

Debate



Does the culture of the ACF provide adequate safeguarding for its adult and cadet members?



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▶ YES

Being a Unit Commander, a primary school teacher and a parent, safeguarding of children and young people is extremely important to me. Having been trained and regularly updated by the education authority, I believe that the ACF is providing a culture of safeguarding for cadets and CFAVs more than adequately. From the robust familiarisation processes, PI training and Frimley Park courses, to the annual update presentations by the County Commandant and the opportunity for both cadets and CFAVs to have independent listeners available, a cohesive network of support and advice is clearly in place. All of this has also been reinforced by the safeguarding briefings that took place in the summer.

▶ YES

We are very well supported in Lincolnshire ACF by our CEO, Major David Mullock, in regard to safeguarding. Although we are a rural county, we can certainly not be complacent in any shape or form. We receive updates from the CEO on any training opportunities from organisations outside of our own. We also receive mandatory safeguarding training, study days from outside agencies and support from our own staff, several of whom work in this field. The only area we can improve on is similar training for our senior cadets, 16+, as they go into society, work, etc. It is our duty to inform them of the dangers as they go into adulthood.

▶ MAYBE

Implementation of a safeguarding policy alone will not provide our CFAVs with the skills required to provide adequate safeguarding; and what is adequate anyway? At present only the CEO has had training to be the focus for safeguarding issues. There ought to be at least two adults trained, in order to provide cover at all times and share the workload. We tend to focus on sexual abuse and bullying, but there is little recognition of neglect, and a reluctance to deal with this aspect of safeguarding.

We are still coming to terms with the complexities of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), which changed in June this year. The process for referral of adults dismissed because of inappropriate behaviour should be mandatory. Furthermore, since cadets can continue until 18 years 9 months, and anyone over the age 18 is considered an adult in the eyes of the law, why do we not subject any cadet over the age of 18 to a DBS check?

It is reassuring to see that we are moving forward in terms of safeguarding; however, it is a complex area and should not only focus on the delivery of safeguarding training. We need to know who we get guidance from when dealing with problems – i.e. who is our subject matter expert (SME) within the ACF – and anomalies such as those caused by having cadets over the age of 18 should be addressed.

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