

Q methods study of vulnerability

Understanding how the police, health services, education providers, social care and other agencies providing core public services in Bradford respond to and deal with people's vulnerabilities.

Key details

Lead institution	Vulnerability & Policing Futures Research Centre
Principal researcher(s)	Professor Adam Crawford n.capstick@leeds.ac.uk
Police region	Yorkshire
Collaboration and partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Leeds • Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	May 2022

Research context

Vulnerability is a well-used concept among public services in the UK. However, what this means in practice for public services, the police and non-governmental organisations is underexplored.

The meaning of vulnerability is subjective and the concept is used in various ways across different settings, with different outcomes.

Aim

The project aims to shed light on how vulnerability is interpreted and how it is used to frame public service delivery.

It will look at the effect of vulnerability-based interventions in cities such as Bradford and Leeds.

The project will provide a better understanding of the diverse perceptions of the role of the police in safeguarding vulnerable populations.

Research methodology

The project uses Q methodology to explore divergent and convergent opinions about vulnerability and structure them in a way that can be studied.

Q methodology combines qualitative approaches and statistical analysis to examine patterns in human subjectivity. It does so by:

- presenting participants with a structured set of opinion statements about a topic
- asking them to rank responses
- clustering these into shared views for statistical analysis

In addition to the data collected via statement rankings, rich qualitative data will be collected from in-depth interviews. During these interviews, respondents will explain why they agreed or disagreed with certain statements and values.

Summary of findings

This project was completed in May 2024.

Öznur Yardimci and others. 2026. 'Vulnerability and policing: The views of service providers and users.' The British Journal of Criminology, azag028, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azag028>.

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