



Participant Information Sheet

Policing and vulnerability: How is the concept of vulnerability understood and used by chief police officers and those responsible for their direction and oversight? What are the implications of the application of the concept of vulnerability to policing for police legitimacy?

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?

This research explores how the concept of vulnerability is shaping police policy, practise and legitimacy and seeks to identify how chief police officers, and those responsible for their direction and oversight, understand vulnerability. Qualitative interviews will be conducted with chief police officers and people in important posts who are involved in police governance and oversight. The data gathered will be analysed and interpreted and the findings will be disseminated.

This work builds on the researcher's PhD study, which explored how chief police officers understand the right of police to exercise power. The thesis found that 'protecting the most vulnerable' was frequently cited as a primary purpose of policing and was used as one of the main explanations for the right of police to use power and was used to legitimate choices chief officers make about police priorities and to justify how they use resources and police power. This emphasis is relatively new to policing in the UK and is shaping policy and practise. This has happened with limited academic attention, this research aims to fill this gap, build knowledge about this aspect of policing, and contribute to wider debates about police leadership, protection of citizens, vulnerability and police legitimacy.

Why have I been chosen?

You are being asked to participate in this research as the research is designed to explore the role of the concept of vulnerability in shaping police policy, practise and legitimacy through the accounts provided by chief police officers, police and crime commissioners, senior leaders from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, the College of Policing and the National Crime Agency. You have been selected to take part as you a member of one of these groups.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any point up to four weeks after the interview (the time limit is set as there is a practical point at which I will no longer be able to disentangle individual responses from the analysis). You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing.



What will happen if I take part?

The research is being conducted using semi-structured interviews. I am a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Leeds and this study is central to the research I am conducting during the fellowship.

I will contact you and arrange to conduct the interview. The interview will take between one hour and ninety minutes. I will seek formal consent to the audio recording prior to the start of the interview. If you do not agree to audio recording, I would continue with the interview, if you consent to me taking notes during the interview. Following the interview, I will send you a transcript of the interview with an invitation to comment on matters of factual accuracy. As findings from the study start to emerge you will also be sent a draft version of these findings and be given an opportunity to comment on them.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

No specific disadvantages have been identified, although participants should be aware that the interview may cover areas that might be considered politically sensitive.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The research may shed light on important issues for society, including the protection of vulnerable people, the use of police power and police legitimacy.

Use, dissemination, and storage of research data

It is intended that data from this research will be made available through:

- production of a book, which will include a chapter informed by this research;
- a peer-reviewed academic article to identify and discuss the learning in relation to the use of the concept of vulnerability in policing;
- a policy and practitioner focused summary of research findings;
- presentations at academic conferences, including the European Society and British Society of Criminology conferences; and
- engagement with police policy makers, practitioners and representatives of governance and oversight bodies.

The data will be anonymised, and no individual will be identified or identifiable. The recording and subsequent transcript will be stored on the secure section of the University of Leeds computer server. Transcripts and written notes will be anonymised and to protect your privacy a pseudonym will be used. All research findings put into the public domain will be anonymised.

What will happen to my personal information?

In the informed consent form, I will ask for your consent for your data (in the form of the transcript) to be deposited in the UK Data Service repository at the end of the project, once pseudonyms and obvious identifiers have been removed and appropriate access controls are applied. This would allow controlled access to the data for other researchers but would maintain your anonymity. If you agree to transcripts being deposited in the UK Data Service repository, then these anonymised transcripts will be deposited, with restricted access facilities to prevent your identity being revealed, as this is sensitive data. The data would only be made available to academics conducting research into the implications and application of the concept of vulnerability to policing and those conducting research into developments in police leadership and/or police legitimacy. The nature of the restricted access facilities would also be the subject of further discussion between me and the UK Data Service before the data was deposited to ensure that your interests are protected. If



you do not agree to this data being placed in the UK Data Service repository it will still be possible to proceed with the interview and the data would be retained securely until the project is completed and would then be securely disposed of.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

All the contact information that I collect about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored separately from the research data. I will take steps wherever possible to anonymise the research data so that you will not be identified in any reports or publications.

The findings from this research will be used in the production of a peer reviewed article and in a book based on this research and on the earlier research I conducted for my PhD. It is also intended to inform a short open access paper aimed at policy makers and practitioners and the results will be used in presentations and discussions at academic conferences.

The data collected during the project might also be used for additional or subsequent research. At all stages your anonymity will be protected.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed for analysis. No other use will be made of it without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

I will be seeking your views about the application of the concept of vulnerability to policing and about the influence it has on police policy and practice and on police legitimacy. This is central to achieving the research project's objective, as the account you provide will provide valuable data that will inform the findings of the study.

Who is organising/ funding the research?

This research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Contact for further information

Should there be any issues you wish to discuss I can be contacted at I.C.N.Shannon@leeds.ac.uk or 07766 992208 or 0151 327 5318. If I cannot resolve these issues for you my mentors, Professor Adam Crawford and Professor Stuart Lister, can be contacted at A.Crawford@leeds.ac.uk and S.C.Lister@leeds.ac.uk