

Race Equality Assessment Matrix

Title of policy/procedure:	Vulnerable and Intimidated Witnesses
Policy author/assessor:	DI
Department:	Force Crime Management Unit
Date/period of assessment:	1 November 2004
Aim of policy/procedure:	provide guidance to police officers/staff on how to deal with such witnesses

Nature of function i.e. policy/procedure	Potential Impact (Yes/No)	Score	Comments/Rationale
Does the function impact directly on the public or any Thames Valley personnel (<i>for Human Resources issues</i>)?	Yes	2	The function affects how witnesses are dealt with by the police and supported through the court process through the use of special measures. It also relates to police officers who are witnesses, including those who are in fear or distress about giving evidence
Can discretion be used in the carrying out of the function?	Yes	2	Discretion is exercised in the sense that the officer is required to make a judgement about the needs of the witness and the support for which they may be eligible
Is there any evidence or reason to believe that some racial groups could be differently or adversely affected?	Yes	2	Indirectly. In order for special measures to be granted information will need to be provided on the nature of a witness's mental or physical disorder or disability. There is plenty of evidence to show that certain racial groups experience difficulty in obtaining a diagnosis or treatment for such

			<p>disorders. This would therefore affect their eligibility for assistance.</p> <p>In addition members of certain racial groups are more likely to be victims. Some special measures are available for those who are in fear or distress about giving evidence and race and culture are considerations so the law recognises this as a problem. But there is potential for discrimination at the point of the service being made available.</p>
Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	2	<p>Point of service – there are plans to deliver training across the force in 2005 as further special measures are rolled out. Equality of opportunity/access will be included.</p> <p>Public awareness – consideration will be given to how information about special measures can be targeted at minority groups in co-operation with the No Witness No Justice project. One of the aims of this project is to improve access to justice and includes providing information in a range of languages.</p>
Is there an opportunity to promote good race relations?	Yes	2	<p>Consideration will be given to making contact with RECs</p>

			locally and with the BPA, perhaps together with the NWNJ project, to show that the criminal justice system is actively improving its service to those who are witnesses/victims of crime.
Is there data already being collected for race equality purposes?	No	0	Consideration will be given to how cases can be monitored to ensure the correct and fair use of special measures is used. Monitoring to date has not been successful but there are opportunities to do so through the No Witness No Justice project which need to be explored.
Has any consultation been carried out so far?	Yes	0	Internal consultation with users of the policy/procedures. This is a revised policy which takes into account feedback from earlier consultation of the old policy
Is there any other public concern in relation to race issues attached to this function? (<i>think locally as well as nationally</i>)	No	0	
Do you perceive the function to be politically or socially sensitive?	No	0	
Total points:		10	
Impact Assessed as (<i>Low 0-4 Medium 5-9 High 10-16</i>):		High	