



## Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) Policy (922/2026)

### Abstract

This policy provides an overview of the Volunteer Police Cadet Scheme operating across the Force.

### Policy

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) Scheme is the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) recognised uniformed youth group of policing in England and Wales. This policy ensures that there is a framework, governance, and a consistent process across Sussex Police for the recruitment, deployment, and management of cadets. It also outlines the policy and principles relating to safeguarding procedures and guidelines in relation to all members of the VPC Scheme.

#### 2. Scope

2.1 This policy covers the recruitment, deployment, and vetting process for all members of the VPC Scheme.

#### 3. Policy Statement

3.1 The Force fully supports the [VPC Scheme](#) as it encourages young people (13 to 18 years of age) to undertake constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time whilst upholding the [Code of Ethics](#) and standards of Sussex Police.

### Procedure

#### 1. Statement of Purpose

1.1 The Force, through its VPC scheme, provides opportunities to all young people, regardless of their background, providing them with a practical understanding of policing whilst encouraging the spirit of adventure and good citizenship amongst its members. The Force aims to:

1. Enhance Public Trust
2. Widen participation from diverse backgrounds
3. Support policing capability and capacity through volunteering

4. Embed a culture of public service and lifelong commitment to community safety

**2. Roles**

2.1

<p><b>Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)</b> (Neighbourhood Policing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has overall responsibility for the VPC in terms of funding, development, and practices in relation to recruitment, retention, and use of cadets.</li> <li>• Ensures that any allegations, disclosures or concerns that are raised are appropriately and timely discharged at Force level according to the National VPC Safeguarding Process and Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance (see section 4.2 for link).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chief Inspector – Force Lead</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison between cadet co-ordinator, units, and Citizens in Policing Board.</li> <li>• Advises and manages processes around workplace concerns and disciplinary matters involving cadets.</li> <li>• Acts as the main Force spokesperson in the event of any child protection incident OR main liaison with the Force communications team.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cadet co-ordinator</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create and maintain cadet units within the force ensuring that they are compliant with the National VPC Safe to Operate Standards and the Safeguarding Framework. (See Section 4 below for link).</li> <li>• Recruit, induct and provide training and support for new leaders.</li> <li>• Provide guidance and support to ensure cadet leaders are suitable for their role, understand and are committed to the principles and procedures supporting the National VPC Safeguarding Framework.</li> <li>• Keep policies under review to reflect current standards in the management of units and young people.</li> <li>• Maintain contact with cadet unit leaders and assist with development of their units.</li> <li>• Organise and provide ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD) training for unit leaders.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Unit leaders are following the Force VPC policy to ensure delivery of a consistent cadet programme and to maintain quality assurance.</li> <li>• Act as liaison between National VPC and units.</li> <li>• Safeguarding advisor for VPC units.</li> <li>• Responsible for providing guidance and supporting compliance with the VPC Safe to Operate Standards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inspector</b> (Neighbourhood Policing / Prevention Inspector)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the VPC Scheme by identifying and releasing suitable individuals to deliver the programme within their area.</li> <li>• Meets regularly with VPC leaders to review progress of the unit and to ensure the unit's compliance with Force VPC Policy and National VPC Safe to Operate Standards.</li> <li>• Monitors the hours being accrued by cadet leaders whilst volunteering with units.</li> <li>• Oversee unit finances in liaison with unit supervisor and cadet co-ordinator.</li> <li>• Advise and assist with processes around any low level workplace concerns stage one disciplinary matters involving cadets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit Supervisor</b> (Sergeant / police officer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervises the leadership team to facilitate the weekly running of the unit in accordance with Force VPC policy and the National VPC Safe to Operate Standards.</li> <li>• Oversees ongoing recruitment, training, and development of unit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assistant Leader</b> (Police officer, SC, contracted member of Sussex Police staff or approved PSV)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with the unit supervisor to ensure the efficient running of the unit.</li> </ul>

### 3. Intentions of the VPC

#### 3.1 VPC Objectives:

- Create a safe and inclusive space to ensure an ethical and inclusive environment for young people and leaders.

- Promote an understanding of policing and youth voice by providing platforms for young people to influence local priorities and policy development.
- Inspiring youth participation and social action by developing skills for life, confidence and a sense of purpose.
- Building trust by engaging young people, especially those at risk.
- Inspiring and enabling progression into policing by scoping and developing supported pathways for young people to pursue careers in policing.

### **3.2 Principles - Each cadet unit should:**

- Engage with young people between 13 and 18 years old.
- Hold 2-hour weekly cadet training sessions during the school term, subject to the availability of leaders. Meetings may be held during school holidays or at weekends at the discretion of the unit leadership team. The option of virtual meetings is also available although face to face meetings are always preferable.
- Provide promotion opportunities for cadets to encourage those with leadership skills, both whilst as a cadet and then as a volunteer leader once they reach the age of 18.
- Provide a balanced programme of sessions that are youth led, following the National Cadet Curriculum, utilising resources and lesson plans provided by the National VPC through their website.
- Maintain a direct link with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) for awareness of local policing priorities.
- Support their cadets to volunteer and assist the NPT with social actions, community, and crime prevention events.
- Aim to have a body of cadets that is reflective of its community, whilst reaching underserved groups including those that are vulnerable, or from the most deprived areas.

## **4. Governance**

### **4.1 Strategic Oversight**

National Level - The VPC is overseen by the National Volunteer Police Cadet Team who together with the National Police Chiefs Council and National Youth Agency produce the National VPC Safe to Operate Standards (STOS) which outlines the guidelines on how to run cadet schemes safely and effectively. All schemes are annually assessed against these to ensure compliance. A link to the standards is included here [The National VPC Safe To Operate Standards 25-26 V2](#)

Force Level - A VPC unit leaders' group will meet on a regular basis (approximately every 6 - 8 weeks), at a meeting chaired by the current Force Lead (Chief Inspector). They will have responsibility for implementing the policy and strategy as set by the

National VPC and Citizens in Policing board (CiP). Any significant issues raised by the unit leaders at this meeting will be escalated to the CiP board.

The NPT on the 3 Divisions (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove) will have responsibility for monitoring their local units, especially in terms of leader availability, ratios, finance, safeguarding and the continuous support of their leaders. The cadet co-ordinator will identify relevant leader training and ensure that this is offered to leaders to encourage professional development. Additionally, the co-ordinator will ensure training is kept up to date and current, and regularly renewed where required, to maintain compliance with the VPC Safe to Operate Standards. For chain of command within Sussex Police please see section 2.1. Management Structure.

## 4.2 Safeguarding

The Force provides a safe and secure environment where young people can meet with others to learn about policing and policing issues, contribute to community initiatives and have fun. The public expect and deserve to have trust and confidence in the police, and this is even more so when this comes to protecting young people in our care when participating in activities organised by the Force.

In line with guidance from the National VPC Scheme regarding safeguarding, a procedure and chain of command is as follows:

- National Safeguarding Manager – [vpc.safeguarding@vpc.police.uk](mailto:vpc.safeguarding@vpc.police.uk)
- Designated Responsible Officer (DRO) – ACC – required to complete DRO training provided by National VPC Team.
- Chief Inspector – Strategic Lead – required to complete Introduction to Safeguarding and Managing Safeguarding Concern training provided by National VPC Team.
- Cadet co-ordinator – Safeguarding advisor and contact for Unit supervisors – required to complete Introduction to Safeguarding and Managing Safeguarding Concern training provided by National VPC Team.
- VPC unit supervisors – required to complete Introduction to Safeguarding and Managing Safeguarding Concern training provided by National VPC Team.

VPC leaders – required to complete Introduction to Safeguarding training.

The National VPC Safeguarding team send out an annual bulletin to all trainees to refresh their knowledge. All safeguarding training is renewed every three years.

Unit leaders complete mandatory Safeguarding training as part of the induction when joining a unit and annually thereafter. Leaders are provided with a 'blue card' which provides guidance for how to deal with safeguarding issues and where to go for assistance, should the need arise.

Cadets and parents / carers are provided with an induction pack containing information relating to safeguarding, data protection, security, and other relevant issues either before or on joining a unit. Cadets are required to sign the VPC code of conduct agreement to

say they understand and abide by the specified guidelines. This should be signed in the presence of a responsible adult.

Further information can be found in the following documents.

[National VPC Safeguarding guidance A – Z.](#)

[National VPC Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy](#)

[National VPC Child Protection Referral Process Flowchart.](#)

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

A Force Safeguarding document is available, which sits alongside those above, but provides additional information on a local level. This is available via email from the cadet co-ordinator at [cadets@sussex.police.uk](mailto:cadets@sussex.police.uk)

## **5. Health and Safety**

5.1 The [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) require Sussex Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Sussex to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all their employees and others affected by our undertakings. This includes our volunteer cadets. Under [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#), an employer has a responsibility to ensure that young employees or volunteers are not exposed to risk due to a lack of experience, being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or lack of maturity. All VPC leaders receive Health and Safety training as part of their induction. The person within the Force with responsibility for Health and Safety within the VPC scheme is the Cadet Co-ordinator.

5.2 It is mandated that a minimum of 2 leaders within each unit complete regular risk assessment training as provided by the National VPC team. All leaders will be offered the training as part of their continual professional development.

5.3 There must be a risk assessment in place for weekly meetings, whether taking place within a police station or elsewhere. There must also be risk assessments for any meetings or activities that take place away from the regular meeting place, for example (but not limited to) social actions, sports activities, events, operations, test purchasing. Initial Risk assessments should be approved by the cadet co-ordinator, then saved into the VPC Risk Assessment Teams Channel. They should be regularly checked and updated so that current risks are considered at all times. The risk assessments should be accessible to all leaders, and the Force management team. Risk assessments should also be readily available to parents / carers of the cadets.

5.4 It is the responsibility of the unit leaders to ensure

- They take personal responsibility for their actions, taking reasonable steps to protect their health and safety and others affected by their activities.
- Compliance with the **Health and Safety Management System** and associated arrangements.

- Compliance with the findings and **Working Strategies** identified in risk assessments / safe systems of work.
- Cadets complete participation consent forms on VPC Gateway, which include emergency contact and medical details. These must be regularly checked to keep up to date and current. If cadets are attending an extraordinary event or activity (such as summer camps) additional forms should be completed.
- All **Safety Incidents** are reported via the Force Incident and Assault Management System (Workplace Incident) by the end of a shift.
- All incidents, accidents and near misses should be appropriately recorded and shared with the National VPC team as soon as possible via Gateway or email.

## 6. Cadet Leaders

6.1 The team should consist of a unit supervisor, who is a suitable operational officer and will be the main point of contact for that unit. They will be assisted by other officers, SCs, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), police staff and PSVs.

### 6.2 Code of Conduct

All leaders are required to sign and adhere to the VPC Leaders Code of Conduct which sets out the standards of behaviour expected of leaders alongside the Code of Ethics and ensures a safe space for all.

If a leader does not attend sessions, complete initial or refresher training when requested to do so or is in breach of the Leaders Code of Conduct they will be asked to leave the scheme.

### 6.3 Recruitment

The unit supervisor, who is drawn from the existing workforce, must be willing to take on the responsibilities of running the unit, including maintaining the staffing of sessions to ensure ratios are met, recruitment and professional development of leaders, timely maintenance of waiting lists and liaison with the NPT Inspector regarding finances and hours accrued by leaders.

It is possible for a police officer to become a cadet leader whilst still in their probationary period, however, it is not advisable for them to take on the role as full unit supervisor until that period has ended. This is because of the extra work that looking after a cadet unit entails. It is the responsibility of the unit supervisor to ensure that any cadet sessions or events do not impact on or are detrimental to their required studying as an officer.

Leaders can be recruited in a variety of ways including, advertisements, word of mouth, or requests from managers. Role descriptions for unit supervisors and cadet leaders can be obtained from the Cadet Co-ordinator. The recruitment process, which will follow the [Safer Recruitment Policy Guidelines](#) will include the following stages:

- Face to face interview to ascertain suitability of working with children.

Official

- Completion of safer recruitment application form.
- Two safer recruitment references obtained and verified (for existing officers and staff as well as volunteers).
- Observation of new leader at sessions, with provision of feedback on their interactions with the young people.
- Mandatory Safeguarding training courses to be completed upon joining and regularly refreshed during time as a leader.
- Induction training to include the following topics:
  - Health and Safety
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Data Protection
  - Fire Safety
  - First Aid
  - Manual Handling
  - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
  - Food Safety Handling (if necessary)
- Sign VPC Leader Code of Conduct

Cadet leaders are required to be vetted in line with the Vetting Code of Practice, Vetting Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and the Joint Force Vetting Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (592).

All leaders, regardless of their role or background, must also have additional enhanced and barred list checks carried out through the DBS in order to comply with the VPC Safe to Operate Standards required for providing a regulated youth activity.

This is in addition to any other vetting carried out for their employed role. These will require regular renewal, which will be prompted by the cadet co-ordinator and in liaison with the VPC Safeguarding Lead and Joint Force Vetting Unit (JFVU) Manager.

Once all checks have been completed and are satisfactory, if the leader is a PSV, a Force Identification Number and staff identity card will be issued. They will also be asked to sign the Official Secrets Act 1989.

#### **6.4 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Leaders and other volunteers**

To deliver a safe and supportive programme Sussex VPC seeks to appoint effective and appropriate leaders all of whom are required to accept fully the responsibilities of their commitment. In recruitment and appointments processes all roles are open to people of all genders, ethnicities, faiths and backgrounds and we encourage a diverse range of applicants to apply, particularly those currently under-represented on the team. It may, in limited circumstances, be appropriate to consider the gender or protected characteristics of our leaders for a particular event or activity. This is only the case where there is a genuine requirement, for example, in order to ensure that the VPC leaders on a trip includes adults of different genders. The National VPC Safeguarding policy and Safer Recruitment procedures are paramount in ensuring the delivery of a safe and supportive programme for our young people. Within the constraints of our Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment policies, no adult supporting the Sussex VPC programme should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage, harassment or discrimination by reason of

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

### **6.5 Social Media and Leader Contact**

Leaders must ensure that whenever discussing anything relating to the VPC or wider issues on social media, that they are representing the organisation and what they say can reflect on the wider VPC.

Leaders should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how technologies may be used.

This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook, What's App, Threads or 'X', chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Leaders should not request or respond to any personal information from cadets other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their

communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

Leaders should not give their personal contact details to cadets for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers or details of web-based identities. If cadets locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the leader, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their named person responsible for safeguarding. The cadet should firmly and politely be informed that this is not acceptable.

Leaders should always follow the Leaders Code of Conduct and the [National VPC Social Media Statement of Purpose](#).

Communication for police cadet purposes, should preferably be made using the approved National system, VPC Gateway.

There must be no contact with cadets under the age of 14 years directly – communication should be with the parents / carers.

When you contact parents / carers or cadets over 14 years by email or online you should:

- Use language that is suitable. Try to avoid any words or phrases that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued.
- Ensure that any images you send are directly related to the cadets and any cadet related activity. They should be meaningful, and appropriate. External hyperlinks you include must not lead to inappropriate content.
- Always copy a parent / carer into any messages you send to a cadet.
- Individual instant messaging between young people and leaders is not allowed.

For those leaders who are in a relationship e.g., parent and child where the child is a cadet in that unit, this rule does not apply.

Leaders or cadets may not share any material that does not belong to them on social media, and the appropriate permissions from the individual must be in place prior to publication. This refers to photos or videos. Refer to Social Media Policy (1086) and [The National VPC policy 7-communication-with-children-final.pdf \(vpc.police.uk\)](#).

## 6.6 Training

Whilst there is no set requirement for VPC leaders to have any specific qualifications or knowledge prior to applying for the position, as part of the role, they will be required to undertake mandatory Safeguarding training, including risk assessments prior to commencing in their role. They will also be given the option of completing an accredited 'Working with Young People' training package, and other relevant courses, as offered by the National VPC team to support their leadership development. All leaders are required to keep their training up to date and refresh when requested to do so. Training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Data Protection, Health and Safety and First Aid which

will be offered by the Force. Any additional training, including annual face to face continued professional development (CPD) days, will be provided as the need arises and leaders will be expected to participate.

## 6.7 Remuneration

### Remuneration for weekly sessions:

It is anticipated that leaders involved in the running of cadet sessions will accrue approximately 3 hours per week. In addition to this, it is recognised that there will be additional administration work involved in the running of cadet units, as well as the supervision of cadets at events in support of local policing and community projects and central aid commitments.

Leaders who are officers or staff may claim for the hours worked as follows:

- If a cadet session is part of their working day, then no further remuneration may be claimed.
- If the cadet session falls outside of a shift or is on a rest day leaders may claim a maximum of 3 hours to reflect the hours that they have worked with the cadets for that session. It should be claimed as 'no compensation' through SAP, and the hours will be accrued as time off in lieu. This is up to a maximum total of 100 hours per year.
- If a leader is participating in an event or operation with the cadets, they should seek to re-roster their shifts so that may attend this as a working day, wherever possible to do so.
- If a leader is unable to cover the event or operation by re-rostering their working day, they may follow the process above, claiming a maximum of 8 'no compensation' hours to reflect the time that they have worked with the cadets in line with the conditions below.

Leaders may not claim any compensation for travelling time between their home address and the cadet meeting place.

### Remuneration for unit administration:

As leaders, it is expected that in return for this concession, staff are volunteering an **equal amount of their own time** in support of these and other cadet activities. Therefore (as an example) if claiming 100 hours from the Force, a leader would be expected to volunteer 100 hours of their own time, without further compensation. It is these volunteer hours that would usually be used to cover the administration tasks involved in the running of the unit. With the permission and at the discretion of the Local NPT Inspector, leaders may, if possible, also use time during their working day (so with no additional compensation) to complete unit administration tasks or VPC related training, if required.

Leaders will be entitled to claim any hours worked in excess of their usual duty time or any rest day working (if required) as either no compensation or as locally negotiated with the Divisional Commander (due to 'flat time' being claimed as overtime not conforming with Police Regulations). This will be appropriately recorded in the SAP duties system.

Where leaders accrue hours, it is the responsibility of their line manager to ensure this is taken as time off as soon as possible subject to operational demands. In line with Force guidance, leaders are not permitted to have excessive amounts of time in lieu in their SAP quota pots.

Where an individual is already running a unit and moves role or location, their existing commitment to the VPC Scheme will be honoured by the new Division / Department. The number of hours dedicated to the scheme will be negotiated locally with the Divisional Commander in order to balance the current supervision of the unit against an unreasonable impact on the new Division / Department.

Please see section 12 - Summer Camp / Activity Holidays / Nights Away for details about remuneration for leaders when carrying out trips away. These hours may be claimed in addition to the maximum 100 hours mentioned above.

## **7. Cadets**

### **7.1 Recruitment Eligibility**

Young people can join the VPC Scheme on or after their 13th birthday, but before their 17th birthday. On their 18th birthday cadets become adults and must leave but may be encouraged to return as PSVs.

Cadets can be recruited from all locations, via social media, word of mouth, advertising, or recruitment campaigns.

All units have a limit to the maximum number of cadets that they can enlist, and individuals may be unable to join immediately. This is based on leader to cadet ratios, and available training space. In this situation they may need to be put on a waiting list until a space becomes available.

### **7.2 New Cadet Convictions and Vetting**

Cadets are not vetted prior to joining, and leaders (or any representative of) must not carry out any intelligence or NICHE checks to ascertain a young person's background.

There may be cases where young people who are known to have come to previous police notice or have convictions for minor offences may wish or are referred to join the VPC Scheme. Individuals must be judged on a case-by-case basis and their involvement risk assessed and balanced against the benefit for the young person.

In some circumstances leaders may wish to implement trial periods or "Acceptable Behaviour Contracts" (ABCs) in order to set clear boundaries. Leaders should always consider that the desire to support a single cadet should never be to the detriment of the rest of the unit.

### **7.3 Code of Conduct**

All cadets will be expected to agree and sign a Force VPC Code of Conduct, which outlines that they are expected to act as a good role model at all times whilst with the cadets, and to maintain the discipline and order of the unit.

Only the most exemplary behaviour will be accepted by the Force as this not only promotes a positive culture but also a safe working environment.

If a cadet does not meet and sustain the required levels of behaviour, they will be asked to leave the unit.

#### **7.4 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - Cadets**

Sussex VPC are part of the national VPC and CiP framework and are committed to equality of opportunity for all young people.

Sussex VPC is committed to extending its aims and opportunities to young people in all parts of society, and will strive to ensure that no young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage, harassment or discrimination by reason of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Everyone within the Sussex VPC should seek to practise equality, especially in promoting equal access and opportunity for all young people. Sussex VPC opposes all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia and take seriously our duty to comply with relevant equalities legislation.

#### **7.5 Inclusivity**

The National VPC is an inclusive organisation, and all young people should be encouraged to join. All adults involved in the delivery, leadership and governance of Sussex VPC should make reasonable adjustments where possible to support and enable all cadets or volunteers with disabilities or special requirements to take part in our programme and will receive dedicated Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training as part of their induction to the role. Refer to the [National VPC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

The VPC recognises that volunteers may need adjustments to transport, teaching and leadership styles and equipment to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, they

have the same opportunities to progress and be successful throughout their time with the cadets.

Leaders are at liberty to alter and adapt cadet activities and events to allow inclusion of any cadet with special requirements, within reason and subject to a risk assessment.

7.6 If a cadet requires any adjustments or support to enable them to be a member of the cadet scheme, a Cadet Personal Supportive Passport (PSP) should be completed in collaboration between the cadet, their parents / carers and their unit leaders. There may be adjustments that cadets are already aware of that they need when they join but they may be also other requirements that become apparent after they start with a unit, a plan can be put in place at any time. The individual does not need to have a diagnosed health condition to request or have adjustments made.

The Passport remains the property of the cadet, who has the responsibility of ensuring that leaders are made aware of any changes to the requested adjustments. It should be initially reviewed after 3 months and then (at least) annually, unless there are any changes, which can be made at any time.

The Passport can be shared with the unit leaders and the cadet co-ordinator where necessary. It should be securely stored in the unit's dedicated Teams Channel.

The Passport can be deleted when it is superseded or updated, or when the cadet leaves the unit.

Force guidance regarding Workplace Adjustment Passports can be found via the Workplace Adjustment Assessment

7.7 It is accepted that in extreme cases some young people require constant close supervision and care and the structure of the VPC Scheme cannot provide this. The benefits to the young person should be weighed against the impact of the required adaptations when deciding if an applicant can be accommodated.

## **7.8 Religion**

The VPC will always support cadets who require any adjustments to be made to accommodate their religious faith or belief and will make changes to sessions or routine that will enable the cadet to attend or participate with their worship wherever possible. These adjustments can be outlined in a PSP and may include (but are not restricted to) flexible scheduling of sessions, leave of absence, dress code exceptions, prayer or quiet spaces and dietary accommodations.

## **7.9 Transgender cadets**

Within Sussex Police and the VPC all cadets should feel included, so that everyone can add value and fulfil their potential without fear of discrimination. This includes anyone whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth and who may identify themselves as trans (or transgender) and also those whose gender identity cannot be defined within the margins of the gender binary: man or woman (also known as "non-binary")

Cadet leaders and cadets must

- Treat all cadets, no matter what their gender identity, in a dignified and non-discriminatory way.
- Work in a way where all cadets are treated as individuals, without needing to reference their gender identity where this is not necessary.
- Support any cadets in relation to their gender identity, including during transitioning.
- Help all cadets to be more aware about gender identity matters.
- Treat any issues of bullying and harassment in relation to trans or non-binary identity issues seriously and report accordingly.

The VPC will support any cadets in wearing the clothing that they feel best represents their gender identity, in line with any uniform/dress policy.

If a cadet requires support regarding inclusion or related issues, they can speak to their leaders, or the Sussex Pride Cadet Unit, who can provide advice and signpost to other related organisations if required.

Inclusion and transgender policies are under review by parliament and the NPCC therefore it should be checked that current and correct guidelines are being followed.

## **7.10 Cadets with Challenging Behaviour**

Challenging behaviour is conduct that is unacceptable in some way. It may hurt or undermine others or be socially inappropriate regardless of intention. Sometimes the behaviour will be a barrier to the commitment to the Code of Conduct and possibly put other cadets at risk.

Guidance as supplied by the National VPC to help and support cadets with challenging behaviour can be found here: [guidance managing challenging behaviour](#)

## **8. Guidance for Cadet Sanctions**

8.1 Leaders should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to sanction a cadet. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards cadets is completely unacceptable.

8.2 Where cadets display challenging behaviour, leaders should follow the Unit's behaviour and discipline policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

8.3 Any sanctions should be imposed as close to the time of the misconduct as possible and appropriate to the offence.

### **8.4 National VPC Statement**

The VPC Scheme is built on a restorative approach to conflict and misdemeanour, and the safety and prevention of crime and conflict is of paramount importance.

Applying a restorative approach to all conflict / poor behaviour is based on the understanding that young people can often display negative behaviour and will often make mistakes as part of growing up, so it is important that they have the opportunity to learn from these experiences and do so in a safe environment.

Implementing a restorative process, when done so effectively, may often be enough to resolve conflict, repair harm and prevent further harm. However, there may be times when a restorative approach is not an appropriate approach on its own but can be used to compliment other disciplinary.

Under no circumstances will any leader or cadet require or allow any cadet to perform any kind of physical punishment or “reward”.

The use of physical punishment is archaic and is ineffective in the correction of inappropriate behaviour. The VPC Scheme does not condone its use under any circumstances.

The process is as follows:

- Minor Breach – Words of advice
- 2nd Breach – Written warning
- 3rd Breach – Exclusion from unit unless exceptional circumstances apply
- Serious Breach – Immediate exclusion

Parents / carers MUST be informed of any discipline procedures. The cadet co-ordinator should be informed if a cadet is excluded.

If dismissed cadets must surrender their entire uniform as soon as practicable. If not returned, appropriate steps will be taken to reclaim the uniform.

The full guidelines from the National VPC can be found here [guidance-cadet-sanctions.pdf](#)

## **9. Uniform and Appearance Standards**

9.1 Cadets are issued a uniform by the unit leader at the end of their probationary period.

9.2 Cadets are expected to care for and appropriately store all items that are issued.

9.3 Cadets are expected to maintain a high standard of personal appearance and must be clean, neat, tidy, and well groomed. Cadets must not chew gum or smoke whilst at VPC meetings, on parade or in public facing roles. When the type of work involved makes a formal standard of dress impracticable, any clothing worn must be presentable and appropriate to the work or activity.

9.4 Uniform or clothing that identifies the individual as a police cadet should not be worn openly to and from cadet meetings or events. Cadets should cover uniform or visible logos by wearing an outer layer / coat.

9.5 Loss or damage of uniform items must be judged on individual circumstances, but if it is apparent that items have not been suitably cared for, cadets may be disciplined for loss / damage and/or asked to pay for a replacement.

9.6 On leaving the VPC Scheme, whether due to age or other circumstances, all items of uniform that have been issued must be returned in good order (normal wear and tear being acceptable).

9.7 Additional guidelines regarding uniform are available via email from the cadet co-ordinator at [cadets@sussex.police.uk](mailto:cadets@sussex.police.uk)

## **10. Running a VPC Unit**

### **10.1 Ratio of leaders to cadets.**

A minimum ratio of 1:10 (Leaders: YP) must be adhered to at weekly meetings and a minimum of 1:8 for other activities. This may drop considerably depending on the event.

However, it should be noted that there must be a minimum of 2 VPC Leaders present for ALL meetings, events or activities. It would be preferable to have at least 3 present because in the event that one has to leave, e.g. to escort an injured person to hospital, then this would leave the group and the one remaining Leader member vulnerable. If there is only one Leader present, the activity should stop.

The use of "cadet instructors" (18 -19 years old) must be risk assessed based on the individual. No event will ever be supervised purely by cadet instructors; there must be a minimum of one substantive leader present. Should that substantive leader need to leave for any reason then the activity will end.

Supervision must reflect the gender mix of participants in the group. For a mixed group it is good practice to have a leader group that includes at least one member of each sex.

For single sex groups at least one leader must be of the same gender as the participants.

The leadership ratio risk assessment must take into account the needs, abilities and age of the participants, as well as the complexity of the proposed activity and the competence and experience of the leaders.

### **10.2 Cadet Personnel Files and Information**

The personal details of cadets must be entered on Gateway, which is a central database for such information. Leaders must ensure that these details are kept up to date in line with current Data Protection guidance.

### **10.3 Unit Finances**

Cadet units may charge cadets a weekly subscription fee of no more than £1.50 per week.

These funds will form a 'petty cash' for the unit, which can be used for incidental costs. Each cadet unit has a bank account and any cash taken in must be banked at the earliest opportunity and must not be stored by leaders. Cadets / parents / carers are requested to pay the subscription via a BACS payment into the cadet bank account, rather than paying by cash. If this is not possible, the unit leader will accept the payment and pay into the unit bank account.

The cadet bank account should be overseen and maintained by one cadet leader, who is required to submit annual accounts to the Force. The account must have 2 current, un-associated signatories at all times. If a cadet leader who is also a signatory leaves the unit, they must be removed from the bank account.

Cadet units may apply for grants for additional funds should they wish to do so, and it is expected that these monies will be reflected in the accounts accordingly.

Cadet units may accept donations from outside organisations but may not canvas or request money for services rendered, i.e., cadets helping at an event. Again, these donations must be reflected in the accounts accordingly.

Any gifts or donations must be recorded in line with the Gifts, Gratuities and Hospitality Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1201) by completing the form to be found at Joint Force Vetting Unit Gifts and Hospitality Application Form. Once completed this form should be emailed to Gifts and Hospitality Vetting. This does not apply to any prize monies that may be won by cadet units.

#### **10.4 Cadet Syllabus**

To keep young people engaged with the scheme the weekly sessions should follow this format.

- Team building exercises
- Elements / topics delivered by leaders and cadets which are available in the Resource Library on the MVP (see link below)
- Visiting speakers
- Practical scenarios
- Social action projects

Leaders are expected to deliver a varied lesson plan that covers the core subject areas, although they do not have to strictly follow the National programme.

Leaders may also invite relevant guest speakers to sessions, as well as organise visits to locations of interest. Refer to [National VPC Resource Library](#) for supporting lesson plans.

### **11. Cadet Attendance at Policing Initiatives, Operations and Events**

11.1 The use of cadets as part of any policing operation is intended to staff those roles which in no way need the skills or powers associated with police officers or PCSOs but would, out of necessity, be staffed by a police officer, SC or PCSO were it not for the use of cadets.

11.2 Cadets may only be deployed to roles that are, based on all the available information, expected to be non-confrontational. Should a leader deem that a role has or is likely to become confrontational or hazardous, then they may refuse to deploy the cadets, or at any time withdraw them to a safe place. If this occurs the leader must immediately inform the Officer in the Case (OIC) or Bronze Commander for their sector / event of their decision.

11.3 Cadets will not be involved in tasks which could compromise information security.

11.4 Cadets can be used in training exercises for the training of other police officers and staff.

11.5 Cadets may be used for station duties following training and under the supervision of a police officer or member of police staff where they will not be required to have individual IT user accounts.

11.6 The issue or deployment of body armour in any form to cadets is NOT permitted. Any deployment hazardous enough to require body armour is too hazardous to be attended by cadets.

11.7 It must be remembered that the VPC is a voluntary organisation and as such the same expectations that are placed on paid staff cannot be applied to cadets and leaders. No cadet can be forced to attend any event or operation. However, as part of their service cadets are expected to be a deployable resource and by becoming a cadet, they must accept this fact and be prepared to play their part in this role from time to time. When asked to volunteer for events cadets may decline without providing a reason.

Cadets who persistently refuse the opportunity to take part in cadet operations may be asked to question their motivation for being a cadet when there are others waiting to take their place who want to take part in these events.

### **11.8 Suitability**

When deciding which cadets should take part in an operation, consideration must be given to the nature of the tasks being performed, the hours of duty, the experience of the cadet and the leaders supervising the event and the cadet's maturity. Cadets may not start taking part in aid until they have completed their probation course and received their uniform.

Some events may have specific age requirements placed on them by leaders or OIC. The age range of the cadets will be stated in the tasking request, operation order or briefing documents. In these cases, the directions must be complied with.

### **11.9 School Time Events**

Occasionally there may be extraordinary events that are planned or fall within the school term, during school time. On these occasions VPC representatives must not approach schools with requests to release the cadets for these events. The Police Service cannot be seen to be encouraging young people to miss out on school time. The cadets may be made aware of the opportunity; however, it must be their parents/guardians who send a letter into the school Head Teacher requesting absence for the particular reason.

If a briefing sheet for the event is available and suitable for dissemination (i.e. it must not contain any operationally sensitive information or be restricted in any way), this can be forwarded to the parents for inclusion in their letter to the school. It is only expected to be very exceptional circumstances when cadets will be invited to events during their school time.

### **11.10 Leaders**

Cadet leaders deployed to supervise cadets must ensure that they are, at all times, in a position to supervise their cadets. This positioning will vary dependant on the nature of the event. Crowd density, noise levels, community tension levels and the character of the Cadets themselves will all play a part in determining how far the Cadets should be from a suitable supervisor.

VPC Leaders are responsible for the safety of the Cadets in their care and should be in a position to intervene should the need arise. Cadet Leaders must undertake continuous dynamic risk assessments to assess the risk level and the safety of the Cadets.

Leaders assigned to an event or operation will never be placed in charge of other officers or SCs other than leaders and cadets. Their role is the supervision and direction of the cadets, thereby ensuring their welfare and safety. They cannot be distracted from this role with other duties or responsibilities. The safety of the cadet is paramount.

### **11.11 Policing Initiatives**

The involvement of cadets in policing initiatives is the method by which cadets add value to local policing.

At a local level these activities may include:

- Age restricted purchasing operations
- Street surveys
- Crime prevention stands
- Leafleting and “mail shot” preparation
- Representation at youth events
- Helping at primary school safety education events
- Line searches of large areas (not fingertip searches, these are the remit of specialist police search teams)

Official

- Drink / drug drive education
- Safer transport initiatives
- Seasonal safety events
- Police / public services / major incident training

Care must be taken that the cadets are never used in a role that should be undertaken by a police officer or PCSO. All activities should be thoroughly risk assessed, and consideration given to the possibility of the cadets becoming part of the evidential chain. If this is a possibility, then this must be made clear on the notification / permission form for parents / carers.

### 11.12 Age Restricted Purchasing Operations

Cadets may be used to assist with age related test purchasing operations. The only age restricted items that cadets may be used to purchase are knives, alcohol, tobacco, vapes, sunbeds, fireworks, to test the service provision of bookmakers, hotels and entry into nightclubs.

**Under no circumstances should any cadet be allowed to ever; consume any alcohol; smoke any tobacco, get on any sunbed, or set off any firework which has been obtained as part of an age-related test purchase operation.**

### 11.13 Ride Alongs

The Volunteer Police Cadets are offered the opportunity to accompany police officers for their duties, to gain experience and knowledge of the role first hand. This encourages them to pursue a career in the police, but also, by learning more about what officers do in their day-to-day roles, will hopefully become positive ambassadors for the force.

Consent must be sought from the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector, a risk assessment completed, and an indemnity form signed by the cadet prior to them participating in the ride along.

A full guidance document relating to the Cadet Ride Along Scheme can be obtained from the Cadet Co-ordinator.

### 11.14 Availability and Location of Consent Forms

By signing the application form when they join the unit, cadets (and their parents) are giving consent to participate in weekly sessions, fitness sessions and other routine, low risk events that cadets may be requested to participate in. However, if a cadet is asked to participate in any unusual activity such as test purchasing, a role specific consent form must be completed.

All cadet personal details are entered on to Gateway, and it is important that these are kept current and up to date, so that contact and medical details are correct. Unit Supervisors must ask parents to review and update their medical forms once a year as a minimum. All leaders have access to Gateway and these details in normal

circumstances. Consent forms should be completed prior to attending an activity or event and remain with a named contact person who is not attending the activity / event, e.g., someone in a supervisory capacity at the station of the cadet unit or the control room supervisor and must be immediately available in the event of an emergency. All leaders should be made aware of who the station / cadet contact is, and how to contact them in the event of an emergency.

For overnight stays copies of the consent forms must also be left at the station where the unit usually meets. This would allow for access by the Duty Officer in the event of an incident. This means there is an intermediary between the group on the event / activity and the parents / carers. The nominated supervisor with the copies of the forms should also monitor progress and provide the alert if the group fails to report back as expected (e.g., on expeditions).

A Medical Health Permission Consent Form and supplementary form are available within the shared Teams Channel or from the cadet co-ordinator at [cadets@sussex.police.uk](mailto:cadets@sussex.police.uk)

### **11.15 Risk Assessments for Events**

A risk assessment should be completed for every activity or event, unless a corporate risk assessment already exists which is deemed, by a competent Risk Assessor, to be suitable for the event. The leader in charge of the operation or event will be responsible for completing or arranging the risk assessment which must include the cadets and their activities and transport. They must provide the cadet co-ordinator with a copy of the risk assessment for inclusion with the cadet event form. Refer to section 5.3 above for more guidance regarding Risk Assessments.

### **11.16 Briefing**

Cadets must be given a full briefing as to their role for the event. The responsibility for giving this will be decided between the OIC / organising department and the leader for the event. Briefing officers must pitch this briefing at the correct level for cadets, without the use of common police jargon. The leader will make a note of the briefing or keep a copy of any briefing sheet.

It is the responsibility of the leader for the event to satisfy themselves that the briefing is appropriate for the expected role of the cadets. If they are not satisfied, they must inform the briefing officer and request further details. If this is not forthcoming, they must inform the Bronze Commander responsible for their deployment immediately and appraise them of their concerns.

Cadets must know and understand their role in the event and what actions to take in an emergency. They must know who their supervisor is and how to contact them.

### **11.17 Behaviour and Appearance**

When deployed at any event as a member of the VPC they are representing Sussex Police and therefore must behave in a manner that represents the values of the organisation.

Cadets must be polite, attentive, professional, punctual, disciplined and be aware of the Code of Ethics.

Cadets must be reminded that they are deployed at these events as part of the policing operation and as such are not there as spectators. The use of cameras, mobile phones and headphones is strictly prohibited when deployed at these events.

## **12. Summer Camp / Activity Holidays / Nights Away**

12.1 It is permitted for leaders to take their cadets away overnight, on summer camps or activity holidays.

12.2 Whilst engaged on such a camp and supervising the cadets, leaders are entitled to claim compensation for a maximum number of 5 days. This will be regarded as duty time for the first 8 hours and overtime at no compensation hours for the remaining 8 hours. The 8 hours for sleeping each day cannot be claimed. On no account will this be claimed for payment or enhanced hours. Please also refer to section 6.7 - Remuneration.

12.3 Whilst leaders are in a position of responsibility for the cadets, they **MUST NOT** consume alcohol and must be able to respond to an emergency situation, should the need arise, at all times.

12.4 Cadets may only stay at recognised locations, such as a campsite, activity centre or hostel, with suitable facilities for all present. If cadets are participating in activities with an outside provider, it is essential to check that the provider is suitably qualified to teach the activity, insured as required and the relevant risk assessments in place.

12.5 If staying at a commercial premises, a risk assessment must be provided by the holiday provider prior to the stay.

12.6 It is the responsibility of the unit(s) concerned that there are sufficient leaders attending the holiday, and a mix of genders, keeping in line with required ratios, but not unnecessarily exceeding them. Any leaders attending the holiday must be up to date with their required vetting, DBS checks and safeguarding training.

12.7 It is not permitted for leaders to sleep in the same room / area as cadets. Further information and guidance on organising and running trips or nights away can be found by emailing the cadet co-ordinator.

## **13. Transport**

### **13.1 Transportation of Cadets**

All transportation of cadets by or in the company of leaders must be risk assessed.

Leaders must not give cadets lifts except in emergency and never without prior knowledge of both the parents / carers and the named person. If this situation arises leaders should wherever possible arrange for another leader to accompany them.

Cadets may be asked to arrange their own transport to a location to "parade" for an event. In these circumstances the cadet's parents or carers must be informed of this fact. It is then the decision of the parent or carer how the cadet travels to the location. In these

circumstances no risk assessment for the travelling is required as the cadet is not in the care of the VPC until they have paraded at the location.

### **13.2 Use of Police Vehicles**

For official matters, inside or outside of the county, permission to use any unmarked vehicle must be sought from the appropriate Chief Inspector. Marked vehicles may be used at the Divisional Superintendent's discretion for use in police matters that occur within the Sussex Police boundary.

### **13.3 Use of Non-police Vehicles**

Hirers of such transport must ensure that the vehicle, passengers, and equipment carried are suitably covered by insurance. It must also be ascertained who is to insure the vehicle. Consideration must be given to the quality of transport used. Vehicles fitted with sufficient seatbelts must be used. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that they have the correct category on their driving licence to drive such a vehicle. If possible, a second person should be available to drive in case of emergencies.

There is no Force budget specifically for hiring non-police vehicles so any hiring conducted will be on the terms and conditions of the hire company. The Force will not be responsible for the recovery of any hired or loaned vehicle or its passengers. The extent of any breakdown cover must be considered as well as what would happen in the event of a breakdown or accident and whether replacement transport is included.

## **14. Raising Concerns or Making a Complaint**

### **14.1 About a Cadet**

Should a parent or cadet wish to raise an issue regarding a fellow cadet, they should direct their complaint to any unit leader or unit supervisor in the first instance, who will record the matter, and upon assessment, speak to and deal with the individual concerned in accordance with the VPC discipline and behaviour policy.

Should the matter be of a more serious nature, the unit leadership team can progress the complaint to their Divisional Inspector or to the cadet co-ordinator if the issue requires it.

### **14.2 About a Leader**

Should a parent or cadet wish to make a complaint about a cadet leader, this can be raised with the unit supervisor in the first instance, or if that is felt to be inappropriate, can be directed towards the Divisional Inspector or cadet co-ordinator. This will be recorded and dealt with in line with the national VPC discipline and behaviour policy alongside the Force professional standards.

### **14.3 Whistleblowing as an adult volunteer**

To raise a concern about a VPC person / team / unit you can follow any of the steps below:

Official

- Contact the National VPC via [vpc.admin@vpc.police.uk](mailto:vpc.admin@vpc.police.uk)
- Contact the Force cadet co-ordinator.
- Make a report on the [Force website](#).
- Ring 101.

It is not necessary to provide a name, but this is encouraged if possible. A contact telephone number or email address will be required so that further contact can be made.

To make an **anonymous report** this can be done via either.

- **Break the Silence**. (BTS). This link is to make secure reports relating to integrity, corruption, or serious misconduct-based concerns, direct to the Force Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), when you do not feel you can openly report your concerns via other means.
- **Crimestoppers** on 0800 555 111. You should state clearly that you believe you are making a protected disclosure under the VPC whistleblowing policy.

Further guidance about Whistleblowing via the National VPC is available here [whistleblowing-process.pdf \(vpc.police.uk\)](#)

## 15. Leaving the VPC Scheme

15.1 A cadet is required to leave the programme no later than the end of the term in which they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The only agreed exception to this is if the cadet in question is in the role of High Sheriff Cadet, when they are permitted to stay with the cadet unit until the end of their term in service.

All safeguarding standards such as health forms, behaviour expectations and risk assessments extend until they are due to leave, to ensure consistent oversight. Should the cadet in question attend any overnight trips with the unit, they must have separate sleeping / bathroom facilities.

A cadet turning 18 may apply to become a Young Leader, with the support of their unit supervisor. They are required to step back from the role until the recruitment process, including vetting and all relevant training is complete. This provides a cooling-off period from the unit and assists to mark the transition from cadet to young leader.

15.2 Exit interviews are an important tool in understanding why people leave our organisation, assessing the quality of their experience and how it could be improved for future learning, and monitoring those who go on to work with us in different capacities.

15.3 It is mandatory that both leaders and cadets leaving the VPC Scheme are offered the opportunity for an exit interview. The completion and quality of exit interviews must be quality assured through regular dip-sampling.

A Cadet Exit Interview Form and related guidance is available via email from the cadet co-ordinator at [cadets@sussex.police.uk](mailto:cadets@sussex.police.uk)

Official

**Team:** Local Policing Support Team