

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER POLICE CADETS STRATEGY 2025 - 2029

CONNECTING POLICING, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND COMMUNITIES



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FOREWORD

It is a privilege to introduce this new strategy as the NPCC Lead for the Volunteer Police Cadets - a movement that continues to **inspire, grow, and shape futures**.

Since the launch of our last strategy, the VPC has grown in both scale and significance - now engaging many thousands of young people across all 44 police forces, including our Mini Police, and supported by nearly 4,000 dedicated adult volunteers across the country.

As we look to the future, our commitment is clear: **we will strengthen, not scale back, our engagement with young people**. Our ambition is not only to sustain this work, but to deepen and grow it. We will build trust, amplify young voices, and **ensure every VPC member feels safe, valued, and inspired**.



Jon Cummins

ACC JON CUMMINS
AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE
NATIONAL VPC LEAD



A CORNERSTONE OF POLICING'S ENGAGEMENT

The VPC is more than a youth programme. It is a cornerstone of policing's engagement with young people and communities - a vital part of the Citizens in Policing portfolio and a **powerful contributor to public trust, community resilience, and safer neighbourhoods**.

This strategy **reaffirms our long-term commitment to inclusion, youth empowerment, and early intervention**, ensuring that every young person, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive, lead, and be heard.



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LEADING A CULTURE OF VIGILANCE AND SAFETY

At the heart of our success is the National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Hub. Its trusted role in safeguarding is **not only essential - it is transformative**. The fact that young people feel confident to speak up and seek help is a testament to the culture of trust we have built.

Safeguarding reports are not signs of failure; **they are evidence that the VPC is a safe space where concerns are raised and addressed**. Safeguarding cases continue to come to light because of the VPC's structured processes and unwavering commitment to doing the right thing.



DELIVERING FOR POLICING, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND COMMUNITIES

This strategy also reinforces a critical truth: **structured youth engagement is safer, more impactful, and more sustainable than informal or ad hoc approaches**. The VPC provides a **consistent, values-led framework that supports young people, protects them, and helps them grow into active citizens and future leaders**.

The VPC is already **contributing to key national policing priorities** - tackling violence, preventing vulnerability, developing our future workforce, and strengthening policing's legitimacy. It is helping us recruit from underrepresented communities, build bridges with those we serve, and shape the future of policing.

To all policing leaders: the VPC is not a "nice to have." It is a vital part of neighbourhood policing, prevention, and legitimacy. I urge you to champion it - not just in words, but in action.



Your Priorities – Your Programme – Your Scheme

Locally delivered. Nationally supported. Always young person-led.



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INTRODUCTION

The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) is the name for the collection of uniformed youth groups operating across all police forces in England and Wales. (It is also known as PYV in South Wales and PSYV in Scotland).

Sitting within the broader Citizens in Policing portfolio, the VPC is a significant national movement of **thousands of young volunteers** supported by nearly **4,000 adult volunteers**.

It embodies policing's commitment to engage communities through citizen participation, particularly young people, and to support safer, more resilient neighbourhoods through long-term, inclusive engagement.

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INTRODUCTION



LEARN LEAD CONTRIBUTE

The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) is a national youth movement that brings together young people from all backgrounds to learn, lead, and contribute to safer communities. Our mission is both social and aspirational: we seek to open doors for those from under-represented communities while also supporting pathways for those who aspire to a future career in policing or public service.

Achieving this dual purpose requires a unifying approach that ensures no young person is left behind while maintaining a clear link to the values and standards of policing. Pro-social modelling provides this foundation. By consistently demonstrating and reinforcing positive behaviours, attitudes, and problem-solving skills, leaders and cadets alike create a culture where every young person can thrive.

For young people who face barriers—whether due to disadvantage, special educational needs, or other challenges, the VPC offers stability, belonging, and exposure to aspirational role models. For those with ambitions to join policing or related professions, the programme builds leadership, resilience, and an early appreciation of the values and responsibilities expected of public servants. That resilience and understanding is forged through a pro-social programme where young people learn through the lived experiences of their peers and leaders alike as one policing family.

This strategy therefore positions the VPC not only as a vehicle for inclusion but also as a structured environment where pro-social behaviours are modelled, practised, and embedded in all its members. It is through this shared culture and set of values that all young people can gain confidence, knowledge, and skills regardless of their background or future aspirations.

By investing in this balanced approach, the VPC will continue to deliver on its commitment to inclusivity: empowering seldom-heard voices and equipping the next generation of public service leaders.

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The VPC forms the largest component of citizen involvement in policing and delivers against key priorities in the National Citizens in Policing Strategy, including:

1



Enhancing
public trust

2



Widening participation
from diverse
backgrounds

3



Supporting policing
capability and capacity
through volunteering

4



Embedding a culture of public
service and lifelong commitment
to community safety

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NATIONAL VPC

SAFEGUARDING AND STANDARDS HUB

The National Volunteer Police Cadets Safeguarding and Standards Hub enables the central coordination, governance, and operational infrastructure required to ensure the VPC delivers consistently and credibly across all forces.

Acting as the single point of coordination, the Hub sets the standards by which the programme is delivered, safeguards the welfare of all young people and adult volunteers, and ensures that the VPC continues to demonstrate value to policing, partners, and the communities we serve.

This work is anchored in the **National Safe to Operate Standards**, the national framework that underpins safeguarding, quality assurance, and accountability across the programme.

Key

Functions:

SAFEGUARDING AND STANDARDS

Maintain and refresh national policies, deliver leader safeguarding training, and monitor Safe to Operate Standards benchmarking.

SUSTAINABILITY

Explore the potential to formalise the VPC as a charitable entity, with the aim of broadening funding opportunities and attracting sustainable sponsorship and partnerships.

PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen internal and external partnerships nationally and locally to benefit young people and forces.

ALIGNMENT TO POLICING PRIORITIES

Coordinate VPC contributions to national portfolios such as Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), serious violence, and youth safety.





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The National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Hub will support forces in delivering this strategy through four key pillars:

The Hub safeguards the welfare of all members of the VPC by maintaining national safeguarding policies, guidance, and the National Safe to Operate Standards. It provides mandatory training, specialist child-focused advice in safeguarding cases, and clear standards for national delivery. Through benchmarking, quality assurance, and the sharing of best practice, the Hub ensures every scheme meets consistent national expectations, giving Chiefs confidence in the programme's safety and integrity.

SAFEGUARDING AND STANDARDS



SAFEGUARDING AND STANDARDS HUB

The Hub aims to secure the long-term future of the VPC by embedding sustainable systems and governance. This includes establishing the VPC as a national charity to provide transparency, fundraising capacity, and resilience. By reducing duplication and streamlining processes, the Hub maximises value for policing and ensures resources are focused where they make the greatest impact—on delivery for young people.

SUSTAINABILITY

PARTNERSHIPS

The Hub convenes national and external partnerships, engaging with policing, government, education, and the youth sector.

These partnerships bring new opportunities, expertise, and resources into the programme, while enabling cadets to contribute to wider social action and civic life. By brokering and sharing best practice, the Hub enhances the cadet experience and strengthens the VPC's reputation as a trusted and inclusive national movement.

ALIGNMENT TO POLICING PRIORITIES

The Hub ensures the VPC supports policing priorities by evidencing delivery against youth engagement, early intervention, crime prevention, and public confidence. Through collection of key national data and evidence, the Hub will highlight and champion the programme's contribution to tackling key national priorities including: anti-social behaviour, addressing violence against women and girls, and strengthening neighbourhood policing. This clear alignment allows Chiefs and Commissioners to see the VPC's direct impact on operational outcomes and wider community safety.

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STRATEGIC VISION

SAFE SUSTAINABLE INCLUSIVE

Our vision is for a safe, sustainable, and socially inclusive uniformed youth group grounded in the values and principles of British policing—supporting and empowering young people to develop life skills, confidence, and a commitment to positively impact their communities and local policing priorities.



1. CREATE A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE

Embedding the Safe to Operate Standards across all forces to ensure safe, ethical, and inclusive environments for young people and adult volunteers.

2. PROMOTING AN UNDERSTANDING OF POLICING AND YOUTH VOICE

Supporting cadets to understand policing and provide platforms for young people to influence local priorities and policy development.

5. INSPIRE AND ENABLE PROGRESSION INTO POLICING

Scope and develop supported pathways for Volunteer Police Cadets who are interested in exploring and pursuing careers in policing.

4. DIVERTING FROM HARM AND BUILDING TRUST

Strengthening community safety by engaging young people—especially those at risk—with trusted police relationships and positive development opportunities.

3. INSPIRING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ACTION

Promoting volunteering and youth-led social action that develops skills for life, confidence, and a sense of purpose.



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OBJECTIVE 1

OBJECTIVE 1

CREATE A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACE

Embed the National VPC Safe to Operate Standards to ensure all VPC schemes operate effectively, safely, and inclusively—prioritising the wellbeing and best interests of young people.

KEY ACTIONS



Annual benchmarking against 7 national standards:

HEALTH AND SAFETY	SAFEGUARDING
STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS	FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE
DATA	LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION	



Promote a strong sense of belonging and achievement for every cadet.



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OBJECTIVE 2

PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF
POLICING AND AMPLIFY YOUTH VOICE



Ensure all young people in the VPC gain a meaningful understanding of policing and are empowered to shape both the cadet programme and local policing priorities.

KEY ACTIONS



Embed active consultation and co-production with young people in every scheme.



Equip young people to take leadership roles in community engagement and safety.



Amplify youth voices—especially those from traditionally underrepresented groups.



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OBJECTIVE 3

INSPIRE PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ACTION

Enable young people to contribute to their communities through volunteering and social action—building life skills, self-confidence, and civic responsibility.

KEY ACTIONS

-  Facilitate youth-led volunteering initiatives linked to local policing priorities.
-  Deliver character-building experiences through practical life skills, digital literacy, and leadership opportunities.
-  Highlight, celebrate, and share youth-led social actions projects, promoting best practice in VPC community projects and initiatives to inspire wider participation.



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OBJECTIVE 4

DIVERT FROM HARM AND BUILD TRUST

Support young people at risk by offering positive alternatives, building trust in policing, and reducing vulnerability to crime and exploitation.

KEY ACTIONS



Engage with under-represented communities to reduce risk factors such as exclusion, exploitation, and adverse childhood experiences.



Provide safe, supportive environments with strong role models.



Align VPC programmes with national policing priorities (e.g. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), knife crime, cyber safety).



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OBJECTIVE 5

INSPIRE AND ENABLE
PROGRESSION INTO POLICING

Scope and develop supported pathways for Volunteer Police Cadets who are interested in exploring and pursuing careers in policing.

KEY ACTIONS



Create opportunities for personal development, mentoring, and recognition of transferable skills.



Ensure those young people, interested in pursuing a career in policing feel empowered to see themselves as the future of policing, especially those from underrepresented communities.



Work with national and local partners to ensure VPC experience is valued in recruitment processes and contributes to a more diverse, community-connected police workforce.



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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER POLICE CADETS EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

VPC schemes are designed and delivered locally in alignment with community needs, local demographics, and force priorities—supported by national resources.

The National Hub provides over 500 pre-prepared sessions and resources in categories including:

While use of the national toolkit is optional, it supports consistent, quality-assured delivery while allowing local innovation and flexibility





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NATIONAL VPC

OUR COMMITMENTS

We are committed to Inclusion, Growth, and Impact

To deliver this commitment the VPC will continue to:





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CONCLUSION

The VPC Strategy 2025–2029 reflects policing's long-term commitment to community engagement, youth empowerment, and safer futures for all.

As part of the wider Citizens in Policing approach, the VPC is uniquely placed to build bridges between young people and the police—through relationships, learning, leadership, and service.

Together, we will create lasting change—by connecting policing, young people, and communities.

A group of five National Volunteer Police Cadets are shown in their uniforms, which include dark blue shirts, high-visibility yellow-green vests, and caps. The caps of the cadets in the front row are labeled 'JUNIOR CADET' and 'CADET'. They are all smiling and holding informational leaflets. The leaflets have the text 'Sign up for crime alerts and prevention advice in your area' and a picture of a police officer. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and trees.

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CREATED BY THE NATIONAL VPC TEAM 2025