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# **National Police Chiefs' Council Police Dog Standard [Consultation]**

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## 1 Introduction

The National Police Chiefs' Council Police Dog Standard sets out the nationally agreed minimum standards for all police forces and their Chief Constables who have police dog units. The document sets out how dog units will carry out the day-to-day functions of their unit including, but not limited to training, welfare, deployment, staffing, health and safety, procurement and retirement and record keeping. It sets out the police's use of police dogs in a wider context to general policing activity.

The document is aimed at Chief Constables, all police officers or staff who train, care for, or deploy police dogs. It should be read in conjunction with individual force police dog Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA's), the Police Dog APP and National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme.

Any Chief Constable who determines it necessary to deviate from the requirements in this Standard and issue separate instructions, due to the operational context or legal provisions appertaining in a specific jurisdiction, should ensure that this decision aligns to their Police Dog Strategic Risk Assessment (STRA) and that the rationale is recorded.

## **2 Updating and Review of the NPCC Police Dog Standard**

The body responsible for the development and management of content is the NPCC Police Dog Policy Subgroup, on behalf of the NPCC Police Dog Working Group (PDWG), or any successor body designated by them.

Where forces identify issues with existing tactics, procedures, or capabilities, in either operations or training, they must consult with the PDWG, and the standard may be reviewed by the policy subgroup.

Amendments to the Standard follow an appropriate consultation process as agreed by the PDWG.

### **2.1 Management and maintenance**

The Police Dog Policy Subgroup manages and maintains the Standard on behalf of the PDWG. The review and maintenance processes follow a procedure agreed by NPCC Police Dog portfolio lead and the PDWG.

### **2.2 Agreed mechanism for management and maintenance**

The below is the agreed mechanism for management and maintenance of the Standard;

There will be two types of reviews of the Standard which will take place; *Scheduled* and *Triggered*.

#### **2.2.1 Scheduled Reviews**

The Standard will undergo a 12 monthly review. This will be led by the NPCC Police Dog Policy Lead.

#### **2.2.2 Triggered Reviews**

Triggered reviews will take place between scheduled reviews where necessary. This could be following an operational incident, training incident, misconduct investigation, inquiry, or court case (this list is not exhaustive).



This guidance will be reactive to time critical, urgent requirement for reviews and updates.

### **3 Legislation and Policing Standards**

#### **3.1 Legislation**

Legislation relevant to dog units is contained within the Police Dog APP. Chief Constables will ensure their respective dog units comply with the legislation as outlined in the Police Dog APP.

#### **3.2 Policing Standards**

Police dog handlers and police dog units must ensure that their decision making, advice, conduct and actions are in accordance with the:

- **Code of Ethics**
- **Standards of Professional Behaviour**

Officers in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are under a duty to act in accordance with the **PSNI Police Code of Ethics**. Article 4 of the Code of Ethics focuses on the use of force and the responsibilities of those in command.

In Scotland officers must comply with the **Police Service of Scotland (Conduct) Regulations 2013**.

## **4 Welfare and Care of Police Dogs**

The welfare of all police dogs must be at the forefront of every decision made around their care, training, and deployment, when on and off duty.

The health and welfare of police dogs when off duty is not only paramount from a moral and ethical perspective, but is crucial to providing an efficient, effective, and sustainable service. Chief Constables must ensure operational duties do not compromise the general welfare and care of the dogs.

Further details around individual forces and their dogs can be found in the relevant police forces' Standard Operating Procedures in relation to the health and welfare of police dogs.

All persons who work with or have contact with police dogs must adhere to the current **Animal Welfare Legislation**. Section 2.2 of the Police Dog APP provides additional guidance.

### **4.1 Reporting of welfare concerns**

#### **4.1.1 Veterinary Reporting mechanisms**

Chief Constables should have a policy in place that allows and encourages veterinary surgeons to report to the Chief Constable any concerns they may have with regards to the police dogs.

Veterinary surgeons should be reminded that although other police employees may oversee the day-to-day welfare of the police dog, the owner of the police dog remains the Chief Constable.

#### **4.1.2 Internal reporting mechanisms**

Chief Constables should have procedures in place which enable police officers and support staff to report concerns regarding unprofessional behaviour so as to secure the welfare of police dogs and ensure any mistreatment is identified

and dealt with promptly. This can be through their forces Professional Standards Department, or as a bespoke system within the dog unit.

## 4.2 Duty of Care

All police dogs are officially owned by the Chief Constable of that particular force, regardless of where the dog resides.

In **L v CPS 174 JP 209 DC and Regina v Huddart [1999] 2 Archbold News 1, CA** it was deemed that more than one person can be “in charge” of a dog. The owner of the dog is not in charge of it, if they can prove at the time that they reasonably believed the person who was in charge of it to be a fit and proper person. In addition, **section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006** sets out responsibility for animals, whether on a permanent or temporary basis.

Whilst ownership of a police dog remains that of the Chief Constable, responsibility for a police dog is deferred to those police officers and staff in charge of the dog.

All police dogs must be treated as individuals, with individual care managed to ensure all their needs are met to ensure a long and fulfilling life as a police dog. Individual needs should be recorded within their dog personal file.

## 4.3 Off duty care

A dog handler or member of staff employed by the police are responsible for caring for a given dog in their charge. Should a dog handler not be in a position to exercise or care for the police dog personally, then arrangements should be made for the dog to be kennelled as per the individual force’s policy and procedure.

A kennel collar and/or some other form of identification must be worn by the dog when kennelled at the handlers' home, or at designated police or private kennels.

A dog handler must report any complaint by members of the public to their line manager as soon as practicable, including where it is known or believed to relate to the keeping of a police dog at home (e.g., the dog barking). The report should outline the circumstances of the complaint and be submitted to the **nominated officer**. Consideration should be had for early consultation with the relevant local authority around noise complaints as they may be able to suggest reasonable actions and responses to resolve any potential dispute. Forces should consider requests made by a handler to take the dog away over night from its approved residence.

It is recognised that police dog handlers are in a unique situation since they are charged with the care of their police dog(s) both on and off duty. A variety of off duty incidents can occur, and consideration should be given to a handlers work/duty status and their fitness to perform the tasks involved effectively, and without risk to their police dogs, own or others' health and safety when off duty.

It is also recognised that at times, authorised persons other than the handler (kennel assistants, instructors, other handlers, etc) will need to be in control of the police dog when in public.

Although there remains an expectation for handlers to exercise their dogs in public, the safety of both handler and public must remain the priority. Dynamic risk assessments must always be completed by handlers when the potential for risks exist, with due diligence and the utilisation of the **NDM** being applied throughout the duration of the exercising. For more commonly used areas, a

formalised written risk assessment will be considered in line with individual force SOP's, policies and procedures.

Every opportunity must be taken to minimise risk associated with potential contact between the police dog and members of the public regardless of whether on or off duty.

The person in charge of a police dog at that time, must be able to account fully for actions. This person will have received both classroom and practical instruction as defined by individual force policies, procedures and SOPs on the correct identification of risk factors from the dog and the environment, and how to effectively minimise and mitigate those risks. This person's training, competence, and experience must be evidenced in their professional portfolio.

The following cases highlight the need for correct training and risk assessments to all staff given the responsibility of exercising police dogs:

- **JANICE FLYNN v. LOTHIAN AND BORDERS POLICE [2010] 8 WLUK 7**
- **Merseyside Police Authority v Police Medical Appeal Board & Ors [2009] EWHC 88 (Admin)**

The majority of police dogs, when not working reside with their handlers. If an officer stays away overnight from home, they must put their police dog into a nominated kennel in accordance with their individual force policies and procedures. Individual forces set an annual allowance for the number of nights dogs are permitted to be kennelled.

There are two types of nominated kennels for police dogs, which include:

- Police boarding kennels: These are for housing dogs when they are not with their handlers. These kennels may be commercial boarding kennels

or may be purpose built kennels on police premises run and managed by police members of staff.

- Police kennels at the handler's homes: These are where the police dog goes to rest and relax when not with the handler. Whether that be for exercise, bonding, training, or operationally deployed. These kennels are purpose and professionally built to ensure the wellbeing of the police dogs.

#### 4.3.1 Police boarding kennels

Police boarding Kennels do not fall within the scope of **The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018**. Forces will fall under this definition if they breed and sell puppies whilst making a profit, or charge for the use of their kennels.

Police boarding kennels that do not come under the scope of **The Animal Welfare (Licensing of activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018** must abide by the **NPCC Police Dog Welfare Standard**.

All Police boarding kennels built after [DATE TO BE AGREED] must ensure within the business case for the kennel building, the following **guidance** has been considered.

Chief Constables should ensure they have a SOP for the day-to- day running of police kennels.

All police boarding kennels must have risk assessments completed with regards animal safety and welfare. These will be recorded and retained by the nominated officer.

All police boarding kennels must have maintenance records that will detail all damages noted and repairs completed. The kennel manager must also complete

regular safety checks. The intervals of safety checks will be determined by individual force policies and procedures but must be capable of identifying new damage which pose a risk to dog welfare.

#### **4.3.2 Police kennels at the handler's home**

The kennel must be large enough to allow each dog (if more than one dog in the kennel) to be able to walk, turn around and wag their tail without touching the sides of the kennel. The dog must also be able to stand on its hind limbs and stretch and lie down in a natural position without touching the sides or another animal. It must also be large enough to allow dogs to interact, play, go to the toilet and feed.

The dog handler should consider variables when identifying the site of the kennel. These include:

- proximity of adjoining property
- footpaths
- rights of way
- potential hazards that may influence its location (e.g., children residing in neighbouring properties)

The site, design and positioning should allow for shade in hot weather and be free from draughts.

Dog handlers are responsible for maintaining adequate boundary security of the property at their own cost to prevent the dog from escaping, or unauthorised persons entering. Boundary security can be enhanced by the locking of access gates and solid fencing.

A formal H&S risk assessment must be conducted at the home of a dog handler who has been allocated a police dog, and regular checks as determined by the



force's individual policy and procedures. It remains responsibility of the dog handler to understand and appreciate the conditions and to accept responsibility for the care of the police dog on behalf of the Chief Constable.

The Chief Constable, via the officer in charge of the dog unit, reserves the right to inspect the conditions in which a police dog is being kept, at any reasonable time. If necessary, they can remove that police dog immediately. The use of **Police Authority Animal Welfare Independent Visitor Scheme** is now widely employed to assess, monitor, and ensure any issues around police dog welfare are reported and actioned.

#### **4.4 Transporting police dogs in vehicles**

##### **4.4.1 Police dog vehicle**

Police dog vehicles are specifically adapted for the safety and comfort of the police dog.

There is a duty of care to ensure police dogs are transported in suitable containers and to protect them from injury or unnecessary suffering under as defined under:

- **Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006**
- **Article 4 of Welfare of Animals [Transport] [England] Order 2006**
- **Article 4 of The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) order 2007**
- **The Highway Code (Rule 57)**

The recommended minimum specification for response police dog vehicles outlines the minimum specification of vehicles used to transport police dogs whilst on duty.

All vehicles used for transporting police dogs must have the correct ventilation and temperature control so that the dog remains comfortable inside.

Police dog(s) will not be left in an unattended vehicle unless appropriate measures for their welfare and security have been made. These include:

- water
- temperature control
- ventilation
- prevention of escape and injury to other persons are catered for.

All cages or guards should have securing mechanisms to ensure doors cannot be inadvertently or accidentally opened to prevent injury.

#### **4.4.2 Handlers' personal vehicle**

All police dogs will be carried in a vehicle that prevents them from being thrown forward during braking or in a collision. This may include a properly installed dog guard capable of withstanding the impact of a dog or by the installation of a cage secured within the vehicles load carrying area. Consideration can be given to suitable alternatives, such as purpose made harnesses, that achieve the same safety requirements.

Forces must consider the suitability of the method the dog is being carried in, as well as its welfare and the welfare of the passengers should the dog find the presence of passengers stimulating.

The space required depends on the size and number of dog(s) carried. The space must allow the dog(s) to assume a relaxed position and permit them to turn and reposition themselves at will. The vehicle temperature and ventilation experienced by the dog(s) should be the same as that experienced by the passengers. This ensures the conditions the dog(s) are exposed to can be monitored and adapted where necessary. The vehicle must be well ventilated and kept cool during the journey to not cause distress, suffering or heat stroke which could be fatal. Additional care should be taken where possible to ensure

that the dog(s) are shielded from, or can avoid direct sunlight, which may raise the body temperature. The provision of ventilation should not endanger persons outside the vehicle.

All police dogs should have a comfortable surface to lie on that will ensure they can rest and relax.

Any police dogs left unattended in a handler's own vehicle will be subject to the same, welfare, safety and security provisions as outlined in **4.4.1**.

#### **4.5 Police Dog Individual file**

From all police dogs should have an individual and unique file. Chief Constables should ensure all police dog files are compliant with and detail the minimum standards set out below;

- temperament,
- care requirements,
- training.

This file will accompany the police dog throughout its working life, even if they move to another force and will be referred to as their "police dog file."

Police dog supervisors have responsibility for reviewing police dog individual files. This review will include ensuring full and comprehensive, up to date records are available for inspection by veterinary surgeons, managers, supervisors, instructors, and animal welfare lay-visitors throughout the dog's entire time within the police service.

All records in relation to health and veterinary treatment should be readily available for inspection and should contain details of diagnosis and treatment. Details should include:

- regular weight checks
- worming tablets issued
- flea treatments administered
- record of inoculations

All entries should be time stamped and attributable to the person making the entries. Veterinary surgeons will be encouraged to ask for the record for examination purposes as a matter of course. Any first aid administered that is not the subject of a visit to the veterinary surgeon should be recorded. In these instances, details of the first aid should be brought to the attention of a supervisor who will decide if veterinary intervention is needed and make a written record of their decision and supporting rationale.

Persons inspecting the police dog individual files must log and record the date of the inspection. Supervisors must examine these on a regular basis, and in any case at least once every three months. The force nominated officer is responsible for inspecting the police dog individual files every six months. The file will contain the fullest details available of both dog and handlers as defined in this section (4.5). The nominated officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with this process.

#### **4.5.1 Opening a Police Dog Individual File**

The police dog individual file should be opened and commence from the moment the care of a dog is taken over by a police force. It should start with an initial health and welfare assessment that will detail the dog's condition and the dog's physical, emotional, and psychological needs. It must include any factors or items that help the dog to relax and enjoy its time in police kennels.

Police dogs should be checked by a veterinary surgeon who has experience with police dogs. The initial examination should be within 2 weeks of coming into the

care of a police dog unit. The veterinary surgeon will conduct a full body check to ensure the dog is fit and healthy. This examination will include checks of body weight, skin condition, teeth condition, coat condition, and overall health and temperament. This check will also focus on that particular breed's (or combination of breeds) inherent medical issues as judged by the examining vet. At the end of this examination the veterinary surgeon will confirm whether this dog is a suitable candidate to become a police dog. If the veterinary surgeon decides a dog is not fit or suitable for the life of a police dog, then it should be returned to where it came, or a suitable home. A copy of the veterinary report will be provided to the dog's owner. If the dog is found to be suitable then it should be recorded in the dog's personal file.

The dog's personal file will also contain:

1. name
2. date of birth (if not known approximate to be given)
3. gender
4. breed
5. origin (If bred, by whom. If brought, from whom)
6. background if known (must include any training that has taken place)
7. when they came into the care of a police force
8. whether they are neutered or unneutered
9. microchip or tattoo number
10. general temperament
11. kennelling details (which will include what environmental enrichments they require whilst in kennels and the level of other dogs/persons contact they prefer)
12. specific welfare needs
13. full medical and vaccination history

14. full training history
15. full history of significant deployments
16. date and location of their retirement (when appropriate)
17. date they died (when appropriate)

The dog handler should monitor Sections 10 – 12. Any changes should be immediately brought to the attention of their supervisor for consideration of updating the formal record. These sections should be updated at least every time the dog's living situations changes and should be reviewed at every 6 months by the nominated officer to ensure it best reflects that individual dog's needs.

Section 13 should be updated after every injury or illness incurred and after every vet visit undertaken.

Section 14 should be updated after every training session, and any significant operational deployment that may impact on the dog's ability to safely and efficiently complete its relevant role.

Sections 15 and 16 should be updated when the police dog is no longer on operational duties. More details can be found in the retirement section. Significant deployments should include;

- all police dog bites,
- incidents where the dog has caused injury or damage to a person or property,
- any failed deployments,
- any deployment where a written report was required
- any other deployment as seen necessary by the nominated officer, dog handler, training manager, instructors, or handlers line supervisor.

This list is not exhaustive.

## **5 Dog Unit Staffing**

### **5.1 Job roles**

#### **5.1.1 Dog handler**

Has the majority of contact with the police dog. They take care of the police dog on a daily basis and deploys them operationally. Each dog will have one handler at a time. One handler may handle more than one dog, but dogs will not be routinely handled (in relation to deployments) by multiple people. Handlers will receive specific training in relation to the capability that their dogs are trained in.

#### **5.1.2 Sergeant dog handler**

Supervises the dog handler ensuring that the dog handler is correctly caring for and deploying the police dog. This will be completed by regular one to one meetings, which are recorded as per the individual forces local procedures. Not all forces have dedicated Dog Sergeants, however all have a Sergeant supervisor who is responsible for the handler.

#### **5.1.3 Kennel manager**

In charge of the day to day running of the kennels. They may also have other responsibilities as set out by individual forces.

#### **5.1.4 Kennel assistant**

Take care of the police dogs whilst they are residing in kennels. They will be solely dedicated to this role.

#### **5.1.5 Dog instructor**

Lead the training of the police dog and handler. They conduct the training of police dogs both before they are trained and throughout their career. The instructor will have completed specific training related to the individual



capabilities of the dogs. Instructors can be trained to provide multiple and varying modules of training as per the National Canine Training and Accreditation Standards (NCTAS).

#### **5.1.6 Training manager**

Supervise the dog instructors and manage all aspects of police dog training, risk management and health and safety issues associated with training. Some training managers may also be trained as a dog Instructor. They will ensure the departments training is compliant as per NCTAS standards, the police dog APP, The NPCC Police Dog Standard, individual force policies and STRA.

#### **5.1.7 Nominated officer**

Chief Constables should identify a “nominated officer” who will usually be the head of the dog unit and may also have other responsibilities.

Nominated officers supervise and manage the performance of dog teams in relation to the adherence of the Police Dog APP, NPCC Police Dog Standard and relevant **NCTAS modules**.

Any person completing this role should be able to evidence experience and competence in the use of the **NDM** to make sound and impartial decisions relating to risk management and Use of Force applications. All decision should be clearly recorded with full supporting evidence and rationale and where necessary what subject matter expert advice was sought.

### **5.2 Staff selection**

Chief Constables have the responsibility to decide as to how an individual’s suitability for a particular role is to be assessed.

Within each NCTAS module is a list of attributes deemed necessary for that discipline.

Any process undertaken to assess suitability of an individual must have an objective basis and be included within that force's STRA.

### 5.3 Job Related Fitness tests

All dog handlers must complete the national standard annual fitness test. The requirement for dog handlers is a bleep or shuttle test in which candidates achieve a 5.7 level on a 15-metre shuttle run.

### 5.4 Diversity Equality and Inclusion

Chief Constables must comply with their Public Sector Equality Duty, under the Equality Act 2010.

### 5.5 Training Policy/ Continuous Professional Development

By [DATE TO BE AGREED] all Chief Constables should ensure their police dog units have a training policy for any person who could be required to care for a police dog. The training policy will be recorded as a Continued Professional Development (CPD) Portfolio. This should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated by the nominated officer at least every 12 months and must include:

- annual appraisal
  - evidence of knowledge around enrichment processes and their implementation
  - planned continued professional development
  - recognition of knowledge gaps
  - use of online courses and literature
- evidence of staff attendance or completion of the training must be provided e.g. POPS training, specific training in line with NCTAS modules, H&S training. This list is not exhaustive.

All staff should be trained in aspects of animal welfare or have demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge and experience, as defined by each force's SOPs.

As well as role specific training, each member of staff who may be required to care for the dogs whilst they are in the kennels, should have training that covers the below areas:

- dog welfare, including recognising poor welfare and understanding the welfare needs
- dog handling
- dog behaviour
- cleanliness and hygiene
- feeding and food preparation
- disease control
- recognition and first aid treatment of sick animals

These will include specific packages that may include the below subjects:

- understanding of dog facial and body posture signals
- basic requirements for handling and interacting with dogs in the kennels
- entering and leaving kennels
- fitting and using training and handling equipment on dogs
- taking a dog in and out of kennels
- walking dogs within the premises
- cleaning kennels (behavioural aspects)
- feeding dogs (behavioural aspects)
- dealing with aggressive incidents and dog fights
- recovering a loose dog
- recognising signs of ill health to report to vet
- handling / restraining dogs for vet visits
- taking dogs to the vet clinic
- giving oral medication
- applying topical medication

- recognising behavioural signs of concern to escalate
- understanding behaviour assessment processes
- understanding welfare assessment processes
- understanding types of enrichment used for dogs and how to select the right enrichment for individuals and implement each appropriately
- dog mixing (this means getting dogs to interact with one another safely)
- walking dogs off site
- training for enrichment
- assisting with rehabilitation training
- basic dog grooming and bathing
- puppy rearing
- basic understanding of how dogs learn
- vehicle travel

Chief Constables units must ensure staff are trained to the required standard when utilising the service of a private boarding kennels under the **Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018**.

Private kennel staff should be given further guidance and training around the care and handling of police dogs. If the kennels are police owned, and do not fall within the above remit then the kennel staff should be trained as per the below role profiles.

Training must reflect both the standard of the **Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018** and Professional Policing Profiles where activities of the police kennels fall within the remit of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

## **5.6 Police dog training schools**

Initial formal training of all police dogs must be carried out by a licenced police dog training school by an appropriately accredited NPCC police dog instructor.

## 6 Procurement, Retirement and Euthanasia

### 6.1 Procurement

Police dogs require necessary attributes, these are; health, confidence, and a desire to play/ interact with people. Dogs without these attributes are recognised to not be suited for a life as a police dog.

There are generally two ways in which dogs become police dogs:

- raised from a puppy
- procured as an adult dog

Forces should regularly assess their chosen method to ensure the continued welfare of all dogs.

#### 6.1.1 Raised from a puppy

Forces can either breed police dogs, buy puppies from external breeders or they can do a combination of the two. Care should be taken to ensure all puppies are physically and psychologically healthy not only as dogs, but also as candidates to become police dogs.

Any healthy puppies that are bred by police forces but deemed not to be suitable candidates (for whatever reason) should be found suitable homes so that they can lead long and fulfilling lives.

Police forces that consider breeding should seek advice and guidance from other forces that already run successful breeding programmes. This should be done through the police dog working group.

Police forces that breed dogs must comply with **relevant legislation** in relation to the commercial breeding of dogs. The priority of forces should be on providing police dogs of the future and never for the sole goal of monetary gain.

The process of breeding candidate puppies to become police dogs takes thought and planning. Forces may consider before the identification of breeding stock is made:

- research on breeding stock (parents): check pedigree for evidence of; health checks completed (breed specific health checks as listed within Kennel Club Assured Breeder Programme), general health, trainability, previous progeny, known siblings and their progeny (trainability and operational progress of those dogs)
- fertility testing:
- bitch: progesterone testing to be carried out from day 7 of season until mating dog: semen sample to be taken and evaluated before mating
- whelping facilities: Quiet whelping kennel, away from main block (DEFRA guidance complied with on sizes), good security (minimise risk of theft), CCTV (to monitor bitch and pups) and trained staff to cover 24/7 period for at least 3 weeks.
- care of bitch and litter: management of lactating bitch, preparation for supplement feeding with large litters, monitor for signs of ill health, stress, or abnormalities and maintaining bitch at a good weight and minimising stress.
- placement of puppies: identify the requirements of each pup individually. Ensure they are correctly placed in the most suitable minder home (when staying in the system). Ensure suitable home if deemed not potential candidate. If puppies are sold privately ensure homes are correctly vetted and that contracts of sale are completed, as well as guidance provided to

new owner. Breeding restrictions and endorsements will be placed on all pups.

- puppy minder scheme: suitable foster homes need to be sourced and vetted. Full guidance to be given and 24/7 support to be in place. Equipment, food, and veterinary care provided. Boarding of puppy for times when foster home cannot care for the puppy until placement with handler
- adequate biosecurity measures to ensure the risk of disease is at a minimum
- worming bitch through pregnancy and puppies at 2, 5, 8 weeks
- consideration of **Early Neurological Stimulation** handling from day 3-16 of age
- programme for weaning of litter onto solid foods
- Kennel enrichment for puppy development (different sounds/ textures/ surfaces/ smells)
- microchip at 6 weeks
- 1st vaccinations at 7 weeks
- Regular training and assessment to take place.

### 6.1.2 Puppy selection

Chief Constables should have a robust policy in place for the selection of a police dog puppy. This policy should include as a minimum:

Forces must assess puppies to identify their suitability to be a candidate for police dog training before being removed from the litter by:



- Determining the puppies relative desire to:
  1. interact with toys
  2. interact with people
  3. its confidence
  4. its intelligence
- Considering the health of the parents and puppy as well as the ethical standards of the breeder
- Ensuring police forces do not take any action or inaction that could promote poor breeding practices or jeopardise the health of any dogs both now and in the future.
- The absence of any of the above information from private breeders should not, on its own, prevent the puppy becoming a candidate for police work.
- Ensure the puppy's microchip is checked to ensure the correct details
- Having the puppy's health verified by an independent vet within 10 working days.

This should usually take place at around 49 days old. Any person who is unsure around the suitability or implementation of an assessment will consult with an experienced puppy assessor.

### **6.1.3 Procured as a young or adult dog**

Police forces can procure young or adult dogs in two different ways:

- purchased from a private seller
- donated by a rescue or member of the public

Purchasing young or adult dogs generally involve either private, individual, or commercial companies that are in the business of selling potential police dogs. In both cases the health of the dog being offered for sale, as well as the conditions it and any other dogs owned are kept in, are the priority.

The identity of the dog should always be easily verifiable by microchip, tattoo, passport, or relevant paperwork to prevent involvement in any dog theft practices or illegal activity.

Forces should employ appropriate procedures to ensure the dog has the required health and attributes to become a police dog. If any forces or staff are unsure, they will seek guidance from another force who is more experienced in this field.

In addition to physical health, the assessment should aim to ascertain the dog's level of sociability, desire to interact with people and toys, its confidence, and its intelligence.

Chief Constables should ensure they have a suitable assessment process that enables an informed decision to be made around the dog's potential suitability. This should be carried out when the dog reaches the age of 12 months and again at 24 months (unless the dog has begun its training or already accredited) of its ability to fulfil a role as a police dog. This could be any discipline of police dog, such as detection, protection, or general patrol duties.

### **Sociability**

Sociability can be tested in several ways, but ultimately it tests their demeanour around new people in new environments.

## **Temperament**

This looks at the general demeanour, behaviour, and body language of the dogs in as many environments as possible in the short time available to test. This will ideally include behaviour in kennelled environments, exiting and entering vehicle kennels, muzzle acceptance and veterinary manipulation.

## **Environmental**

How the dog copes with different/new environments in all disciplines (e.g., bite work, search work, control work and agility).

## **Search work**

This test's the drive of the dog to work, it also works hand in hand with sociability and temperament. Seeing how the dog leaves its toy and how it reacts to frustration on delayed retrieves.

## **Bite work (if appropriate)**

This is tested in as many environments as possible. A certain amount of pressure is applied to the dog in different scenarios to test the dog's willingness to maintain a firm bite on.

All the areas are scored 1-5. 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest.

The highest scoring dogs after an initial phase of testing should go on to the next phase and be further tested over a longer period. These tests may include:

- muzzle acceptance
- lifting and handling over of dogs
- kennel environment (if kennelled)
- reaction to new people walking and working the dog
- new environments

Tests should be set out to show what the dog is capable of and not what it isn't. Experienced police dog instructors should be able to set appropriate tests that are not beyond the individual dog's ability.

If at any time a dog shows any sign of undue discomfort or stress, for any reason, all testing must stop immediately, and the dog will be encouraged to return to a calm state.

Whenever forces consider purchasing dogs by any means, or any other items, they must abide by Public Sector Procurement rules which are governed by the **Public Contracts Regulations 2015**. These regulations contain the stipulations/rules for public sector purchasing. Police forces must also consider and abide by their own force policies around purchasing.

Forces should consider clauses within the contract that allow, within a suitable time, for the dog to be returned to the previous owner should it prove unsuited to police dog life.

When buying any adult or young dog, any previous training the dog has or has not had should be considered and how this could affect the dog's ability to successfully become a police dog.

Police forces should consider a dog's early training before purchasing any dog. Dogs that may naturally have the ability to become police dogs can be damaged beyond repair by poor early training. Forces should not attempt to train an unsuitable dog to become a police dog as it can be both unnecessary and cruel.

Many owners who wish to donate their dog to police forces may not have all the paperwork described above. As with purchasing from other sources, this alone should not necessarily mean the dog cannot become a candidate for police work. Forces should ensure that all relevant and proportionate checks are

completed to ensure the dog or owner has not been involved in poor breeding practices or dog theft.

Forces should consider using rescue dogs whenever possible. Many dogs that could be unsuitable for life in a family home can lead long and fulfilling lives as police dogs.

## **6.2 Retirement**

Police dogs are retired when it is clear they no longer enjoy the role, or they are no longer able to carry out the role. This can be due to ability, age, illness, or injury.

Police dogs often retire to live with their handlers as pets. The dog may be re-homed if it is not in the best interests of that particular dog.

From [DATE TO BE AGREED] every time a police dog is retired and re-homed a full and comprehensive handover should be completed between the force and the prospective owner. Chief Constables should have procedures that will evidence how they will ensure that the dog and prospective owner are a good match and the dog's needs can be met, and its welfare ensured. Each new owner will be involved in the formulation of a specific transfer of ownership contract for that particular dog to ensure all its present and future needs are met. The new owner will sign the contract and have their attention drawn to the potential consequences should there be a breach of any terms, or the dog's good welfare is put at risk.

Once the dog's personal file has had all sensitive information redacted, the new owner will be given a summary. This allows the owner to be fully aware of the life the dog has had and what the dog requires in order that its high quality of life can be continued into retirement.

The welfare and financial liabilities for retired police dogs are the responsibility of their new owners. However, there are many retired police dog charities which help and support new owners and dogs during retirement.

### 6.3 Euthanasia

The following section has been formulated with reference to the Euthanasia policy of the RSPCA, ADCH, and The Blue Cross.

The Chief Constable that owns the dog is responsible for the decision around the appropriateness of euthanasia. The nominated officer will be the final decision maker. Any decision to euthanise a police dog will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the individual dog and its particular circumstances.

In every case relating to behavioural issues, this decision will only be made after rehabilitation or rehoming has been explored and a full and thorough examination and review of circumstances carried out to determine the facts surrounding each individual case.

Documentation detailing the rehabilitation considered and the veterinary examinations carried out should be completed and stored within the dog's personal file. This will include what was attempted and what was considered. It should detail why further attempts of rehabilitation will not be attempted and who was consulted in the decision-making process.

The key factors when considering whether euthanasia is necessary should be:

- to prevent further or potential pain or suffering (including mental and emotional)
- if the dog poses an unacceptable risk to people or to other animals
- if quality of life for the dog is compromised, or likely to be compromised, to an unacceptable degree with no realistic prospect of improvement.

Unless in extreme circumstances, euthanasia will only be carried out by or under the direction of a veterinary surgeon using an approved humane method. Euthanasia should be the last resort.

Every organisation involved in the care of police dogs should have a written policy on euthanasia. All decision where a police dog is euthanised must be recorded with supporting, full rationale and what subject matter expert advice was sought.

## **7 Training and accreditation**

### **7.1 The National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme**

The National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme (NCTAS) consists of fifteen individual modules covering information necessary for the selection, training and accreditation of police dogs and handlers in the relevant capabilities currently authorised for deployment in UK policing. All training will comply with the **NPCC Police Dog Training Standard**.

#### **7.1.1 The NCTAS modules**

##### **7.1.1.1 NCTAS Introduction**

The NCTAS Introduction module is the overarching document for the curriculum and provides a single point of reference for curriculum content as well as outlining its purpose, standards of training, curriculum maintenance and information critical to the delivery of police dog training. It should be read by all those involved in the training and deployment of NPCC Police Dogs but is particularly relevant to training managers and nominated officers.

##### **7.1.1.2 NCTAS GPD – General Patrol Dog**

GPD's must be trained to:

- track
- search for persons and property
- detain persons using force
- be under control at all times
- deploy in Public Order Public Safety (POPS) incidents

All general patrol dogs must have a safety element trained for the eventuality of a suspect surrendering, or an innocent person being mistakenly targeted by a Police dog, so that a bite does not occur. They can also be trained in POPS tactics.



### **7.1.1.3 NCTAS FSD – Firearms support dogs**

FSD's must be trained to work alongside firearms officers to provide a contingency for containment, to track subjects across open country, and to search premises to identify, locate and contain subjects.

### **7.1.1.4 Conflict Management Dogs**

CMD's must be trained to work alongside Counter Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFO) to provide a less lethal tactical option to neutralise a threat posed.

### **7.1.1.5 Dedicated protection dogs**

DPD's must be trained to provide a less than lethal option when dealing with non-compliant persons whose detention requires a higher level of force than normally encountered.

### **7.1.1.6 NCTAS DD – Detection Dogs**

Detection dogs are trained to detect the presence of different substances and/or target odours. They must be trained to the standard of NCTAS detection dogs, and the relevant module linked to their capability. Detection dogs may be trained in more than one discipline. NCTAS detention dog training standards include:

### **7.1.1.7 NCTAS DDD – Drugs Detection Dogs**

Drugs detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of a variety of illegal drugs.

### **7.1.1.8 NCTAS FDD – Firearms Detection Dogs**

Firearms detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of a variety of firearms and ammunition.

**7.1.1.9 NCTAS CDD – Currency Detection Dogs**

Currency detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of a variety of currency types.

**7.1.1.10 NCTAS FEDD – Forensic Evidence Detection Dogs**

Forensic evidence detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of blood and/or semen from crime scenes.

**7.1.1.11 NCTAS VDD – Victim Detection Dogs**

Victim detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of deceased persons.

**7.1.1.12 NCTAS DVDD – Drowned Victim Detection Dogs**

Drowned victim detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of drowned persons.

**7.1.1.13 NCTAS DEDD – Digital Evidence Detection Dogs**

Digital evidence detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of a variety of digital devices.

**7.1.1.14 NCTAS EDD – Explosives Detection Dogs**

Explosives detection dogs must be trained to assist in the recovery of a variety of Explosives.

**7.1.1.15 NCTAS PSEDD – People Screening Explosives Detection Dogs**

People screening explosives detection dogs must be trained to scan people for the presence of variety of Explosives.

**7.1.1.16 NCTAS PSDDD – People Screening Drugs Detection Dogs**

People screening drugs detection dog must be trained to scan people for the presence of a variety of illegal drugs.

## 7.2 Police dog fitness training

Police dog fitness should be constantly assessed by the handler, as well as the instructors when conducting formalised training. These requirements and changes should be documented within the dog's personal file. All police dogs are seen by veterinary surgeons at least once a year, where their overall condition and fitness is again assessed, and any proposed training program changes discussed. Training programmes can include a variety of exercises and treatments, including:

- swimming
- physiotherapy
- nose work conditioning
- HIIT training
- hydrotherapy.

These programmes are initially set by the instructors following the consultation with the vet at the Initial Health Assessment, and then updated throughout the dog's life.

## 8 Deployment

The operational deployment and use of dogs in policing has been proven to be effective and useful in the prevention and detection of crime, as well as the protection of vulnerable people. The deployment of police dogs, police decision making, and response should be directed by available information and the assessment of threat.

The **NDM** assists with this decision-making process and provides a structure for documenting decisions and their rationale. All police dog handlers must justify the direct deployment of their police dog by making reference to the NDM, **Code of Ethics** and **ECHR**. This justification will include the rationale of why the objective of the outcome could not be better achieved without the use of the police dog.

### 8.1 Use of police dogs

A Police dogs work alongside a wide range of policing areas and expertise and their deployment is linked within the relevant APPs. Areas of deployment include:

- **armed policing**
- **major investigations and public protection**
- **missing persons**
- **roads policing**
- **stop and Search**
- **investigations**
- **public order public safety**
- **civil emergencies**

Police dogs are an important tool in the detection and prevention of crime, prevention of potential acts of terrorism, and the protection of vulnerable

persons. When suitably trained and accredited, police dogs provide a relatively rapid and accurate means of searching, locating, and detaining persons and/or evidence.

The role of the handler is to direct the dog to which ever task or tasks it has been trained to do, and to combine the behaviour (indication/interest) of the dog, with an assessment of the situation to make an informed judgement on whether the objective of that task can be achieved.

Police dog teams are a valuable asset for most police deployments or operations due to their:

- speed of search and movement
- versatility for work in varied environments
- real-time and precise location of hidden objectives (Objects or persons)
- non-disruptive search technique
- ability to detect and indicate the presence of a wide range of target scents
- the ability to effectively detain and subdue violent or non-compliant suspects whether by their sheer presence or an appropriate use of force

Police dog can be deployed to search within different environments. These include:

- inside and outside of structures
- in urban and rural areas and on routes
- around and inside a range of different vehicles

## **8.2 Deployment categories**

The deployment of police dogs is not always considered for the direct use of force. Whilst it is recognised that a police dog is an animal that has its own decision making process, they are subject to rigorous continual training and

assessment to ensure they are safe, efficient and meet the minimum standards required to work in all operational circumstances.

### **8.2.1 Non “use of force” deployments**

Non “use of force” deployments may include:

- searching for suspects or vulnerable/missing persons
- searching for articles of evidential value
- specialist searches (drugs, explosives, firearms, cadaver, forensic and digital)
- tracking of persons whose location and/or interaction is sought (distinct from direct deployment to apprehend an offender in flight)
- community engagement

Deployments should be managed and rationalised in conjunction with investigations, major investigations and missing persons APP

### **8.2.2 Community engagement**

It is common for police dogs to be deployed for community engagement events. Any deployment at such event should be risk assessed in line with national guidance, Health and Safety legislation and force policy.

### **8.2.3 “Use of force” deployments**

“Use of force” deployments include:

- pursuing and detaining a suspect who is making good their escape
- engaging and detaining a suspect who presents a threat to persons, property or the dog itself
- guarding and escorting suspects after apprehension
- crowd control

Officers should justify the necessity, proportionality and reasonableness of their actions based on their honest and reasonable belief of the facts.. There is not a list of ‘appropriate offences’ for when a police dog might be deployed or not. The test is rather one of necessity and proportionality in those particular set of circumstances to achieve a legitimate objective.

### **8.3 Use of force**

#### **8.3.1 Deploying a police dog to use force against a suspect**

Deploying a police dog to use force against a suspect is likely to place that suspect, and potentially members of the public and police officers under a risk of harm. Wherever possible, trying to prevent such a deployment from taking place must be the primary consideration of the handler.

Chief Constables should ensure all their handlers have a good working knowledge of the NDM. Police dog handlers are accountable for their actions and any force which is used when deploying their police dog. They should be able to articulate the processes involved when recording their rationale following a deployment where there has been a bite by their dog.

Competence in doing so should be recorded within the handler’s CPD.

Dog handlers must give due regard to the purpose and justification of actions and decisions of a deployment. Handlers should consider if the deployment is necessary and balances against threat, risk and harm for which the subject is having (or about to have) force used against them?

If the decision is made to deploy a police dog to use force, it must be proportionate, legal, accountable, necessary and ethical to achieve a legitimate policing objective with due regard for the circumstances. It is important that the risks, geography, population density and continuing surroundings are calculated

to justify legitimacy of actions. Officers should not place pressure on themselves or risk public safety beyond their, or their dog's capabilities.

When deploying a police dog to use force, handlers must comply with use of force legislation as outlined in the Police Dog APP, as well as the Code of Ethics (PSNI Police Code of Ethics in Northern Ireland and Police Service of Scotland (Conduct) Regulations 2013 in Scotland).

Each deployment must be considered on the information and intelligence at hand and measured against the considerations collectively. Decisions should be documented along with the rationale for them.

### **8.3.2 Warning before the use of a police dog**

A handler must call out an appropriate warning before using their dog to detain or search for a person, unless impractical to do so. The warning must be in full to any person who may be within earshot, and who may be affected by the use of the dog.

Where it is not practical or possible to deliver a warning prior to the dog being used or prior to it biting a person, the lack of a warning does not, on its own, make the use of the dog unjustified. The handler should justify their lack of warning, utilising the NDM, in any subsequent police dog deployment report.

In relation to a search, the warning must state that a police officer, with a police dog, is going to conduct a search. It must provide an opportunity for any persons within the search area to make their presence known and should advise all persons to remain still if the dog locates them. The handler should repeat the warning before releasing the dog. This warning must be repeated at appropriate intervals as the search progresses to ensure anyone, who is now within earshot is aware of the dog's presence.



In relation to incidents that may result in the dog biting someone, the warning must state that a police officer, with a police dog is present. It must clearly indicate that the police officer intends to send the police dog to detain the suspect unless the suspect stops what they are currently doing. The handler should repeat the warning before releasing the dog. If circumstances dictate that further or subsequent warnings are possible and necessary, then these will be carried out as appropriate to ensure the minimum level of force to detain the suspect is used.

### **8.3.3 Body Worn Video**

Chief Constable's who issue body worn video devices to dog handlers should ensure there is a robust policy in place for clearly defining when they should be utilised, especially in in 'use of force' deployments.

### **8.3.4 Aftercare**

Police officers have a duty of care for injuries caused by their police dogs. In cases involving the direct deployment of a dog towards a suspect, aftercare may be delayed until after the safe arrest of the suspect.

Due to the risk of infection, all persons bitten should be advised to seek clinical (medical or nursing) attention so that any decision to treat the wound with medication can be made. Advice on pain relief can also be obtained from the health care practitioner.

At the arrival at a police station the custody officer must:

- be notified of the dog bite
- document this within the custody record
- seek clinical attention for the detained person

### **8.3.5 Accidental injury**

Officers may consider a re-association programme for an injured person involving puppies or suitable dogs where an accidental injury is cause. This may:

- reinforce concern shown by police to an injured person
- enable the injured party to regain self-confidence in close proximity of dogs
- assist in cases of civil litigation where costs against police may be influenced by a victim's continued fear of dogs

### **8.3.6 The Police (Conduct Regulation) 2020**

Where an injury or damage has been caused by a police dog, forces will comply with the rules set out by the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 in relation to complaints, death or serious injury (DSI), and Recordable Conduct.

### **8.3.7 Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with a police force that is expressed by or on behalf of a member of the public.

### **8.3.8 Definition on a Death or Serious Injury (DSI) matter**

A DSI matter means any circumstances (unless the circumstances are or have been the subject of a complaint or amount to a conduct matter) in, or as a result of which, a person has died or sustained serious injury and:

- at the time of death or serious injury the person had been arrested by a person serving with the police and had not been released or was otherwise detained in the custody of a person serving with the police or
- at or before the time of death or serious injury the person had contact of any kind – whether direct or indirect – with a person serving with the police who was acting in the execution of their duties and there is an

indication that the contact may have caused – whether directly or indirectly – or contributed to the death or serious injury. However, this sub-category excludes contact that a person who suffered the death or serious injury had whilst they were acting in the execution of their duties as a person serving with the police.

#### **8.3.8.1 Definition of Serious Injury**

Serious injury is defined by **Section 29(1) Part 2 Police Reform Act 2002** as a fracture, a deep cut, a deep laceration or an injury causing damage to an internal organ or the impairment of any bodily function.

#### **8.3.8 Definition of a conduct matter**

A conduct matter is any matter which is not and has not been the subject of a complaint, where there is an indication (whether from the circumstances or otherwise) that a person serving with the police may have committed a criminal offence or behaved in a manner which would justify disciplinary proceedings.

#### **8.3.9 Post Incident Management procedure (PIM)**

Handlers should contact the relevant senior officer for that force if they feel the criteria for a PIM is met. Full details of PIMs and how they can assist can be found in the **PIM APP**.

#### **8.3.10 Review of a dog bite**

Chief Constables must ensure they have systems, policies, and procedures, in place to review all dog bites and dog related injuries or damage.

These systems should employ multi-layered reviews of the circumstances by persons of varying ranks and expertise.

The following process must be adhered to upon receiving information that a police dog has caused injury or damage to a person or property, or is believed to have bitten someone:

- Immediate action will be taken to mitigate the risk of any further damage or injury occurring. The handler will identify themselves and their dog as being a serving police Dog team. All reasonable steps will be taken with regards First Aid if required
- The handler will report the occurrence to a senior officer as defined within the individual force policy, who will determine if any supervisory oversight or action is needed at scene
- The handler will retain, record, and reveal all relevant information relating to the circumstances of the incident for review. (The timing of this process will be governed by the individual force policy and any potential Post Incident Procedure.)
- Any suggestion that the injury or injuries caused could amount to **“Serious Injury”** will be dealt with as per IOPC guidance.
- The circumstances of the incident will be reviewed by a supervisory member of the Dog Unit Training Department. This review will be focused on the actions of the dog and handler in relation to what they are trained to do in line with the relevant NCTAS manual.
- The circumstances of the incident will be reviewed by the dog handler’s line supervisor, and/or other appropriate line manager or subject matter expected as per force policy. This review will be focused on the actions of the handler in relation to whether the force was reasonable and for a legitimate aim.

- Once the reviews have taken place by the training department and line supervisor, the nominated officer will conduct a review considering all the evidence supplied and the opinions detailed within the report. The nominated officer must consider whether the actions were reasonable, proportionate, and necessary. This will then aid them in deciding if the injury or damage caused, or bite inflicted was, justified or unjustified.
- When considering dog bite reports the nominated officer should consider:
  - has the police dog team received, as a minimum, the prescribed number of training hours?
  - whether there is sufficient information to show that the dog was under full control of its handler and is safe to continue to be deployed operationally
  - that prior to deploying the police dog the handler had reasonable grounds for justifying their action
  - that the handler is required to give at least one clear challenge prior to deploying the dog to detain, or search for, a person. If it is not practicable to issue such a challenge the reasons must be recorded
  - that any injury to a person is fully explained and documented by the handler
  - any previous history of bites by the relevant team
- Where the nominated officer determines that further action is appropriate the following options may be considered:
  - withdrawal of the dog and/or handler from operational duties
  - request the dog to be assessed in respect of safety and control by a suitably qualified person

- arrange remedial training with a subsequent re-assessment within a defined and suitable period
- referral to the individual forces Professional Standards department or IOPC as required.
- The nominated Officer should record their decision, together with the supporting rationale, on the original report
- A full record of the occurrence, reviews, and final decision will be retained within the forces Bite recording system and within the dog's training personal file.

## 9 Equipment

All equipment used will be appropriate to the task in hand and used by appropriately trained staff. This will be evidenced within the staff members CPD portfolio.

The safety and welfare of staff and dogs will be at the forefront of every decision made with regards to equipment. Further information on Equipment can be found within Equipment Section of the NCTAS Introduction.

**Appendix**

**NPCC Police Dog Welfare Standard**

**NPCC Police Dog Training Standard**

**Dogs Trust Kennel Building Guidelines**

**Dogs Trust Animal Welfare Scheme**