Title: **Violence Fascinated Individuals Position Paper**

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Purpose: **Outline the current position on VFI policy development within policing and cross-government**

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1. *Current position of VFI policy development within HMG*

1.1 The Cabinet Office are leading a monthly '*cross-Whitehall VFIs meeting*' which is chaired by the National Security Secretariat. There is a renewed desire for continued progress on VFI policy development.

1.2 Five issues have been identified and will form the basis of a x-WH workplan, with regular meetings providing delivery assurance. Those issues are:

- Lack of understanding what interventions have impact,
- Lack of tracking for prevent cases which do not meet S36 threshold,
- Insufficient capacity within social care and MH services,
- Absence of prioritisation protocols,
- Lack of integrated case management systems.

1.3 There is also an *Extreme Violence Content (EVC) x-WH working group* which is chaired by the Emerging Technology Safety and Security Unit within the Homeland Safety Group (HSG). This second working group seeks to coordinate and drive cross-government understanding and input on EVC policy. Legislation is in the process of being developed.

1.4 Whilst there was significant momentum behind VFI work in early 2025, the Home Office (HO) have since been working to a much narrower remit. However, since January 2026 there has been a stronger steer form ministers in part due to the evidence heard at the Southport Inquiry Part 1 (SIP1). The HO are intending to stand up a small team to develop recommendations on the response to Non-ideological Extreme Violence (which includes VFI and COM networks)

1.5 There remains a risk that with the HO leading a taskforce that this is viewed by other departments as a policing 'problem' to resolve. The NPCC should push back against this and encourage wider ownership thereby ensuring genuine prevention focused approach is taken.

2. *Outcome of NPCC VFI workshop*

2.1 A workshop was held in January 2026 which brough together NPCC leads who will likely have a key interest in aspects of VFI policy. The following portfolios were represented:

Serious Violence, CT Prevent, CYP, MoSOVO, MASH and Early Intervention, CSAE UCOL, SW ROCU, NPCC Communications and College of Policing. Other subject matter experts were also present.

2.2 The key discussion points and outcomes from that meeting are consistent with the issues identified within other forums. In particular, there was group consensus on the following:

- There are existing referral structures capable of assessing risk (and therefore the VFI cohort). Whilst demand needs to be managed, 'front doors' for initial risk assessment do exist albeit imperfect.
- There is an absence of agreement on how to manage the risk post referral including intervention pathways.
- There is an absence of legislative controls to manage those who have not committed criminal offences but who pose a risk.
- To avoid duplication or confusion, VFI communications or training opportunities can be aligned to those related to COM networks. This avoids VFI being considered in silo.
- Legislative changes *may* be required to encourage buy-in from agencies for example a stronger emphasis within the SVD or MACPT development.

3. Defining NPCC position on VFI

3.1 A series of positions have been developed to allow for a consistent approach on behalf of policing and may be used in stakeholder forums to advocate for change.

3.2 There is no consistent definition of what constitutes of VFI. Consequently there is no complete data set and no single agency is tracking the cohort. To understand the risk and demand associated with VFIs, agreement on a definition is essential.

3.3 The VFI cohort is predominantly aged under 18 (86%) with the majority being males aged between 12-16 years. When approached from a prevention perspective and with finite resource, efforts should be focussed on addressing this cohort whilst avoiding the '*cliff-edge*' when an individual turns 18-years-old.

3.4 Casework demonstrates that whilst the behaviour of a VFI is of significant concern and risk, often that does not engage a criminal threshold. Except in those cases referred to a panel under s36(3) CTSA 2015, law enforcement has limited intervention methods to reduce the risk where no offences have been committed.

3.5 Referral mechanisms already exist within the multi-agency setting to allow for the initial risk assessment of vulnerable and/or dangerous individuals (i.e. VFI). MASH are currently the most obvious existing 'front door' which exist across the country. In its current state, this is not necessarily the '*big front door*' referred to in the Lord Anderson Report.

3.6 Due to the lack of clear referral routes for the public and partners for non-CT/risk of radicalisation concerns, prevent has become a default referral route. Consequently, as Prevent is the most the used '*front door*', it is now overwhelmed by referrals which is was not designed to manage. There has been a significant demand increase since the Southport attack. This needs to reduce to allow finite CTP resource to remain focussed on its primary mission. That said, CTP would still wish to assess and consider a proportion of VFI referrals (referred to within Prevent as FEVMC – Fixated with Extreme Violence and Mass Casualty)

3.7 The Serious Violence Duty requires agencies to work together to reduce serious violence. Strengthening this legislation may encourage greater ownership of the VFI problem amongst other agencies. VFI related data must be made available to partners to inform the evidence-based analysis as required in law.

3.8 In the absence of the development of a new framework which would require both legislation and funding, existing frameworks may be adapted to allow for the management of VFI. Existing mechanisms provide for referral, assessment and on-going management by the relevant agencies. In the current form, these frameworks may be suboptimal in bringing the right focus on VFI in that may are police-led. These frameworks do not necessarily have the right interventions or legislative levers to ensure a full multi agency approach.

3.9 The primary problem that needs addressing by all agencies is determining how VFIs are managed where there is no criminal offence. There is a risk that the existing 'front doors' will result in a heavily law-enforcement focussed approach.

3.10 The solutions to the primary problem mostly sit outside of law enforcement. There is a broad consensus that this needs a wholistic approach albeit the solution does not sit within existing law enforcement *capability*. HMG departments, beyond the Home Office, have key responsibilities.

3.11 The solution should be threat agnostic and capable of managing the risk regardless of the threat type – it should be based on harm. In the development of any new system, we should avoid 'labelling' to avoid the solution being limited to a very specific risk cohort. It may be that specific threat based responses are required behind that front door.

3.12 Interventions are required to manage VFI through a prevention lens. There needs to be evidence-based interventions available for the management of VFI. Neither the evidence base nor clear interventions exist at this point in time. Law enforcement is not the right agency to lead and develop these interventions albeit they should be a partner in it.

3.13 The Home Office intend to develop VFI policy development options over the course of the next twelve months. There will then be a further period of implementation at which point three years will have passed since the events in Southport. There has been extensive discussion and analysis of what needs fixing i.e. the problem statement. The Home Office work needs to report far quicker. Moreover, the options must be

developed with other sectors and preferably led by others as the prevention and intervention pathways will be primarily delivered by other agencies.

4. Reports and Evaluations likely to influence VFI direction

4.1 *The Southport Inquiry* - Southport Inquiry Part 1 (SIP1) will report in Spring 2026. It is anticipated that the report will be critical of agency's risk management ownership. Recommendations will likely influence the development of VFI policy. Southport Inquiry Part 2 (SIP2) Terms of Reference will be published in April 2026. Central to the ToR will be the long-term management of risk in high harm cases that are not assessed as CT. SIP2 will report in April 2027.

4.2 *Below (Prevent) Threshold pilot* - The Home Office has been running a pilot with a range of local authorities and CTPHQ in the management of individuals who do not meet the Prevent threshold. An evaluation is being carried out and is due to conclude shortly. The findings of this pilot may influence future system design.

5. NPCC VFI next steps

5.1 There are several activities which the NPCC lead will continue to progress:

	Activity	**Intention**
1	x-WH *VFI* working group involvement	• Ensure positive policing representation and influence in decision making • Raise key risks and concerns on behalf of policing • Allow connectivity between group and wider policing leaders • Understand changes to allow policing to be prepared to receive changes
2	x-WH *EVC* working group involvement	• Ensure positive policing representation and influence in decision making • Raise key risks and concerns on behalf of policing • Allow connectivity between group and wider policing leaders • Understand changes to allow policing to be prepared to receive changes
3	VFI guidance development through London Roundtable	• Contribute to the development of guidance • Assess its utility as a potential national document • Ensure connectivity into government workplan • In the absence of national strategic direction, this guidance may provide an interim position.
4	Design a system using *existing* mechanisms	• Update 04/26 - This action is now superseded by the work of the Home Office.
5	Agree formal definition and	• Update 04/26 - This action is now superseded by the intended work of the Home Office.

	examine development of VFI assessment method to assist with referral process	
6	Implement information sharing with external partners	• Provide disruption opportunities beyond conventional law enforcement mechanisms (e.g. OfCom) • This can take place whilst national strategic position is designed.
7	Influence the work of the Home Office team in policy development	• Update 04/26 - Following announcement in April 2026 of the creation of a NIEV team within the HO, influence is required in the design work.

END.