



## **Hampshire and Thames Valley Police Visual Impairments Protocol.**

### **What is the Visual Impairments Protocol?**

People living with sight loss cannot identify police officers and police employees using the traditional warrant card. Hampshire Police responded to feedback from the community to put an alternative, but simple process in place. It has been developed with the assistance of West Yorkshire Police.

The Visual Impairments Protocol (VIP for short) is now in use across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Thames Valley forces.

### **WHO IS IT FOR?**

It is very important that police officers and other police employees who come to someone's door, for whatever reason, are able to identify themselves. The VIP has been developed and can be used by anyone with any level of sight loss or by anyone caring or helping someone with sight loss.

We understand people with dual sensory loss will need a different protocol therefore, we urge anyone who has hearing and sight difficulties to make contact to discuss their needs for identifying police at their door.

### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

There are four scenarios anticipated:

- A PRE-ARRANGED VISIT BY CALLING 999 OR 101**
- B DOOR TO DOOR ENQUIRIES AND CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE WHICH HAVE BEEN PRE-ARRANGED**
- C DOOR TO DOOR ENQUIRIES AND CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN PRE-ARRANGED**



## **D EMERGENCY ENTRY**

The Visual Impairments Protocol works as follows under each scenario.

### **SCENARIO A**

#### **PRE-ARRANGED VISIT BY CALLING 999 OR 101**

1. The person who needs help from the Police calls either the emergency 999 number, or the non-emergency 101 number to report a crime or other incident. This may be through either telephone, text, or other methods available to the public.
2. When connected the caller says they have a visual impairment and want to use the Visual Impairment Protocol.
3. As with all calls, a log number will be issued but also the caller will be asked to choose a password of their choice. This password is then given to the officer who will be attending.
4. The caller can ask for the log number and password to be sent to them via text or email, so that they have an accessible copy.
5. When the officer arrives at the address the caller will ask for the password from the officer.
6. Only through providing the correct password will the officer be allowed into the property.
7. If the officer gives the wrong password, or won't give the password, the person should not be allowed to come in. You should then call 999 to ask for immediate police attendance.



## **POINTS TO NOTE**

- A. When you call 999 or 101 and confirm you wish to use the VIP you may be asked what sight condition you have, how much you can see, and whether it affects both eyes. This information will be added to your record so you will only need to give it once, however it can be changed or updated by you at any time by calling 101.
  
- B. You may also be asked your preferred form of communication e.g. Braille or large print. Again this is stored against your name for future use. Please be aware though in an emergency situation police officers will not have this information to hand, they will only have it for pre-arranged visits.
  
- C. The password you give will only be a one-time use password; you need to give a new one each time you call. This is to make it as secure as possible.

## **SCENARIO B**

### **DOOR TO DOOR ENQUIRIES AND CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE WHICH HAVE BEEN PRE-ARRANGED**

1. For pre-arranged crime prevention and house-to-house enquiry work within an agreed area there will be a “purpose” and “log number.”
  
2. The visually impaired person confirms to the officer they wish to use the VIP and asks the attending officer to give both pieces of information.
  
3. The person will then call 101 to check that both the log number and purpose match.
  
4. If and only if they match, can the officer be allowed into the property. If they do not match then you should call 999 and explain the situation and an officer will be dispatched to your address.



## **POINTS TO NOTE**

- A. Whilst entry to the property may not always be required, if the visually impaired person requires identity confirmation, this should be encouraged and supported by the officer.
- B. The process of calling 101 can take time, so please be patient and keep your front door closed and locked whilst making the 101 call.
- C. The officer may say that they will come back in a few minutes to give you time to make the call. They will understand and encourage you to close and lock your door whilst making the call. Please do not feel that this is being rude.

## **SCENARIO C**

### **DOOR TO DOOR ENQUIRIES AND CRIME PREVENTION ADVICE WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN PRE-ARRANGED**

1. Sometimes, enquiries are spontaneous. This means that there may not be a log number available and a crime has just happened. This is why we need to give an alternative.
2. The person should confirm they wish to use the VIP and ask for the officer's collar number and call sign. The person should then contact 101 to confirm these two pieces of information match.
3. If and only if they match, can the officer be allowed into the property. If they do not match then you should tell the call taker and explain the situation. The call taker can then dispatch an officer to your address.

## **POINTS TO NOTE.**

- A. The process of calling 101 can take time, so again please be patient and keep your front door closed and locked whilst making the 101 call, the officer will expect this.



- B. An officer may be able to speak to you on your doorstep about the information, rather than needing to come in. This depends on the nature of what is to be discussed. You may still use the VIP to identify the officer if you wish or not if you do not.
- C. An officer's collar number remains the same at all times and it is between one and five digits long.
- D. With every change of shift, officers are allocated a new call sign for that shift. It is made up of letters and numbers and is 5 characters long.
- E. You will need to make a note of what the call sign and collar number information is. This could be:
  - a. Written down – you can ask the officer to write it down.
  - b. Audio recording – you can ask the officer to speak into your voice recorder.
  - c. Phone recording – you can ask the officer to speak into phone but they may not wish to be videoed for security reasons.
  - d. Any suitable method for you to remember them.
- F. If recording the information simply isn't possible then call 101 and explain the situation saying you wish to use the VIP. They will ask for a password which they will relay to the officer and you can then confirm it back. This may take time so the officer may leave and return to you later.

## **SCENARIO D**

### **EMERGENCY ENTRY**

1. A police officer's overall duty is to protect life and therefore on rare occasions police may need to enter the property immediately to achieve this.
2. In this case there will be no time for information to be checked.



3. Officers, however, are aware this can be very frightening for anyone and therefore every care is taken to reassure anyone involved using an audible verbal description of events as they unfold offering clear concise instructions to any householder facing this situation.

## **GENERAL POINTS TO NOTE**

### **999 OR 101**

999 or 101 can be used depending on the urgency of the call. Further information can be found on when to use each number by visiting the Hampshire Constabulary website, page [‘Help us to help you – only call 999 in an emergency’](#).

### **INFORMATION STORED ABOUT YOU**

You can request access to your personal records by completing a subject access request, should you wish. This can be done via our website at the [‘Request information about yourself or someone else’](#) page or by calling 101.

### **SECURITY MEASURES**

Please take appropriate security measures, as you usually would, when answering the door to unknown people. All officers will have been briefed on the VIP. This includes closing and locking your door, leaving the officer outside, while you make any verification calls you need to make.

### **IF INFORMATION CANNOT BE CONFIRMED BY OFFICER**

Use 999 number to call if you feel under threat or worried that the person at the door is not a genuine police officer. However, if the officer asks for time to radio in to check information please allow them; they may have been asked to attend your address at short notice.

### **MUST I ALWAYS USE THE VIP IF I HAVE USED IT ONCE**

It is always a personal choice if someone wishes to use the protocol. We wanted to provide a process to use, should you feel concerned about identifying police officers at your door.



If you know someone who you think might benefit from using the VIP, then please do tell them about it. The local neighbourhood policing team can assist and there is plenty of information that we can send to you.

## **AND FINALLY, OTHER THINGS THAT MAY AND OTHER THINGS THAT WON'T HAPPEN**

### **THE OFFICER MAY:**

If possible, the officer will phone you ahead of the visit. This way you can hear the voice of the officer who will be visiting.

Unfortunately, the nature of policing is subject to sudden changes and it may not always be possible to have a specific officer visiting you, which is why we do not feel it appropriate to offer this as a primary means of contact.

### **THINGS AN OFFICER WILL NEVER DO**

- A. Insist on entering your property to wait while you make the calls to confirm their identity.
- B. Tell you that you don't need to confirm their identity.
- C. Offer their own phone for you to make a call.

If you wish to offer feedback on difficulties encountered whilst using the VIP these can be directed to the [ICT Accessibility Mailbox](#).