# Volunteer Police Cadet Safeguarding

## Policy & Procedure

**OFFICIAL**

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|---|---|
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# Policy

## National Context

Authorised Professional Practice (APP) is produced by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. All officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. Essentially, our "policy" is to comply with APP as it develops to cover all areas of policing.

This document is compliant with the National Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) Safeguarding Policy agreed by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in 2020 and as updated.

## Statement

We recognise and accept our responsibility to act in loco parentis for our Cadets during organised events and activities and our 'duty of care' to volunteers and staff.

We are committed to ensuring all our activities and engagement within the wider community is held to the highest standards of safeguarding practice; is compliant with current legislation in England and Wales; is child and young person centred; and that we are fully accountable.

These standards are set out in our mission and values as well as our policies and procedures.

We are invested in making sure our safeguarding practice places the views of children, young people and where required adults at the centre of our policy planning and implementation processes. This approach ensures that their welfare remains paramount in all we do.

Establishing and maintaining a culture of honesty and openness helps us to know and understand what issues children and young people consider likely to affect them and their safety. This is particularly important when working with diverse communities or those who have additional vulnerabilities.

## Aims

This Safeguarding Policy is primarily to cover Volunteer Police Cadets but also for all young people, staff and volunteers who receive an **allegation, disclosure or are concerned** about the **welfare** of any member of staff, volunteer, or Cadet.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- ensure staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibility in terms of recognising, responding to and how to refer any reported allegations, disclosures, or concerns.

- ensure staff are clear about their responsibility to follow the correct procedures laid out to protect our Cadets, young people and volunteers from harm and to create a safe space for them to have fun, be challenged and develop skills for life.

The policy applies to those who hold both an employed and volunteer role and who raise a safeguarding concern in either capacity.

The policy is underpinned by procedures designed to provide clear, definitive, and unambiguous direction for all those involved in its deployment. The procedures apply from the moment an incident is reported.

## Objectives

Specific objectives are to:

- Identify an individual at risk at the earliest opportunity.
- Protect the lives and preserve the safety of Cadets who may be at risk of harm.
- Report all safeguarding concerns regarding Cadets at risk of harm.
- Adopt a proactive and effective approach to preventing offences against any Cadet at risk.

The specific aim is to provide assistance to Merseyside Police staff who have a responsibility to take action when an individual is believed to be at risk of or suffering abuse.

## Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This is a non-statutory policy that sets out the principles to help guide decision making. It provides guidance that, on occasions, officers and staff may depart from based on the particular circumstances they encounter. On such occasions, officers and staff will be supported provided they can demonstrate a clear rationale which can be objectively justified for why they have departed from the policy.

The Merseyside Police Voluntary Police Cadet Scheme (VPS) differs from other VPS schemes Nationally. In that Merseyside does not utilise Cadet Leaders or ‘contract out’ the scheme to individuals or groups in the wider community. The Merseyside VPC scheme is run entirely under the direct supervision of Police officer and / or Police Staff.

The Chief Officer lead for this policy is the Assistant Chief Constable responsible for the ‘People Services’.

The Merseyside Police Volunteer Police Cadet Safeguarding Policy incorporates three key points as approved by Chief's Council and as mandated by the National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Manager:

- The national safeguarding framework and reporting process (via email or safeguarding case management system),
- National safeguarding training,
- The safe to operate standards (a self-Assessment 'living' document submitted by all forces to the National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Manager for assessment and developmental feedback.

## Outcome Evaluation

Outcomes should reflect specific objectives and be measured against these objectives on a routine basis.

Responsibilities and activities involved in measurement will be included in a separate deployment plan monitored on an on-going basis by the Corporate Support Department and People Services.

Governance arrangements will include participation by partner agencies.

## Statutory Compliance

### Equality Act (2010)

This Policy and Procedure is designed to deal with adults who are defined as an adult at risk or an adult that has care and support needs that is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and is a key means by which Merseyside Police will work to safeguard victims who are at risk of serious harm or even death.

It is recognised that protected characteristics such as age and disability may have an adverse impact on some members of our community. The procedures in this document, have been designed to identify people with protected characteristics so that the support they receive from Merseyside Police is tailored to meet their specific needs.

### UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018)

This policy and procedure has been assessed for compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018 by the Data Protection, Corporate Support and Development Unit. Any victim data obtained and/or shared will be subject to UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

**Freedom of Information Act (2000)**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 grants a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. Any requests made for this policy should be forwarded to freedom.of.information@merseyside.pnn.police.uk

# Procedure

## Version History

| Version Number | Date | Detailed rational behind amending/updating policy or procedure. | Policy Owner Details | Policy Author Details |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| V. 1.0 | 28/04/2021 | This is a new policy created to ensure Force compliance with NPCC agreement signed regarding Cadet Safeguarding in 2020. | | |
| V. 1.1 | 17/05/2023 | Updated to reflect Citizens in Policing Department and functions (including Voluntary Police Cadet Scheme) from the 'Local Policing' strand to the newly formed 'Prevention' strand.<br><br>References to 'Cadet Leaders removed or amended as appropriate to clarify that the scheme on Merseyside is run entirely under the direct supervision of Police officer and / or Police Staff.<br><br>Additional references made to interaction with the National VPC Safeguarding and Standards Manager to strengthen safeguarding measures, and with the OHU Clinical Psychologist and team to support Cadets at risk of Self-Harm. | Ch/Supt. Prevention | Citizens in Policing Sgt |
| V. 1.2 | 29/03/2026 | Update document to current Force standard template.<br><br>Amend incorrect version number in version 1.1 Version History table from 2 to 1.1.<br><br>updating links and checking terminology and content are still relevant.<br><br>Updated to reflect organisational structure. | Ch/Supt. Prevention | Citizens in Policing Sgt |
| V. 1.2.1 | 26/11/2026 | Amendment of owner and author only. | Head of PO&SD | Citizens in Policing Sgt |

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The requirement to take safeguarding action incurs obligations at every stage of the police response. These obligations begin from receipt of the initial concern or incident throughout the whole process and extend to the multi-agency process for safeguarding young people at risk.

1.2 This policy will provide operational advice to all staff to ensure that working practices are structured and that Officers and staff should ensure that their actions and decision making (including cases where actions are considered unnecessary or disproportionate) are recorded in detail.

1.3 Following these processes will:

- Embed 'Wellbeing' into the Cadet programme to support Cadet's welfare and reduce likelihood of self-harm.
- Help to effectively protect Cadets from abuse or neglect.
- Help to increase public confidence in Merseyside Police for protecting the vulnerable in our society.
- Encourage reporting, by dealing empathetically and diligently with reports.
- Increase general awareness, ensuring Cadets with support needs, who are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and are unable to protect themselves from experiencing or the risk of abuse or neglect because of their support needs, get the help and assistance they need to keep them safe.

1.4 Procedures will also be compliant with the National Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) Safeguarding Policy agreed by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in 2020 and as updated.

## 2. Key definitions

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| **Child** | Has a specific legal meaning of anyone below the age of 18 years. |
| **Young Person** | Has no specific legal definition. However, 12-18 years is the standard age associated with the term. |
| **Adult** | Has a specific legal meaning of anyone above the age of 18 years. |
| **Safeguarding** | For the purposes of this policy, we are using the terms 'safeguarding' and 'to safeguard' to describe the prevention and precautionary approach to planning and procedures needed to protect children, young people and adults from any potential harm. |

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| **Child Protection** | Child protection is a process within the Safeguarding Policy and refers to the activity undertaken to protect children suffering from, or at risk of, significant harm (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) |
| **Child and young person focussed** | Our safeguarding practice places the views of children and young people at the centre of our policy planning and implementation processes. This approach ensures that their welfare remains paramount in all we do. |
| **Adult Protection** | Adult protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect adults suffering from, or at risk of significant harm (No Secrets – Statutory guidance (2000), and Social Care Institute for Excellence (2011): Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm: Social Services and Well Being Act 2014) |
| **Adult at risk** | An adult, who is, or may be, in need of community care services i.e. adult social services, because of mental health, disability, age or illness, and/or who is unable to care for themselves or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation |
| **Radicalisation** | This refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups |
| **Safety** | Safety is about being protected from and not causing, danger, risk, injury, loss or harm. Safety can be a feeling, a physical object or place, and an action, and sometimes refers to the laws, rules, and principles that are intended to keep people safe. Safety is not just about what happens inside the meeting place, it is also about outside it, including days out, and may be about something that is happening at home. |
| **Wellbeing** | Wellbeing refers to a person's sense of contentment and satisfaction with their conditions in life and their current circumstances. It is closely linked to emotional balance and mental health, but it also affected by an individual's attitude, values and perspective. |
| **Grooming** | This is the planned and deliberate act of manoeuvring an individual into a position of isolation to ensure they become a key influencer or 'trusted person'. |

## 3. Roles & Responsibilities

3.1 **Force Strategic Lead (ACC, Chief Superintendent, or another rank with additional authority)** – This role is the main communication link between the Regional CIP / VPC Lead and the Force Cadet coordinators. They should meet on a quarterly basis to review good practice; lessons learnt and support the National VPC (Safeguarding) Team in defining needs in training and development. In cases where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse from a member of the Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadet Programme, the Strategic Lead MUST immediately be informed, and it will be their responsibility to liaise with any ongoing Police investigation. This liaising role must continue and involve the management of the safeguarding concern with the programme manager, parents/carers; any communication on behalf of Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets; and/or more specifically with the National VPC Safeguarding Manager.

3.2 **Force Programme Manager and Co-ordinators** – These roles are the main conduit for communication from programme level to Force Strategic Lead. They have overall responsibility for ensuring any request for guidance and support is met by either the Strategic Lead or the National VPC Hub Team. They are responsible for undertaking reports for the Force. They have responsibility for supporting Strategic Leads and Regional VPC Leads in maintaining compliance to the 'License to Practice' /striving to achieve UK Youth Safe Spaces Standards (as above) and 'Safe to Operate' Standards in conjunction with the National VPC Safeguarding Manager.

3.3 **Named Person** – This role exists for Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers acting in the capacity of Cadet Leader. As previously discussed, unlike some other forces nationally, Merseyside does not currently utilise Cadet Leaders. However, should Merseyside Police choose to appoint Cadet leaders (aged 18 years and above), they too would be a 'Named Person'. Each will receive the appropriate training to be a 'Named Person'. If Cadets attend an event or activity external to the usual curriculum, this person will be named on the appropriate documentation. This role can be held by Police Officers, Staff and volunteers and there must be a clear adherence to process.

3.4 This role is to ensure all allegations, disclosures and concerns are raised, actioned, and recorded appropriately. They also ensure that the Named Person(s) involved directly with the young person is free to support them. Whilst this is happening, the named person is free to co-ordinate an appropriate response and ensures that all other young people are not impacted upon. They are the key communication channel directly involved with supporting the young person, and the Programme Manager.

3.5 Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, and it is important that all understand their role and responsibility not only when they receive an allegation, disclosure or have a concern but in the whole way in which a safe space is maintained. All Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved with Cadets must attend training appropriate to their role and

requirements, to enable them to do this and follow the Codes of Conduct, and local Force Reporting Procedures.

## 4. Safeguarding Framework

4.1 Merseyside Police Volunteer Police Cadet Programme seeks to provide an environment where everyone can work safely, and children, young people and adults at risk can engage with and enjoy the activities and sessions provided.

4.2 It is the policy of Merseyside Police Volunteer Police Cadet Programme to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk involved in the work we do by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. It is also policy to provide those working for or volunteering with a framework to operate within to keep everyone who is engaged in Cadet activities safe. It is therefore policy to:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers (legally responsible adults) working with children, young people, or adults at risk: are carefully selected, are checked via DBS and the Force Vetting Unit and understand and accept their responsibility for the safety of children, young people and adults at risk in their care.
- Ensure that children, young people, and adults at risk's welfare is of paramount importance, when planning, organising, advising on and delivering programmes.
- Create a safe environment for a young person, Cadet, Police Officer, Police Staff or Volunteer to feel confident to speak up and challenge or report and say 'that's not right' regardless of how small the issue might appear to be. It is of paramount importance that we have all reasonable checks and measures in place to keep Cadets, and adults involved in the Cadet Programme safe.
- Ensure that all children, young people, adults, and parents / carers have all the information they need to make an informed decision before choosing whether to take part in activities, events, trips, and overseas visits.
- Ensure that when working with partner organisations, a term of our agreement will be that they state: "We confirm that we have read and understood Merseyside Police Volunteer Cadet Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by it."
- Ensure that electronic communication between adults and young people follows strict guidelines so that we don't place anyone at risk of harm. (See Manual of Guidance document in relation to social media best practice, and Merseyside Police Social Media Policy.)
- Personal data relating to individual Cadets must be only the minimum necessary to operate the scheme and to aid safeguarding measures. All data must be stored on approved systems for example Duty Sheet, and in all cases in compliance with Data processing legislation and be included on the Merseyside Police Records of Processing Activity (ROPA) returns [processing' means any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether

or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction]

- Ensure that we encourage volunteers and staff to discuss their concerns with their Named Person, Force Coordinator or through supervision.
- Ensure that young people, have access to adults that they trust or are clear on how to report their concerns.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to any suspicion or allegation of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate departments and external agencies.
- Raise the awareness of relevant staff and volunteers of child protection issues through the provision of training and regular updates.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and that all Police Officers, Police Staff, Volunteers and Coordinators regularly refresh and review their understanding of this and all associated policies.
- Ensure that the principles of this policy are adopted by all individuals supporting the Merseyside Police Volunteer Cadet programme.

4.3 Merseyside Police Volunteer Cadet programme also seeks to effectively manage the risks associated with activities and events involving children, young people, and adults at risk by:

- Completing a risk assessment process which involves identifying risks and means of reducing or eliminating these; all activities should be properly risk assessed, insured, and have appropriate adult to Cadet ratios.
- Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis.
- Ensuring that the appropriate DBS and vetting checks are conducted, depending on eligibility, for any individuals starting or moving into work which involves working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults;
- Requiring new employees and individuals involved in working or volunteering with children, young people and adults at risk to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and the associated code of conduct and receive appropriate training.

4.4 Safeguarding practice is not just about having a protection process, but a way of working that is embedded in everything we do and the way that we do it. As such, all of us must ensure the following happens in whatever aspect of Cadet activity we work in.

## 5. Safeguarding Behaviours

5.1 Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved with the Cadet Programme must uphold our values and adhere to our Code of Behaviour, which sets out the standards of

behaviour expected of all alongside the College of Policing (Code of Ethics), VPC Code of Conduct and ensures a safe space for all of us.

5.2 In addition, all Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved with the Cadet Programme need to follow the below Safeguarding Behaviours which help ensure that safe space:

- **Vigilance and Understanding:** take time to understand situations and be alert so that we notice when something is wrong.
- **Early Help:** take action and provide support as soon as a problem emerges and before it gets any worse.
- **Inclusion:** safeguard every individual because everyone is equally important and valuable. Everyone involved in the Cadet Programme has a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- **Resilience:** support individuals to develop the knowledge, ability, and the confidence to be actively involved in and responsible for their own safety and wellbeing and to cope with life's challenges.
- **Stability:** develop on-going stable relationships of trust with all those you work with. This means we are more likely to notice if something is wrong.
- **Respect:** treat everyone with the expectation that they are responsible and accountable rather than not.
- **Advocacy:** help others to put forward their own point of view.
- **Accountability**: always respond if we are concerned and never assume someone else has or someone else will.

5.3 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility within the Merseyside Volunteer Cadet Programme, but what does this mean?

It is the responsibility of all to ensure that:

- behaviour is always appropriate as laid out in the Code of Behaviour and reflective of our Code of Conduct and Police Code of Ethics.
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people through processes, procedures and guidance provided.
- they follow the procedures laid out following an allegation, disclosure or the raising of a concern.
- we recognise the position of trust in which we all have been placed.

5.4 If this is not happening, it should be reported to the Force Coordinators or Programme Manager at the earliest opportunity. All matters will be recorded on the Incident Reporting Form (See Appendix D) and dealt with confidentially.

## 6. Maintaining Boundaries

6.1 Being a Police Officer, Police Staff or Volunteer involved within the Volunteer Cadet Programme is based on ability to build positive relationships with others, but specifically young people and it is important to maintain appropriate boundaries to keep ourselves safe.

6.2 We are role models to young people and their families, and we must promote and respect safe spaces and listen to others. We have a responsibility to challenge negative ideas, assumptions, behaviour, and language - including our own - whenever it occurs.

6.3 How we present ourselves, our interaction with others and our general conduct are highly significant when dealing with an allegation, disclosure, or concern. This does not mean that our relationships should be cold and detached, but we need to be sensitive and support individuals, without placing them or ourselves at risk.

6.4 We should listen to, and respond to, everyone's concerns. Avoid discussing information regarding the concerns with those who do not need to know and be aware of being overheard while speaking or while on the phone.

## 7. Positional Statements

7.1 Young People are the most heavily legislated part of society and as such there is significant complexity when operating in a youth setting.

7.2 The Merseyside Police Volunteer Police Cadet Programme has appropriate policies and process for all aspects of its operations however there are areas that do not require a policy, more a statement that tells our partners, Cadets, leaders and parent/carers our position as a programme on certain societal issues. These areas are often steeped in values, beliefs and cultural complexity e.g., Use of alcohol, radicalisation.

7.3 We recognise this is especially complex for the Volunteer Cadet Programme, but we are part of the Police, and all of our leaders are police officers, Police Staff or Police Volunteers who have very specific duties and responsibilities which if not complied with, would put their job or role at risk. It should also be noted, as in the case of alcohol, that it is legal to use however it can lead to many issues, if used incorrectly which may lead to criminality or open the person up to coercion.

7.4 Positional statements therefore are a series of statements outlining our views and recommendations on key potential issues, which Leaders may have to engage with. It provides a guide to how you should respond; the support we can give and should raise awareness to seeking support and or guidance.

7.5 Statements have been divided into two forms:

- Our position around Cadets using alcohol, illegal substances or gambling whilst involved with Cadets. The statement sets out the boundary between what is acceptable both in and outside of the Cadet Programme.
- Our position around larger society affecting issues such as mental health and well-being; radicalisation and gender transition.

**NB: (the above is not an exhaustive list)**

Our Positional Statements will be reviewed by the Programme Manager and Designated Responsible Officer (DRO) annually who will appraise the National VPC of the review and a full review will take place at least every three years by the National VPC.

**Positional Statements**

**Alcohol**

- Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets recognises that drinking alcohol is a popular pastime for those over 18. When done in a controlled environment it can be a positive social activity however, we also recognise that for many, left unregulated it can lead to adverse outcomes such as bullying, strained relationships, criminal behaviour, exploitation, debt depression and potentially suicide.
- All adults involved in the Cadet Programme are role models for young people and seen as a trusted. When supervising Cadets, they must not drink alcohol or encourage them to do so. We appreciate that those over 16 can consume alcohol in certain circumstances, but Cadets, Police Officers, Police Staff or Volunteers are not permitted to drink alcohol when involved in any part of the Cadet Programme, including when on a residential activity.
- The Programme Manager will support any Cadet who identifies that they have an issue with alcohol and will take appropriate action and support referrals.

**Illegal Substances**

- Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets recognise that some young people are involved or living within communities where illegal substances can be accessed or are prevalent.
- The personal use or supply of illegal substances at Cadet activities will not be tolerated. Where found, appropriate steps will be taken to remove the individual(s) and substances from Cadet activities and appropriate reports made and action taken.
- Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets will support any Cadet 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**

Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets recognises that gambling is a popular pastime for people. When done in a controlled environment it can be fun, and a positive social activity. However, we also recognise that for many, left unregulated it can lead to adverse outcomes such as bullying, strained relationships, criminal behaviour, exploitation, debt depression and potentially suicide.

Whilst engaged on Cadet activities, no gambling will be permitted. Any fundraising activities that involve an element of gambling should be risk assessed and monitored closely by a named person (Police Officer or Police Staff).

- Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets will support and / or signpost to support services, any Cadet who identifies that they have an issue with gambling.

**Positions of Trust**

- Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets 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 Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme without being at risk of abuse or harm. As a result of their knowledge, position and / or the authority invested in their role, every person working or volunteering within a Cadet setting are in positions of trust in relation to the young people and this would include young people who were previously Cadets.
- This position of trust could potentially be exploited to put people at risk for the purpose of personal advantage or gratification. Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets will not allow any person who is in a position of trust to enter a personal relationship with a Cadet of any age.
- All Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved with the Merseyside Volunteer Cadet Programme must have completed the College of Policing 'Position of Trust E-Learning package, it's successor or similar training input.

**Radicalisation**

- Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadet Programme has a legal duty under the Counterterrorism 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 and staff who are involved with the Cadet Programme have an additional professional duty to refer to 'Prevent'. As a result, our non-police volunteers will be guided to understand and acknowledge both their duty, and the additional duties of the police officers and staff.
- All leaders MUST know how to identify children or young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified.

- 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. 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 / indoctrination.

**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, old and young, 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.
- Merseyside Police recognise that our Cadet Programme has a legal duty under the Equality and Diversity Act to ensure accessibility for all. The Cadet Programme 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 our Cadet programme, Merseyside Police will, wherever possible and practicable, seek to embrace all Cadets with mental health illness, and seek to encourage all Cadets, their friends, and carers to talk to staff 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 Cadet activities.
- Supporting young people / adults 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 ensure that Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme are educated in Mental Health and are aware of the need to signpost young people to appropriate additional, specialist support.
- Especially in light of the impact that the Covid Pandemic and other societal pressures have had on young people in recent years, the Merseyside Voluntary Police Cadet Scheme will be 'front loaded' with help advice and support on Wellbeing and Mental Health and Psychological support. This will be delivered in conjunction with the Merseyside Police Occupational Health Unit (OHU), and in consultation with the National VPC Safeguarding Officer.

**Gender Transition**

- Merseyside Police have an Equality and Diversity policy, and welcomes Cadets regardless of their 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 example, someone who feels that they are male but have the physical characteristic of a female body.
- 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.
- Supporting people transitioning is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, It should be noted that transgender young people may be 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.
- Further advice and guidance is available on the Merseyside Police Force Intranet under the heading "Trans Guidance Documents".

## 8. Child Sexual Exploitation

### 8.1 Definition

The sexual exploitation of children is defined as:

'*involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol,*

*cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, mobile phones) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion, and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability*'. Child Sexual exploitation: definition and guidance for practitioners 2007.

See Appendix A which contains the following information and guidance regarding Child Sexual Exploitation:

- Risks
- Consent
- Indicators
- Inappropriate relationships
- 'Boyfriend' model of exploitation and peer exploitation
- Organised / networked sexual exploitation or trafficking.
- Health
- Education
- Emotional and Behavioural Issues
- Identity
- Relationships
- Social Presentation
- Family and Environmental Factors
- Housing
- Income
- Other Areas to consider
- Children and Young People who go Missing.

### 8.2 Protection and Action to be taken

Where the concerns about the welfare and safety of the child or young person are such that a referral to Children's Social Care should be made, this must be recorded on the Incident Reporting Form (Appendix D) and the Force Child Exploitation Policy and Procedure must be followed.

### 8.3 Supporting Children and Young People out of Child Sexual Exploitation

Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme and practitioners from statutory agencies and other voluntary sector organisations together with

the child or young person, foster carers, and their family as appropriate, should agree on the services which should be provided to them and how they will be coordinated. This may mean working together with other statutory organisations.

For children who are Looked After (LAC) issues raised and actions planned should be incorporated into the child's Care Plan and Placement Plan and reviewed as part of the Looked After Child Review.

Because the effects of child sexual exploitation can last well into adulthood, support may be required over a long period of time. In such circumstances, effective links should be made between children and adult services and statutory and voluntary organisations. For young people who are Looked After, this should be incorporated into their pathway plan.

## 9. Bullying

9.1 Bullying may mean different things to different children; dependent on whether they see themselves as '*the victims of bullying*' or '*the bullies*'. However, the way children feel about bullying and about how other people's behaviours affect them, means that regardless of how others see those 'behaviours' – to the victim it will still be 'bullying'.

### 9.2 Definition of Bullying

The Department for Education helpfully defines bullying as "*a behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally*".

Bullying can include a range of behaviours or actions by individuals or groups that are repeated over time and that are intended to cause either physical or emotional harm to another individual or group. There are many different types of bullying and many ways in which bullying can happen. It can be motivated by prejudice against a particular type of person or just because a child or young person is different in some way from the wider group. When dealing with bullying, our first priority is to stop any violence and make sure everyone is safe. What we need to remember though, is that whether or not bullying involves physical contact or violence, the emotional impact of bullying can be just as bad and can cause serious harm.

It is absolutely essential that all types of bullying are given sufficient attention and should always be treated seriously and sensitively. If a cadet feels or says they are being bullied, this should never be minimised or ignored. Each case of bullying is different and one solution will not fit all. Whilst there are different types of bullying and different words used to define bullying, it comes down to the same thing: a deliberate behaviour on the part of one or more people, designed to make someone suffer either physically or emotionally and cause that person harm.

It is important that everyone works together when someone has reported being or feeling bullied.

See Appendix B which contains the following information and guidance regarding Bullying:

- Cyber Bullying and E Safety
- Risks
- The Child Victim
- The Child Bully
- Indicators

### 9.3 Protection and Action to be taken

Bullying should never be minimised, and negative attitudes towards bullying should always be challenged. Such attitudes might include the misplaced perception or belief about bullying that:

- It's only a bit of harmless fun;
- It's all part of growing up;
- Children just have to put up with it;
- Adults getting involved make it worse;
- Children should learn to stand up for themselves.

Clear messages must be given that bullying is not acceptable, and children must be reassured that significant adults involved in their lives are dealing with bullying seriously. Some acts of bullying, such as physical assault and harassment, could be a criminal offence.

A climate of openness should be established and encouraged in which cadets are not afraid to tell people what is happening, have the confidence to address issues and incidents of bullying and know that they will be taken seriously.

Consideration should always be given to the existence of any underlying issues in relation to Protected Characteristics, which must be addressed and challenged accordingly.

Where a Cadet is thought to be exposed to bullying, action should be taken to assess their needs and where appropriate provide support. If the bullying involves a physical assault, as well as seeking medical attention where necessary, consideration should also be given to whether there are any child protection issues to consider.

Where a criminal offence may have been committed, normal police reporting procedures following Force policy apply.

Where appropriate, parents/carers should be informed and updated on a regular basis. They should also, when applicable, be involved in supporting programmes devised to challenge bullying behaviour. This may require involvement of not only the victim's parents/carers but also the parents of the bully.

A safeguarding referral should be submitted via the Force VPRF process to ensure that the incident is documented.

### 9.4 Issues

Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme may often be in the position of having to deal with the perpetrators as well as the victims of bullying. Bullying behaviour may in itself be indicative of previous abuse or exposure to violence.

Where bullying exists in the context of gang behaviour, there should be an institutional, as well as an individual, response to this. The matter must be recorded on the Incident Reporting Form and brought to the attention of the Programme Manager and Designated Responsible Officer for appropriate action.

## 10. Radicalisation

There is a continued threat from Terrorism in the United Kingdom which can often involve the exploitation of vulnerable people. This threat extends to children and young people to draw them into an extremist ideology and behaviours.

**Radicalisation** is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, go on to participate in terrorist groups and activities.

**Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths, cultures, and beliefs. In our definition of extremism, we also include calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas" (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011).

**Equality and Diversity**

It is important to ensure that no-one is treated in any way less favourably on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or social origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age, religion/belief or political/other personal beliefs.

### 10.1 National Guidance and Strategies

**CONTEST** is the Governments counter terrorist strategy, its aim being to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism.

**PREVENT** is a key part of the CONTEST strategy, its aim being to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Early intervention is at the heart of "Prevent" in diverting people away from being drawn into terrorist activity. "Prevent" happens before any criminal activity takes place. It is about recognising, supporting and protecting people who might be susceptible to radicalisation. The Prevent Strategy objectives focus on the following core areas:

- **Ideology** - responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- **Individuals** - preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- **Institutions** - working with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

**CHANNEL** is a key element of the "Prevent" strategy and is a multi-agency approach to protecting people at risk from radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as the education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services), the police and the local community to:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism;
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk; and
- Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about safeguarding children and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they face before illegality occurs.

See Appendix C which contains the following information and guidance regarding Radicalisation:

- Partnership working
- Understanding and Recognising Risks and Vulnerabilities of Radicalisation
- Vulnerability / Risk Indicators
- Access to Extremism / Extremist influences
- Experiences, Behaviours and Influences
- Travel
- Social factors

### 10.2 Referral and Intervention Process

If a concern is raised about a Cadet or Leader and it is felt that they are vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism, it is important that the Force Coordinators, Programme Manager and the Designated Responsible Officer are informed so they can discuss the matter and make the appropriate decisions. These concerns must be recorded on the Incident Reporting Form and sent to the Safeguarding Lead and all the individuals mentioned above.

The individual should also be referred to the Merseyside CTPNW Prevent Team.

## 11. Inclusivity

Whilst not a specific safeguarding issue we take matters of inclusivity extremely seriously and will look to accommodate and support a young person. We will also be mindful of any associated potential safeguarding concerns that may arise due to their background or needs so we are best paced to support the individual.

## 12. Health And Safety

To ensure we create a safe space for our Cadets and young people to learn, we must ensure that ALL activities are correctly risk assessed and insured and that the staffing ratios are appropriate for the activity and the requirements of the group.

Any additional or new activities or amendments to existing practices and procedures must not operate without a valid Risk Assessment.

(See Health & Safety Policy & Procedure for more information.)

## 13. Cadet Leaders

**How do we ensure Cadet Leaders are safe to work with children and young people?**

The Merseyside Police Voluntary Police Cadet Scheme (VPS) differs from other VPS schemes Nationally. In that Merseyside does not utilise Cadet Leaders or 'contract out' the scheme to individuals or groups in the wider community. The Merseyside VPC scheme is run entirely under the direct supervision of Police officer and / or Police Staff.

We will ensure all who work with young people or adults at risk, are carefully selected, undergo the required DBS checks and vetting and are adequately trained. All Force personnel who assist with Police Cadets complete the safeguarding training through the National Volunteer Police Cadet Association.

# Appendices

## Appendix A - Child Sexual Exploitation

### Risks

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances.

Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm and may cause significant damage to their physical and mental health. It can also have profound and damaging consequences for the child's family. Parents and carers are often traumatised and under severe stress. Siblings can feel alienated, and their self-esteem affected. Family members can themselves suffer serious threats of abuse, intimidation, and assault at the hands of perpetrators.

There are strong links between children involved in sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home or care, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy, and substance misuse. In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, victims of forced marriage and those involved in gangs.

There is also often a presumption that children are sexually exploited by people they do not know. However, evidence shows that this is often not the case and children are often sexually exploited by people with whom they feel they have a relationship, e.g., a boyfriend / girlfriend. Children are often persuaded that the boyfriend / girlfriend is their only true form of support and encouraged to withdraw from their friends and family and to place their trust only within the relationship.

Many children and young people are groomed into sexually exploitative relationships, but other forms of entry exist. Some young people are engaged in informal economies that incorporate the exchange of sex for rewards such as drugs, alcohol, money, or gifts. Others exchange sex for accommodation or money as a result of homelessness and experiences of poverty. Some young people have been bullied, coerced, and threatened into sexual activities by peers or gang members which is then used against them as a form of extortion and to keep them compliant.

Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused.

Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme should be aware that particularly young people aged 16 and 17 may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited. This is not an issue, which affects only girls and young women, but boys and young men are also exploited. However, they often may experience other barriers to disclosure.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, accommodation, or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. (Human trafficking is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone's vulnerability).
What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

Technology such as mobile phones or social networking sites can play a part in sexual exploitation, for example, through their use to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children and young people to groom them.

Sexual exploitation has strong links with other forms of crime, for example, Domestic Violence and Abuse, online and offline grooming, the distribution of abusive images of children and child trafficking.

The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and use sophisticated tactics. They are known to target areas where children and young people gather without much adult supervision, e.g., parks, takeaway outlets or shopping centres or sites on the Internet.

Children and young people may have already been sexually exploited before they are referred to Children's Social Care; others may become targets of perpetrators whilst living at home or during placements. They are often the focus of perpetrators of sexual abuse due to their vulnerability. All practitioners and foster carers should therefore create an environment which educates children and young people about child sexual exploitation, involving relevant outside agencies where appropriate. They should encourage them to discuss any such concerns with them, or with someone from a specialist child sexual exploitation project and feel able to share any such concerns about their friends.

**Consent**

This extract from The Office of the Commissioner for Children (OCC) Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups (Nov 2012) helps to consider issues around consent.
*"The law not only sets down 16 as the age of consent, it also applies to whether a person has given their consent to sexual activity, or was able to give their consent, or whether sexual violence and rape in particular took place. In the context of child sexual exploitation, the term 'consent' refers to whether or not a child understands how one gives consent, withdraws consent and what situations (such as intoxication, duress, violence) can compromise the child or young person's ability to consent freely to sexual activity."*

Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme must also consider other factors which might influence the ability of the person to give consent, e.g. learning disability / mental ill health. Young people under the age of 16 cannot legally consent to sexual activity.

Sexual intercourse with children under the age of 13 is statutory rape. A child under 18 cannot consent to their own abuse through exploitation.

**Indicators**

Anyone who has regular contact with children is in a good position to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs that may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation and as such this would include Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme.

Parents, carers, and anyone in a position of responsibility with a child should also know how to monitor online activity and be prepared to - monitor computer usage where they are suspicious that a child may be being groomed online.

The fact that a young person is 16 or 17 years old should not be taken as a sign they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation.

Young people with a disability may have increased vulnerability as well as young people up to the age of 21 who were looked after for whom the local authority has statutory care leaver responsibility and / or where there may be child in need and / or child protection issues. Barnardo's 'Puppet on a String' report 2011 sets out three different models of activity in the spectrum of sexual exploitation:

**Inappropriate relationships**

Usually involving one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person (physical emotional or financial). One indicator may be a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.

**'Boyfriend' model of exploitation and peer exploitation**

The perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship' and then coerces or forces them to have sex with friends or associates.

Peer exploitation is where young people are forced or coerced into sexual activity by peers and associates. Sometimes this can be associated with gang activity, but not always.

**Organised / networked sexual exploitation or trafficking**

Young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced / coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs in 'sex parties', and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of young people by perpetrators.

Practitioners should receive training on child sexual exploitation and therefore be aware of the key indicators of child sexual exploitation. This list is not exhaustive, but they include:

**Health**

- Physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault);
- Chronic fatigue;
- Recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections;
- Pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion;
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or other substance misuse.

**Education**

- Truancy/disengagement with education or considerable change in performance at school.

**Emotional and Behavioural Issues**

- Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language;
- Secretive behaviour;
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- Reports of being seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation, including public toilets known for cottaging or adult venues (pubs and clubs);
- Being withdrawn and secretive.

**Identity**

- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing, eating disorder.

**Relationships**

- Hostility in relationships with staff, family members as appropriate and significant others;
- Physical aggression;
- Placement breakdown;
- Reports from reliable sources (e.g. family, friends or other professionals) suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation;
- Detachment from age-appropriate activities;
- Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited;
- Sexual relationship with a significantly older person, or younger person who is suspected of being abusive;
- Unexplained relationships with older adults;
- Possible inappropriate use of the Internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the Internet;
- Phone calls, text messages or letters from unknown adults;
- Adults or older youths loitering outside the home;
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation;

- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base;
- Missing for long periods, with no known home base;
- Going missing and being found in areas where they have no known links.

**Please note**: Whilst the focus is often on older men as perpetrators, younger men and women are also involved and Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme should be aware of this possibility.

**Social Presentation**

- Change in appearance;
- Going out dressed in clothing unusual for them (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people).

**Family and Environmental Factors**

- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties;
- Break down in family relationships.

**Housing**

- Pattern of previous street homelessness;
- Having keys to premises other than those known about;
- Being located when missing at the property of adults with whom there is no clear link to e.g. not a family member.

**Income**

- Possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation;
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation;
- Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding.

**Other Areas to Consider**

Police Officers, Police Staff and Volunteers involved in the Cadet Programme should be aware that many children and young people who are sexually exploited do not see themselves as victims. In such situations, discussions with them about concerns should be handled with great sensitivity. Seeking prior advice from in Force teams, specialist agencies and the National

Safeguarding Manager may be useful. This should not involve disclosing personal, identifiable information at this stage.
In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, or at risk, careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind that:

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching;
- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence;
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them;
- Where sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered;
- Non-consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent; therefore, offences may have been committed;
- Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group.

The child sexual exploitation training which practitioners receive should also include what information should be given to the police in such cases, for example vehicle registration numbers, names, physical descriptions. It may also include what action staff should take in the case of suspected sexual or physical abuse in order to protect potential evidence, which may be useful in the case of an alleged perpetrator being prosecuted.

**Children and Young People who go Missing**

A significant number of children and young people who are being sexually exploited may go missing home or care, and education. Some go missing frequently; the more often they go missing the more vulnerable they are to being sexually exploited. If a child does go missing, a safeguarding referral should be made following the Force process.

## Appendix B - Bullying

### Cyber Bullying and E-Safety

Computers, gaming consoles and smart phones have given wider access to the internet, instant messaging, social networks and a myriad of ways of communicating with one another that a generation ago, were almost non-existent.

Whilst E-technology can be a great thing in lots of ways, it also means that there are now far more ways in which children and young people can be bullied. This is known as 'cyber-bullying' and can happen quickly and often when a child is alone and isolated.

This instant access to social media via the internet also brings a whole host of connected issues around keeping safe on line, or 'E-Safety'. Because of the availability and accessibility of technology, cyber-bullying, or bullying through the use of technology can happen at any time of day or night and because it is not done 'in person' then the potential is for anyone to be bullied at any time by any individual and for it to go unreported and unnoticed. The emotional impact on people can be devastating and so not only does everyone need the means to recognise and report bullying, but all professionals, parents and carers need the means to recognise, support and protect children and act on cyber bullying.

Many organisations have adopted a CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) approach and use their materials and ethos when dealing with and advising on E-Safety. Many Young People's Support Service (YPSS) and Early Intervention and Prevention services have a number of staff trained as CEOP Ambassadors.

### Risks

### The Child Victim

Anyone can be bullied, but bullying often happens to children, so we are focussing from now on, on Cadets.

If Cadets are seen as different in some way or are already vulnerable e.g. cadets who live away from home are often particularly vulnerable to bullying by their peers and being away from home means they may also lack access to a safe or trusted adult that they could confide in easily.

Harm to Cadets as a result of bullying should not be underestimated. It can cause distress, emotional harm and can lead to low self–esteem and depression. This could result in withdrawal from everyday activities and in some cases self-harm and in extreme cases, suicide. Cadets often do not want to tell anyone they are being bullied. Sometimes they are worried about what might happen as a result of telling someone, or they feel that no one would believe them. Sometimes cadets might feel that they are in some way to blame for the situation they are in and they may feel that they should be able to sort it out themselves.

Parents, carers and agencies need to be alert to any changes in a Cadets behaviour such as refusing to attend school, refusing or appearing reluctant to go to particular place or engage in a particular activity. Victims of bullying may become unusually anxious in public places and crowds and may become withdrawn and isolated.

**The Child Bully**

Cadets who bully others have often been bullied themselves and may have suffered considerable disruption in their own lives. The bullying behaviour may occur because the child is unhappy, jealous or lacking in confidence. Cadets who are isolated may take on a bullying role to achieve a sense of belonging or to avoid being a victim themselves.
When working with cadets who bully, leaders should recognise that those cadets are likely to have significant needs themselves.

**Indicators**

As cadets are sometimes unlikely to tell someone if they are being bullied, it is important to look out for any changes in behaviour or presentation. Any change in behaviour that indicates fear or anxiety may be an indicator of bullying. Cadets may also want to avoid events, activities and even places they had previously enjoyed. Changes in attitude towards VPCs or organised activities are particularly significant.
Behaviour in cadets such as:

- Being frightened of walking to and from cadets and changing their usual route
- Feeling ill
- Nonattendance
- Beginning to perform poorly
- Coming home regularly with clothes and social media tools damaged
- Becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence, being distressed and anxious and stopping eating
- Self-harming
- Attempting or threatening suicide
- Crying themselves to sleep, having nightmares
- Having their possessions go missing
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully) or continually 'losing' their higher value items e.g., phone, iPads etc.
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches
- Beginning to bully other children/siblings
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable
- Becoming anxious or obsessive about computer or mobile phone use.

These should all be taken seriously, and the behaviour discussed between parents/carers and schools.

## Appendix C - Radicalisation

**Partnership Working**

Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018 specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB), or Safeguarding Partnerships Boards should be commissioning and providing services for children who are likely to suffer, or may have suffered significant harm, due to radicalisation and extremism.

The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (Sections 36 to 41) set out the duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel programme of 'Channel panels' to provide support for people, children and adults, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm.
Since Channel is designed to support and prevent young people and adults most vulnerable to being radicalised or involved in extremism, Channel referrals should therefore be a priority for local authority and other statutory partners in all their work to safeguard vulnerable individuals. Channel should be considered alongside early intervention measures such as work undertaken to support and divert young people from anti-social behaviour, gangs, alcohol/ substance misuse and diversion from offending.

Both an awareness of 'Prevent' and an understanding of its aims are vital to the effective management of risk to vulnerable people of getting involved with terrorism and/or extremism. Professionals can help to identify and to refer to the relevant agencies, children whose behaviour suggests that they are at risk of or being drawn into terrorism or extremism.

Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadet Programme can help to protect children and young people from extremism and extremist views in the same ways that they help to safeguard children from drugs, gang violence, bullying or alcohol and the work schools undertake on the 'Prevent' agenda needs to be seen in this context. The purpose must be to protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and our values.

**Understanding and Recognising Risks and Vulnerabilities of Radicalisation**

**Principles**

A Child is defined in the Children Acts (1989 & 2004) as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. For the purpose of this guidance, reference to child or children includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

Children can be drawn into violence or exposed to the messages of extremism by many means. These can include the influence of family members or friends, direct contact with extremist

groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet; placing the child at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and the potential to cause significant harm.

Circumstances can make some children more vulnerable to being drawn into groups or being influenced by individuals who advocate violence as a means to a political or ideological end.

Examples of groups that have used violence to achieve their ends include animal rights, the far right, internal and international terrorist organisations and some fundamentalist faith groups.

Most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in extremism but a range of factors can increase and influence those behaviours that are defined as extremism. It is important to consider these factors in order to develop an understanding and recognise the risk factors alongside those factors that build resilience and protect individuals from extremist activity.

Many factors that increase a young person's likelihood of becoming radicalised are from the same as those seen in mainstream safeguarding and include:

- Family tensions;
- Sense of or experience of social isolation;
- Migration and distance from cultural heritage;
- Experience of racism or discrimination;
- Feeling of failure;
- Being excluded from social and peer networks etc.

Those in the process of being radicalised or drawn into extremist behaviour may:

- Be involved with a new group of friends;
- Be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Be searching for a sense of belonging;
- Possess extremist literature or advocate violence actions;
- Change their behaviour and language;
- Seek to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

It is important to note that children experiencing these situations or exhibiting such behaviours are not necessarily showing signs of being radicalised and could be signs indicative of alcohol or drug misuse, family breakdown, domestic violence, bullying etc. or something more minor such as peer conflict. Caution should therefore be exercised when assessing these factors to avoid wrongly labelling or stigmatising individuals. Professionals who have contact with vulnerable individuals must therefore be able to recognise those vulnerabilities and help promote young people making safe choices.
Some may be at greater risk due to living with or being in close contact with known extremists or adults with extreme views. Such children may be identified by the police or through Multi Agency

Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA**)** processes, allegations against professionals, police enquiries or via Safeguarding Investigations and Child Protection Conference systems.

The purpose of the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) framework is to reduce the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders in order to protect the public, including previous victims, from serious harm.

The responsible authorities in respect of MAPPA are the Police, Prison and Probation Services who have a duty to ensure that MAPPA is established in each of their geographic areas and to undertake the risk assessment and management of all identified MAPPA offenders (primarily violent offenders on licence or mental health orders and all registered sex offenders).

The Police, Prison and Probation Services have a clear statutory duty to share information for MAPPA purposes. Other organisations have a duty to co-operate with the responsible authority, including the sharing of information. These include:

- Local authority children, family and adult social care services;
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, other Health Trusts and NHS Executive;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Youth Offending Teams;
- Local Housing Authorities;
- Registered Social Landlords with accommodation for MAPPA offenders.

**Vulnerability/ Risk Indicators**

The following lists are not exhaustive and vulnerable children / young people experiencing these factors are not automatically at risk of exploitation for the purposes of extremism. The complex relationships between circumstances and aspects of an individual's identity may however combine to increase vulnerability to extremism. Over-simplified assessments e.g. based upon demographics and poverty indicators tend to increase victimisation, fail to identify vulnerabilities and, in some cases, increase the potential for extremists to exploit, operate and recruit.

There is no such thing as a 'typical extremist' and those involved in extremism come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. The following indicators have been provided to help understand and identify factors that may suggest an individual is more vulnerable to extremism.

**Vulnerability**

The following factors may increase an individual's vulnerability:

- **Identity Crisis** - Being alienated from cultural and or religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in society, their community or their family;
- **Personal Crisis** - Family tensions; isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group, becoming involved with a new groups or friends; questioning faith or belonging;

- **Personal Circumstances -** Migration; community tension; events in country of origin; rejecting UK values; grievances triggered by experience of racism or discrimination;
- **Unmet Aspirations -** Perceptions of injustice; feelings of failure; rejection of civic life; lack of life chances;
- **Criminality -** Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement/reintegration, involvement with criminal groups.

**Access to extremism / extremist influences**

The following sets of questions are helpful in assessing an individual's vulnerability factors:

- Is there reason to believe that the child/young person associates with known extremists - either through direct association with known individuals or by frequenting key locations? (e.g. in a relationship with someone linked with extremist activity);
- Does the child/young person access internet sites linked to extremist activity? (e.g. Closed network groups, extremist material, contact associates; or does the young person covertly contact risky individuals via Skype/email etc.);
- Is it believed that the child/young person has been to or contacted extremist/ military training camps/ locations?
- Is the child/young person known to have possessed or sought out extremist literature or other media likely to incite racial/ religious hatred or acts of violence?
- Does the child/young person express sympathy or support for illegal/illicit groups;
- Is the young person involved with propaganda distribution, fundraising, attendance at meetings?

**Experiences, Behaviours and Influences**

- Has the child/ young person encountered peer, social, family or faith group rejection?
- Is there evidence of extremist ideological, political or religious influence on the child from within or outside UK?
- Have international events in areas of conflict and civil unrest impacted on the child/ young person resulting in a noticeable change in behaviour? N.B. we must differentiate between acceptable emotional responses or verbal sympathy being articulated and genuine support for extremist activity;
- Are there noticeable changes in behaviour or appearance indicative of political or religious influence?
- Has the child/ young person come into conflict with family over religious beliefs/lifestyle/ dress choices?
- Does the child/ young person express support for terrorist attacks; either verbally or in written work?
- Has the child/ young person witnessed, perpetrated or been victim of racial or religious hate crime?

**Travel**

- Is there a pattern of regular or extended travel indicative of links with extremist training or activity?
- Has the child/ young person travelled for extended periods outside the UK to locations linked to extremism?
- Has the young person used any ploys to disguise their true identity?
- Has the child/ young person used documents or cover to support this e.g. passports, social network ID?

**Social Factors**

- Does the child/ young person have experience of poverty, disadvantage, discrimination, social exclusion?
- Does the child/ young person experience a lack of meaningful employment appropriate to their skills?
- Does the young person lack affinity or empathy for others, or is isolated from peer groups?
- Does the young person demonstrate identity conflict or confusion normally associated with youth development?
- Does the child/ young person have any learning difficulties/mental health support needs?
- Does the child/ young person demonstrate simplistic, skewed or flawed understanding of religion or politics?
- Does the child/ young person have insecure, chaotic, conflicted, displaced or absent family relationships?
- Has the young person experienced trauma in their lives, particularly associated with war or sectarian conflict?
- Does a significant adult, friend, role model or other have extremist view or sympathies?

## Appendix D - Incident Reporting Form

Merseyside Volunteer Police Cadets

**Safeguarding Reporting Form**

Guidance for handling a Disclosure or Concern:

- Take all complaints, allegations or suspicions seriously
- Ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the person affected
- Stay calm, and offer support and reassurance to the person making the disclosure
- Do not make any promises regarding confidentiality
- Listen, keep questions to a minimum, make brief but careful notes and check the person affected agrees with them (where applicable)
- Explain what you will do
- Do not investigate

| **Details of person at risk** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of young person/adult | | Date of birth | |
| Address | | Contact details | |
| Parent/carer/emergency contact name and contact details | | Other staff/volunteers aware of concern | |
| **Do these concerns relate to a specific incident/disclosure?**<br>**If YES complete Section A; If NO, omit section A and move straight to Section B** | | | |
| **Section A** | | | |
| Date and time of incident/disclosure | | Location of incident/disclosure | |
| Was disclosure made to you or someone else? | | Other persons present | |
| **Section B** | | | |
| Details of concern/incident/disclosure *(dates, times, descriptions of events, full names and whether the information is first hand or the accounts of others; try to use exact wording if possible)* | | | |
| | | | |
| Date and time of disclosure/incident: | | | |
| Are there any injuries as a result of the concern *provide details* | YES/NO | | |
| Are any other young people/adults involved, aware of the concern or | YES/NO | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| potentially at risk? *Please provide details* | | | |
| Is an immediate referral required? | YES/NO | Give details of any action taken | |
| Give details who referral has been made to *(What was discussed? Agreed outcomes? Further actions; by whom?)* | | | |
| **Your details** | | | |
| Your Name | | Your role | |
| Date form completed | | Your contact details | |
| Safeguarding officer concern reported to | | Signed | |

***Please send this form to Safeguarding.Referrals@Merseyside.police.uk***

| **To be completed by designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding officer** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Action taken by DSL/safeguarding officer: *include measures to support/safeguard individual/s who are making referral* | | | |
| Full name | | Date | |
| Signature | | | |
| Further action taken by DSL: | | | |
| Full name | | Date | |
| Signature | | | |
| Referred to National VPC Safeguarding Manager: | | | |
| Full name | | Date | |
| Signature | | | |