

Birmingham Anti-
Social Behaviour
Victim Vulnerability
Matrix
Guidance Notes

MARCH 2010

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Key Principles	3
Prioritisation.....	3
Trigger Risks and Vulnerabilities	3
3. Introducing the Matrix	4
Main Risk/Vulnerability Categories	4
Scorecard	4
4. Completing the Matrix.....	5
Scores and Prioritisation	5

Birmingham Anti-Social Behaviour Victim Vulnerability Matrix Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The ASB Victim Vulnerability Matrix is intended to assist staff receiving initial ASB incident referrals to ensure that both the seriousness of the incident and the vulnerability of the victim are taken into account when making a decision about the relative priority of the case.
- 1.2 It has been developed in response to concerns raised nationally in the aftermath of the death of Fiona Pilkington in 2007, who took her own life and that of her daughter Francessca, after suffering many years of harassment and ASB.
- 1.3 Whilst the incidents were reported, they were not regarded as serious by the relevant authorities, which also failed to recognise that the mental and physical disabilities suffered by Mrs Pilkington and her daughter compounded her distress and added to her vulnerability as a victim.

2. Key Principles

Prioritisation

- 2.1 This matrix has been developed to reflect current local authority practice and procedure whereby ASB cases are sub divided into 3 priority levels:
 - Level A - High Priority – the victim is visited within 1 working day
 - Level B – Medium Priority – the victim is visited within 5 working days
 - Level C – Low Priority – the victim is visited within 10 working days
- 2.2 The matrix is not intended to provide a definitive needs assessment, but rather an intuitive initial guide as to whether a victim may also have vulnerabilities and needs that might disproportionately and negatively affect their perceptions of the ASB they are suffering.
- 2.3 The matrix therefore assumes that, having initiated a response, there will be further assessment undertaken with the victim to substantiate their needs and organise whatever support is necessary.

Trigger Risks and Vulnerabilities

- 2.4 The matrix is based on the principle that it is better to be over cautious when responding initially to vulnerability in victims. As indicated above, the matrix provides a first response guide only and, further investigation may reveal that the risk or need was not as significant as first thought.

2.5 To that end, the matrix also assumes that there a certain key risks and vulnerabilities identified in the matrix as “triggers”. If, in completing the assessment, it appears that one or more triggers are present, the case is automatically categorised as a top priority, Category A investigation, irrespective of what other concerns, risks and vulnerabilities may also exist.

3. Introducing the Matrix

3.1 The matrix is divided into 2 Parts – **Part A** concerns the assessment of the seriousness of the presenting incident, commensurate with current practice. **Part B** concerns the additional and compulsory assessment of the vulnerability of the victim.

3.2 A clear and critical principal underpinning the matrix is the need to ensure that, even where an ASB incident appears to be low key and not very serious, the potential vulnerabilities of the victim are considered; as well as to recognise that, where victim resilience is low, even the smallest of incidents might result in a disproportionately negative reaction.

3.3 The major incident and victim risk/vulnerability categories identified in the matrix are set out below as well as the number of assessment questions per section and the number of trigger risks/vulnerabilities each section contains.

Main Risk/Vulnerability Categories

Section	Number of Questions	Number of Triggers	Section	Number of Questions	Number of Triggers
1. Hate crime	1	1	1. Mental Health	6	5
2. Violence	1	1	2. Physical Health	5	3
3. Frequency	1	0	3. Isolation	5	0
4. Duration	1	0	4. Victimisation	2	1
5. Perpetrator	4	1	5. Service User	1	0
Total	8	3	Total	19	9

3.4 As can be seen, there are significantly more assessment questions and “trigger” risks/vulnerabilities associated with Part B and the victim vulnerability assessment. This is reflective of the more complex nature of this aspect of the assessment process.

3.5 However, overall, the matrix assumes that whenever either the incident seriousness assessment and/or the victim vulnerability assessment indicates “high risk”, the case should be treated as a Category A top priority.

Scorecard

3.6 In addition to the “Trigger” risks and vulnerabilities, the matrix uses a scorecard approach to assessing risk victim vulnerability.

3.7 This approach allocates a score to each potential response provided by the victim or the person making the referral; a higher score is allocated to answers that appear to place the victim at greater risk or make them more vulnerable; scores range from 0 to 6.

3.8 It is recognised that some questions may not be answered by the victim and/or an answer may not be available at the point of referral. In these circumstances the “Not Known” box should be ticked. All “Not Known” responses are scored 1 for the purposes of this matrix. This is because until a definitive answer is secured some degree of risk must be assumed. Only the definitive answer “No” receives a risk score of 0.

4. Completing the Matrix

4.1 In discussing an ASB incident referral for the first time with the victim, the assessing officer should attempt to secure answers to all questions in both Parts A and B of the matrix.

4.2 With each response, the assessing officer should tick (v) the relevant answer next to the question, (usually Yes/No/Not Known).

4.3 Any important discussion points and/or evidence should be recorded in the free text box at the far right of the matrix. Additional space for recording such information is also provided at the end of the document.

4.4 **Please Note: -**

- In Part A, Section 3, “Frequency” – if the answer provided is: “This is the first occurrence”, Section 4 should be ignored.
- In Part B, Section 5, “Service User” – if the answer provided is: “Yes”, additional information about key agency contacts should be sought and recorded in the appropriate boxes.

Scores and Prioritisation

4.5 Once all the questions have been answered and evidence recorded, the assessing officer should add up the scores from both Part A and from Part B and mark them on the separate scorecards located on page 5 of the matrix document.

4.6 If one or more “Trigger” responses have been recorded during the assessment, the answer “Yes” should be ticked as appropriate.

4.7 **Please Note:-**

- Seriousness scores and Victim Vulnerability scores should be added up separately and marked separately on the appropriate scorecard.

4.8 Using both scores, the assessing officer should then refer to the **Prioritisation Matrix**, which will help identify whether, on the basis of this assessment, the case should be regarded as Category A, Category B or Category C.

4.9 Where any “Trigger” risk or vulnerability has been identified, the case should **automatically** be treated as Category A.