I am absolutely delighted to be launching the first ever Volunteer Police Cadet programme in Essex. I very much look forward to welcoming its first participants and watching them grow through the programme. Having worked with volunteer police cadets in London I am continually inspired by the contribution young people from all communities make, and am excited by the opportunity this programme provides us to improve our understanding of, and response to the needs of young people in Essex.

Although this programme is open to all young people, it is right that we prioritise the opportunities it offers for those who need them most. That’s why this programme will specifically look to include young people who may be vulnerable or at-risk, including those who have already been engaged with the criminal justice system. This programme will provide a safe environment in which young people from all backgrounds can develop, build confidence and key life skills, and make a meaningful and lasting contribution to safety in their communities. I extend my sincere thanks to all those volunteers involved in delivering this programme both from within Essex Police and our communities. I know that Essex will be a stronger and safer county for it.

Stephen Kavanagh
Chief Constable
The Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) is a national uniformed voluntary youth organisation, supported by the Police, and open to young people aged 13 -18 from across the UK’s diverse communities, irrespective of their background or financial circumstances, and including those vulnerable to crime or social exclusion.

Launching in 2015, the Volunteer Police Cadet programme in Essex aims to reduce youth vulnerability to crime and provide an opportunity for young people to participate positively in their communities.

This is achieved through promoting a practical understanding of policing amongst young people, & supporting local policing priorities through volunteering.

The Volunteer Police Cadet programme offers you a fantastic variety of opportunities, including access to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and will help to prepare you for your future by providing a range of activities and opportunities to develop qualifications, enhance inter-personal skills and confidence, and achieve a sense of pride through supporting community policing.

If you want to help improve your local community, have an interest in finding out more about how the Police work, or the law, the VPC is for you.
Essex Volunteer Police Cadet scheme is open to young people between the ages of 13-18 years, resident or at school in the town of their local Unit.

Due to its success and popularity the VPC is usually oversubscribed. Priority is given to applicants who are in most need of access to the programme, but waiting lists are held and places offered as they become available.

The VPC in Essex is new and expanding – please see the Essex Police website for details of your nearest Unit.

For further information please contact VPC Inspector Emma Matthews: volunteer.police.cadets@essex.pnn.police.uk
Is VPC only for people that want a career with the police?

NO! This is a common misconception about the Police Cadets. The VPC has the aim of developing a practical understanding of policing amongst young people which obviously attracts young people who have an interest in this area. However, young people join us for many different reasons & many just to be able to work in their communities, or gain awards and qualifications.

Will I get a uniform?

Yes, the Volunteer Police Cadets is a uniformed youth group and the uniform is part of our identity as part of the extended Policing family.

Who can become a volunteer police cadet?

The Volunteer Police Cadets is for young people between 13 and 18 years old. At 18 you are eligible to become a Cadet Leader. You will also have access to other volunteering opportunities to support your local community.

Where are cadets held?

Cadet meetings are held in community premises such as schools and colleges.

How much does it cost?

Cadets may be asked to pay a small weekly “subs”, usually in the region of £2. This money is only ever used for purchasing equipment or events that directly benefit the Cadets. Personal financial circumstances will be considered when applying this.
I’m over 18 what else can I do?
Once you are 18 you can volunteer as a Cadet Leader or apply for other volunteering roles, including the Special Constabulary. For details of this please see our Volunteering Brochure (link).

Can I still join if I have been in trouble with the police?
Yes, depending on the seriousness of the trouble you have been in.

The VPC tries to be an all-inclusive programme and will support young people who want to make a change. If you have made a decision that you want to choose a different path we will do everything we can to support you. We obviously have a duty of care to the other young people we work with and our Volunteer Leaders. As representatives of the Police service we also need young people who represent our values.

Will being a VPC help me join the police service?
The Volunteer Police Cadets is not a direct entrance scheme into the Police Service. The VPC will, however, give you an insight into policing, build your employability skills and will help you to make informed career choices.

How often do I have to attend?
Most Units meet every week in term time & it is expected that you will attend as many sessions as you can. Education will always come first however.

There is an expectation that all members of the organisation will volunteer 3 hours per month, on average, outside of weekly meetings.
**What kind of volunteering will we do?**

The Volunteer Police Cadets take part in many and varied volunteering events, from local community based activities to occasions with a national and even international audience. Some activities that we have been involved in recently include:

- Independent Advisory Groups – advising police on youth issues and concerns
- Community Speedwatch schemes
- Crime prevention stands – informing the community of simple ways to stay safe.
- Marching in / route lining for local parades (i.e. remembrance events)
- Stewarding local events such as award ceremonies
- Assisting in the provision of activities for special needs children
- Community gardening
- Street Surveys – assisting police with large scale questionnaires
- Dynamic problem-solving projects to support improvements to community safety.