

Guidance on the suitability of the Victim Awareness Course

Referral criteria

The Victim Awareness Course (VAC) is designed for people aged 18 and over to address the following offences:

- Section 1, 12, 13, 22, 25 Theft Act 1968 and Sections 1, 2, 3 of the Theft Act 1978
- Criminal damage where the value is below £5,000
- Sections 4 and 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 as amended
- Common assault contrary to 39 Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm, contrary to section 47 Offences Against the Person Act 1861 where the charging standard is likely to lead to Common Assault being charged)

The above list is not exhaustive and is by example only.

Discretionary criteria

It may also be used, at police discretion, to address the following offences:

- Possession of a controlled drug as defined under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- A race or religiously aggravated offence where the facts surrounding the incident amount to a single offence and were it not for the aggravated nature of the offence, the offender would have met the VAC referral criteria

Additional considerations

The VAC is designed to be inclusive and we will make reasonable adjustments where necessary, however:

- Attendees must have a basic understanding of English. We do not allow interpreters
- Attendees must be able to participate in a group learning environment
- Attendees must not hold weapons markers or have demonstrated violent behaviour which could be repeated potentially putting other course participants at risk

Excluded offences

It is not suitable to address the following offences:

- Sexual offences including non-contact sexual abuse and 'sexting'
- Offences relating to domestic abuse

These offences are excluded because the course content and duration does not sufficiently address the complexities of this type of offending. Inclusion of such offences on the VAC is also likely to affect group learning and in some circumstances, may increase the risk to the victim(s).

Participant conflict

Please do not make multiple referrals if they are unable to attend the same course. Individuals choose the course that they wish to attend and we have no influence over this. You will need to send the first referral and once this person has attended then send the second one.