

Request Reference: 669A/22

1. Classification

1.1 Do you classify victims with limited or no English speaking, reading and/or writing skills, and other communication barriers as 'vulnerable' under the Vulnerability Assessment Framework?

No information held

1.2 If not, has your police force assessed whether having limited or no English skills is a form of vulnerability? (a) If so, what form did that assessment take and what was its outcome; or (b) If not, why not?

No information held

2. Training

2.1 How many police officers were employed by your force for any length of time at any point between 1 January 2020 and 1 January 2021? This includes police officers of all ranks from frontline to management, including on duty and off duty officers.

7,427

2.2 Please identify what (if any) mandatory training courses the aforementioned police officers employed between 2020-2021 were required to attend on the issue of victims and witnesses with communication barriers¹. If no such mandatory training courses are in place, why not?

¹ Communication barriers¹ is not an exhaustive term but commonly will include anyone with limited or no English skills, or disabilities such as deaf or deaf-mute individuals.

No information held

If mandatory training courses are in place:

2.3 Please specify the contents of the mandatory training courses on the issue of victims and witnesses with communication barriers.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.4 Please confirm whether the mandatory training courses include:

(a) The legal definition of the term 'vulnerable';

Not applicable see 2.2 above

(b) Communication barrier indicators such as a lack of English language or disabilities;

Not applicable see 2.2 above

(c) The duty of police officers to identify victims'/witnesses' communication barriers;

Not applicable see 2.2 above

(d) The duty of police officers to take reasonable steps to ensure that the vulnerable victims and witnesses with communication barriers receive the same service as those without such vulnerabilities, such as securing an interpreter (foreign language/ sign language);

Not applicable see 2.2 above

(e) The duty of police officers to take reasonable steps to ensure that the Victims' Code is applied in the same way to victims with communication barriers (this includes the right to receive updates, the right to provide a statement, the right to seek a review of a decision to take no further action);

Not applicable see 2.2 above

(f) The mechanisms in place in your police force to assist vulnerable witnesses and victims with communication barriers to give evidence in support of an investigation (such as providing guidance on Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviews, special measures at court etc.); and

Not applicable see 2.2 above

(g) The duty of police officers to assess victims for Victim Support Services and to make such referrals where deemed suitable.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.5 Please confirm how many police officers employed by your force (see question 2.1 above) attended and studied the mandatory training courses between 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.6 Please confirm the duration and mode (i.e. lecture/e-learning) of the mandatory training courses.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.7 Please confirm whether the police officers were required to attend Continuing Professional Development sessions on vulnerable witnesses with communication barriers, or whether the mandatory courses were limited to one session only.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.8 Please confirm how police officers' attendance and study of the mandatory course were monitored.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.9 Please confirm how the police officers' understanding and competence in this course was examined.

Not applicable see 2.2 above

2.10 If police officers were examined on this course, please confirm how many police officers successfully passed it. If police officers were not examined on this course – why not?

Not applicable see 2.2 above

3. Engagement with vulnerable victims of crime

3.1 Does the police force record the number of victims of crime with English as a second language? If yes, how many such victims were recorded between 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021?

The IT system we use to record crime does include options to record whether a victim speaks English and what their first language is. However, these are completed very infrequently and therefore accurate data are not available for the specified period.

3.2 Does the police force record the first and other languages of victims with communication barriers at every point of contact? If yes, please provide this data.

As above, once an incident progresses to being recorded as a crime there is the capability to record the first language and whether they speak English in the crime recording IT system. It does not though provide a structured way of recording any additional languages, however that may be recorded in various 'notes' fields.

3.3 Please confirm whether written communications are provided to such victims in easy read or pictorial formats.

Should a victim require interpreter services these would be obtained at the scene via the officer attending contacting our language services provider. A number of the leaflets officers carry and hand out have alternative languages, the main ones we encounter such as Punjabi for example. On our website there are links to information in a range of languages, via the Impact Pathways support page which has lots of language options [Impact Pathways West Midlands \(ipwm.org.uk\)](https://www.ipwm.org.uk) Our website however is not made available in other languages by us, but people can use their own translation services (such as Google Translate) and in tools available in their browsers. There are a range of leaflets for some of the more frequently visited areas, frequently asked questions etc. and with either family support or interpreters we would aim to signpost and refer.

4. Professional Interpretation and Translation services

4.1 Does the police force organise 'competent' and 'accredited' interpreters for interviews and translation of key documents for victims with communication barriers? If yes, how many interpreters were organised for such victims between 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021?

Yes, however, with regard to the number of interpreters organised, we switched service providers last year and information for the specified period is not held.

4.2 Please provide all procedures for officers and staff on how to access language assistance services under different circumstances, including when receiving and responding to requests for assistance, making enforcement stops, conducting field investigations and witness interviews, conducting custodial interrogations and performing other law enforcement operations.

Language assistance services are available for officers and staff by phone or email to our language service provider (Cintra).

4.3 Please confirm the financial budget/funding allocated by the police force for providing the access to professional interpretation, translation services and/or any other tailored support.

The budget covering the financial year from 01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023 is £990,200.

4.4 Does the police force have access to a set of volunteers that might enhance language support wherever possible?

Officers may volunteer from time to time.

5. Ancillary

5.1 If you are not able to answer any question in this FOI request, why not?

No information held – Section 84 of the Freedom of Information Act relates to recorded information held by a public authority and that it does not extend to providing explanations unless the answers are already held in a recorded form.

5.2 If you are not able to answer any question, does the data exist for that question?

No information held – Section 84 of the Freedom of Information Act relates to recorded information held by a public authority and that it does not extend to providing explanations unless the answers are already held in a recorded form.

5.3 If the data does not exist, why not?

No information held – Section 84 of the Freedom of Information Act relates to recorded information held by a public authority and that it does not extend to providing explanations unless the answers are already held in a recorded form.