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Title: Improving recognition and response to vulnerability: an evaluation of a police change programme

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Abstract

A key part of policing is recognising vulnerability, and providing an appropriate response; however there are variations in defining vulnerability and applying this in practice. To enhance the vision of a UK police force alliance to protect vulnerable people from harm, a change programme was implemented which included two one-day workshops which were delivered to officers, staff, and their supervisors, across the organisation. These were intended to promote a change in attitudes and behaviours, and increase participants' confidence in recognising and responding to vulnerability.

The programme evaluation aimed to identify the perceived impact of the workshops in raising awareness and influencing confidence and behaviours of officers and staff, in relation to vulnerability and professional curiosity. A mixed methods approach was used, with a pre- and post-intervention questionnaire (n=97), followed up with semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (n=16).

The findings of the evaluation focus on changes in the participants' understanding of vulnerability and professional curiosity as applied to their roles, and their levels of confidence in responding to different and complex vulnerabilities. Participants identified situations where they felt less confident about providing an appropriate response. Small changes in practice following the workshops were identified, along with potential organisational barriers to change.