

PARTICIPATION IN ACTION



Police cadets scheme builds young people's self-esteem

Provider North Yorkshire Police

Name North Yorkshire Voluntary Police Cadets

Summary Young people at the voluntary police cadets in North Yorkshire are helping to better the community through social action

Young people and police do not always see eye to eye. Young people sometimes think the police tarnish them all as troublemakers. In return, the police are sometimes hampered by a criminal justice system that prioritises punishment over resolving disputes without the need for formal action.

In an effort to bridge the gap between young people and police in North Yorkshire, the first Voluntary Police Cadet (VPC) unit was established in York in September last year. Not only has it helped to improve relations, the 36 young cadets have also gained a range of skills thanks to being involved in social action activities in the community.

Martin McLachlan, volunteer North Yorkshire Police Force VPC co-ordinator, was put in charge of setting up North Yorkshire VPC unit more than two years ago. He says the unit's members, who are aged between 14 and 16, meet once a week for two hours to learn about policing duties and skills, and basic law. The young people also take part in a range of physical exercises and drills.

In addition to attending meetings, the young people are also expected to volunteer for at least three hours a month by contributing towards local community policing objectives such as assisting with events, supporting the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams and helping as role-play volunteers in the training of student police officers.

“The whole thing is about developing confidence, self-esteem, and building up characteristics that will benefit them”

Martin McLachlan, volunteer North Yorkshire Police Force VPC co-ordinator



Cadets read their oath at passing out

McLachlan says that the young people do not do normal police patrolling but by helping at enclosed events under supervision the young people can get a taste of what it is like to be a police officer. The cadets recently attended a popular local farming event in which they carried out a number of different duties from supervising access onto the farm areas to helping find lost items – and children.

“Parents reported to the cadets that they had lost their children

and then under our supervision we got them to do a search of the event area and they were successfully found,” McLachlan explains.

The cadets have also recently taken part in a three-month project with their Neighbourhood Policing Teams called Operation Joypad. Neighbourhood officers and the cadets went out to different homes to identify “insecure premises” and advise the owners of how they can reduce the chance of having their properties burgled.

McLachlan says that it is not just the community that benefits from the VPCs as the young people themselves get to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, as well as build a record of their service work. “When they go for an interview they have something tangible that they can say this is what I have achieved,” he adds.

“The whole thing is about developing confidence, self-esteem, and building up characteristics that will benefit them, regardless of whether they go into the police force or not.”

A passing out parade is also held for the young people who complete their 12-week induction training, where they get to take the cadet oath in front of their family and friends.

Voluntary Police Cadets have been in existence for nearly 30 years, and McLachlan believes there is sufficient interest in the region for dozens more units to be established in the coming years, but that any decision would need to be made by chief officers.

North Yorkshire Police is setting up a new unit in Scarborough, with the recruitment stage now open until the end of July and the unit, which will have 20 cadets, due to open in September.

More from <https://northyorkshire.police.uk/jobs/cadets/>

By Adam Offord

My Life

Miguel Pina, 17,
London

I've got a conditional offer to study drama at university and it's the first time I've left home. It's exciting but I'm worried about money. There is a lack of information and detail about what university will actually be like. Our sixth form took part in a financial education programme called Uni Dosh, run by MyBnk, that helps young people in some of London's poorest boroughs to find out about student finance and the types of support available.

Before the project, I felt like I was making decisions without thinking them through - that I wouldn't be entitled to bursaries, special scholarships or hardship funds and I misunderstood loan repayments. I know I'll have to do a lot of low-paid and unpaid work to become an actor and I'm taking on a part-time job. But, I thought, as a student, I wouldn't have to pay any tax. MyBnk schooled me on that and self-assessment. I now have the right information at the right time to make clued-up decisions about my future and revisit some old decisions.

In the programme I took the lead in a team that was given a £1,000 “moving in” budget and kitted-out our flat. It allowed me to understand the importance of saving money and what it'll be like on my own - having to pay for things like food, rent and covering emergencies - things I'd never thought of before.

