



Cumbria Constabulary VPC Positional Statements

March 2023

Cumbria Constabulary recognises that there is significant legislation concerning safeguarding and also working with children and young people. This legislation and statutory guidance sets out how the constabulary and partner agencies must work.

Cumbria Constabulary Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) has appropriate policies and processes for all aspects of its operations with Cadets. This statement sets out the position of Cumbria Constabulary with the VPCs. This will inform Cadets, Cadet leaders, parents, communities, partners and other stakeholders about what the constabulary's approach to cadets and also provide guidance.

This positional statement is a series of statements outlining Cumbria Constabulary's VPC guidance and recommendations on key potential issues, which Cadet Leaders may have to engage with.

This guidance states views that are based upon Cumbria Constabulary's insight, knowledge and experience. As well as guidance, this document explains what support the constabulary can provide.

The positional statements found in this document are a practical reference resource to assist Cumbria Constabulary VPC Leaders to respond effectively to the queries they may receive. The position statements set out below are our current policy on these issues but will need to evolve over time as policing and society changes. The statements are also not exhaustive – there are likely to be other issues that require a similar response.

Statements have been divided into two forms of statements:

- The constabulary's position around cadets/leaders using alcohol, illegal substances or gambling whilst involved in Cadets. The statement sets out the boundary between what is acceptable both in and outside of Cadets. This is of particular importance as cadet leaders walk a difficult path between law enforcement and support to Cadet Leaders who are experiencing difficulties in their life.
- The constabulary's position on issues and concerns such as mental health and well-being; radicalisation and transitioning gender NB: (these are not an exhaustive list).

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

Positional Statements

Alcohol

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC), the uniformed youth group of the Police recognises that drinking alcohol/alcopop is a popular pastime for those over 18. When done responsibly, consuming alcohol can be a positive social activity. Conversely the constabulary recognises that the consumption of

alcohol can be very harmful and it can lead to adverse outcomes such as bullying, strained relationships, criminal behaviour, exploitation, debt depression and self harm.

- As an adult involved in the VPC you are a role model for young people and seen as a trusted person. When supervising cadets, you must not drink alcohol or encourage them to do so. We appreciate that those over 16 can consume alcohol in certain circumstances, but Cadets are not permitted to drink alcohol whilst taking part in cadet activities. As a leader, if you decide to drink alcohol when not acting as a Cadet Leader, you must consider how alcohol may affect your ability to carry out your role, when you return to the leader role
- The VPC will support any Leader or young person who identifies that they have an issue with alcohol

Illegal Substances

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) is the uniformed youth group of the Police recognise that some young people and leaders are involved or living within communities where illegal substances can be accessed.
- The personal use or supply of illegal substances at VPC activities will not be tolerated. This is a criminal activity. Where found, appropriate steps will be taken to remove the individual(s) and substances from cadet activities and appropriate reports made and action taken.
- The VPC will support any cadet or leader who identifies that they require support or guidance and we will signpost to the most appropriate service. Restorative approaches should be considered wherever appropriate.

Gambling

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC), as the uniformed youth group of Cumbria Constabulary, recognises that gambling is a popular pastime for people. When done responsibly, it can be fun social activity. However, the constabulary recognises that gambling can be very harmful. It can lead to adverse outcomes such as bullying, strained relationships, criminal behaviour, exploitation, debt depression and potentially suicide.
- Whilst engaged on cadet activities there is no gambling permitted.
- Any fundraising activities that involve an element of gambling should be risk assessed and monitored closely by an identified Leader.
- The VPC will support and/or signpost to support services, any registered leader or young person who identifies that they have an issue with gambling.

Positions of Trust

- The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) as the uniformed youth group of Cumbria Constabulary, have a responsibility to ensure that all young people are provided with a safe space to learn and develop. This includes enabling them to form friendships with peers and professional relationships with leaders without being at risk of abuse or harm. As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, (all Leaders) every person working or volunteering within a VPC settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people and this would include young people who were previously VPC.
- This position of trust could potentially be exploited to put people at risk for the purpose of personal advantage or gratification. VPC will not allow any person aged 18 or over who is in a position of trust

as a unit leader to enter a personal relationship with a cadet of any age. Any cadet that then turns 18 and becomes a leader is subject to the same policy. If they are in a relationship with a cadet, they should not be a leader.

Radicalisation

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

Cumbria Constabulary opposes any attitude or discriminatory practice which denies the value of any person. We strive to uphold justice for every person and will take positive action to combat stereotyping, prejudice, marginalisation, unjust discrimination, racism, exploitation and oppression. Cumbria Constabulary has an **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and Procedure**. This is designed to provide a framework for monitoring the delivery of our services to ensure that these are consistently relevant and accessible to the diverse needs of the people we are seeking to serve or whom we employ or volunteer with us.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Mental well-being can be described as a combination of how we feel (our emotions and life satisfaction) and how we function (relationships with others, personal control, purpose in life and independence). Mental well-being is the measures and coping strategies we personally put in place to try to maintain good mental health. Mental health is something that affects everyone and anyone can experience good or poor mental health at any point in their lives.
- Mental ill health takes many forms and can vary in terms of strength and severity and frequency of re-occurrence and whether an individual reaches crisis or is able to manage their illness and maintain a steady state over many years. Some (but not all) people with mental ill health can be at risk as they develop negative, potentially harmful coping strategies e.g. anxiety attacks, self-harm or attempted suicide. There is a small risk in terms of violent behaviour; however, it is more likely that others will become distressed because they do not know how to help their friends or colleagues.

- Cumbria Constabulary recognises that the VPC has a legal duty under the Equality and Diversity Act to ensure accessibility for all. The VPC (cadets) provides opportunities for young people to get together, build connections and friendships, and provide peer support among themselves. This can help to build tolerance and empathy amongst young people and can be particularly powerful for groups of young people known to be at higher risk of developing mental health problems.
- Through the VPC, Cumbria Constabulary will, wherever possible and practicable, seek to include all cadets with mental health illness. We will encourage all cadets, their friends and carers to talk to their leaders around how they (we) can better support them in their cadet journey. Where possible we will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate a cadet with poor mental health in all VPC activities.
- Supporting people with mental health issues is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. neglect, emotional/psychological abuse and bullying), no matter where this risk evolves.
- We will aim to ensure that our leaders are educated in the area of Mental Health and are aware of the need to (able) to signpost young people to appropriate additional, specialist support.

Transitioning Gender

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