RESPONDING TO THE PUBLIC POLICY

Executive Summary

This policy sets out how West Midlands Police (WMP) will consistently respond to public contact, ensuring that every interaction is professional, timely, and risk informed. It supports the delivery of three core missions:

- Delivering prompt and professional responses to requests for service.
- Dispatching the most appropriate resources to manage risk effectively.
- Conducting high-quality initial investigations where physical attendance is not required.

Public trust and confidence are central to our legitimacy. This policy provides clear guidance for all staff involved in Force Contact functions, ensuring a consistent and high standard of service across all contact routes and risk levels.

It consolidates multiple existing documents (e.g., THRIVE, Graded Incident Policy) into a single, coherent framework, supported by procedural guidance. This policy complements other force policies and should be applied in conjunction with them.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

This policy has been checked against APP and WMP have adopted the provisions of APP as its policy, with supplementary information contained herein, which reflects local practice and the needs of the communities served by WMP.

There is no single APP relevant to the breadth of this policy, but various elements of different APP impact this policy. These elements have been accepted, specifically around risk and the National Decision Model (NDM).

- APP Armed Policing
- APP Critical Incident Management
- APP Risk
- APP Roads Policing

Scope

The Chief Constable has overall direction and control of WMP and is accountable for all policies and supporting documents of the organisation and its actions. Adherence to this force policy will be expected from:

- Force Contact – All police officers and staff (Contact Handling; Vulnerability Desk Dispatch; Public Contact Offices & Crime Desk); Supervisors; Managers and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Local Policing Units – All police officers and staff; Supervisors; Managers and SLT
- Any WMP employee who has initial contact with members of the public or responds to the public within the graded incident structure, e.g. DA Desk PPU and other Investigators.

Objectives

This policy aims to:

- **Foster Public Trust and Confidence** – Foster a culture of transparency, integrity, and impartiality within the police service to maintain high levels of public trust and deliver a prompt and effective service to those in need.

- **Ensure effective victim and vulnerability focus –** WMP is committed to delivering a victim-focused service that places the needs, rights, and wellbeing of victims at the centre of our response. We ensure full adherence to the Victims' Code and recognise that vulnerability may be chronic (long-term) or acute (short-term). Each contact with a victim is treated as a unique interaction, with circumstances assessed afresh to ensure appropriate support and safeguarding. We prioritise vulnerable individuals in our risk management processes, using structured professional judgement and recognised frameworks to guide our response. This approach ensures that victims receive a consistent, compassionate, and effective service, ensuring every caller enjoys the following rights.

    - To be able to understand and be understood
    - To have details of crimes recorded without unjustified delay
    - To be provided with information when reporting the crime
    - To be referred to services that support victims
    - To be provided with information about compensation
    - To be provided with information about the investigation
    - To make a Victim Personal Statement
    - To be given information about the trial and being a witness

- **Ensure multiple routes of contact** – WMP will remain at the forefront of modern policing, offering a wide variety of routes to contact the police, which are appropriately staffed and responsive to public need. To include physical contact, telephony, digital contact, and use of emergent technologies where appropriate.

- **Ensure effective management of calls for service –** WMP will implement effective systems for managing calls for service, including the use of technology to streamline communication and offer a wide choice of channels for public contact.

- **Effectively assess and manage risk –** WMP will consistently assess and manage risk to ensure the most appropriate and timely response to public contact. Risk assessment will be guided by the THRIVE framework, enabling staff to evaluate Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation opportunities, Vulnerability, and Engagement needs. Particular attention will be given to known areas of heightened vulnerability, including domestic abuse, missing persons, and mental health concerns. These cases require enhanced scrutiny to ensure safeguarding and appropriate resource deployment. All staff involved in public contact are expected to apply THRIVE consistently and professionally, ensuring that risk is not only identified but actively mitigated through informed decision-making and proportionate action.

- **Ensure responsive policing –** WMP will deploy the most appropriate resources within defined timeframes to meet public need, assess, and respond to vulnerability, and safeguard those at risk. In doing so, the force will uphold its positive obligations under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, ensuring proactive measures are taken to protect life.

- **Ensure effective investigations –** WMP will deliver high-quality investigations including where appropriate through digital technology, by maintaining clear communication with victims and callers throughout the investigative process. All decisions and actions will be transparently explained in line with the Victims' Code of Practice. From the initial point of contact, every member of Force Contact will adopt an investigative mindset, ensuring that opportunities to secure evidence, safeguard individuals, and progress enquiries are recognised and acted upon.

Definitions/Acronyms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CH	Call Handling
CR	Contact Resolutions Response Grade
DA	Domestic Abuse
EM	Emergency Response Grade
EVOLVES	Evidence, Victim, Offender, Likelihood, Vulnerability, Extent and Severity
FC	Force Contact
FDM	Force Duty Manager
FDS	Force Duty Superintendent
HQ	Head Quarters
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
LPA	Local Policing Area
NCRS	National Crime Recording Standards
NDM	National Decision Model
NPCC	National Police Chiefs Council
PNC	Police National Computer
PR	Priority Response Grade
PCO	Public Contact Office
R24	Response within 24 hours
RAD	Resource Allocate Dispatcher
RCRP	Right Care, Right Person
ROC	Record of Contact
SA	Scheduled Appointment Response Grade
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SOH	Single Online Home
THRIVE	Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement
WMP	West Midlands Police

Policy Statements

1. VULNERABILITY

1.1 WMP adopts the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) definition of vulnerability: a state in which an individual, due to their personal circumstances or situation, is unable to protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation.

1.2 The majority of individuals contacting the force will present some indicators of vulnerability at the point of contact. Certain incident types, however, are recognised as having an inherently higher risk profile, and callers or victims involved in these will be treated as vulnerable by default unless information emerges to indicate otherwise.

1.3 Incident types with default vulnerability status include:

- Individuals vulnerable due to age (e.g. children, elderly).
- Individuals with physical or mental health conditions.
- Victims of sexual abuse.
- Victims of domestic abuse.
- Individuals reported as missing.
- Victims of repeat or sustained offending.
- Where a victim of ASB is persistently targeted this will be treated as vulnerability.

1.4 In addition to these categories, any incident may be assessed as involving vulnerability based on a bespoke risk assessment conducted at the point of contact.

1.5 Where vulnerability is identified, WMP will adapt its response to mitigate risk. This may include:

- Escalation of incident grading based on assessed risk.
- Prioritisation within risk categories.
- Deployment of specialist resources.

1.6 Vulnerability will be recorded within the THRIVE framework and will inform all subsequent decision-making and operational activity. Incidents involving vulnerability will be subject to more stringent oversight and escalation as detailed in the additional guidance.

2. CONTACT HANDLING

2.1 WMP provides a range of contact channels to meet the diverse needs of our communities including:

- Emergency (999)
- Non-emergency (101)
- Single Online Home (SOH)

- Webchat
- Social Media

2.2 All contact routes are treated with equal professionalism and are supported by robust processes to ensure consistency, compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), and a high standard of service.

2.3 Prioritisation of emergency calls remains paramount, with non-emergency and digital contacts managed in accordance with assessed risk and service standards.

2.4 WMP is committed to valuing every call and ensuring a consistent, professional response to all public contact. Our approach is built on resilience, responsiveness, and risk-informed decision-making.

2.4.1 24/7 Coverage: We maintain sufficient staffing to answer emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) calls.

2.4.2 Call Recovery: If a non-emergency call is missed or abandoned, we will make proactive efforts to call back and re-engage.

2.4.3 Prioritisation: Emergency calls are prioritised above all other contact types in line with our incident grading chapter below and national standards.

2.4.4 Flexible Resourcing: During spikes in demand, additional Force Contact (FC) resources may be deployed at the discretion of the Force Duty Manager (FDM), Superintendent or Strategic Business Lead.

2.4.5 Resilience Planning: The WMP Bank provides additional support during forecasted peaks (e.g. summer holidays, major events), drawing on trained staff from across the organisation.

2.4.6 Performance Standards: We aim to meet national service level agreements, including:

- Answering 999 calls within 10 seconds (source)
- Answering 95% of non-emergency calls and answering within 3 minutes.

2.4.7 Technology-Enabled Contact: We use Interactive Voice Response (IVR) (automated menus) and Andi-Esra (AI-assisted call handling) to support efficient and effective responses to non-emergency contact.

2.4.8 Listening and Assessing: Contact Handlers will actively listen, assess risk using THRIVE framework and take positive action or provide appropriate advice.

2.4.9 Incident Grading: All incidents are graded in line with the Force Incident Grading section of this policy. Emergency (EM) and Priority (PR) incidents are passed to Dispatch without delay, supported by sufficient information and a THRIVE assessment.

2.4.10 Scheduled Appointments (SA): Where appropriate, incidents may be listed for scheduled appointments via Local Policing Area (LPA) Command Hubs, with oversight to ensure suitability.

2.4.11 Remote Resolution: Incidents suitable for resolution via the Domestic Abuse (DA) Desk, Crime Desk, or other remote investigation teams will be directed accordingly following liaison with those units.

2.4.12 Digital Contact Channels: In addition to voice services, the public can contact us via SOH, social media, and webchat. These channels are staffed 24/7 by trained contact handlers.

2.4.13 Surge Response: In the event of unexpectedly high call volumes, FC resource escalation plan – Project Mercury will be activated, providing a suite of mitigatory options to maintain service standards.

2.5 Advice for a range of call handling issues can be located on the Force Contact Knowledge Base

3. PUBLIC CONTACT OFFICE

3.1 WMP recognises the importance of providing physical locations where members of the public can speak to officers in person. Public Contact Offices (PCOs) offer vital access for individuals who may be vulnerable, digitally excluded, or simply prefer face-to-face engagement. These offices also serve as key points for investigative meetings and the surrender of items to police.

3.2 Local Access: WMP are committed to maintaining PCO's in every local LPA, based on local public need. A 24/7 service is maintained at Lloyd House, Birmingham Police HQ.

3.3 Resilience and Continuity: Extensive contingency plans are in place to mitigate against temporary closures, including redeployments of FC resources and support from LPAs.

3.4 Integrated Working: PCO staff may also support CH, digital contacts, or online work, where physical attendance allows, ensuring efficient use of resources.

3.5 Safety and Risk Management: Any offences of violence or public order within PCO's will be assessed using the THRIVE framework, with consideration for staff safety, the welfare of other visitors (especially vulnerable individuals), and the impact on public confidence.

3.6 Security Awareness: PCO staff are trained to identify and report hostile reconnaissance activity and will comply with auditor processes to safeguard police estates.

4. THRIVE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 THRIVE is a nationally recognised model for assessing threat, harm, risk, and vulnerability, which sits at the core of our grading system and professionalises our response to crisis and public need.

4.2 THRIVE takes clear account of vulnerability categories including missing people, domestic abuse, mental health, and risk to children. Within the THRIVE model these are viewed as aggravating factors to risk. ASB incidents will be assessed individually for vulnerability but will be treated as vulnerability by default where the ASB is repeated.

4.3 Due to the consistency of the model, any threat assessments are corporately structured and easily understandable by other decision makers and audit processes.

4.4 THRIVE must be completed on all incident logs and where grades are changed due to a changing risk profile based on fresh information or intelligence, or specialist understanding of same, this must also be recorded as a Re-THRIVE.

4.5 Incidents will be subject to periodic Re-THRIVE according to grade, to ensure full understanding of changes in risk.

4.6 Where THRIVE does not result in police action, consideration should be made regarding referrals to appropriate agencies. In such circumstances Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) principles may apply, and this may be recorded as a Record of Contact (ROC).

4.7 THRIVE aligns to the Code of Ethics , National Decision Making Model, WMP Values, and helps WMP respond at pace.

T	THREAT	A threat is a communicated or perceived intent to inflict harm or loss against another person
H	HARM	Harm is to do or to cause harm. E.g. to injure, damage, hurt – physical or psychological
R	RISK	Risk is the likelihood of the event occurring
I	INVESTIGATION	Investigation is the act or process of examining a crime, problem or situation and considering what action is required. This applies to incidents from point of call, and all officers and staff should be "investigators."
V	VULNERABILITY	Vulnerability is defined for the purposes of incident management as "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." Specific incidents where vulnerability is likely to be present include Domestic Abuse, Missing People, risk to children and mental health.

E	ENGAGEMENT	Engagement is where organisations and individuals build a positive relationship for the benefit of all parties

4.8 WMP is committed to embedding the THRIVE model across all relevant IT systems. Where system capability allows, and in all newly commissioned technologies, THRIVE functionality will be integrated to support consistent, risk-informed decision-making.

4.9 THRIVE assessments must be recorded wherever risk is identified. However, an immediate THRIVE is not required if it would delay a critical response to crisis or where other legal or procedural frameworks (e.g. EM protocols) take precedence. Similarly, THRIVE may not be necessary where police involvement is limited to administrative processing.

4.10 All post-incident decisions must be recorded promptly, accurately, and in full to ensure transparency and accountability.

4.11 THRIVE assessments will be conducted in line with the NPCC Risk Principles and the forces stated risk appetite. While the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has been replaced by the NPCC, the original risk principles remain valid and continue to inform our approach.

4.12 **Review and Audit**

4.12.1 WMP will incorporate the application of THRIVE into all relevant audit and compliance processes. Regular reviews of THRIVE assessments within ControlWorks ensure consistency, quality, and adherence to standards.

4.12.2 As investigations progress into the wider investigative ecosystem, additional assessment tools—such as EVOLVES, may become relevant and will be used alongside THRIVE where appropriate.

4.12.3 Structured debriefs will include evaluation of THRIVE application, and any learning identified will be considered by the Organisational Learning and Risk Board, with recommendations made to update this policy where necessary.

4.12.4 For incidents graded with longer response windows. Reviews are essential to monitor changes in risk between initial contact and attendance:

- **EM -** Continuously reviewed within Dispatch
- **PR -** Review at 1 hour (Dispatch), 2 hours (Supervisor), and 4 hours (FDM), with escalation to Force Duty Superintendent (FDS) thereafter.
- **Response within 24 hours (R24) -** Review at 8, 12, and 20 hours, or upon receipt of new information or intelligence, managed within Dispatch.
- **Scheduled Appointment (SA) -** Review at 24 and 48 hours of full re-THRIVE when new information is received. LPA Command Hubs typically manage these, but CH may initiate a re-THRIVE if new intelligence emerges.

5. GRADED INCIDENT AND DISPATCH

5.1 WMP use a structured, risk-based approach to determine whether and how police resources are deployed. This approach is underpinned by the nationally recognised THRIVE model and ensures that decisions are proportionate, consistent, and responsive to public need.

5.2 Response Grades: The Force operates four core response grades and a CR grade:

- Emergency (EM)
- Priority (PR)
- Response within 24 hours (R24)
- Scheduled Appointments (SA)
- Incidents not requiring physical attendance are managed through Contact Resolution (CR).

5.3 Deployment Decisions: Any incident requiring officer attendance will be graded as EM, PR, R24, or SA, based on the urgency and nature of the risk identified. All other incidents will be resolved remotely where appropriate.

5.4 THRIVE-Led Grading: Every grading decision is informed by a THRIVE risk assessment. This assessment forms the foundation of the initial grading and must also be used to support any regrading if the risk profile changes due to new information or intelligence.

5.5 Decision Support: Where grading is unclear or risk is ambiguous, staff should seek further information or consult a supervisor—unless doing so would cause undue delay to an urgent response.

5.6 Recording and Audit: All grading decisions must be recorded using the designated THRIVE field in Control Works. Any changes to grading must follow the force's regrade guidance.

5.7 Specialist Capabilities: The Dispatch function has access to a range of specialist resources, including Command (Firearms and Pursuit), Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), and Police National Computer (PNC), and can escalate to operational support units as required.

5.8 Emergency Response

5.8.1 A contact will be classified as an EM when it meets the criteria for immediate police intervention. This classification triggers an urgent deployment of officers, with attendance expected as quickly as possible and within 15 minutes as the standard service level.

5.8.2 An EM will be required when:

- An incident, which is taking place now, is reported to the police, and where there is, or is likely to be:
    - A risk of danger to life
    - Use of, or immediate threat to use violence.
    - Serious injury to a person
- A serious crime is taking place and/or an offender has just been disturbed at the scene of a serious crime.
- An offender has been detained and poses, or is likely to pose, an immediate risk to other people.
- An offender who poses a threat has only recently left the scene.
- The staff member has reason to believe the incident should be graded as EM.

5.8.3 Response Officers will ordinarily attend emergency incidents. However, where there is a risk of delay that could endanger the public, or where specialist capabilities are required, alternative deployment decisions may be made.

5.8.4 It is at the discretion of Dispatchers and Supervisors to identify and deploy the most appropriate available resource. All operational units are considered deployable in emergency circumstances, and decisions will be guided by the nature of the incident, available intelligence, and the THRIVE assessment.

5.8.5 This flexible approach ensures that public safety is prioritised and that the right resource is deployed at the right time to mitigate risk effectively.

5.9 Priority Response (PR)

5.9.1 A contact will be classified as a Priority if it meets the criteria below, which require attendance of an officer within the hour, but there is no immediate risk of serious injury or damage. Officers will be deployed with attendance expected as quickly as possible and within 60 minutes.

5.9.2 A PR will be required when:

- Officer attendance is necessary, in order to safeguard the caller or another, but the immediacy factors requiring an EM are not present, or
- A key witness or other key evidence is likely to be lost unless the police attend promptly, or
- The staff member has reasons to believe that the incident should be graded as a PR.

5.9.3 The force performance standard for attendance at a PR incident is ‘as soon as possible’, but within a maximum of 60 minutes.

5.9.4 Response Officers will ordinarily attend priority (PR) incidents. However, if a delay in their attendance could increase risk to the public, Dispatchers and Supervisors have discretion to deploy the most appropriate available resource to ensure timely intervention.

5.9.5 PR incidents often involve elements of vulnerability such as domestic abuse, hate crime, sexual offences, or missing persons, and may warrant accelerated deployment within the Priority grade. These incidents typically (though not exclusively) carry a higher risk of harm, trauma, or wider community impact.

5.9.6 Deployment decisions will be guided by the THRIVE assessment, ensuring that vulnerability and risk are fully considered when allocating resources.

5.10 **Response 24 Grade (R24)**

5.10.1 A contact will be classified as an R24 if it meets the criteria below, which require attendance of an officer within 24 hours, but there is no immediate risk of serious injury or damage. Officers will be deployed with attendance expected as quickly as possible and within 24 hours**.**

5.10.2 An R24 grade will be required where:

- Officer attendance is necessary in order to investigate offences, but there is no apparent urgent or immediate safeguarding risk.
- Physical evidence is required to be secured, or the victim is identified as being vulnerable and requiring in person support from policing.
- The staff member believes the circumstances are such that an R24 is warranted.

5.10.3 All R24 will be subject to periodic review at 8 hours, 12 hours, and 20 hours. Where these grades apply to vulnerability, supervisory oversight will be expected for the reviews and any incident not Dispatched at 20 hours must be escalated to the FDM.

5.11 **Scheduled Response (SA)**

5.11.1 A scheduled response will be required when:

- There is a requirement for an officer to physically speak to the caller (either at a police station or other location) for investigative, safeguarding, neighbourhood intervention/problem solving purposes, but the threat, harm, risk or vulnerability can be safely managed until police attendance and where the emergency and priority criteria has not been met.
- There are proportionate lines of enquiry, and these can only be completed by the physical attendance of officers.

5.11.2 The force performance standard for attendance at a Scheduled Response incident is expected 'at a time mutually agreed with the caller.'

5.11.3 LPAs must provide appropriate and sufficient resources to manage the volume and types of scheduled appointments for their geographical areas.

5.11.4 Scheduled appointments will be subject to periodic review on LPA to ensure risk is managed across time with a review performed each shift between call and attendance. Where the SA is vulnerability related this review must be performed by a supervisor.

5.11.5 Any SA involving a child at risk must have senior oversight from a Supervisor within Force Contact and subsequently on LPA. Any SA going past 24 hours in relation to a child at risk must be endorsed by a Chief Inspector.

5.12 Contact Resolution (CR)

5.12.1 A CR is required when:

- There is no requirement for physical attendance at an incident.
- There is a need for foundation investigation but no requirement for physical attendance is identified, and any threat, harm, risk, or vulnerability can be managed; the incident can be recorded appropriately, and an appropriate remote investigation can be completed without the physical attendance of an officer or member of staff. There will be some circumstances where further investigation may be required following the foundation and this will be returned to an appropriate investigator to progress.
- There are proportionate lines of enquiry, and these can be completed by phone or other means (i.e. virtually).
- There is no concern of key evidence being lost.
- The incident can be managed by referring to a more appropriate partner agency.
- The incident can be managed by offering advice.

5.12.2 CR may be suitable for initial resolution by Contact Handlers; or further investigation and/or support via the Crime Desk; DA Desk; or the Vulnerability Desk. Further, some CR may be passed to LPA for longer-term problem-solving work.

5.13 Dispatch

5.13.1 All incidents graded as EM or PR will be managed under the oversight of Dispatch. In these cases, the following operational principles will apply to ensure timely, risk-informed, and effective deployment.

- EM incidents should be dispatched within 2 minutes, and 30 seconds of incident creation (outstanding KPI) and Dispatch must be achieved within 4 minutes to deliver a response time within 15 minutes.
- PR incidents should be dispatched within 15 minutes (outstanding) and must be achieved within 30 minutes to deliver a response time within 1 hour.
- R24 incidents will be dispatched according to the specific requirements of the incident, due to the variability of risk represented across a 24-hour response window. In any circumstance Dispatch will aim to be achieved within a limit of 20 hours.

5.13.2 Dispatchers will ensure that sufficient information is provided to support an operational risk assessment, where such information is known or available. This includes relevant warning markers, summaries of previous incidents, and any intelligence indicating that involved parties are wanted or missing.

5.13.3 This information must be passed without delay, except where operational circumstances prevent it or where self-service access to systems is expected and appropriate.

5.13.4 When resources are on route to an EM incident, or are single-crewed, Dispatch will provide as much relevant information and intelligence as possible to support situational awareness at the scene. This may go beyond the minimum required, ensuring officers are fully informed.

5.13.5 For PR or R24 incidents attended by double-crewed units, it is expected that officers will self-serve using their personal-issue laptops or mobile devices to access relevant information, unless operational circumstances require otherwise.

5.13.6 Where it becomes apparent that the expected response times for EM, PR, R24, or SA grades are at risk of being exceeded, the appropriate escalation process will be initiated to ensure timely intervention and risk mitigation.

5.13.7 Arrival Status: Officers must mark themselves as En Route or Code 5 when travelling to an incident, and AI (At Incident) or Code 6 immediately upon arrival at the scene. This requirement should be actively reinforced by Dispatch, monitored by Resource Allocate Dispatcher (RAD), and manually updated where necessary.

5.13.8 Deployment Efficiency: Once dispatched, officers are expected to proceed to the incident without delay. Intelligence checks that do not impact immediate safety should be conducted while mobile, not prior to departure. Local supervisors are responsible for ensuring prompt deployment and preventing unnecessary delays. Officers should be mobile within 2 minutes when Dispatched to an EM and within 5 minutes when Dispatched to a PR.

5.13.9 Escalation for Unattended Incidents: Any EM or PR incident that remains unattended after 4 hours must be escalated to the FDS for consistent and ongoing review.

5.13.10 Review Requirement: All unattended logs will be subject to periodic review in line with the force's risk management framework to ensure any changes in risk are identified and addressed.

5.13.11 Dispatch will also have responsibility for the deployment of specialist resources including Roads Policing resources and Armed Resources. APP provisions accepted with YM1 being the analogue to FIM.

5.14 Vulnerability Incidents

5.14.1 In relation to vulnerability logs, the above processes regarding grading remain relevant, but the timescales for escalation and expectations for oversight are increased commensurate with the elevated risk.

5.14.2 Any incident involving the below vulnerability types must be flagged to a supervisor in Contact Handling for awareness and will then be owned by a supervisor within Dispatch until such time as a resource arrives. At that time ownership of the incident has passed to LPA Response or other attending team.

5.14.3 Escalation for a vulnerability PR incident will follow the above escalation process, but with additional scrutiny from Force Contract decision makers. Specific vulnerability types raising concern:

- Child Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Elderly Adult Abuse
- Missing Persons
- Hate Crime
- Incidents aggravated by physical or mental health issues where there is a policing purpose.

6. CRIME DESK

6.1 The Crime Desk delivers virtual investigations for crime reports where physical attendance is not required. This approach enables timely, remote engagement with victims and supports efficient use of resources across the force.

6.2 Investigations are conducted using platforms such as GoodSAM, allowing officers to engage with victims virtually and progress enquiries in near real-time.

6.3 All victims managed via the Crime Desk will be offered a virtual appointment within 24 hours of their report, ensuring prompt contact and reassurance.

6.4 By handling lower-complexity cases remotely, the Crime Desk helps free up local officers to focus on incidents requiring physical attendance or specialist intervention.

6.5 In addition to investigative functions, the Crime Desk plays a key role in audit and compliance, maintaining high standards of Crime Data Integrity. This includes:

- Monitoring performance
- Ensuring accurate application of closure codes
- Supporting the force's commitment to ethical and transparent crime recording

6.6 Where a comprehensive foundation investigation has been completed by the Crime Desk, further investigative actions may be referred to other departments for progression.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 It is the responsibility of all staff, officers, volunteers, and contractors to whom this policy applies to understand the provisions of this policy and associated guidance and to comply with its provisions.

7.2 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure compliance with this policy and further that associated guidance is followed, or in the case of legitimate and lawful deviation that this is appropriately recorded and rationalised.

7.3 It is the responsibility of senior managers to ensure that this policy is embedded culturally in the department, that appropriate governance measures underpin performance and compliance and that policy is kept up to date and adapted according to changing public, organisational or legislative requirements.

Relevant Legislation / Policies / Procedural Guidance

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- NPCC Risk Principles
- National Decision Model
- Force Contact Escalation Process Procedural Guidance
- Force Contact Vulnerability Strategy
- Force Contact Vulnerability Implementation Plan
- FC Resource Escalation Plan – OP Mercury
- FC Knowledge Hub
- WMP Vision and Values
- Victims Code

WMP Policies

- ASB Policy
- Right Care Right Person Policy

- Missing Persons Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy

APP

- APP Armed Policing
- APP Critical Incident Management
- APP Risk
- APP Roads Policing

Equality Impact Assessment

WMP places trust in their employees to comply with force policies and to work in accordance with and in support of:

- WMP Vision and Values
- Code of Ethics | College of Policing
- Voice of the Child

	What impact has this policy **had** on the nine protected characteristics in relation to the three general duties? (If applicable)	How **will** this updated policy positively impact each of the nine protected characteristics in relation to the three general duties? If not, explain why it will not.
Age (including children and young persons)	In 2023 Age UK reports that older people are more likely to_struggle with automated menus, fast paced speech, hearing difficulties and online reporting platforms. Research conducted by The Youth Endowment Fund and The Police Foundation Research between 2017 and 2024 shows a shift in which younger generations feel more comfortable communicating digitally than face to face or over a phone, both reports also show young people are reluctant to report a crime for fear of not being believed.	WMP will have multiple routes of contact for all members of the public, including face to face, with more LPA front desks open. Automated telephony (ANDI ESRA) which will default to a member of FC staff when there is a communication issue. WMP's use of online reporting platforms gives members of the public the option to report without speaking to a member of staff.
Disability	People with hearing impairments, speech, vision, and other physical and mental health conditions may struggle with automated telephony and digital platforms. Depending on their condition neurodivergent individuals may struggle with different contact methods.	Having multiple routes of contact approach ensures that our contact approach is accessible to as many people as possible. Accessible IT, and AI will enhance the user experience for disabled members of the community. Staff will be trained to recognise distress, cognitive overload and communication differences reducing the

	Those with Dyslexia may prefer to speak to a call handler rather than type out their reports. People with this protected characteristic find it difficult to wait on hold for long periods of time.	risk of confusing communication difference as uncooperative behaviour. Automated services will also reduce waiting times positively impacting people with this protected characteristic
Gender Reassignment	Automated services may misgender callers causing anxiety and frustration. Legal names and lived identity may create difficulties for those with this protected characteristic. Research has shown that misgendering damages trust and deters reporting.	Training for staff to include awareness around using chosen names and pronouns correctly, transphobic hate crime and discrimination. Automated services have been designed to use inclusive non-gender specific language.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Domestic abuse risk increases during pregnancy. Vulnerability increases during pregnancy and post-natal stage.	This new policy will prioritise vulnerable individuals and utilise guidance from existing WMP DV practices to ensure calls from this group are actioned appropriately.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	None Identified.	
Race	Language barriers can make emergency and other calls to the police challenging. Accents and speech patterns can adversely impact some people. Reliance on interpreters can make it difficult to contact the police. This can increase vulnerability in some members of the community.	WMP will have multiple routes of contact for all members of the public. This approach will help call handlers to use appropriate tools to record incidents, Cintra and colleagues with language skills will continue to provide help where appropriate. WMP has introduced a number of initiatives to improve the service offered to members of the Black community.
Religion or Belief	People reporting hate crimes, religiously or racially aggravated incidents may be reluctant to use some methods of communication. Trust and confidence in some communities is low.	Calls and communication will be handled and effectively assessed for risk impartially and in live with the Victims Code. Vulnerable people will be triaged and prioritised when appropriate.
Sex	Women are disproportionately at risk of domestic and other forms of violence and abuse. Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls is addressing existing disproportionality. Men are less likely to report crimes and disclose vulnerability due to stigma.	Vulnerable callers will be dealt with effectively using multiple routes. WMP has a number of policies already in place to address sex-based disproportionality.

Sexual Orientation	People with this protected characteristic have been reluctant to engage with the police due to low trust and confidence. Automated services and AI could risk "outing" people when making calls. Hate crime reporting may not happen if members of the community do not have faith in the police.	All WMP methods of contact use inclusive language and the data generated is handled in line with current Data Protection legislation and standards. Call handlers will be trained in hate crime reporting and will deal, sensitively and effectively with all people who contact WMP.

Publication Instructions

Suitable for publication to public.

Document Control

Strategic Lead: *[role and name]*	Superintendent [redacted] Force Contact
Policy Author(s): *[role and name]*	Superintendent [redacted] Force Contact
Effective Date:	19.02.2026
FET Lead: *[role and name]*	ACC Matt Welsted Force Contact, Communications and Corporate Change
Version Number:	v1.0
Review Date:	19.02.2028

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the Strategic Lead.

All policies are subject to a formal consultation process which encompasses Legal, Professional Standards, Faith Groups, Trade Unions, Independent Advisory Groups and wider force groups and any other relevant parties. A record of consultation can be found on the Policy Portal.

It is responsibility of the Strategic Lead to ensure that all links within the policy are correct and accessible.

Amendment History:

Version Number:	Effective Date:	Summary of Amendments:	Author:
1.0	19.02.26	New Policy	Supt. [redacted]
1.1	20.02.26	Point 2.4.4 Strategic Business Lead added	Supt. [redacted]