

CADETS SAFEGUARDING

Executive Summary

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure you are clear about your safeguarding responsibility as a member of Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC), in terms of recognising, responding to and referring any reported allegations, disclosures or concerns, in accordance with the child/adult protection process
- Ensure you are clear about your responsibility to follow the correct procedures laid out to protect children, young people and volunteers from harm and to create a safe space for children and young people to have fun, be challenged and develop skills for life.
- The policy applies to those who hold both an employed and volunteer role and who wish to raise a safeguarding concern in either capacity

Authorised Professional Practice (APP):

- This policy has been checked against APP which sign posts directly to the Volunteer Police Cadet's website which can be reached [here](#).
- West Midlands Police (WMP) has adopted the Volunteer Police Cadets national policy and guidance as a framework on which to establish our own policy and procedures.

We acknowledge our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of all children, young people, and adult volunteers/employees. We also recognise and accept our responsibility to act in loco parentis during organised events and activities and our 'duty of care' to volunteers and staff.

INTRODUCTION

- We are committed to ensuring all our activities and engagement within the wider community is held to the highest standards of safeguarding practice; is compliant with current legislation; is child and young person centred; and that we are fully accountable.
- These standards are set out in our mission and values as well as our policies and procedures. We are invested in making sure our safeguarding practice places the views of children, young people and where required adults at risk at the centre of our policy planning and implementation processes.
- This approach ensures that their welfare remains paramount in all we do. Establishing a culture of honesty and openness helps us to know and understand what issues children and young people consider likely to affect them and their safety. This is particularly important when working with diverse communities or those who have additional vulnerabilities.
- The Safeguarding and wellbeing Policy are relevant to all young people, staff and volunteers including those who receive an allegation, disclosure or are concerned about the welfare or wellbeing of any member of Staff, Volunteer or Cadet.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<p>NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING AND STANDARDS MANAGER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Safeguarding and Standards Manager interprets legislation and makes sure we are legally compliant and demonstrating good safeguarding practice. • The National Safeguarding and Standards Manager has a remit to provide support to all VPC leaders; engage in a supportive/guidance role in the event of a suspicion or allegation of abuse occurring at Force/Unit level. • The National Safeguarding Manager will assist Force Coordinators with implementing safeguarding changes, will engage with force coordinators in relation to lessons learned and will assist with force self-assessments and action plans in relation to the UK Youth Safe Spaces and VPC Safe to Operate Standards. • The National Safeguarding Manager has certain legal and regulatory obligations that all members of VPC must assist in meeting, as required. For example, we are required to provide information on a regular basis to the IOPC, in response to Freedom of Information requests and also to the DBS and in some instances the Charity Commission.
<p>CADET GOVERNANCE BOARD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are responsible for ensuring that their VPC units are being managed correctly, are complying with policy and aspiring to achieve the UK Youth Safe Space requirements. • They are accountable to their DRO's (Designated Responsible Officer).
<p>DESIGNATED RESPONSIBLE OFFICER (DRO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be an ACC, Chief Superintendent (or another rank with additional authority). This role is the main communication link between the Regional CIP/VPC Lead and the Force Cadet Co-ordinators. • They should meet on a Tri-year basis to review good practice; lessons learnt and support National (Safeguarding) Hub Team in defining needs in training and development. • This role also oversees or has oversight of the quality assurance of delivery of the VPC in terms of governance and enabling leaders to operate safely by ensuring their force schemes meet the VPC Safe to Operate Standards. • <i>The role is ultimately responsible for their force VPC scheme on behalf of the Chief Constable.</i> • In cases where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse from a member of VPC the DRO MUST immediately be informed, and it will be their responsibility to liaise with the ongoing Police investigation. • This liaising role must continue and involve the management of the safeguarding concern with parents/carers; any communication with the



	VPC National Hub Team; and/or more specifically the National Safeguarding Manager.
CADET SCHEME MANAGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This role is to be the main conduit for communication from Unit level to DROs. They have overall responsibility for ensuring any request for guidance and support is met by either Strategic Lead or National VPC Hub Team.• They are responsible for undertaking quarterly reports for all Units and Forces. They have responsibility for supporting DROs in maintaining compliance to the VPC Safe to Operate Standards and ongoing guidance.• This role MUST be satisfied that all those who become Leaders (staff and volunteers) in the VPC are correctly appointed and are:• Appropriate persons to carry out the responsibilities of the appointment, and• Maintain a current valid DBS disclosure check at the appropriate level for their role.• They must ensure that all applicants demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to the principles and procedures supporting the VPC's Safeguarding Policy, and such on-going continual safeguarding procedures, which have been approved by the National Safeguarding and Standards Manager or VPC Hub Team, such as additional training or CPD.
NAMED PERSON/ CADET YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OFFICER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This role exists for every leader aged 18 years and above. Every Leader will receive the appropriate training (National VPC Introduction to Safeguarding in the VPC and Managing a Safeguarding Concern) to be a 'Named Person'.• This person is identified in units on a rota basis for standard meetings.• If the unit attend an event or run an activity external to the usual meeting place, this person will be named on the appropriate documentation as "Leader in charge".• This role can be held by both staff and volunteers and there must be a clear adherence to the process.• This role is to ensure all allegations, disclosures and concerns are raised, actioned and recorded appropriately at unit level. They also ensure that the Leader involved directly with the young person is free to support them. Whilst this is happening, the named person is free to co-ordinate an appropriate response and ensures that all other young people are not impacted upon.• They are the key communication channel in the early days between the Leader directly involved with supporting the young person, and the Duty Inspector/Force co-ordinator, depending on the nature of the report.



	<p>Specific Duties of this role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a Named Person if a leader leaves VPC and you believe they have done so to avoid being investigated, or if you believe they are not appropriate to be with children and young people (CYP) then you have a duty to refer to DBS via your Force referral process. Notify the Cadet Scheme Manager • As a Named Person you have a duty to refer if you believe a young person or adult is at risk of radicalisation or expounding extremist views to the Prevent team via your Force referral process. Notify your Cadet Scheme Manager. This also applies to CSE and FGM. (NB: Police Officers' have a separate duty under Prevent, to refer, but volunteers do not) • As a SG Lead, if you are aware of any allegations, disclosures or concerns about an adult (18 plus) you MUST report to the LADO through your Force referral process via the Cadet Scheme Manager.
<p>ALL LEADERS (INCLUSIVE OF YOUNG LEADERS 16 PLUS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, and it is important that all understand their role and responsibility not only when they receive an allegation, disclosure or have a concern but in the whole way in which a 'Safe Space' is maintained. • All Leaders (staff and volunteers) MUST attend training appropriate to their role and unit requirements, to enable them to do this and follow the Code of Conduct and Policing's' Code of Ethics. • An adult Cadets leader should never be alone with a Cadet, ensuring you are within sight and hearing of another adult at all times so protecting both the young person and the adult.

THE SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

- VPC seeks to provide an environment where everyone can work safely, and children, young people and adults at risk can engage with and enjoy the activities and sessions provided. It is the policy of VPC to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk involved in the work we do by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and harm.
- It is also VPC policy to provide those working for or volunteering with VPC with a framework to operate within to keep everyone who is engaged in VPC activities safe. It is therefore VPC policy to:
 - Ensure that all staff and volunteers (legally responsible adults) working with children, young people, or adults at risk: are carefully selected, are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); have two appropriate references; and understand and accept their responsibility for the safety of children, young people, and adults at risk in their care.



- Ensure that children, young people, and adults at risk, know that their welfare is of paramount importance, regardless of age, gender, ability, or race, when planning, organising, advising on, and delivering programmes.
 - Ensure that all children, young people, adults, and parents/carers have all the information they need to make an informed decision before choosing whether to take part in activities, events, trips, and overseas visits.
 - Ensure that when working with partner organisations, we place into any SLA a term of our agreement, the statement: “We confirm that we have read and understood VPC’s Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy and agree to abide by it.”
 - Ensure that electronic communication between adults and young people follows strict guidelines and only uses an audited system such as Duty Sheet so that we don’t place anyone at risk of harm. (See guidance document in relation to social media best practice)
 - Ensure that we encourage volunteers and staff to discuss their concerns with their Named Person, Cadet Scheme Manager, Cadet Youth Engagement Officer or through supervision.
 - Ensure that young people have access to adults that they trust or are clear on how to report their concerns.
 - Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate external agencies.
 - Raise the awareness of relevant staff and volunteers of child and adult protection issues alongside wider wellbeing and mental health concerns through the provision of training and regular updates.
 - Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy on a yearly basis and that leaders and coordinators regularly refresh and review their understanding of this and all associated policies.
- The child protection and the protection of adults at risk procedures also seek to manage effectively the risks associated with activities and events involving children, young people and adults at risk by:
 - Completing a risk assessment process which involves identifying risks and means of reducing or eliminating these; all activities should be properly risk assessed, insured and have appropriate adult to cadet ratios.
 - Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on an appropriate basis.
 - Ensuring that the appropriate DBS checks are conducted, depending on eligibility, for any individuals starting or moving into work which involves working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults.
 - Requiring new employees and individuals involved in working or volunteering with children, young people and adults at risk to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and the associated code of conduct and receive appropriate training.
 - Safeguarding practice is not just about having a Child/Adult protection process, but a way of working that is embedded in everything we do and the way that we do it.

SAFEGUARDING BEHAVIOURS

- As Leaders you must uphold our values and adhere to our Code of Conduct, as outlined in the Blue Card, which sets out the standards of behaviour expected of you alongside the College of Policing (code of ethics), VPC Code of Conduct and ensures a safe space for all of us.
- In addition, all Leaders need to follow the following Safeguarding Behaviours which help ensure a safe space for all of us:
 - **Vigilance and Understanding:** take time to understand situations and be alert so that you notice when something is wrong.
 - **Early Help:** act and provide support as soon as a problem emerges and before it gets any worse.
 - **Inclusion:** safeguard every individual because everyone is equally important and valuable. Everyone involved in the VPC has a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.
 - **Resilience:** support individuals to develop the knowledge, ability and the confidence to be actively involved in and responsible for their own safety and wellbeing and to cope with life's challenges.
 - **Stability:** develop on-going stable relationships of trust with all those you work with. This means you are more likely to notice if something is wrong.
 - **Respect:** treat everyone with the expectation that they are responsible and accountable rather than not.
 - **Advocacy:** help others to put forward their own point of view.
 - **Accountability:** always respond if you are concerned; never assume someone else has or someone else will.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility within VPC, but what does this mean?

- It is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that:
 - Your behaviour is appropriate at all times as laid out in the Code of Behaviour and reflective of the VPC Code of Conduct and Police Code of Ethics
 - You observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people through processes, procedures and guidance provided.
 - You follow the procedures laid out following an allegation, disclosure or the raising of a concern.
 - You recognise the position of trust in which you have been placed and do not abuse this position.
- If you feel that this is not happening in your unit then please follow the Child Protection Process in the guidance document or report confidentially to the National VPC safeguarding line.
vpc.safeguarding@vpc.police.uk

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

- Adults in the Cadet Scheme are expected to build positive relationships with others but specifically with young people. It is important to maintain appropriate boundaries to keep everyone safe.

- Cadet Leaders are role models to young people and their families, we must promote and respect safe spaces and listen to others.
- We have a responsibility to challenge negative ideas, assumptions, behaviour and language - including our own - whenever it occurs.
- How we present ourselves, our interaction with others and our general conduct are highly significant when dealing with an allegation, disclosure, or concern. This does not mean that our relationships should be cold and detached, but we need to be sensitive and support individuals, without placing them or ourselves at risk.
- We should listen to and respond to, everyone's concerns. Avoid discussing information regarding the concerns with those who do not need to know, and be aware of being overheard while speaking or while on a mobile device.

POSITION OF TRUST

- We have a responsibility to ensure that all young people are provided with a safe space to learn and develop. This includes enabling them to form friendships with peers and professional relationships with leaders without being at risk of abuse or harm.
- As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, every person working or volunteering with Cadets are in positions of trust in relation to the young people and this would include young people who were previously Cadets.
- VPC will not allow any person aged 18 or over who is in a position of trust as a unit leader to enter a personal relationship with a Cadet of any age. Any cadet that then turns 18 and becomes a leader is subject to the same policy.
- As any Cadet that then turns 18 and becomes a leader is subject to the same policy, therefore If they are in a relationship with a Cadet, they should not be a leader at the same unit.

POSITIONAL STATEMENTS

- Positional Statements offer guidance to staff, volunteers, parents and carers and Cadets alike. They set out the expectations for our leaders and ensure clarity.
- Positional statements are reviewed annually by the National VPC which provides updates and guidance aligned to national changes in safeguarding practice.
- We have adopted the positional statements contained in the document linked here from the National VPC.



POSITIONAL STATEMENTS

ALCOHOL

- When supervising Cadets, Cadet Leaders and staff must not drink alcohol or encourage them to do so. Cadets are not permitted to drink alcohol whilst taking part in Cadet activities.

ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

- The personal use or supply of illegal substances at Cadet activities will not be tolerated. Where found, appropriate steps will be taken to remove the individual(s) and substances from Cadet activities and appropriate reports made and action taken.

GAMBLING

- Whilst engaged on Cadet activities there is no gambling permitted.

PROTECTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- Protecting children and young people from Child sexual exploitation forms part of our safeguarding duties, we aim to educate young people and adults to the risks and identify young people who may be at risk.
- Advice and guidance are contained in the document linked here from the National VPC

[CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION](#)

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BULLYING

- Protecting children and young people from Bullying forms part of our wider safeguarding duties.
- Advice and guidance are contained in the document linked here from the National VPC.

[BULLYING](#)

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM RADICALISATION

- Please see the positional statement found here which we have adopted.

RADICALISATION

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- We will create a safe space for Cadets and Leaders to learn, grow and thrive.
- We will ensure that we correctly identify and mitigate risk in all activities associated with VPC. This is supported by the WMP Cadets Health and Safety policy.
- We will ensure our activities are correctly risk assessed, mitigated and insured and that the staffing ratios are appropriate for the activity and the requirements of the group

KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE ONLINE AND WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

West Midlands Police has adopted the National VPC guidance and advice around online safety and social media. The National VPC has a data base of support and guidance at www.vpc.police.uk

Guidance relevant to this policy is listed below.

- Social Media – Online and Social Media Policy/ Statement of Purpose [FOUND HERE](#)

Additional guidance:

- Communication with Children (online included) [FOUND HERE](#)
- Safer Working Practice (social media usage) [FOUND HERE](#)
- Online Safety and Cyber Bullying and Bullying [FOUND HERE](#)
- Photography and Filming [FOUND HERE](#)

LESSONS LEARNED

The National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Hub Team provide regular Safeguarding e-bulletins these provide ongoing advice and guidance around:

- Lessons learnt from serious case reviews/internal investigations.
- Hot topics and FAQ

It is everyone's responsibility to read these and engage with any changes to policy or practice.



Definitions/Acronyms:

Child	Has a specific legal meaning of anyone below the age of 18 years.
Young Person	Has no specific legal definition. However, 12-18 years is the standard age associated with this term.
Adult	Above the age of 18 years.
Safeguarding	For the purposes of this policy, we are using the terms 'safeguarding' and 'to safeguard' to describe the prevention and precautionary approach to planning and procedures needed to protect children, young people and adults from any potential harm.
Child Protection	Child protection is a process within the Safeguarding Policy and refers to the activity undertaken to protect children suffering from, or at risk of, significant harm (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)
Child and young person focussed	Our safeguarding practice places the views of children and young people at the centre of our policy planning and implementation processes. This approach ensures that their welfare remains paramount in all we do.
Adult Protection	Adult protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect adults suffering from, or at risk of significant harm (No Secrets – Statutory guidance (2000) , and Social Care Institute for Excellence (2011): Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm.)
Adult at risk	An adult, who is, or may be, in need of community care services i.e. adult social services, because of mental health, disability, age or illness, and/or who is unable to care for themselves or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
Safety	Safety is about being protected from and not causing, danger, risk, injury, loss or harm. Safety can be a feeling, a physical object or place, and an action, and sometimes refers to the laws, rules, and principles that are intended to keep people safe. Safety is not just about what happens inside the meeting place, it is also about outside it, including days out, and may be about something that is happening at home.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing refers to a person's sense of contentment and satisfaction with their conditions in life and their current circumstances. It is closely linked to emotional balance and mental health, but it also affected by an individual's attitude, values and perspective.
Grooming	Grooming is the planned and deliberate act of manoeuvring an individual into a position of isolation to ensure they become a key influencer or 'trusted person'.
Radicalisation	Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.



Extremism	In the UK this is defined as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children’s Board. These have been replaced in most areas by a Safeguarding Partnership (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)
LADO	Local Designated Safeguarding Officer Not all areas have them however the function must be completed. They will be involved in the management of allegations against people who work with children and have oversight. The VPC has been identified as a Regulated Activity provider we MUST ensure that any concerns or allegations made about any Leader or Adult associated with Cadets.
MASH	Multi Agency Support/Safeguarding Hubs are structures designed to facilitate information sharing and decision-making on a multi-agency basis, commonly through co-locating staff from the local authority, health agencies and the Police in one facility.
Safeguarding Partnership	The working together to safeguard children 2023 guidance stipulates how we work in partnership. This is usually via a Local Safeguarding Children's Board (a cross agency Board that ensured the guidance was adhered to within a set area) a Safeguarding Partnership with the Local Authority, Police and Health.
Risk Assessment	Risk assessment is a term used to describe the overall process or method where you: Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification). Determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk control).
Informed decision-making	Is the two-way communication process between a young person (Cadet) and one or more Leaders that is central to being young-person centred when managing a safeguarding concern? This includes the right to accept or to decline the offer of certain advice and guidance and to change that decision. This MUST never be a deciding factor if the concern raised requires referral to statutory services.
Information Sharing Protocol	An Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) assures safe and lawful information sharing. They are also called Data Sharing Agreements (DSA) and Information Sharing Agreements (ISA). The protocol details how and what data partners share. It also explains the legal basis for the sharing
Supervision	A process of critical reflection in which people who work with young people or youth workers discuss ongoing work and development issues with another Leader, or a peer in order to identify clarity about roles, and the relationship between values, ethics and in some cases child protection issues.

Safeguarding cases MUST go to the LADO using the reporting process – This is a legal requirement – called a ‘duty to refer’.



WMP- West Midlands Police

ISA- Information Sharing Agreements

ISP- Information Sharing Protocol

VPC- Volunteer Police Cadet

SLA- Service Level Agreement

DBS- Disclosure Barring Service

CYP- Children/ Young Person

Procedural Guidance Documents List:

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

[Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 1974](#)

[Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and \(Exceptions\) Order 1975](#)

[The Police Act 1997](#)

[Protection of Children Act 1999](#)

[Regulations 1999](#)

[The Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Convention the Rights of the Child](#)

[Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)

[The Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

[The Children Act 1984; 2004](#)

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)

[GDPR and data protection act 2018](#)

[The Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

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*(*delete as appropriate)*

- Internal document only – unsuitable for publication to public



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Policy Author: Sam Booth

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the policy author shown above.

Force Executive Approval:

**Claire Bell
ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE**

12.02.24

Monitoring and Review

Version	Date Reviewed	No change / Minor Changes / Major Changes (<i>detail</i>)	Amended / Agreed by