



Promoting a practical understanding of policing amongst all young people

*

Encouraging the spirit of adventure and good citizenship

*

Supporting local policing priorities through volunteering and giving young people a chance to be heard

*

Inspiring young people to participate positively in their communities.

Welcome to the February 2025 edition of the National VPC Newsletter. This issue highlights the activities & achievements of VPC Units, Cadets, and Leaders across the Police Forces of England, Wales & Scotland

Do you have a story that can be shared with everyone? Has your Cadet unit done something to shout about?

If so, contact us at - vpc.admin@vpc.police.uk

Follow us -





Award winning Cadet starts Special Constable training

An award-winning Cadet from **Devon & Cornwall VPC** is due to start his training to become a Special Police Constable this month

Caolan Hutchins, a cadet with the **Crownhill VPC** unit was awarded Cadet of the Year at the 2024 Lord Ferrers Awards held in London.

Caolan was instrumental in the success and running of both the new Junior Cadet Unit at City College Plymouth and the senior Cadet unit at Crownhill. rising to the challenge to lead sessions for Junior Cadets, adding his own experiences of Cadets to shape and support the next generation of young people joining the program.

Caolan has gone above and beyond the usual expectation of a cadet, thoughtfully and diligently taking on the additional responsibility of leading sessions, reducing the demands on other volunteer leaders and staff which support the unit.



Caolan showed maturity and professionalism at all times, stepping up to support volunteer leaders who are less confident with delivering sessions to this younger age group, mentoring them through suggesting and implementing games and activities to the group of leaders and staff that would be more appropriate for the junior cadets.

Caolan was fundamental in the support in Devon & Cornwall for the Operation SCEPTRE knife crime awareness campaign. Not only delivering an engaging session to all of the unit but also whilst being filmed by and then later interviewed by the BBC and televised nationally. He did not stop there, as he then further supported Devon & Cornwall with a very successful test purchase operation, which is now going to be used as a benchmark for other forces nationally and VPC units.

Caolan has emerged as a natural leader and session facilitator, managing the behaviour and expectations of both Cadets and leaders. He is always immaculately presented, and greets cadets with energy and warmth at the start of the sessions and is always flexible and willing to learn. He has fed back his own ideas and experiences of cadets, influencing the delivery of sessions at the unit and adding a key youth voice in session planning and delivery.



Caolan, pictured left with the Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper at the Lord Ferrers Awards was nominated by Deborah Hart, Youth Engagement Office with Devon & Cornwall, she said,

"Caolan's professionalism, dedication and thoughtfulness shines through in everything he does. He consistently demonstrates a commitment to the values of both the force and volunteer police cadets. Caolan is absolutely deserving of the recognition he has received for his level of service to the group and our local communities. Police cadets work closely with the community and alongside police teams to support and promote and educate the public about crime. We benefit hugely because we get to positively engage with a group of young people sometimes quite hard to reach."

Of his starting Special Constable training Caolan said, *"I'm hoping to give back everything to the community that the community has given me....The whole reason that I am in the position that I am in today is because of the police cadets and the police family and all of the volunteers who work within both organisations."*



Hertfordshire VPC award Cadets

Back in December, Welwyn & Hatfield Volunteer Police Cadets celebrated by hosting their Annual Awards Ceremony at Police Headquarters in Welwyn Garden City. A fantastic evening celebrating the achievements of their Cadets over 2024.

The Police Cadets themselves recalled a number of events / activities that they took part in, notable highlights include Test Purchasing with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Trading Standards.

Attending the Chief Constables Annual Awards evening, Remembrance Sunday Parade in Welwyn Garden City, the County Cadet Competition as well as supporting numerous other events throughout the year.

Two Cadets were presented with awards.



The first award was for the **Cadets' Cadet of the Year Award 2024** which is voted for by the Police Cadets themselves, this award is for a Cadet who has been particularly supportive to some of the newer Cadets who have joined this year, a Cadet who has supported her peers throughout the year, been a good influence and generally happy presence.

This was awarded to **Cadet Leah Brackley**. Leah recently turned 17 years old, and been a Cadet with Hertfordshire Police for a few years now having moved to the Welwyn Garden area from North London. Prior to joining the Welwyn & Hatfield VPC, Leah was a Volunteer Police Cadet with the Metropolitan Police Service in London.

The second award was for the **Cadet Leaders Cadet of the Year 2024** this award is nominated by the VPC Leaders who voted for one of our newer Cadets, having joined the VPC in November 2023. This award was presented to **Cadet James Harwood**. James, is 15 years old and thoroughly enjoys the Cadet programme.

The VPC Leaders were extremely proud of the Welwyn & Hatfield VPC and their achievements during 2024.



Kents Mini-Police Cadets show kindness



Mini Police Cadets at Hawkinge Primary School, Kent have showed incredible kindness and community spirit by creating care packages for the homeless.

This heartwarming initiative began with a suggestion from one of the young police cadets and quickly gained support from the entire school and Police Officers at Folkestone Police Station.

The cadets worked tirelessly to collect donations, including warm clothing, snacks, and even handmade Christmas cards. One generous child used their own pocket money to fill a whole bag. These thoughtful packages were delivered to the Folkestone Rainbow Centre bringing much-needed warmth and joy to those looking for shelter.



Jane Suckling from The Rainbow Centre said,

'Little people have the biggest hearts. And this was proved beyond doubt when on a busy December day at the Rainbow Centre drop-in, a surprise delivery arrived.'

'No, not Santa. It was PCSOs Samantha Maxwell, Georgia Sutcliffe, James Powell and Janet Rumley, who brought with them 19 care packages put together by students in the force's Mini Police Cadets programme at Hawkinge Primary School.'

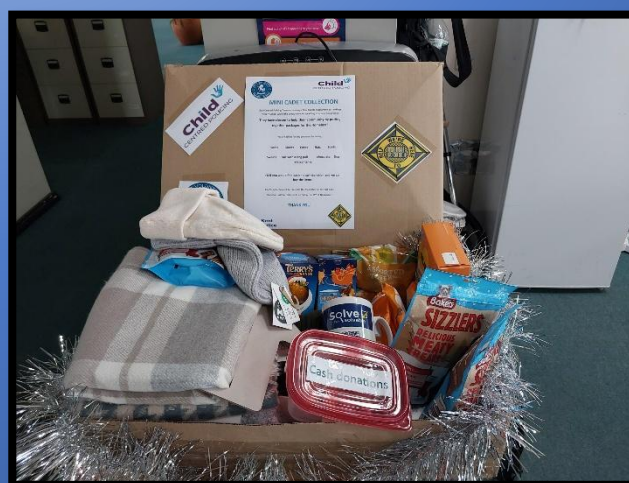
PCSO Maxwell added, *'A little girl suggested giving care packages to the homeless and so it seemed right to help out a local centre. One child filled a whole bag out of his own pocket money.'*

The bags were filled with essentials such as warm outer clothing like hats and gloves along with snacks, and food items. A kind donor had even knitted nine blankets. The young volunteers had thoughtfully included handmade Christmas cards too.

The Mini Police Cadets programme at Kent Police encourages children, aged between 8 and 11, to engage in social action projects that address issues affecting their local community. PCSO Maxwell said: *'We are so proud of our Mini Cadets at Hawkinge Primary School for their compassion and dedication to helping others.'*

Julia Lindon-Taylor, the Mini and Junior Cadet Coordinator, developed the programme to foster positive relationships with the police and to boost young people's confidence and self-esteem. As cadets, young people learn how to contact emergency services, stay safe online, participate in sports and team-building activities, and create a unique social action project that benefits their school and local community.

As highlighted in our last newsletter the Kent Police Cadet scheme was honoured with The King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2024 in recognition of its outstanding volunteering achievements.





Welcome to our friends in Scotland

In 2024 the **Police Scotland Young Volunteers (PSYV)** programme partnered with the VPC. The PSYV program, which covers the whole of Scotland mirrors the aims and objectives of the VPC program in England & Wales. Each group consists of 24 young people aged 13-17 years old.

The program has adopted the National VPC Safeguarding and Standards framework and all their adult leaders are taking part in safeguarding training delivered by the National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Team.

Much like their counterparts in England & Wales the young people take part in community events and support Neighbourhood Policing. Between April – October last year they took part in 572 events and contributed over 25,506 volunteering hours.

The PSYV's took part in national events such as the 2024 Royal Troon, 152nd Open Golf Championships, the PSYV supported the policing operation and the organisers of this event. They deployed 27 times covering early and late shifts and contributed 1200 hours of Volunteering and were praised by members of the public, the organisers and Senior Police Officers or their professionalism.



PSYV from across the country travelled to Edinburgh and deployed at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (REMT) show. The PSYV helped the welfare support team assisting members of the public to access the venue and shows and in one day (afternoon and evening shows) over 1000 people were assisted by our volunteers and the REMT welfare team.



Recently 180 Police Scotland Volunteers gathered at the Scottish Police College to take part in an engaging and educational Young Driver Event.

Throughout the day, volunteers participated in interactive presentations from the Interventions Team, including:

- Brake reaction tests
- Drink and drug driving awareness
- Impairment goggles awareness course

They also had the incredible opportunity to:

Explore a Police Traffic Car and Motorcycle first hand - Take part in a simulated collision rescue with the Fire Service and meet the Police Historical Team, who brought along an original police car, historic uniforms, and fascinating stories from policing in the past.





PSYV's at the young driver event with Inspector Norman Towler



Coming up for PSYV in 2025 - In collaboration with YouthLink Scotland, PSYV Youth Volunteers will be trained in restorative approaches. Training will take place across Scotland with a training course being delivered in each Police divisional area.

In April the PSYV will attend the HMS Caledonia Leadership course and allow young people to gain self-esteem and confidence, encouraging them to make positive choices and resist anti-social behaviour.

Teamwork within a diverse group of people breaks down barriers and encourages collaboration. This encourages respect within communities supporting partners.



We at the National VPC look forward to further engagement and collaboration with the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers going forward.





Sussex Leaders recognised at Chief Constable awards

VPC leaders, **Sarah Master** and **Sasha Watkins** were recently awarded Chief Constable citations. They have run the Worthing Unit of the Sussex Volunteer Police Cadets for three to four years. During the pandemic, the Unit almost disbanded, there were only around 4 cadets and Cadet sessions were conducted online. They then returned in person to Chatsmore High, but Sarah and Sasha managed to secure a new permanent base (at Centenary House) as the hall they were using there became unavailable.

A previous VPC Leader left unexpectedly, so the Unit was diminished to just 2 leaders (Sarah and Sasha) and 4 cadets and was at a real risk of disbanding. However, despite the pressures of being full time police officer and police staff they managed to turn it around, recruit and encourage new leaders to join – and Sasha has been working hard to recruit new Cadets – the unit is now up to around 20 Cadets.

They have made sure the room was functional and fit for needs by liaising with IT and Facilities. Many of the former Cadets have now joined as regular police officer, and three of our new present young leaders were Cadets in this very unit themselves.



The Cadets often start timid, uncertain, and with little confidence. The VPC scheme has inspired them to grow in confidence, and learn new skills, suitable for not only life as an adult, but also as potential warrant card holding officers.

During a recent “show of hands”, around 75% of the Cadets have ambition to join the police in some capacity.

The remarkable thing about Sarah and Sasha is that the vast proportion of their commitment and dedication to the Cadets is done in their own time. Even though they do accrue time off in Lieu for the meetings, if they chose to claim it, they put in a huge number of hours during and outside of the meeting hours, attending meetings, planning classes, liaising with departments, booking guest speakers, as well as recruiting new cadets and leaders, dealing with parents, admin, uniform stores etc.

They have both frequently come in on rest days, or before or after long shifts, and even during Annual Leave to attend meetings. Sarah even went to support the Haywards Heath Cadets when they were short of Leaders, as their meeting was at risk of being cancelled if they didn't have enough Leaders (to comply with Safeguarding numbers). Rather than letting that happen, she drove to Haywards Heath before her night shift to make sure the Cadets didn't have to cancel their meeting.

As Leaders of the Cadet Unit, Sarah and Sasha have inspired many fine young Cadets to join the Sussex Police, as either Constables, or as staff. Right now, one Cadet is already applying to be a PCSO and is part way through in joining procedure.

They have also inspired the Cadets to be better people, to be good citizens, and to be role models amongst their peers. A recent example was an outstanding case where a Cadet, (Finley Anderson) who aged only 14, helped a vulnerable elderly lady MISPER whilst on his paper round by making sure she was returned home and was safe. He contacted the police, and used skills and knowledge gained in the Cadets. He was awarded “Cadet of the Year” for 2024 at the Sussex Police Annual Awards in April 2024

Meanwhile Sussex Cadets learn public order tactics



Crawley VPC made the most of the cold wet/snowy weather during an educational session on PSU tactics.

The Cadets did not let the cold weather put them off putting the tactics into practice in the outdoors.

The Cadets started off by having a go at slow search to contact throughout the corridors of the Police Station, where they were met by resistance from the Cadet Leaders, before braving the weather and heading outside to have a go at a tactic called six persons overhead where they had to endure and protect themselves from snowballs coming in from overhead.

Crawley Police Cadets do not let the weather put a dampener on their spirits when it comes to learning about Police skills and tactics and they enjoyed every minute of it.



City of London Cadets have a team building day.



The Jack Petchey Achievement Award Scheme is our flagship programme which recognises outstanding young people aged 11-25 across London and Essex. Groups on the scheme get to celebrate the achievements of young people

Cadets from the **City of London VPC** visited the London Escape Rooms for a team building day which was funded by the Jack Petchey Association as part of a Cadet Award which one of their Cadets, **Cdt. Grace** won.





Surrey Cadets Sleep Under the Stars for Homelessness

In the words of VPC Unit Leader Phil Jebb

I've been a Volunteer Cadet Leader for eight years now. For me it's the perfect sideline as a Youth Engagement Officer which is my regular PC role. Over the years the **Elmbridge VPC Unit** has done a number of fundraising activities ranging from sponsored cycling for the Princess Alice Hospice to the Race for Life for Cancer Research.

I've found in my time as a Unit Leader that the changing cadet faces in the Elmbridge Unit have gained the most from fundraising and community engagements as they can see how they can change other people's lives for the better.

Being a Stoke fan the idea of a cadet sleepout came to me initially after seeing that a sleepout had taken place outside the Bet 365 Stadium to raise money for the Macari Centre which helps support the homeless in the Potteries.

After discussing the idea with our Volunteering Team, I contacted the Hope Hub who are a Surrey based homeless charity. The charity was so welcoming of our support and couldn't have done any more to make us feel wanted and appreciated in response to our fundraising offer.



The next challenge was then to find a location to host us. Walton Firs in Cobham was an obvious choice as I knew that we'd be away from public attention, but we could still give the cadets the feel of what it's like to be homeless.

Walton Firs is an activity centre so I knew that we'd have the facilities needed to support our group whilst we experienced the challenges that the open air of January would offer.

Once the groundwork was complete, we invited leaders and cadets to take part. We had a great response to the initiative with 28 Cadets and 10 leaders signing up to take part which was far more than we expected especially given the time of year and the likelihood of temperatures more in common with the Antarctic than Surrey!



When the 17th of January eventually arrived, we were all set and our base camp was ready for us! Slowly the cadets started to arrive with their proud parents - thankfully all wrapped up well and with suitable sleeping bags (we did have backup kit just in case!).

During the evening the cadets learnt bushcraft, toasted marshmallows and heard from two very important guest speakers - Gemma Johnston from the Hope Hub and Chief Fire Officer Sabrina Cohen Hatton from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. We felt it was important to help the cadets understand more about homelessness and these experiences of these wonderful speakers helped us achieve this aim.

Around 23:00 the cadets settled into their sleeping bags for the night. Their behaviour was exemplary and there was little grumbling about the very cold conditions. I can honestly say having got no sleep myself, I was amazed at how brave and stoic the cadets were and even more so that some had even managed to get a good night's kip.

We had asked the cadets to spend a maximum of £3 on food to bring to the event to help them understand about the financial challenges of homelessness, so as morning broke the hot drinks and breakfast snacks we provided were a welcome treat! It was nice to chat to the cadets before they all left on Saturday morning; it was clear that although the experience was challenging, it was one they would never forget.



Collectively we raised **over £2,000** for the Hope Hub which was a huge reward for the sacrifices our cadets made. But it wasn't all about the money, it was also about raising awareness around homelessness by experiencing first-hand how tough and cold a life that those who are unfortunate enough not to have a home have. Especially in the winter.



Thames Valley Cadets get 'wheelie' involved

West Berks cadets were asked to help at the First ever Wheelchair Rugby Tournament that were held at Thames Valley Police training centre in Sulhamstead in January.

The cadets assisted with showing all participants to the venue and helping get all their wheelchairs and equipment inside for the event.

During the event, the cadets got to watch the matches taking place.

During the lunch break, spectators, police cadets, and special constables joined a taster session, getting the chance to try wheelchair rugby themselves. The session was filled with laughter and excitement as participants quickly realised just how challenging the sport can be.

Many commented on how physically demanding it was to manoeuvre the chairs while keeping control of the ball.



Several cadets left inspired, with one saying:

"It was really amazing to see how much teamwork and strength goes into it. Watching the players up close and trying it myself was great fun."



PUKDS (Police UK Disability Sports) provides a sustainable platform for the UK's policing community to participate in adaptive, accessible, and fully inclusive sports. It is open to all serving and retired police officers, staff, and volunteers from all areas of UK policing.

Four teams took part in the tournament: Taunton Gladiators, Crawley Jets, Bournemouth Lions, and the PUKDS team. The day featured six group games, followed by a third-place play-off and a thrilling final match.



Lancashire Cadets bag pack for charity

Preston and Chorley & South Ribble Police Cadets spent one Saturday in February at their local Asda Supermarket bag packing and fundraising for the Guide Dogs. In total the Cadets collected **£611.52**. Well done Police Cadets and Leaders.





Thank you
Guide Dogs would like to thank

Police Cadets

for raising
£611.52

Andrew Lennox
Andrew Lennox,
Chief Executive Officer,
Guide Dogs.



The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association is registered charity no 1494946 and 1494947. (Scotland) 00338876 and 00338877. (NI) 10252020.



West Mercia Cadets



On a very bright but very cold February day Cadets from across the **West Mercia** force area set off to the outskirts of Hereford where they were to spend a night away from home.

After finishing lunch, they all listened in to the briefing about what lay ahead!

The afternoon started the afternoon with laser clay shooting – and some potential Firearms Officers in the makings?



Next on the agenda was the aptly named “Adrenalin package” where a zip wire played a prominent part! (right)



The next activity was the Borneo low ropes and balancing activities which involved lots of team building, and encouragement from each other and a whole lot of laughter and enjoyment along the way !



Conquering fears of heights and showing a real can-do attitude the Cadets were a credit with their team building and the kindness and support they showed to each other. After a hearty meal an evening of good company and laughter around the fire brought a perfect day to an end.

After a night’s sleep what better way to end the trip than with a spot of Paintballing!



And then all too soon it was time to say goodbye to friends, Cadets, Leaders and staff alike.

Well done to **Pc Jo UTLEY** from Hereford who organised this trip and has spent many a sleepless night checking menus and medical forms!



The value of these outdoor trips out in the fresh air and away from mobile phones and social media cannot be underestimated. If there was any doubt about this, take a look at what the Cadets have told their Leaders.

I really enjoyed the trip I thought the leaders of Oakerwood were amazing, the activities were great and the accommodation was really nice.
Would love to go back.

Charlie

The trip was fantastic I really enjoyed!! My favourite was the paintballing it was so fun and all the cadets I talked to were nice. Thank you.

Keira

Hi Jane, just got my feedback for the trip for you:

We all really enjoyed the trip to Oakerwood - the activities were great for team building and confidence building, particularly the high ropes (slightly terrifying!), and it was great to get to know all the other cadets better. My favourite activity was the paintball, but all of the activities were really fun. I would definitely return again if we got the chance - it was one of the highlights of my time at cadets!

It genuinely was really fun - thank you to all the leaders who made it happen as well.

Adam

Oakerwood was a great experience, I particularly enjoyed paintball. It demonstrated teamwork and team building and making friends with other cadets we may have not met before.

Thank you.

Katy

I really enjoyed Oakerwood and all of the activities we did, I was a bit cold during the night but other than that it was really good. I really think everyone enjoyed it and would love to do it again in the summer for maybe 2 nights.

Grace

The activities were good fun and the staff were great as well. I enjoyed paintballing the most and the whole experience was really good.

Milo

I really enjoyed our Oakerwood trip and thought that it was a really good opportunity to get. I would say that my favourite part was the high ropes on the first day because it was something I have never done before.

Madi



Northumbria VPC keep Eagle eyed

Northumbria Police Cadets continue their support of home games of professional basketball club Newcastle Eagles this season.

Cadets are tasked with fundraising by selling ducks for the Eagles famous 'chuck-a-duck' competition as well as raffle tickets to win a signed match ball.



Following the third quarter the Cadets are also responsible for preparation for 'chuck-a-duck' - and the subsequent clearance of hundreds of ducks from the court in a matter of seconds!

This is always a very busy duty, but Cadets continue to manage their duties

professionally, whilst adeptly dealing with queries from members of the public – all with a smile on their faces!



Warwickshire receive Gold award

Warwickshire Police Cadets BTEC journey started back in 2022 working in partnership with The Cadet Vocational College.

It was initially trialled with the **North Warwickshire Senior cohort** of cadets in 2022. All the cadets achieved either a BTEC level 2 extended certificate or BTEC level 2 extended Diploma certification covering the following modules –

- Developing effective teamwork
- Developing effective communication
- Volunteering in the communication

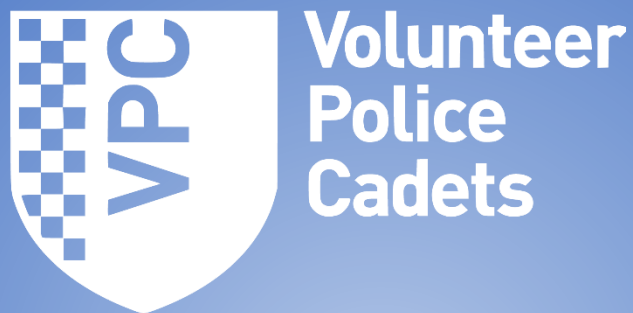
In 2024, due to its success it was rolled out to the senior South and East cohort of cadets allowing other cadets to achieve a recognised qualification and enhancing our Cadet scheme.



PC Lee MARSTON said, *"It is a great privilege to receive a gold award certificate and special coin from the Cadet Vocational College recognising the BTEC work. We are the first Police Cadet scheme to receive this recognition and I was told that I'm the 3rd person to receive this certificate and coin in the UK. It's not just me, there is a team that supports me.*

I'm lucky to be supported by my co cadet leader PCSO Stephanie NORMAN and all my voluntary cadet leaders who support us both and the cadets on a weekly basis"





Do you have a story that can be shared with everyone?
Has your Cadet unit done something to shout about?
If so, contact us at –

vpc.admin@vpc.police.uk

