



Crown
Prosecution
Service

Violence Fixated Individuals

The effectiveness of current laws, systems
and orders – Legal powers and offline
disruption



- **The CPS is a non-ministerial department**
- **We are independent and we make our decisions free from external influences**
- **We make our prosecutorial decisions in accordance with the Code for Prosecutors and the two-stage Full Code Test**

Violence Fixated Individuals - VFIs

A public-policy description

Individuals fixated on extreme violence, where ideology is not the primary driver

- The term does not define an offence or a separate prosecution route.
- The CPS does not formally categorise a case or an individual as VFI.
- There is no VFI monitoring flag in CPS case systems.
- Prosecutors focus on the alleged conduct, available evidence and public interest.

QUESTION 1

How effective are existing legal powers and intervention thresholds before serious harm occurs — particularly where concerning behaviour does not clearly meet an offence, terrorism threshold or other statutory definition?

CPS involvement starts with a referred investigation

Before CPS involvement

- Police and partner agencies identify, safeguard and manage early risk.
- CPS has no role before suspected criminal conduct is referred.
- A referral may seek Early Investigative Advice or a charging decision.

Once a case is referred

- Early Investigative Advice will guide a focused and proportionate investigation.
- A prosecutor will identify any potential offences and give advice on further steps required to meet a charging threshold.
- If no offences available on the evidence, the case will not proceed to charge. CPS involvement comes to an end.

The Code Test stays the same

Evidence

- Is there enough admissible and reliable evidence?
- Does the evidence provide a realistic prospect of conviction?
- Can further investigation strengthen the case if the test is not yet met?

Public interest

- Is prosecution required in the public interest?

The VFI label does not replace, lower or add to the Code Test.

Case Example 1 – Op Quakeric

- 16 year old who planned to commit an AR-styled terrorist attack
- Motivation was to replicate the extreme levels of violence of AR
- Had attempted to purchase knives online and searched for potential attack locations
- Only offence available to prosecutors was section 58 of the Terrorism Act 2000 in respect of an Al-Qaeda Training Manual that was recovered.

Case Example 2 – Op Anthropic

- 16 year old who wanted to “re-enact Axel”. Called 999 himself requesting the police to stop him.
- Fixation with AR and his acts and wanted to replicate them. Had taken preparatory steps.
- His search history indicated a variety of ideologies, but the focus was on violence in various forms.
- Pleaded guilty to the four offences contrary to s. 58 Terrorism Act 2000.

QUESTION 2

In cases involving children and young people who present serious concern, including terrorism-related or fixation-driven risk, what prosecutorial and youth justice options are available to manage risk before serious harm occurs, while ensuring responses remain proportionate and do not unnecessarily criminalise or impose lengthy custodial outcomes on children?

**Youth cases
require an
individual and
proportionate
decision**

The child is considered first — not the VFI label

- The normal evidential test still applies; there must be enough evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction.
- Youth-specific policy and guidance inform the public interest assessment.
- The prosecutor considers the child's circumstances and the seriousness of the alleged conduct.
- Where appropriate, formal out-of-court disposals can be used as an alternative to prosecution.
- Any outcome must be lawful, proportionate and based on the individual case.

**Diversion is an
option only
when the
evidential
threshold is met**

It cannot be used as a stand-alone intervention

- Formal pre-charge diversion requires sufficient evidence to charge a criminal offence.
- The CPS has a role in decisions on a limited range of out-of-court disposals – youth cautions or youth conditional cautions.
- Diversion must remain proportionate to the conduct and the child's circumstances.
- It is not available as a stand-alone intervention where no offence can be proved.

QUESTION 3

How do specialist prosecutors work with agencies where fixation-driven violence risk causes serious concern, but there is no obvious charge, agreed legal definition or clear statutory pathway, and what disruption options are available below the prosecution threshold?

**Early
Investigative
Advice can clarify
the legal route**

Specialist prosecutors help focus complex investigations

- Advice is available for cases that are complex, serious, sensitive or high risk.
- It is also appropriate where difficult issues of law, evidence, disclosure or public interest arise.
- Prosecutors can help identify offences that reflect the criminal conduct, even if they are not specific to the fixation.
- Examples may include communication offences or criminal damage, depending on the facts.
- The advice supports the investigation; the police remain responsible for investigating and managing risk.

Case Example 3 - Op Almique

- Member of online groups which were encouraging members to carry out violence in real life.
- Aspects of extreme right wing ideology, but focus was mainly on causing violence and harm for the sake of it.
- It was believed he was intending to murder a homeless man and encouraging others online to do the same.
- Ultimately a decision was taken not to proceed with a charge under the Terrorism Act 2000
- Defendant was instead charged with encouragement to commit suicide, possession of indecent images of children, criminal damage, animal cruelty and possession of a document contrary to s. 58 Terrorism Act 2000.

**If no offence can
be identified, the
CPS role ends**

Serious concern does not create a prosecution power

- CPS engagement depends on identifiable criminal conduct and sufficient evidence.
- Where no offence is available, CPS engagement is no longer a requirement
- Ongoing safeguarding and risk management remain matters for police and other responsible agencies
- This is a legal boundary, not a judgement that the concern is insignificant.