



THE SAFE TO OPERATE STANDARDS

A GUIDE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SAFE TO OPERATE STANDARDS
FOR POLICE FORCES OPERATING A
VOLUNTEER POLICE CADET SCHEME

2025 VERSION TWO



INTRODUCTION TO THE STANDARDS

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) published the Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) five-year strategy.

It makes a clear commitment to ensuring the safety of the young people and leaders who make up our VPC. Significant work has progressed to understand the structural and cultural challenges and opportunities which exist in order to deliver the strategy.

Following a due diligence process, the UK Youth Safe Spaces framework was identified as a product that could ensure police forces operate to youth sector standards, while providing sufficient flexibility to implement them according to their local circumstances.

THE STANDARDS

This document sets out the UK Youth Safe Spaces, enabling forces assess their performance against the standards, while providing tips and guidance.

Our communities expect us to look after their young people when they are with us, and this provides the way forward.

This reference document will be of benefit to all forces as they implement the standards. It aims to complement the Citizens in Policing, Valuing Volunteer Framework which clearly sets out the need for senior leaders to oversee an appropriate, supportive culture for the delivery of the VPC.





INTRODUCTION TO THE STANDARDS



A LEARNING JOURNEY

To maximise the benefits of this document, it is vital that the implementation process is viewed **as a learning journey, rather a rush to implement the policies as a one-off piece of work.**

This approach will ensure lessons are learnt and shared and long-term change can be affected. It is organisational culture that sets the context and expectations of all behaviour in any organisation, and a positive culture where concerns can be identified and spoken about openly, is a key element of a strong safeguarding system.

A CULTURE WHERE ALL CONCERNS ARE SHARED

Creating a culture in which all concerns (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately, is crucial.

If implemented well this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable forces to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the police service are clear about professional boundaries and act within them, in accordance with the ethos and values of the VPC and Policing.

Behaviour which is not consistent with these standards and values, and which does not meet the expectations encapsulated in VPC and Police codes of conduct, needs to be addressed to promote a healthy, informed and more effective protective culture for our young people and our leaders This standards document should be made available on Force websites.





INTRODUCTION FROM ACC CUMMINS

“Running a Volunteer Uniform Youth Group of over 18,000 young people is not without its challenges.

We, the police, must do all we can to ensure our young people and their leaders are safe, supported, and fulfilled while they are with us”

To ensure appropriate youth sector standards are adhered it was agreed at National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in 2020 that police forces operating a VPC scheme as the youth organisation of the Police, would adopt the standards set out in the UK Youth Safe Spaces (UKYSSF) framework and the VPC Safe to Operate Standards are these standards made relevant to VPC.

The VPC Safe to Operate Standards framework **contains seven elements** that should be in place to ensure an effective and safe youth organisation can operate. The National VPC strategy, which was also adopted by the NPCC, is clear in its’ commitment to the safety of everyone involved in the VPC is made.

This guide aims to be a reference point for police forces, highlighting the minimum standards for operating the Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) scheme (including schemes in Wales and Scotland) and contains links to National VPC created guidance to assist forces to deliver a safe VPC scheme which meets the adopted standards.



ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE JON CUMMINS

NATIONAL LEAD FOR THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER POLICE CADETS



INTRODUCTION FROM ACC CUMMINS

AN ONGOING PROCESS

“It is organisational culture that sets the context and expectations of all behaviour in any organisation”

AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT CULTURE

“Creating a culture in which all concerns (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately, is crucial.”

It must be noted that the introduction of these standards should be seen as an **ongoing process rather than an event** where the organisational culture is addressed to ensure consistent change.

It is organisational culture that sets the context and expectations of all behaviour in any organisation, and a positive culture where concerns can be identified and spoken about openly is a key element of a strong safeguarding system.

What that means in practice is, ensuring that all those who work with children behave appropriately, follow the standards set and that the early identification and prompt and appropriate management of concerns, is critical to effective safeguarding.

Creating a culture in which all concerns (including allegations that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately, is crucial.

If implemented well this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable forces to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the police service are clear about professional boundaries and act within them, in accordance with the ethos and values of the VPC and Policing.

Behaviour which is not consistent with these standards and values, and which does not meet the expectations encapsulated in VPC and Police codes of conduct, needs to be addressed to promote a healthy, informed and more effective protective culture for our young people and our leaders This standards document should be made available on Force websites.



GOVERNANCE AND ROLES

DESIGNATED RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

(Chief Superintendent or above)

The named Force Executive member who is accountable for the safe delivery of their Force VPC scheme. Through effective governance and leadership, they will promote a safe culture and adherence to the UK Youth Safe Spaces Framework Standards adopted as the National VPC Standards

FORCE STRATEGIC LEAD

(Citizens in Policing Ch. Insp or equivalent)

The name responsible person for the safe delivery of their Force VPC scheme. Through effective governance and leadership, they will promote a safe culture and adherence to the UK Youth Safe Spaces Framework Standards adopted as the National VPC Standards

FORCE OPERATIONAL LEAD

(e.g. CIP Manager)

This role supports the safe delivery of the Force VPC scheme as a regulated youth activity. The role holder is the link between the delivery of the VPC scheme and operational policing

LOCAL RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

(e.g. Borough Commander / Local Area or Neighbourhood Ch. Inspector or Inspector: depending on Force structure)

The named person responsible for the safe delivery of the VPC in their policing area, and should be responsible to the force operational lead to ensure consistent delivery of the scheme . Through effective governance and leadership, they will promote a safe culture and adherence to the UK Youth Safe Spaces Framework Standards adopted as the National VPC Standards. They must have completed VPC safeguarding courses -Introduction to Safeguarding & Managing a safeguarding concern

VPC UNIT LEAD

(e.g. Force VPC coordinator)

The Unit lead coordinates the safe delivery of the Force VPC unit, ensuring identified leader roles are filled in line with expectations of the Force and the standards and confirms to the Local Responsible Officer that standards are met. Must have completed VPC safeguarding courses -Introduction to Safeguarding & Managing a safeguarding concern



THE SAFE TO OPERATE STANDARDS



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.1. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1.2. HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICE

1.3. HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

1.4. ACCIDENT REPORTING

1.5. RISK ASSESSMENTS

1.6. ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

1.7. EQUIPMENT CHECKS

1.8. FIRST AID

1.9. FIRE SAFETY



SAFEGUARDING

2.1. ROBUST LEADERSHIP

2.2. SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

2.3. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

2.4. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

2.5. APPROPRIATE AND SAFE COMMUNICATION

2.6. SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

2.7. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

2.8. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TRAINING

2.9. WHISTLEBLOWING, COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3.1. APPROPRIATE LEADERS

3.2. EXPERIENCING A SESSION

3.3. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER INDUCTION

3.4. COMMUNICATION



THE SAFE TO OPERATE STANDARDS



FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 YOUTH LED CULTURE

4.2. YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT

4.3. YOUNG PEOPLE'S INDUCTION

4.4 ONLINE SAFETY



DATA

5.1. DATA PROTECTION POLICY

5.2. DATA PROTECTION PRACTICE

5.3 DATA PROTECTION TRAINING

5.4. RETENTION OF RECORDS



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

6.1. STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT

6.2. STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN

6.3. FORCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

6.4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

6.5. APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL CONTROLS



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

7.1. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

7.2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PRACTICE

7.3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING

7.4. POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

7.5. JOINING WITH A DISABILITY

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of everyone involved in the VPC is of the upmost importance.

This section identifies some of the key issues that have been identified as requiring consideration and professional judgement as forces implement the standards.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

CONSIDERING YOUTH SECTOR SPECIALISMS

NEW FOR 2025 - NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORTING

Reliance on operational police policies and procedures can lead to hidden risks developing, unseen, by police forces. Health and safety policies failing to consider youth sector specialisms. It is important to remember when risk assessing VPC activity that it is not a policing activity and therefore must be assessed according.

A good governance process will drive the safe delivery of the VPC and by doing this the standards will be met. Although a huge amount of good work is being undertaken by VPC leaders, evidence of safe practice must be maintained so forces can prove that their VPC operates safely.

There may be a temptation to progress work to prove compliance with the standards, rather than concentrating on ensuring the correct culture and processes are in place for a safe VPC.

The use of police health and safety training may not always account for a specialism that requires consideration for the delivery of the VPC

In line with an increasing number of national uniformed youth organisations, from September 2025 the National VPC is introducing the requirements that all forces share all incidents, accidents, and near misses through the national safeguarding reporting process.

This can be achieved through the existing case management system on VPC Gateway, or by completing [this form](#) and emailing to the National Safeguarding and Standards Manager .

Report any incident where you believe there was potential for harm to be caused. This will help prevent future accidents and make your VPC safer. It is important to encourage all VPC leaders to report both accidents and near misses, using your internal systems and the national reporting form. Further information/guidance in relation to running safe activities and events can be found [HERE](#)



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.1 Health and Safety Policy

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.1	A written Health & Safety policy that is compliant to current legislation and guidance and is relevant to the VPC.	1.1.1	Outline roles and responsibilities	Strategic Lead
		1.1.2	Consult with the Force H&S policy lead, to ensure VPC are part of the overarching Force H&S policy.	
		1.1.3	Have a named person with overall health and safety responsibility for the VPC scheme. (Force VPC H&S officer).	
		1.1.4	The policy is signed off by the Force DRO.	
		1.1.5	Force insurance policy is updated to cover VPC activities and where not appropriate changes are made or alternative insurance is found.	
		1.1.6	Force vehicle/driving insurance fully covers those driving Force/hire vehicles for Cadet activities (to include passengers in said vehicles).	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

Ideally schemes will have a **bespoke** Cadet Health and Safety policy, that not only addresses the specific requirements of young people but is also written in a clear and accessible manner so that all those engaging with the scheme can understand it.

If the Force Health and Safety policy is to be used, then this should be checked and amended where necessary to ensure it is appropriate for use by the scheme.

GOOD PRACTICE

DERBYSHIRE CADET HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

A dedicated VPC Health and Safety policy with a clear policy statement that is inclusive to all with the VPC

Clearly sets out expectations of Leaders and Cadets

Clear and practical sections, such as first aid and risk assessments which are pertinent and relevant to VPC activities.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.2 Health and Safety Procedures and Safe Working Practice

GUIDANCE

- Ensuring that the policy is available to all stakeholders and having a system in place to record that it has been read is essential to:
 - Promote a consistent approach to Health and Safety,
 - Provide a live resource for reference if needed,
 - Encourage stakeholders to take responsibility for their own actions,
 - Avoid single points of failure should Force Coordinators, Officers, or more experienced leaders be unavailable

• *Tip: Sending policies and facilitating access to training prior to a Leader starting in role can allow them to read policies / complete training at their own pace. This is also a useful way of making new Leaders feel part of the organisation whilst they are waiting for vetting checks etc. to be completed.*

GOOD PRACTICE

DYFED-POWYS

SAFE TO OPERATE CHECKLIST

- Ensures that health and safety is considered at every session / activity,
- Encourages a consistent approach
- Provides a way of documenting processes

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.2	Evidence demonstrating that safe working practice is a integral part of your practice as defined in your Health and Safety Policy	1.2.1	A signed record showing that the Health and Safety policy has been shared with all VPC Leaders.	Strategic Lead
		1.2.2	Make the policy available for all within the VPC scheme including parents, guardians, carers (e.g. Force/Constabulary website).	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.3 Heath and Safety Training

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.3	Evidence demonstrating that safe working is an integral part of training for staff and volunteers as defined in your Health and Safety Policy	1.3.1	Maintain induction records demonstrating that all staff and volunteers receive a health and safety induction when becoming a VPC Leader which includes all aspects of the Health and Safety Policy.	Operational Lead
		1.3.2	A record of regular (e.g. annual or in line with Force/Constabulary policy) training to demonstrate VPC Leaders have the appropriate level of training to carry out their role safely.	

GUIDANCE

- Regular training for Leaders and Cadets helps to enforce Health and Safety policies/procedures and ensures that knowledge is kept up to date. Training should be refreshed annually or in-line with Force policy.
- Although College learn courses alone should not be relied on to meet all the Health and Safety training needs of the scheme, they are available to all Leaders and can provide a good starting point. Learning and development teams can facilitate access for Volunteers without Force email addresses or access to Force IT.
- Tip: In addition to training, some schemes also complete spot checks where Leaders are asked to identity key points in Health and Safety / Fire Safety policies and procedures and evidence their understanding.*

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.4. Accident Reporting

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.4	An accident reporting, recording, informing, and reviewing process.	1.4.1	From September 2025 all incidents, accidents, and near misses should be appropriately recorded and shared with the National VPC Team as soon as possible via Marshall Safeguarding Reporting Process (or via email for forces not using Marshall.)	Force/VPC Health and Safety Officer
		1.4.2	Give clear guidance on how participants, parents, guardians, and carers will be informed when there is an incident, accident or near miss.	
		1.4.3	A defined retention period for accident and incident forms and details of where the accident and incident forms are kept.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

• From September 2025 all incidents, accidents, and near misses should be recorded appropriately and shared with the National Team via Marshall or Email. [Click here to see the reporting form.](#)

- Ideally, these records should be held as electronically as opposed to paper accident/incident forms which can easily be misplaced.
- Consistent guidance around how parents/carers/guardians will be informed of incidents should also include best practice time scales and methods for notification e.g. (depending on the severity) immediately via telephone at the time of the incident, followed up in writing or via email at the end of the session. Where possible any communication should be either in writing or followed up in writing to provide an audit trail.
- Accident/near-miss forms should be stored securely as they will contain personal information, these forms should be kept in line with a defined retention period – this may be the standard Force retention period.

GOOD PRACTICE

SCOUTS ASSOCIATION

[EMERGENCY PURPLE CARD](#)

- Includes a clearly defined step-by-step process for how adult volunteers should deal with incidents and near misses
- Includes a leader code of conduct which details what leaders should and should not do.
 - Links to overarching health and safety policy



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.5 Risk Assessments

GUIDANCE

It is important to remember when risk assessing VPC activities that these are not Policing activities and therefore must be assessed accordingly.

In addition to the Scheme risk assessment, separate risk assessments should be completed for all Cadet sessions/activities/events, these should be available to all stakeholders so that cadets/leaders/parents/carers/guardians can make informed decisions.

Each activity or event should have a unique risk assessment, although use of a template is a good idea to save time and ensure all areas are covered, risk assessments should not just be copied and reused without adaptation for the specific activity

Risk assessment training is available from the [National Youth Agency](#)

Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) and Food Hygiene may not be relevant to the majority of Cadet activities however, including these on the risk assessment template acts as a reminder to consider them when appropriate (e.g. Overnight residentials and DofE where camping equipment may be in use)

FURTHER GUIDANCE

SCOUTS ASSOCIATION - RISK ASSESSMENTS

The scouts website offers a useful range of information, guidance, and examples for creating and completing risk assessments for various events and activities.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.5	Risk assessments in place for individuals, venues, activities, and events	1.5.1	The Scheme overarching risk assessment is signed off by Force DRO (or delegated person).	Force/VPC Health and Safety Officer
		1.5.2	Maintain training records demonstrating VPC leaders receive risk assessment training (specific to youth work delivery) at induction.	Operational Lead
		1.5.3	A record of regular risk assessment (e.g., annual training) to demonstrate VPC Leaders have the appropriate level of training to carry out their role safely.	
		1.5.4	Make all risk assessments available for all within the VPC scheme participants including parents, guardians, carers.	
		1.5.5	If appropriate, risk assessments should demonstrate consideration of Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) issues and Food Hygiene (if you provide catering – i.e., camping, baking/cooking activities).	
		1.5.6	Venue Risk Assessments are completed and include security risks (e.g. access by those not associated with the scheme, emergency 'lockdown' procedures etc.).	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team





HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.6. Activity/ Participation and 1.7. Equipment Checks

GUIDANCE

1.6. Activity/ Participation

Participation forms should be completed for all cadets prior to their attendance for any activity / event, this will allow time to make any reasonable adjustments required (e.g. plan for dietary requirements). Completion of participation forms also provides an opportunity to verify that parent/carer/guardian contact details are correct and up to date.

1.7. Equipment Checks

Equipment includes any sports equipment, IT/AV equipment, desks, chairs and any equipment used for, or by Cadets. Checking equipment could be added as an agenda item to Unit briefings - as evidence by Dyfed Powys, see [Safe to Operate Checklist – H&S \(P4\)](#).

Manual Handling training is available via College Learn

FURTHER GUIDANCE

[SPORTSAFE - PE AND SPORTS EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST](#)

Sportsafe have put together a visual equipment checklist which includes pictures of key equipment combined with a set of recommended checks to be conducted on each piece of equipment. This means the checklist is suitable for a wider variety of ages and abilities and ensures checks are conducted consistently. Having a consistent, easy process in place could mean that equipment checks can be delegated to young people, empowering them to take responsibility for equipment in their unit (with appropriate oversight).

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.6	Activity / Event participation consent form	1.6.1	These should include contact information for parents, guardians, or carers; contact details of participant; contact details of the next of kin; all participant needs (medical, dietary, allergies, care, and support needs).	Operational Lead
1.7	Regular checks carried out on any equipment used	1.7.1	A record of regular checks carried out on any equipment used by the scheme (e.g. desks/chairs/IT equipment/sports equipment), and by whom.	Force/VPC Health and Safety Officer
		1.7.2	A documented reporting process for defective equipment.	
		1.7.3	A record of Manual Handling training provided to leaders.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



HEALTH AND SAFETY

[CONTENTS](#)

THE SAFE TO OPERATE STANDARDS

1.8 First Aid

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.8	First Aid available	1.8.1	If not all leaders are First Aid trained, a process to ensure that first aiders are present for cadet sessions / activities and events.	Force/VPC Health and Safety Officer
		1.8.2	A process to ensure that the first aider(s) present at each session is (are) identifiable to all in attendance.	
		1.8.3	A record of the location of first aid boxes and a process to ensure all participants know where these are.	
		1.8.4	A record of regular checks of first aid boxes and reporting process for replenishing supplies.	
		1.8.5	A record of appropriate first aid training provided to leaders and a process to ensure training is maintained and up to date.	
		1.8.6	A documented first aid emergency procedure, e.g. step-by-step guidance to manage an incident (e.g. where a Cadet/Leader is unconscious), including who is responsible for administering first aid, calling an ambulance, managing Cadet welfare etc.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

- Ideally all leaders will be first aid trained, however, if this is not the case then Cadets and Leaders will need to know who the First Aiders are at each session/activity. This can be included on the Cadet Management system (e.g. Marshall / Duty sheet) and/or can be posted on notice boards etc. at the venue for the session and included in any verbal briefings.
- No cadet session/activity/event should take place without a first aider present, schemes have a responsibility to ensure they can prevent this from happening.

GOOD PRACTICE

CUMBRIA

FIRST AID BOX CHECKS

Processes for checking First Aid boxes:

- Taking a photo of the contents which makes it easier to identify when things are missing,
- Seal boxes with a tag so you know when they've been opened, and stock may need replenishing.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

1.9 Fire Safety

GUIDANCE

All schemes that meet on Police premises should be fully compliant with the basic criteria of this standard, however, the scheme is responsible for ensuring this is the case and that they have access to all appropriate documentation / resources

Most schools/colleges and community buildings will also be compliant (fire risk assessment, building plan, maintenance checks of fire equipment, plan showing sensors etc.) but again, the scheme is responsible for ensuring this is the case. Facilities managers at these venues should be able to assist.

GOOD PRACTICE

SOUTH WALES FIRE DRILL REPORT

- Keeping a written record will help to ensure that drills are conducted on a regular basis,
- The form provides space to record any issues that occurred and suggestions to rectify these

PEEP TEMPLATE

- It has clear step-by-step sections to fill in to cover all aspects of any emergency evacuation,
- It facilitates the plan to be designed collaboratively by the individual, the Scheme and the parent/guardian (if relevant)

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
1.9	Fire Safety	1.9.1	A documented fire safety policy, identifying a named person responsible for fire safety (this may be a Force/Constabulary policy).	Strategic Lead
		1.9.2	A fire risk assessment with a building plan (this could be done by the landlord if in non-police premises, however if they have not done it, you must).	Force/VPC Health and Safety Officer
		1.9.3	A fire evacuation plan which includes a PEEP(s) (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) for any Cadet/Leader who may require support in the event of an emergency evacuation.	
		1.9.4	A plan showing sensors and fire equipment.	
		1.9.5	A documented record of fire drills conducted (at least every 6 months) with Leaders and Cadets.	Operational Lead
		1.9.6	A record of maintenance checks and logs, including fire extinguishers, emergency lights, call points. (These may be held by the landlord if non-polices premises).	
		1.9.7	A record of fire safety training provided to Leaders on induction and records of regular (e.g. annual or in line with Force/Constabulary policy) refresher training.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility involved in the VPC and is of the utmost importance.

The following pages contain the key considerations that have been identified as requiring thought and professional judgement as forces implement the new standards.

SAFEGUARDING

To report concerns or seek advice please contact VPC
safeguarding vpc.safeguarding@vpc.police.uk

A VPC pocket guide to safeguarding for
leaders & other adults – [HERE](#)



SAFEGUARDING

SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF SAFEGUARDING

KEEPING ALL YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

Every Police Force should support a safeguarding culture that encourages young people to challenge their beliefs and values in an informed way and in a safe space.

It is important that a senior officer takes the lead in safeguarding and a Named Person is in place so that people (both internally and externally) know where to go for support.

It is important that information is shared if a cadet or young leader is harmed, or at risk of harm and a procedure is in place that will make it clear to staff, volunteers, children, and young people under what circumstances you refer.

There is a legal requirement to protect those at risk from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Additional vulnerability faced by some children and young people can be caused by several factors such as someone's disability, their means of communication or their care needs. In some cases, they may be dealing with complex circumstances, such as caring for a parent or sibling. Without knowledge of an individual's background and circumstances it is important to recognise that some children and young people may have had previous harmful experiences that may make it difficult for them to recognise unsafe situations or may have affected their self-confidence and sense of self-worth.

To keep safe those who are at risk of abuse and to promote their welfare, it is vital to ensure organisations work collaboratively, know how to engage with outside agencies and share appropriate information, for example when referring a child or young person or when your organisation is part of a network of agencies supporting an individual who is considered at risk. Safeguarding now includes the digital world, perpetrators can access and abuse others online and through social media platforms. The understanding of abuse, of how we can guard against it and of how we to stop it now forms part of an organisation's responsibilities.

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.

To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



SAFEGUARDING

SAFEGUARDING IN THE CONTEXT OF A YOUTH ORGANISATION

DOCUMENTING AND SHARING ALL CONCERNS

There is a difference between **safeguarding in a youth organisation** and **child protection within the policing** environment which should be acknowledged.

The role of cadet leader (regardless of rank) is to **support the young person and unit** should a disclosure or concern be raised at VPC not to undertake a police investigation.

There was some evidence of VPC leaders having to use their discretion in the absence of clear standards and leadership which may lead to **blurred boundaries and a failure to recognise or address risk**.

There should be an awareness of the **position of authority** and **power imbalance** between cadets and leaders and between police officers and adult volunteers and their lack of confidence to challenge or report.

There is a need to document low level concerns to track patterns of behaviour, deal with leader wrongdoing and if necessary, report to DBS and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Although significant progress has been achieved in safeguarding reporting standards, many grassroots leaders are still under-identifying and under reporting low level safeguarding concerns. We have put together additional guidance and examples on low level concerns that should be consistently identified, reported, and actioned.

There is a need to share concerns and learning on a national level to identify patterns of behaviour and concerns and provide support and early intervention.

Learning should be shared with the NPCC Safeguarding Manager and locally with internal and external partnerships (within consent/GDPR regulations) – especially regarding low level concerns that do not meet the child protection threshold.

There is a need to ensure the context of VPC as a regulated youth activity is understood by those in the decision-making process.

Examples of this include, vetting of leaders, rather than the legal requirement of DBS checks on leaders.



SAFEGUARDING

2.1 Robust Leadership and 2.2 Safeguarding Governance Processes

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
2.1	Robust leadership in Force. All activity contributes to safeguarding and is everyone’s business regardless of role and responsibility.	2.1.1	Appointment of Designated Responsible Officer (DRO) of appropriate senior rank e.g. Chief Superintendent	Chief Constable
		2.1.2	DRO has completed the necessary DRO training.	
2.2	Transparent and accountable governance arrangements and organisational structures in relation to safeguarding.	2.2.1	Named Force Designated VPC Safeguarding Officer appointed.	Strategic Lead
		2.2.2	Names and contact details of the DRO and Designated VPC Safeguarding Officer must be published and clear procedures for escalating concerns relating to safeguarding and whistleblowing made available and understood by all stakeholders.	Operational Lead
		2.2.3	The National VPC Safeguarding email should be displayed on all material relating to the scheme to give individuals an opportunity to report externally.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

Schemes that evidence best practice in this area have a good working relationship with the DRO.
Tip: One way to help facilitate this relationship is to create a Cadet ‘Plan on a Page’ that aligns with your Force’s priorities. This could include how the Cadets can assist with social action, community engagement etc. and can be used to evidence the value of the Cadet scheme to the Force.

GOOD PRACTICE

AVON AND SOMERSET SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT (AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE)

- It includes details of the Responsible Officers
- It includes expectations for all stakeholders
- Both internal and external reporting channels are provided, including the NVPC safeguarding email
- It is available on the Force website so is accessible to all stakeholders AND the public
- There is also a Safeguarding reporting form available on the website ([click here](#))

MET

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

- It’s bespoke to the scheme,
- It explains why it is important to report ANY concern (big or small)
 - It provides both internal and external reporting options,
- It makes it clear that anyone can report a concern – cadet/leader/parent/carers/guardian/member of the public,
 - It clearly explains how concerns will be dealt with and what to do if you are not satisfied with the process,
 - It is written in clear easy-to-understand language



SAFEGUARDING

2.3 Safeguarding Policies and Processes and 2.4 Safeguarding Responsibilities

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
2.3	There are effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place and utilised.	2.3.1	Adoption of the National VPC Safeguarding Framework as a minimum standard click HERE to view.	DRO
		2.3.2	Adoption of the National VPC Safeguarding Reporting Process.	
2.4	All VPC leaders are made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and the expectations of them when commencing their role.	2.4.1	There is an induction process for all new VPC Leaders which includes familiarisation with VPC safeguarding policies, procedures and expected standards of behaviour.	Operational Lead
		2.4.2	VPC leaders undertake the National VPC safeguarding training as directed (receive safeguarding bulletins to keep up to date and complete the full course every 3 years)	
		2.4.3	A code of behaviour as to how your organisation expects staff and volunteers to always conduct themselves.	
		2.4.4	An attendance register should be taken for each cadet session or event and held electronically and retained. (This facility is available on the VPC Gateway / Marshall Volunteer Portal)	
		2.4.5	A list of emergency contacts for each cadet must be available for leaders during each session or event.(This facility is available on the VPC Gateway / Marshall Volunteer Portal)	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

Having strong safeguarding policies is essential – but making sure they’re clearly understood, consistently applied, and embedded into the everyday practices of Leaders is what creates real protection for young people.

It’s important that Forces adopt the National VPC Safeguarding Framework and Reporting Process as a minimum standard. However, safeguarding doesn’t stop at documents – every VPC Leader must fully understand what’s expected of them from day one and feel confident in how to respond if a concern arises.

Things to consider when meeting this standard:

- **Adopt and promote national frameworks** – Ensure the Force has formally adopted the National VPC Safeguarding Framework and Safeguarding Reporting Process. These documents set the baseline for consistency and compliance across the country. Make sure they are accessible to all Leaders (e.g. links to national website, promotion of Safeguarding reporting functions on VPC Gateway/ Marshall, documents on duty sheet)
- **Safeguarding-focused Leader induction** – All new Leaders should complete a thorough induction that includes key safeguarding policies, the Code of Behaviour, what to do if they have a concern, and how they are expected to behave when working with young people. Consider using a checklist or briefing sheet to ensure consistency across units.
- **Mandatory safeguarding training** – Leaders should complete the National VPC Safeguarding Training within the required timescales and refresh every three years. Ensure all Leaders receive regular safeguarding bulletins or updates from the Force or National Team to stay current with good practice.
- **Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers** – Clearly set out how Leaders are expected to behave and reinforce this as a live, working document – not just something to sign once and forget. Use practical examples to explain boundaries, communication, and professionalism.
- **Accurate attendance and emergency contact records** – Leaders must ensure that a register is taken for every cadet session or event and stored securely. Emergency contact details must be easily accessible during every activity. Both of these can be recorded through the VPC Gateway/Marshall Volunteer Portal or duty sheet.

We have produced additional guidance around low-level concerns which can be accessed [here](#)



SAFEGUARDING

2.5 Appropriate and Safe Communication

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
2.5	Appropriate and safe communication	2.5.1	All VPC leaders use appropriate communication methods with Cadets / Parents or Carers such as VPC Gateway / Marshall (or equivalent).	Operational Lead
		2.5.2	No use of WhatsApp or other social media platform when communicating with Cadets.	
		2.5.3	Process to ensure that if VPC Gateway / Marshall (or equivalent system) is not available communication should initially be via parents/carers (not cadets).	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

Everyone within the VPC should consider what methods they are using when communicating with young people.

It may be relatively straightforward to manage communication boundaries during regular weekly sessions – but it’s equally important to plan for appropriate communication during offsite activities, residential camps, and social action events, where circumstances may change quickly and reliable contact is essential.

Forces must ensure that all leaders understand and adhere to safe communication standards that protect young people and uphold public confidence.

Some key considerations for achieving this:

- **Use approved systems only** – All communication with cadets and their families should take place via the VPC Gateway/Marshall, Duty Sheet, or another approved communication system. These systems provide appropriate levels of oversight, audit trails, and data protection. Remind Leaders that personal email, private messaging, and direct texting with cadets is not acceptable.
- **Strict no-use policy on social media messaging** – Communication with cadets via WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat or other social media platforms must never take place. Where Leaders are part of a Force or VPC social media team, this must be clearly governed by Force policy and should not involve private messaging.
- **Emergency contact access** – Ensure emergency contact details for cadets are available in hard copy or downloadable format and securely held by leaders during offsite activities. A basic protocol for emergency contact (who to call, in what order) should be agreed in advance and form part of your activity risk assessment.
- **Staff and cadet briefing** – Use briefings ahead of residential or social action events to reinforce communication expectations, including how cadets can raise concerns or speak to a trusted adult.



SAFEGUARDING

2.6. Safeguarding Culture

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
2.6	Cadets, Parents/Carers and Leaders are informed about their rights to protection from abuse, exploitation and mistreatment in any form and are empowered to report concern.	2.6.1	Cadet Safeguarding Session delivered to cadets each year. Ideally parents/guardians/carers will also attend this session.	Force/VPC Health and Safety Officer
		2.6.2	Include Leader and Cadet code of conduct in cadet induction session so that Cadets and parents are aware of how Leaders should behave.	Operational Lead
		2.6.3	Parents/guardians & carers should receive a copy of <u>Keeping Children Safe: Parental Guidance</u> , and encouraged to ask questions of the unit or additional information about how the unit keeps young people safe.	
		2.6.4	Ensure reporting chains (including national VPC) are advertised on all handouts, resources and the Force/Constabulary website.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

Creating a safeguarding culture isn't just about protecting young people behind the scenes – it's also about being open, clear and proactive with Cadets and their families so they understand their rights, know what to expect, and feel confident in speaking up if something doesn't feel right.

Many young people and parents may not fully understand how safeguarding works in a policing youth provision, or they may feel unsure about whether they can or should challenge adult behaviour in a police setting. That's why Forces should treat safeguarding awareness as a core part of building trust and inclusion in the VPC through annual inputs to cadets, and parents/guardians

GOOD PRACTICE

CUMBRIA

SAFEGUARDING LESSON PLAN

In addition to the presentation, the lesson plan includes reminders to ensure Cadets are not adversely affected by the session (e.g. trigger warning, follow up aftercare)
It includes activities and prompts discussions to encourage Cadets to participate in the session

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

SAFEGUARDING REPORTING DUTY SHEET

It offers both internal and external reporting routes
Everybody who logs onto Dutysheet will see it every time, keeping safeguarding at the forefront of Leaders/Cadets/Parents minds



SAFEGUARDING

2.7 Safeguarding Training and 2.8 Quality Assurance of Training (if Relevant)

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
2.7	All Leaders have undertaken the mandatory National VPC safeguarding training.	2.7.1	Leaders have been informed of the training requirements.	Operational Lead
		2.7.2	Records are maintained by the Force/Constabulary to show when VPC leaders have completed the training, including refresher training.	
		2.7.3	Leaders are withheld from performing cadet duties if their training is out of date.	
		2.7.4	Forces should update the National VPC Team when Leaders have left so national training records can be updated as appropriate.	
2.8	Quality Assurance of Training Delivery	2.8.1	Where a Force delivers the national VPC safeguarding training in house then a member of the National VPC team should be asked to quality assure the delivery of the training on a bi-annual basis. The feedback from this observation should be kept as evidence	Operational Lead
		2.8.2	Where a Force delivers the national VPC safeguarding training in house, there should be no changes to the content of the presentation without written approval from the National VPC and the names of all attendees should be sent to the National VPC team for recording and issue of certification.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

All VPC Leaders must complete the National VPC safeguarding training – *Introduction to Safeguarding* for all adults involved in delivering VPC activities, and *Managing a Safeguarding Concern* for those in leadership roles. This helps ensure a shared understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and consistent practice across all Forces.

To maintain a safe and compliant programme, Forces must be able to identify when training is due, act promptly if it becomes out of date, and ensure accurate force level records are maintained.
Things to consider when managing safeguarding training at Force level:

- **Clear communication** – Make safeguarding training expectations part of your onboarding process for new leaders, and regularly remind current leaders of their responsibility to keep this training up to date.
- **Track and flag expiry dates** – Maintain a central record of all VPC Leaders’ training dates (including refreshers), with regular checks to flag when someone is approaching expiry. This can be achieved through VPC Gateway/Marshall, Duty Sheet, or spreadsheet, but ensure a clear process to avoid gaps or duplication of records.
- **Link to activity authorisation** – Leaders should not undertake Cadet duties if their safeguarding training is out of date. Embed a quick check into your sign-off processes for events, camps or session planning to make this easy to monitor.
- **Update national records** – Inform the National VPC Team promptly when a Leader leaves so central training records can remain accurate.
For Forces delivering the training in-house:



SAFEGUARDING

2.9 Whistleblowing, Complaints, and Concerns Processes and Practices

GUIDANCE

Complaints and Whistleblowing: Making it Safe and Simple to Speak Up

A strong complaints and whistleblowing culture is essential to safeguarding, but it only works when young people, parents, carers, and volunteers feel confident and supported in raising concerns – especially those who may be less trusting of authority or unfamiliar with police systems.

Forces often have robust internal processes in place, but if these are hard to find, hidden behind logins, or written in overly formal language, they may not be accessible to those who need them most.

- Things to consider when strengthening accessibility and confidence in your complaints procedures:
- **Visibility matters** – Ensure your public-facing website includes a clear safeguarding statement, your VPC complaints or concerns procedure, and contact details for both internal and external reporting routes (e.g. NSPCC, IOPC, National VPC team).
 - **Clarity of language** – Use plain, youth- and family-friendly wording to explain what someone can do if they're worried, what will happen next, and who they can speak to. Consider a downloadable 'How to Raise a Concern' leaflet or webpage.
 - **Promote trust** – Let Cadets and families know that all concerns are taken seriously – including low-level or informal ones – and that raising an issue will never impact a young person's place in the programme.
 - **Build understanding through induction** – Use Cadet and parent/carer induction sessions to walk through how to raise a concern, with real examples and reassurance. This can reduce anxiety and increase confidence over time.
 - **Quality assurance is key** – Consider termly pulse checks, feedback forms or short Cadet/parent conversations to assess whether people know how to raise concerns and feel safe doing so.

GOOD PRACTICE
DORSET
STAFFORDSHIRE
LINCOLNSHIRE

Several schemes evidence good practice in this area by including safeguarding reporting routes on the cadet page on the Force Website. Using the public facing Force website ensures that ALL stakeholders AND the public are aware of how to report a safeguarding concern.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
2.9	There are clear, effective, and widely promoted complaints, concerns, and whistleblowing procedures.	2.9.1	External reporting routes and contacts (e.g., National VPC, IOPC, NSPCC) are promoted alongside formal internal procedures.	Force VPC Designated Safeguarding Officer
		2.9.2	Force/Constabulary website should clearly detail key aspects of VPC safeguarding e.g. safeguarding statement, policy, procedure and internal/external reporting routes.	
		2.9.3	Process to ensure that all (including low-level) concerns and reports are taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.	
		2.9.4	QA process to ensure VPC Leaders demonstrate a sound awareness of, and confidence in, the unit's grievance, complaints and whistleblowing procedures.	
		2.9.5	QA process to ensure Cadets, and their parents/guardians/carers demonstrate a sound awareness of, and confidence in, the Forces' VPC procedures for raising concerns and complaints.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

The VPC is a Regulated Youth Activity, and as such all adults involved in the direct delivery of the VPC must go through a 'safer recruitment' process. This relates to all officers, staff and volunteers and will, in most cases be in addition to normal recruitment process.

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to assist Chief Officers to make their VPC Leaders are suitable to work with children and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe culture and positive environment and making a commitment to keep Cadets safe from harm. Safer recruitment should be a continuing process of improvement.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

EMBEDDING A SAFER RECRUITMENT CULTURE

SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Working with Safeguarding leads in several forces the National VPC have produced a Safer Recruitment policy and supporting processes which forces can use. However, it is recognised that all forces will be required to use their professional judgement to weave this into other recruitment processes.

Previous hidden risks within the VPC have included -

- Officers with no background in VPC or experience of working with young people being posted to the unit for the evening 'to make up numbers'

- VPC leaders inviting family and friends to help at VPC evenings as they were short of leaders without checks and being left with young people unaccompanied.

- Police forces using Police vetting rather than the required DBS process.

- Leaders not being provided with any induction to the unit or provided with support or guidance of what is expected when they initially take on the role.

Your Recruitment and Selection Policy should have a section covering: – process and procedures, full induction to the force and role, issues of resources, HR matters, regular check-ins and probation meetings, on-going training, and support.

Good induction programs can increase retention rate, improve volunteer moral, increased productivity and increased a sense of acceptance and belonging into the organisation.

The Safer Recruitment Policy and accompanying procedures apply for volunteers and police officers and staff.

The National VPC Safer Recruitment Policy can be viewed [HERE](#).

The National VPC Safer Recruitment Procedures can be viewed [HERE](#).

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3.1 Appropriate Leaders

GUIDANCE

The key to operating a safe, youth focused scheme is to recruit the right people. The VPC is a Regulated Youth Activity, and as such all adults involved in the direct delivery of the VPC must go through a 'safer recruitment' process. This applies to ALL Officers, Staff and Volunteers and will, in most cases, be in addition to the normal recruitment process.

GOOD PRACTICE

DURHAM

LEADER OBSERVATION FORM

- The Form provides a template for new (and experienced) Leader observations.
- It includes a section for development opportunities.
- Once complete it provides documented feedback.

CUMBRIA

PROBATIONARY PERIOD GUIDANCE AND END OF PROBATIONARY REVIEW

- The guidance sets out the expectations of the Leader and the Unit Leader for the probationary period.
- The review provides a documented process for conducting Leader observations to inform an end of probationary period review.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
3.1	Ensure the VPC scheme operates with responsible & appropriate leaders to develop a culture of vigilance	3.1.1	Enhanced DBS or PVG (Scotland only) check with barred list checks for all leaders.	Strategic Lead
		3.1.2	Two (2) safer recruitment references obtained and verified as part of the leader recruitment process (including for existing Police Officers and Police Staff).	
		3.1.3	Face to face motivational interview conducted with all applicants.	
		3.1.4	Safer recruitment application form to be completed by all leaders, including Police Officers and Staff.	
		3.1.5	Observe new leaders and their interactions with young people and give documented feedback.	
		3.1.6	Periodic observation of experienced leaders with documented feedback	
		3.1.7	Provide regular line management safeguarding meetings with all cadet leaders to focus on concerns.	
		3.1.8	Open Source checks of Leaders personal social media accounts conducted by recruiter regarding inappropriate content.	
		3.1.9	Suggested – Leaders to be subject to continuing checks via the Police National Database	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3.2 Experiencing a session and 3.3 Staff and Volunteer Induction

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
3.2	Provide opportunity for prospective Cadets & Leaders to experience a session.	3.2.1	Visit made to a VPC unit by prospective Leader/Cadet	Operational Lead
3.3	Staff and volunteer induction	3.3.1	Provide full induction to the Cadet Leader role and follow up with regular check-ins, probation meetings, on-going training, and support.	Operational Lead
		3.3.2	Provide full induction to the organisation including resources and HR matters.	

- A comprehensive induction to the role is important:
- To set out and manage expectations from both sides,
- Introduce policies and procedures and confirm they have been read and understood,
- Ensure that all relevant training has been completed prior to starting in post,
- To make sure new leaders understand how to report any concerns,
- To manage any welfare issues from the start.

In addition, for any external volunteers there should be a corporate induction. This helps to ensure that Volunteers understand some of the nuances involved with working in a Police environment and will also help them to integrate and settle into the role more quickly. We want to ensure that our volunteers feel like part of the Police family from the very beginning.

GOOD PRACTICE

NORTH WALES
[LEADERS WELCOME BOOKLET](#)

LANCASHIRE
[NEW CADET LEADER PROCESS](#)

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

- Keeping a written record will help to ensure that drills are conducted on a regular basis,
- The form provides space to record any issues that occurred and suggestions to rectify these.



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

3.4 Communication

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
3.4	Provide opportunity for prospective Cadets & Leaders to experience a session.	3.4.1	Disseminate National VPC newsletters and e-bulletins to all cadet leaders.	Cadet Coordinator
		3.4.2	Hold regular meetings with staff and volunteers, both unit and one-to-one, to update on key issues, ask about any concerns and check on welfare.	Unit Leader

GUIDANCE

Taking the time to complete regular one-to-one meetings with all Leaders will:

- Provide an opportunity to discuss welfare.
- Enable the Leader and the co-ordinator to ask any questions and address any issues.
- Provide a confidential space for Leaders to disclose any low-level safeguarding concerns they may have that they do not feel comfortable raising in a group environment.
- Help to reinforce how valuable every Leader is to the scheme.

GOOD PRACTICE

CUMBRIA

CADET LEADER ONE-TO-ONE

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

- It provides a documented process for conducting Leader one-to-ones.
- It covers several areas such as wellbeing and development

FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Involving young people in the design and delivery of VPC activities and empowering them to become active citizens and create positive change should be embedded throughout a VPC scheme.



FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT THE HEART OF PRACTICE

A YOUTH LED PROVISION

VPC schemes recognise the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and actions of their young people. The VPC offers the opportunity to bring groups together which are diverse and offer different perspectives and experiences.

Young people's views are key to the success of a VPC scheme and should be sought at every stage. Youth engagement works well when young people are represented at force VPC meetings and when planning events and activities.

The organisation should clearly articulate that it is an organisation that is youth-led.

Young people should have the opportunity to share their ideas and comments about your organisation's services and what activities, events, or workshops they would like to see in the future.

It is good practice for young people to have an induction into Force, so they know where to get help and support from; code of behaviour, and what information is kept on them.

Young people are aware of the dangers they face online and through social media.

A National VPC Youth Voice, Good Practice guide, can be found [HERE](#)

Looking to do Social Action? The Cadet Journey Topic library on Marshall Portal has one on Social Action

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.

To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 Youth Led Culture

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
4.1	Culture of a youth led organisation.	4.1.1	Public Communication of vision, aims, and purpose of the VPC (e.g. Force/Constabulary website) in a manner and language that is appropriate for all young people (including prospective and current young people within the programme).	Strategic Lead
		4.1.2	Evidence that there is a process for involving young people in decision making, i.e., correspondence of invites, audit trail of documents with young people input.	

To help ensure that the young people are involved with decision making, some schemes have introduced Cadet Councils or Cadet Steering Groups. This gives Cadets from each unit the opportunity to meet on a regular basis to present ideas, issues and initiatives from their unit and feed back to their peers.

Attending Council/Steering Group meetings also enables Cadets to develop soft corporate skills such as setting agendas, meeting etiquette and minute taking.

If this is something you would be interested in some things to consider include:

- Location – to ensure that there is fair representation, meetings should be held either in a central location accessible to all or moved around all units – the latter option is favourable in rural areas where units may feel isolated
- Some models involve inviting Head cadets to represent their unit, other options are to hold ‘elections’ so Council members are peer nominated; inviting Cadets to self-nominate; Leader nominated Cadets or a combination of these. Ideally there will be a minimum of two Cadets from each unit.
- Including lunch or an activity during the meetings is a great incentive to encourage Cadets to get involved

If you would like further details, please contact the National team who will put you in touch with a Force who have already introduced a Cadet Council or Steering Group.

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

4.2 Young People's Engagement

GUIDANCE

Co-production can be viewed as doing things with Young People rather than to or for Young People and involves acknowledging that young people have their own strengths, skills and experiences.

Some principles of co-production include:

Communication – Use of simple, jargon free language. Setting agreed objectives from the start,

Empowerment and Inclusivity – Ensuring all Young People within the scheme have the opportunity to work collaboratively with each other and Leaders and that all Young People are included in decision making processes,
Recognising and celebrating contributions –
Feedback and learning -

GOOD PRACTICE

GWENT

GOOGLE CLASROOMS IN SESSION DELIVERY

·Google Classrooms is a good example of using 'Young Person Friendly' technology – many young people rarely use emails

Gives a range of interact options for young people catering for a range of needs and abilities within the unit.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
4.2	Young people's engagement.	4.2.1	Evidence young people participate in and co-produce activities and services e.g. Cadet designed and led social action initiatives/sessions which align to policing priorities.	Operational Lead
		4.2.2	A scheduled programme of events/activities (e.g., yearly/monthly/termly).	
		4.2.3	Evidence that demonstrates the organisation is promoting key programmes (e.g. Digital eagles, Cyber Crime).	
		4.2.4	A record of training to demonstrate that Cadet Leaders know how to ensure young people participation and co-production.	
		4.2.5	How to become a volunteer, young leader in the organisation or careers advice and guidance;	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

4.3 Young People’s Induction

GUIDANCE

Cadet Inductions: Ensuring a Safe and Informed Start

A structured induction helps ensure that every Cadet feels welcomed, informed, and supported from the outset. A good induction sets the tone for expectations and provides clear signposting to safety, wellbeing, and development opportunities. It also supports safeguarding by empowering Cadets to recognise risks and speak up if something doesn’t feel right.

Some Forces have created printed or digital induction packs that are handed out during the first few weeks, while others deliver this information in themed sessions over the first month. Either way, the content should be clear, age-appropriate, and inclusive.

- Things to consider when planning an effective induction:
- **Who delivers it?** Unit Leads or experienced leaders are best placed to deliver induction content in a consistent way. Some schemes involve senior Cadets in co-delivering parts of the induction to help build peer trust.
 - **Format** – Consider using a mix of printed guides, interactive activities, and videos. Visual aids and short discussion tasks can help embed key messages like how to report a concern or access wellbeing support.
 - **Local context** – Tailor information about local charities, youth services, or school nurses that Cadets can turn to for support. This ensures young people know where to go for help beyond VPC.
 - **Reinforce over time** – While inductions happen early, revisit key topics periodically throughout the year (e.g. Code of Conduct, reporting concerns, access to health resources) to reinforce learning.

If you’d like examples of how other Forces structure and deliver their induction materials, please contact the National Team who can connect you with other forces.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
4.3	Induction	Cadets should receive an induction and a copy of induction materials that include the following:		Unit Lead
		4.3.1	Guidance that clearly identifies support charities/agencies in the locality that can support individual young people to refer/self-refer, if appropriate;	
		4.3.2	How to report abuse, concern of abuse;	
		4.3.3	How to keep themselves and others safe by reporting hazards, accidents and near misses;	
		4.3.4	How to access information on issues affecting them like sexuality, sexual health, drugs and substance misuse, relationship abuse, bullying, self-harming etc.;	
		4.3.5	VPC Code of Conduct;	
		4.3.6	Activities and opportunities (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, summer camps, apprenticeships, NVQs etc.)	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

4.4 Online Safety

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
4.4	Online safety	4.4.1	Promotion of online safety awareness, specifically aimed at Young People (e.g. on-line safety policy, lesson, input etc.).	Operational Lead
		4.4.2	Evidence that VPC Leaders are clear around how they use social media when working directly with young people e.g., training records, signed statements.	
		4.4.3	Clear guidance around the use of Leader's personal phones to capture photos/film of Cadets.	
		4.4.4	Evidence that VPC Leaders and young people are clear on boundaries i.e., privacy rules, when they can call or not, whether texting is permitted (not an exhaustive list). This evidence could be training records, training plan, feedback forms.	
		4.4.5	Evidence that young people, as part of their safeguarding induction/updates, are clear about what cyber bullying is, what can be done to stop it and how to get help. This could be a video, workshop, or poster you have provided.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

Online safety is a key part of safeguarding, especially as digital communication and social media are such an everyday part of young people's lives. Including online safety in your induction or termly programme helps equip Cadets to recognise risks, set boundaries, and know how to access support if needed. Some Forces deliver online safety inputs as part of the initial safeguarding induction, while others revisit it through workshops, guest speakers or youth-led discussions. It's important that the content is relatable, practical, and age-appropriate.

Things to consider when planning an effective online safety input:

- Engagement first – Use real-life scenarios or anonymous discussion boards to get Cadets talking. Invite them to reflect on how they keep safe online and where they'd go for help if something felt wrong.
- Key topics – Cover the basics of privacy settings, safe sharing, online reputation, and recognising unsafe behaviours (e.g. cyberbullying, grooming, and pressure to share images).
 - Peer voice – If you have senior Cadets or a Youth Council, involve them in co-designing or co-delivering a session – this can make the topic feel more relevant and less like a school-style lecture.
- Link to support – Make sure Cadets know where to go for help, both within the VPC (e.g. a trusted adult, Safeguarding Manager) and externally (e.g. Childline, CEOP, or ThinkUKnow).
-

Many schemes utilise Force Cyber Security Teams to deliver an input to Cadets and Leaders around staying safe online.

We would strongly advise against using social media as the main communication vehicle with young people

FURTHER GUIDANCE

[NATIONAL VPC SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING POLICY](#)

[NSPCC - KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE](#)

[UK SAFER INTERNET CENTRE - RESOURCES FOR 11-19](#)

[CEOP - CHILD EXPLOITATION AND ONLINE PROTECTION SAFETY CENTRE](#)

it is important that force information managers understand the context of the VPC as youth group, not operational policing and how data requirements may be affected

DATA



DATA

DATA SECURITY

UNDERSTANDING DATA MANAGEMENT FOR THE VPC

Security is not just about keeping personal data in a locked cabinet or password protected it is about knowing that it must not be passed on and shared to third parties who may make an unauthorised or non-need to know request to access it.

Sometimes what appears to be innocent gossip may result in a breach of confidentiality. When holding a conversation which includes personal information it is particularly important to make sure that no one can overhear it.

The law says only relevant data should be stored on individuals, this makes it likely that anything recorded is, therefore, sensitive information.

Data Protection and GDPR sets out guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information and aims to give individuals more rights over how their data is used.

A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) is a tool to help you identify and minimise the data protection risks It is important to embed DPIAs into your processes and ensure the outcome can influence your plans. A DPIA is not a one-off exercise. You should see it as an ongoing process that is subject to regular review.



DATA

GDPR & THE VPC

if using the VPC Gateway/ Marshall platform information managers must be made aware that the force owns their data within Marshall and that appropriate measures are in place. It is important to have secure systems for recording, sharing, and storing information for the following reasons:

The GDPR introduces a duty for you to appoint a data protection officer (DPO) if you are a public authority or body, or if you carry out certain types of processing activities.

**** It is important to note – GDPR does not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding reasons ****

Legal requirements are reinforced by inspection and organisational standards of behaviour and practice which staff must follow.

Records can be used to abuse a person if they fall into the wrong hands, every effort needs to be made to prevent this from happening

Individuals' data needs to be kept secure so that third parties who have no right to know about it do not have access to it either by gaining access to it deliberately or accidentally.

Data about individuals is personal and confidential to the person and the person has the right to expect that it will be handled safely and securely.

The law says only relevant data should be stored on individuals, this makes it likely that anything recorded is, therefore, sensitive information.

Individuals have the right (both legally and morally) to decide what information about themselves is shared, how it is shared and with whom.

Police Forces have a duty towards those within their VPC scheme with regards to the standards they should meet

Frivolous attitudes towards confidentiality are a lack of respect and thus not in line with operating a safe VPC scheme.



DATA

5.1 Data Protection Policy

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
5.1	A Data Protection Policy that is compliant to current legislation and clearly defines the data protection principles.	5.1.1	There should be a VPC specific data protection policy or the Force/Constabulary policy should be reviewed to ensure it is suitable for use by the scheme (i.e. makes mention of young person's data).	Strategic Lead
		5.1.2	The policy should identify your VPC Data Protection Officer (DPO) - this may be the Force/Constabulary DPO	
		5.1.3	The policy should show how you promote awareness and maintain high standards of practice in data protection and privacy.	Force/VPC DPO
		5.1.4	The Policy should show how your organisation processes and responds to a subject matter request.	
		5.1.5	The policy should outline the process for responding to a data complaint and how you would respond to a data breach.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

5.1 Data Protection Policy

The majority of schemes rely on Force/Constabulary data protection policies. This practice is acceptable IF the policy has been checked to ensure it is relevant to the scheme.

If this is the case, then you may wish to consider having an additional 'privacy notice' specifically for Cadets.

Tip: Cheshire have a Cadet specific privacy notice linked to the Cadet page on the Constabulary website ([click here](#))

GOOD PRACTICE

MET

[CHILD FRIENDLY PRIVACY NOTICE](#)

- Whilst not a bespoke cadet policy it is aimed at young people
 - It is written in easy-to-understand language
- It includes details of how to raise a question or make a complaint



DATA

5.2 Data Protection Practice

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
5.2	Evidence demonstrating that data protection is an integral part of your practice as defined in your Data Protection Policy.	5.2.1	A signed record showing the policy has been shared with VPC leaders. This should be reshared and signed by leaders annually.	Operational Lead
		5.2.2	A copy of an anonymised Service Level Agreement (SLA) or equivalent with clear data protection clauses for all instances where data is shared (e.g. duty sheet, combined cadet schemes)	Force/VPC DPO

GUIDANCE

5.2 Data Protection Practice

As with all policies, these should be shared with Leaders during induction and on a regular basis thereafter. Leaders should either be asked to return a signed copy or utilise an email read receipt to confirm that the policy has been read.

A Service Level Agreement is needed for any instance where Cadet/Leader personal data is shared. This applies to Cadet management systems (NB. These agreements are already in place with the VPC Gateway (formally Marshall) and DutySheet), combined cadet schemes or any joint activities where personal data will be shared.



DATA

5.3 Data Protection Training and 5.4 Retention of Records

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
5.3	Evidence demonstrating that data protection is an integral part of your training for staff and volunteers as defined in your Data Protection Policy.	5.3.1	Records demonstrating that inductions include data protection and the role and responsibilities VPC Leaders have in keeping data safe.	Operational Lead
		5.3.2	A record of regular (e.g. annual or in line with Force/Constabulary policy) data protection training, that includes all aspects of the Data Protection Policy, to demonstrate that VPC leaders have the appropriate level of training.	
5.4	Evidence demonstrating that retention of records is an integral part of your data protection practice.	5.4.1	The Scheme/Force is following the recommendations made by the IOPC (including what data is stored, where and for how long).	Strategic Lead
		5.4.2	Consideration to be given to to applying a specific retention policy for young person's data to accommodate future non-recent disclosures (e.g. keeping basic personal details / attendance records for an extended period of time), and retaining data relating to identified safeguarding issues in line with recommendations from the Scouts Association, e.g. 100 years (https://www.scouts.org.uk/about-us/policy/data-retention-policy/).	Operational Lead

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

5.3 Data Protection Training

College Learn training is available to all Leaders, including those who do not have a Force email address or access to Force IT.

All Police Officers and Police Staff are generally required to complete mandatory data protection training on an annual basis – this practice can be extended to include Leaders external to the Force/Constabulary.

5.4 Retention of Records

There are a variety of recommendations from organisations relating to the storage and archiving of data. Although police policy for retention is 7 years plus 1, UK youth recommend that organisations consider retaining personal data of the young people until the subject's 75 birthday to accommodate future 'historic child abuse reviews'.

We appreciate that most schemes will be required to retain data in-line with their Force/Constabulary policy. However, we recommend that you are familiar with the guidelines from across the youth sector, such as the Scouts association, specifically in relation to the retention of young persons data.

Where possible, it is advisable to adhere to these guidelines as they allow for future reporting of non-recent offences.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

SCOUTS ASSOCIATION
DATA RETENTION POLICY

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Each Police Force and Chief Officer has autonomy over their VPC scheme.

It is essential that there is strong, supportive leadership in place to support those delivering the VPC scheme.

This involves a documented and robust governance structure.



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

6.1 Strategic Oversight & 6.2 Strategic Delivery Plan

GUIDANCE

In research carried out with those delivering the VPC scheme a common theme was the perception of being unsupported by senior management.

It is organisational culture and leadership at every level, that sets the context and expectations of all behaviour in any organisation, and a positive culture where concerns can be identified and spoken about openly is a key element of a strong safeguarding system.

Any governance structures should ensure a two-way dialogue, so that any concerns can be raised by VPC leader and are then progressed upwards and vice versa.

Previous learning has shown that even when a VPC unit is operating well governance and oversight should remain.

Governance which adheres to these operating standards should initially consider three main areas: policy requirement, practical implementation, and appropriate governance boards.

- **Policy requirements:** evidence demonstrating clear aims and objectives linked to the governing document.
- **Practical implementation:** Evidence demonstrating that good governance and organisational purpose is an integral part of your VPC scheme.
- **Governance board:** The board is not unduly influenced by those who may have special interests and places the interests of the organisation before any personal interest. This applies whether organisations are elected, nominated, or appointed. Collectively, the board is independent in its decision making. The board safeguards and promotes the organisation's reputation and, by extension, promotes public confidence in the wider sector. Members of the board and those working in or representing the organisation are seen to be acting with integrity, and in line with the values of the organisation.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
6.1	Strategic oversight of the delivery of the VPC scheme in Force	6.1.1	Appointment of a Designated Responsible Officer (DRO) at Assistant Chief Constable level or equivalent.	DRO
6.2	Force Strategic plan for the delivery of the VPC scheme	6.2.1	The plan should include an organisational description, a clear mission statement which sets out your overall purpose and values and is signed and dated for review by the Force DRO.	DRO

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

6.3 Force Governance Structure & 6.4 Quality Assurance

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
6.3	Force Governance structure	6.3.1	Appointment of a Designated Responsible Officer (DRO) at Assistant Chief Constable level or equivalent.	DRO
		6.3.2	If integrated into existing Force/Constabulary structures (such as Neighbourhood Policing) that there remains appropriate supervision in line with the aims of the VPC and youth sector standards.	
		6.3.3	Establish Force VPC Governance Board, including representation from appropriate organisational departments.	
		6.3.4	If local VPC governance boards exist, ensure these are accountable to the Force VPC governance board.	
6.4	Quality assurance of scheme delivery	6.4.1	A documented process that ensures and demonstrates that the Safe to Operate Standards are being delivered at unit level (this may be via checklists, unit inspections etc.).	Operational Lead

GUIDANCE

Quality Assurance: Making Sure the Standards Are Delivered in Every Unit

Many Forces have strong central systems in place to meet the Safe to Operate Standards, but it’s just as important that these are embedded and visible at the unit level. A simple quality assurance (QA) process helps ensure that what’s expected centrally is actually being delivered in practice – and gives Unit Leaders the tools and confidence to maintain high standards. Some Forces have introduced light-touch, supportive QA tools such as termly checklists, mini self-assessments or peer-to-peer unit visits. Others build this into their routine leader meetings or Safe to Operate Standards reviews.

Things to consider when developing a unit-level QA process:

- **Make it proportionate** – Keep QA processes simple and easy to complete (e.g. a one-page checklist per term), so they feel useful rather than burdensome.
- **Focus on support, not inspection** – Use the process to highlight good practice, identify support needs and prompt improvements, rather than just to flag gaps.
- **Involve young people** – Some Forces have invited Cadets (e.g. Head Cadets or Youth Reps) to contribute feedback on how safe and included they feel – this can add real value and perspective.
- **Create a feedback loop** – Ensure QA findings are shared back with local leaders.

If you’d like a sample unit-level QA checklist or examples of how Forces have implemented local reviews, please contact the National Team.

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided. To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

6.5 Appropriate Financial Controls

GUIDANCE

Financial Controls: Supporting Local Units to Handle Funds Safely and Transparently

While not all VPC units handle money directly, where they do, it's vital that simple, clear financial procedures are in place. This helps ensure transparency, prevent misuse, and build trust with parents, communities and partner organisations. Sound financial governance also reassures Forces that funds are being managed in line with legislation and force policy.

Some Forces have created simple templates to help units keep a basic ledger of income and expenditure, which are then reviewed annually by the Force finance team or a nominated independent person. Others centralise funds at Force level to reduce local handling.

Things to consider when supporting units with financial controls:

- **Clarity and consistency** – Whether you're fundraising for a trip or collecting subs, keep a written record that's signed and dated. Ensure funds are counted by at least two adults and banked or passed to the finance lead promptly.
- **Training and awareness** – Provide a short input to any leader handling funds so they understand the process, including how to report concerns or errors. This could be part of your cadet leader induction and catch-ups with adult leaders.
- **Documented roles** – Make sure there is a named person responsible for unit finances where needed, and keep a simple record of leaders who have received any finance-related training or briefing. This should be included on cadet management platforms.
- **Fundraising protocols** – Establish local fundraising guidelines (e.g. raffle procedures, cash handling) that are youth-friendly and involve Cadets in responsible money handling, while always maintaining adult oversight.

If you would like to see examples of simple financial control templates or fundraising protocols used by other Forces, please contact the National Team.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
6.5	Appropriate standard for financial controls	6.5.1	If applicable, a signed ledger for each unit which is up to date with income and expenditure and is audited by Force finance department or other accredited independent person	Operational Lead
		6.5.2	If applicable, a documented process for fundraising which ensures that money is raised appropriately, is counted by a minimum of two people and is 'banked' promptly	
		6.5.3	If funds are held at a unit level, a nominated individual who provides an input to leaders with unit financial account responsibility to ensure they are aware of the process and risks	
		6.5.4	Where applicable, a dated record of leaders who have received appropriate training in managing unit accounts	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As stated in the National VPC strategy, Police Forces should aim to recruit 25% of their Cadets from a vulnerable or at-risk background.

The VPC scheme is not a recruiting ground for policing, although it is recognised that many join with a view of pursuing a career within policing.



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

CATERING TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO ENTRY

A good VPC programme will cater to the needs of a range of young people. Forces should have a written statement showing that their VPC scheme is open and accessible to all young people. The Forces' website and promotional material should reflect this statement.

It should be made clear to cadets when starting on a scheme that there is no guarantee that being cadet will lead to employment with policing, but should they wish to they will be supported in their efforts. However, by being a member of the VPC young people from any background will develop essential skills that will benefit them into adulthood.

To be inclusive, it is important that Forces have a written specific VPC Equality and Diversity Policy which reduces or eliminates barriers to participation and prevents discriminatory practice and prevents the Force and individuals within it undertaking prohibited practices which could result in legal action. Activities and arrangements should be adapted where possible to ensure they are inclusive to all members.

The term 'diversity' includes the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 as well as different backgrounds, life experiences, aspirations and diversity of thought.

The vetting of cadets has long been a source of discussion. To this end a legal position has been obtained. The position of the National VPC, in line with the legal advice received, is that the operation of a VPC scheme is not for a 'policing purpose' and therefore the vetting of cadets is not proportionate or justifiable. Should a VPC scheme conduct vetting of cadets then the Designated Responsible Officer should record that decision along with their justification for doing so.

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.

To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

7.1 Equality and Diversity Policy

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
7.1	A written Equality and Diversity Policy that is compliant to current legislation and guidance, is relevant to the needs of the VPC.	7.1.1	The policy should be bespoke to the VPC or checks completed to confirm that the Force/Constabulary policy is relevant to young people.	Strategic Lead
		7.1.2	The policy should be signed off by the Force DRO.	
		7.1.3	There should be a document control sheet that identifies regular reviews and updates.	
		7.1.4	A list of supporting policies and procedures should be included.	
		7.1.5	The policy, or a VPC-specific supporting statement, should document a process that ensures that, where possible, all young people can access all activities and any additional support or resources needed to participate in the programme.	
		7.1.6	The policy should include procedures for how to manage a situation in which someone has been treated unfairly or disrespectfully.	
		7.1.7	The policy should outline your harassment and complaints procedure.	
		7.1.8	There should be a section outlining how staff and volunteers are trained.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team

GUIDANCE

As with all policies, ideally there will be an E, D, and I policy specifically for the Cadet scheme that considers issues and challenges that may be unique to Young People / working with Young People. If a general Force/Constabulary policy is in use, then this should be checked to ensure it is suitable for the scheme. It may be appropriate to create a bridging document which considers any areas relevant to Young People not covered by the Force policy.

We appreciate that some Forces/Constabularies operate a ‘Golden-Thread’ approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, whereby E, D and I forms part of all policies rather than having a standalone policy. If this is the case, then schemes should review all relevant policies to ensure they are appropriate for, and relevant to, young people.

GOOD PRACTICE

HAMPSHIRE BULLYING AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

- It advocates a restorative approach, acknowledging that Young People can make mistakes,
 - It includes signs that might indicated unreported bullying,
- It sets out clear guidelines for Leaders to address and escalate reports of bullying and incidences of poor behaviour.



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

7.2 Equality and Diversity Practice

GUIDANCE

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
7.2	Evidence demonstrating that equality and diversity is an integral part of your VPC scheme.	7.2.1	Signed record showing the policy(ies) has been shared with staff and volunteers.	Operational Lead
		7.2.2	Proof the policy is available for all participants of the VPC and their parents/guardians/carers, for example a link to the Equality and Diversity Policy on the Force/Constabulary website, or a copy of the policy included in the welcome pack for new Cadets/Leaders.	
		7.2.3	Vetting of cadets is not carried out (as per guidance and legal advice)	Strategic Lead

Making the policy (and bridging document if applicable) available on Marshall/Duty Sheet and including it in the Cadet AND Leader handbooks will help to ensure that all stakeholders have access to the policy. Ideally there will also be link on the Cadet page of the Force/Constabulary website.

If your scheme is unable to link the E, D, and I policy to the Cadet page on the website or is using the golden-thread approach, then consideration should be given to writing a Cadet specific E, D, and I statement that can be shared as above.

Vetting of Cadets should not take place – The VPC is primarily a youth provision and therefore should be approached in a similar vein as other youth provisions (e.g. scouts, guiding, St Johns ambulance) who do not vet their young people. Vetting could lead to prejudice / bias towards Cadets (weather conscious or unconscious) which could result in unfair treatment. Remember, Police Crime and Intelligence systems can only be checked for a genuine Policing Purpose and vetting of Cadets does not meet this criteria.

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

7.3 Equality and Diversity Training

GUIDANCE

7.3. Training

Equality training is available via College Learn, which also provides several resources and case studies in this area. Whilst this training is not specifically aimed at working Young People it is a good starting point.

Most Forces/Constabularies have an E, D, and I Team who will be able to provide tailored inputs for Leaders and Cadets.

Most Forces/Constabularies have a variety of support groups/networks (e.g. LGBTQ+ Network, Women in Policing, Disability support network, Neurodiversity support network) who may be able to provide training materials/inputs. Some schemes also utilise colleagues from the Force/Constabulary who have lived experience of E, D, and I to deliver inputs.

GOOD PRACTICE

WEST MIDLANDS
ADDITIONAL TRAINING

During E, D, and I training West Midlands explore distraction packs and deliver SEND inputs. They have also completed Barnardo's Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Practice training.

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
7.3	Create opportunities for Leaders to gain awareness or access to training and highlight their responsibility to comply with any legislation. Evidence demonstrating that equality and diversity is an integral part of training for VPC Leaders.	7.3.1	A record of VPC Leaders training in equality and diversity.	Operational Lead
		7.3.2	Induction materials	
		7.3.3	Copies of training certificates from external/internal training (where external training has occurred)	
		7.3.4	Training notes and feedback from internal/external training	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

7.4 Positive Attitudes and Behaviours and 7.5 Joining with a Disability

GUIDANCE

7.4 Promotion of Positive Attitudes

Tools that help ensure that activities consider the individual abilities and needs of Cadets and Leaders (such as introducing Equality Impact Assessments and Adjustment / Supportive Passports) can help to embed positive attitudes and behaviours around inclusion.

GOOD PRACTICE

SUSSEX
[ADJUSTMENT PASSPORT](#)

- Highlights that the form can be completed at anytime if needed, not just at induction,
- Encourages regular reviews
- Explains the process for considering whether adjustments can be accommodated

WEST MIDLANDS
[INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT](#)

- It makes it clear that those who are already known to Police will still be considered for the scheme
- In addition to offending behaviours there is also a section for other concerns such as substance misuse and domestic circumstances

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
7.4	Promote positive attitudes and behaviour towards equality to all Leaders and Cadets alongside the planning and development of the programme.	7.4.1	Your activities should consider the individual abilities and needs of Cadets and Leaders.	Operational Lead
		7.4.2	Consideration should be given to the changing facilities available at venues ensuring these are suitable for all, including those with protected characteristics.	
7.5	The scheme must ensure that anyone with a disability who wishes to join the VPC scheme is aware they can apply and all reasonable adjustments will be considered.	7.5.1	Consider what steps can/have been taken so that people wanting to use the premises and equipment can access these.	
		7.5.2	Consider potential issues that might prevent individuals or groups from applying to the scheme or accessing your services.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team



DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

7.5 Joining with a Disability

GUIDANCE

7.5 Joining with a Disability

- Whilst most schemes do try to accommodate reasonable adjustments either at the Cadet recruitment phase or induction, good practice in this area would also include ensuring that the scheme is viewed as accessible externally to encourage those who may require support to apply. This can be achieved by ensuring that all external facing materials, such as the Cadet page on the Force/Constabulary website highlight inclusivity.

“We welcome cadets from any background and actively encourage young people who may feel disadvantaged through crime or social exclusion to apply to join. We will ensure all members can reach their full potential and will work with you and your family/others to see what adjustments we can make to help support you” Lincolnshire Police

“We believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to thrive regardless of his or her background. We encourage young people from all backgrounds, social group, gender, ethnicity, ability / disability and whether you have an interest in the police or not to join the VPC, including those who may be vulnerable to the influences of crime and social exclusion” Sussex Police.

GOOD PRACTICE

NORFOLK

[ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT ON CADET WEBSITE](#)

- There is a separate section for accessibility that highlights inclusivity and breaks down potential barriers to joining the scheme
- It actively encourages applications from all 13–17-year-olds

No.	Objective	No.	How to Achieve	Responsible Person
7.5	The scheme must ensure that anyone with a disability who wishes to join the VPC scheme is aware they can apply and all reasonable adjustments will be considered.	7.5.1	Consider what steps can/have been taken so that people wanting to use the premises and equipment can access these.	Operational Lead
		7.5.2	Consider potential issues that might prevent individuals or groups from applying to the scheme or accessing your services.	

This standards document is just for reference, to complete the standards please use the self assessment toolkit provided.
To gain another copy of the self assessment toolkit please contact a member of the National VPC Team