1.0 Rationale

Protecting adults from abuse and harm is a key role of the police. Many people may be at risk of abuse or neglect due to the actions, or lack of action, of another person and because of their inability to look after themselves.

In such cases, the role of the police is to identify those who may be vulnerable, assess if they are at risk of harm, deal any immediate safeguarding concerns and work with other agencies to put steps in place to prevent further abuse or harm.

2.0 Intention / Priorities

This policy is intended to ensure that Thames Valley Police achieves a consistent and professional approach to dealing with adults who have been identified as being vulnerable and at risk of harm (adult at risk). The priorities when responding to concerns about such adults are:

- To promote the safety and wellbeing of adults at risk, having due regard to their right and ability to make decisions for themselves;
- To proactively work with our partners to identify concerns about adults at risk and to reduce the harm they might suffer while respecting their wishes;
- To proportionally investigate crimes involving adults at risk;
- To facilitate effective and appropriate action against offenders so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system;
3.0 **General Principles**

A person is vulnerable if, “as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves, or others, from harm or exploitation”. This policy will apply to those aged 18 and over.

The term “adults at risk” will be adopted to mean those adults who are vulnerable and at risk of harm or exploitation.

Thames Valley Police will pay due regard to the six principles which underpin decisions about adults at risk identified in the [Care Act 2014](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-act-2014). Protecting adults at risk will not operate in isolation from other policies aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, i.e. Honour based Abuse, Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse, and officers will need to have due regard to the relevant policy.

4.0 **Statement of Policy**

When dealing with incidents where there are concerns about an adult at risk, officers and staff will:

- Recognise that some adults at risk may have difficulties in accessing and engaging with the police service because of mental health issues, learning, physical or other disabilities (including cultural, language or communication difficulties)
- Record concerns about adults at risk, and to share those concerns where appropriate
- Appropriately investigate crimes relating to adults at risk
- Work with other agencies to proportionally manage the risks to the safety of an adult at risk

5.0 **Challenges & Representations**

Any challenges or representations in respect of the contents of this policy should be directed to the D/Superintendent Head of PVP, Thames Valley Police, Oxford Rd, Kidlington, OX5 2HX.

6.0 **Communication**

**Communication Strategy**

All policies will be published on the Policy Intranet site. New and reviewed policies will be promoted in Managers' Briefing and ‘In the Know’.
7.0 **Compliance and Certification**

7.1 **Freedom of Information Act**

This policy will be made available to the public via the Thames Valley Police Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

7.2 **Government Security Classification Policy (GSCP)**

This policy has been assessed as not requiring a security classification.

7.3 **Human Rights Act**

This policy has the potential to engage in several articles of the Human Rights Act but this engagement is justifiable, necessary and proportionate.

7.4 **Health & Safety at Work**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Force Health and Safety Manual the Generic Risk Assessments (GRA’S) for General Patrol, Custody, Protection of Vulnerable Persons (PVP) and Local Risk Assessments. Supervisors of staff dealing with cases involving adults at risk should closely monitor their staff to ensure they are supported. Where they identify stress arising from the nature of the work supervisors will refer the staff member for appropriate support.


7.5 **Monitoring and Review.**

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should a legislative or operational need require it.

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<th>Version</th>
<th>Date reviewed</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Reason for Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>26/05/2017</td>
<td>DS 3239 Thomas</td>
<td>New policy in view of this being an increased area of police activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>28/06/18</td>
<td>DS 3239 Thomas</td>
<td>No changes required</td>
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**For use by the Policy Management Unit Only**

**Chief Officer Policy Authorisation**

Policy signed off by:

______________________________________________

Name of relevant ACC      Date