updates as the investigation progressed also showed that she had concerns regarding having to come 'face to face' with the suspect in court. For this reason I submitted a further special measures application

under the YJCEA for the victim to give evidence via court live link which means she appears to the court on a television screen and does not have to be present inside the courtroom (CPS, 2019).

As the trial got closer I have tried to provide some additional support to the victim to make her feel as comfortable as possible during this process. I spoke to Witnesses Services (Citizens Advice, 2023) who were able to arrange a court visit so that the victim could see the layout of the court, the live link room and ask questions about arrangements on the week of the trial. Accompanying the victim during this visit allowed me to allay some of the concerns the victim had such as her name and personal details being publicised in the media. This is an area that is still being debated, with some arguing that the current lifelong anonymity preventing reporting of any information that identifies a victim goes against the presumption of innocence until proven guilty (UK Parliament, 2015). My personal opinion is that the low conviction rates and stress of going through an investigation, likely lasting several months, means the system is still heavily weighted against the victim even with anonymity. According to Rape Crisis (2023) five out of every six victims still fail to make a report to police.

One of the main difficulties I have experienced in providing support to the victim are that I and the police service do not have the expertise or capability to provide the counselling and medical support that some victims need. The SARC can provide counselling services, but they are in high demand and they can sometimes only offer sessions several months down the line. The victim also stated when I spoke to her that she was suffering with increased anxiety and PTSD symptoms, something which a victim is unfortunately at an increased risk of (Tull, 2022). Again I can only suggest she speaks to her GP regarding this despite her again reporting a delay of several months in receiving support. This lag in receiving support can be the difference between the victim feeling strong enough to attend a trial and withdrawing their support for an investigation.

Secondly I have learnt that I have to recognise there are certain aspects of the investigation that are outside of my control such as court delays. I have already experienced two delays during the investigation to the date of the initial hearing and trial itself, both of which have come at the last minute. This has been a frustration for me, but more importantly I have seen it have a huge impact on the willingness of the victim to engage in the process. The victim suggested that she could not go through with attending court if the matter kept getting pushed back due to her mental health. Recent news articles this year show that hundreds of cases are being dropped by victims due to delays in the system due to a lack of court space and barrister availability (Ames, 2023). This is also not a local problem to South Wales, national organisations that support victims urging the government to tackle this growing problem and suggesting judge only trials and guaranteed dates for victims as a way forward (Topping, 2023).

Finally I have experienced difficulty with managing the expectations of witnesses. During the investigation I have met with and spoken to the victims parents due to them being witnesses having received disclosures from the victim about what had happened. Whilst in some ways I was able to reassure them that the matter was being dealt with seriously and I would do all I could to gather the available evidence,

it was difficult knowing that it would be at least several months until the matter was in court. I also had to balance not disclosing information to the victims parents that could damage the investigation. I knew this was the right thing to do in accordance with achieving best evidence guidance to avoid witness or victim contamination (Ministry of Justice, 2011). In practice however, it meant holding back information that strengthened the account of their daughter and may have provided them some further reassurance.

Section wordcount - 1030

Total - 2182

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**Please sign to confirm that the work submitted is your own and has not been copied from another:**

**Signed: R.Powell**

**Date: 28.04.23**

## Bibliography

The bibliography should only include sources referenced within the workbook using the Harvard referencing system. Information about referencing in written assignments and how to avoid plagiarism can be found on Moodle. It is important that you are aware of the importance of ensuring that the work submitted is your original work.

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