

## VPC Positional Statements

Young People are the most heavily legislated part of society and as such there is significant complexity when operating in the space called, a youth setting.

VPC has appropriate policies and process for all aspects of its operations however there are areas that do not require a policy, more a statement that tells our partners, cadets, leaders and parent/carers our position as a national programme on certain societal issues. These areas are often couched in values, beliefs and cultural complexity e.g. Use of alcohol, radicalisation.

This is especially complex for the VPC as we recognise, we are part of the Police and many of our leaders are police officers, who have very specific duties and responsibilities which if not complied with, would put their job at risk. It should also be noted, as in the case of alcohol, that it is legal to use however it can lead to many issues, if used incorrectly which may lead to criminality or open the person up to coercion.

Positional statements therefore are a series of statements outlining VPC's views and recommendations on key potential issues, which Leaders may have to engage with. It provides a guide to how you should respond; the support we can give and should raise awareness to seeking support and or guidance.

Statements have been divided into two forms of statements:

- Our position around cadets/leaders using alcohol, illegal substances or gambling whilst involved in cadets. The statement sets out the boundary between what is acceptable both in and outside of cadets. This is of particular importance as cadet leaders walk a difficult path between law enforcement and support to cadet/leaders who are experiencing difficulties in their life.
- Our position around larger society affecting issues and concerns such as mental health and well-being; radicalisation and transitioning gender

**NB:** (these are not an exhaustive list)

Our Positional Statements are reviewed by the Hub annually and a full review will take place every three years.

## Positional Statements

### **Alcohol**

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC), the uniformed youth group of the Police recognises that drinking alcohol/alcopop is a popular pastime for those over 18. When done in a controlled environment it can be fun, and a positive social activity however we also recognise that for many, left unregulated it can lead to adverse outcomes such as bullying, strained relationships, criminal behaviour, exploitation, debt depression and potentially suicide.
- As *an adult involved* in the VPC you are a role model for young people and seen as a trusted person. When supervising cadets, you must not drink alcohol or encourage them to do so. We appreciate that those over 16 can consume alcohol in certain circumstances, but Cadets are not permitted to drink alcohol whilst *taking part* in cadet activities. As a leader, if you decide to drink alcohol when no longer supervising or in a position of responsibility i.e. at an event or residential, you should consider how alcohol may affect your ability to carry out your *role*, when you return to supervising.
- The VPC will support any Leader or young person who identifies that they have an issue with alcohol

### **Illegal Substances**

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) is the uniformed youth group of the Police recognise that some young people and leaders are involved or living within communities where illegal substances can be accessed.
- The personal use or supply of illegal substances at VPC 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.
- The VPC will support any cadet or leader who identifies that they require support or guidance and we will signpost to the most appropriate service. Restorative approaches should be considered wherever appropriate

### **Gambling**

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC), as the uniformed youth group of the Police, recognises that gambling is a popular pastime for people. When done in a controlled environment it can be fun, and a positive social activity. However, we also recognise that for many, left unregulated it can lead to adverse outcomes such as bullying, strained relationships, criminal behaviour, exploitation, debt depression and potentially suicide.
- Whilst engaged on cadet activities there is no gambling permitted.
- Any fundraising activities that involve an element of gambling should be risk assessed and monitored closely by an identified Leader.

- The VPC will support and/or signpost to support services, any registered leader or young person who identifies that they have an issue with gambling.

### Positions of Trust

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) as the uniformed youth group of the Police, 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, (all Leaders) every person working or volunteering within a VPC settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people and this would include young people who were previously VPC
- This position of trust could potentially be exploited to put people at risk for the purpose of personal advantage or gratification. 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. If they are in a relationship with a cadet, they should not be a leader at the same unit

### Radicalisation

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) is the uniformed youth group of the Police and as such have a legal duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have '*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*' (the 'Prevent duty'). We also recognise that due to their unique position, all Police Officers and staff who are involved with the of VPC have an additional professional duty to refer 'Prevent'. As a result, our non-police volunteers will be guided to understand and acknowledge both their duty, and the additional duties of the police officers and staff.
- All leaders MUST know how to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified
- Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), no matter where this risk evolves
- We seek to build children and young people's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values; and enabling them to challenge extremist views within the VPC. It is important to emphasise that we do not seek to control or stop open discussion of controversial issues. On the contrary, groups should provide a safe space in which cadets and adults can understand the risks associated with radicalisation and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments/indoctrination.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Mental well-being can be described as a combination of how we feel (our emotions and life satisfaction) and how we function (relationships with others, personal control, purpose in life and independence). Mental well-being is the measures and coping strategies we personally put in place to try to maintain good mental health. Mental health is something that affects everyone, old and young, and anyone can experience good or poor mental health at any point in their lives.
- Mental ill health takes many forms and can vary in terms of; strength and severity and frequency of re-occurrence and whether an individual reaches crisis or is able to manage their illness and maintain a steady state over many years. Some (but not all) people with mental ill health can be at risk as they develop negative, potentially harmful coping strategies e.g. anxiety attacks, self-harm or attempted suicide. There is a small risk in terms of violent behaviour; however, it is more likely that others will become distressed because they do not know how to help their friends or colleagues.
- The police recognise that the VPC has a legal duty under the Equality and Diversity Act to ensure accessibility for all. The VPC (cadets) provides opportunities for young people to get together, build connections and friendships, and provide peer support among themselves. This can help to build tolerance and empathy amongst young people and can be particularly powerful for groups of young people known to be at higher risk of developing mental health problems.
- Through the VPC, the police will, wherever possible and practicable, seek to embrace all cadets with mental health illness, and seek to encourage all cadets, their friends and carers to talk to their leaders around how they (we) can better support them in their cadet journey. Where possible we will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate a cadet with poor mental health in all VPC activities.
- Supporting young people/adults with mental health issues is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. neglect, emotional/psychological abuse and bullying), no matter where this risk evolves.
- We will aim to ensure that our leaders are educated in the area of Mental Health and are aware of the need to (able) to signpost young people to appropriate additional, specialist support.

## Transitioning Gender

- The VPC have an equal opportunities policy, and welcomes cadets regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Trans or transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, someone who feels that they are a male may be trapped in a female body.
  - For some people the mismatch between sex and gender identity can lead to distressing and uncomfortable feelings that are called Gender Dysphoria
  - The person may live or be considering living in their true gender; going through what is known as transition, to being known by a different name, wearing different clothes and/or concealing parts of their body. The person may or may not decide to have gender reassignment, to permanently alter their body to match their true gender
  - A person may call themselves transgender or 'trans' for short. However, they may simply live as their acquired gender and not want others to know they are transgender.
  - A person, once 18 years plus may choose to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), as a legal recognition of their acquired gender.
- We embrace all LGBTQ members, and seek to encourage all to talk to their leaders around how we can better support them on their cadet journey.
- Supporting people transitioning is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. emotional/psychological abuse and bullying), no matter where this risk evolves. It should be noted that trans young people are at particular risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse from peers and the risk of abuse by adults as [children turn online for support and access to networks of those sharing similar views and feelings.](#)