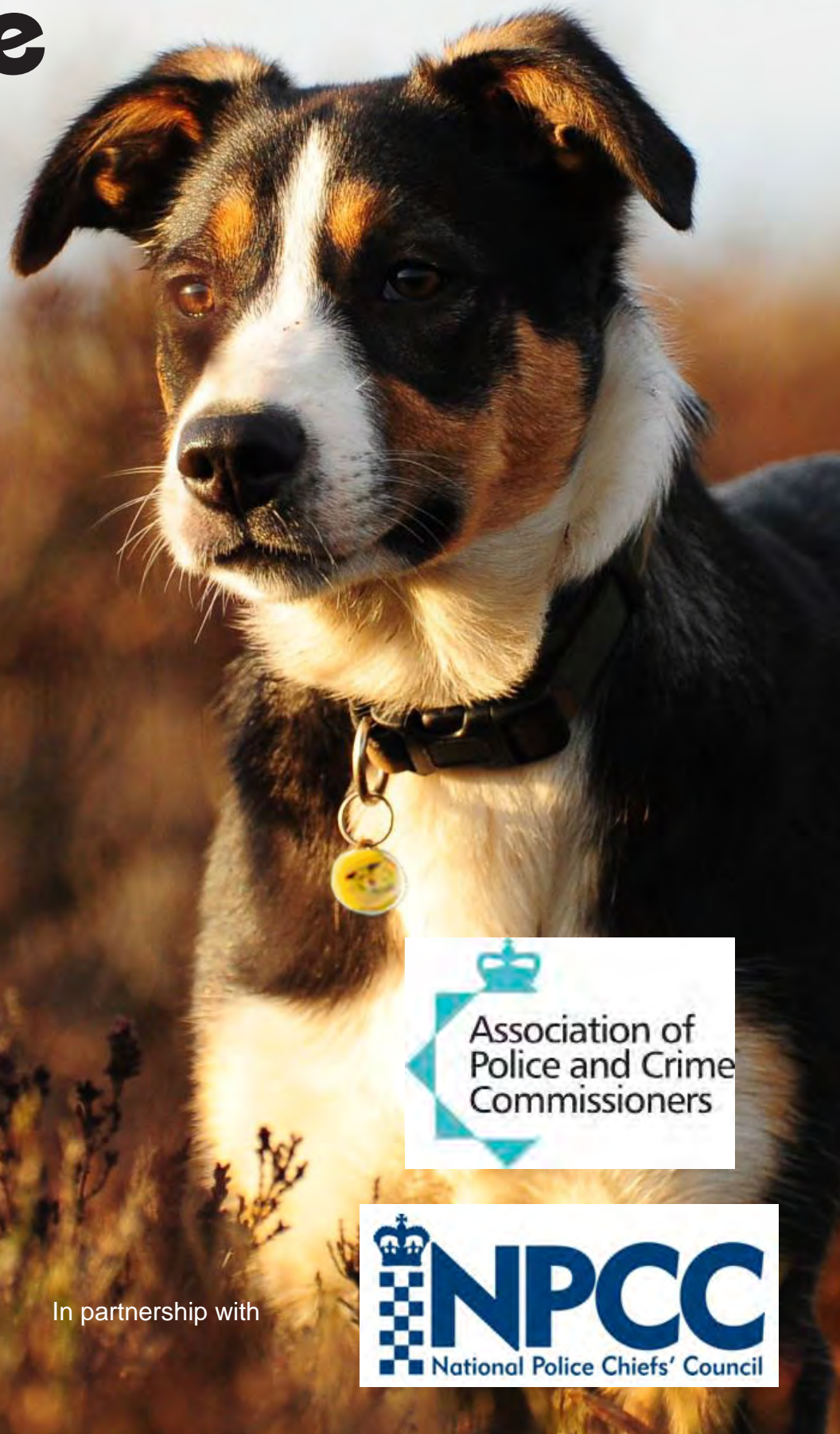


The **Animal Welfare** Independent Visitors Scheme



In partnership with



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AC's Foreword

I'm delighted to have recently been selected as the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Police Dogs and believe the work of our brave service animals offers a genuine opportunity to drive public confidence in policing.

Alongside wanting to celebrate the incredible work of our world class police dogs, I am equally keen to progress welfare considerations to ensure they receive the care, respect and loving care they rightly deserve.

Independent scrutiny to provide public reassurance is something all police forces have benefitted from and our partnership with the Dogs Trust and the Animal Welfare Independent visitors who give up their time voluntarily is critical to the success of this scheme. I'm also grateful to Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioners for their support for the scheme and for their help in selecting and appointing the Independent Visitors.

I look forward to working with the Dogs Trust in their vital role over the coming months and years.

Pippa Mills

Assistant Commissioner Pippa Mills
Metropolitan Police



APCC's Foreword

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) applaud the vital role that brave police dogs and other service animals play in catching criminals, finding missing people and providing protection to frontline policing.

We know that police dogs are loved and valued by the public too, for their significant contribution and risking serious harm on a regular basis to keep their handlers and communities safe. That's why they deserve the highest standards of care whether they are on or off duty.

PCCs are proud to be associated with and support the excellent Dog's Trust Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme, and as a result many PCCs have set up local dog welfare visitor schemes that follow a similar process to Independent Custody Visitor volunteers who make unannounced visits to custody centres to check on the wellbeing of detainees.

PCC animal welfare visitor volunteers will continue to provide scrutiny of the care and treatment of police dogs ensuring that procedures are ethical, humane and transparent in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.



Commissioner Donna Jones

APCC Chair, PCC for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight



Introduction

The death of Acer, a police dog in 1997, and the subsequent prosecution of police officers, resulted in a loss of public confidence in police dog training methods. The incident generated adverse comments in the media and caused several animal welfare organisations – including Dogs Trust, to stop rehoming dogs to the police.

In response to these issues, a sub-committee of the National Police Chiefs' Council (formerly known as the Association of Chief Police Officers, or ACPO) embarked upon a thorough review of police dog training.

The team developed a strategy aimed at restoring public confidence by ensuring that training methods are humane, ethical and transparent. The strategy focuses on six key areas, including the welfare and treatment of dogs, alongside raising awareness amongst the public of the work of police dogs. The use of items such as barbed 'Pinch Collars' and electric collars, which were used to punish dogs was banned at the time of the ACPO review.

The training and welfare of dogs engaged in police work must be open and be seen to be open. To this end, the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme was successfully piloted by Lancashire Police force and then rolled out across other forces.



In 2006, the **Animal Welfare Act** brought in an even greater responsibility for police forces to provide for the needs of the dogs in their care. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 applies to England and Wales. For forces operating in Northern Ireland, the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) is applicable; and for forces in Scotland, the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland Act 2006) applies.

This booklet sets out how the scheme operates and the animal welfare principles that apply to police forces. It is aimed at police forces and people interested in becoming Animal Welfare Independent Visitors and is expanded on in the Animal Welfare Independent Visitor training provided by Dogs Trust. Police forces can also access further explanation and guidance from Dogs Trust.

Who are Animal Welfare Independent Visitors?

Animal Welfare Independent Visitors come from a variety of backgrounds and sections of the local community. They are tasked with checking on the welfare of police dogs within police dog training centres, police stations, central kennel facilities and other venues. Their visits may be pre-arranged or unannounced and they may be accompanied by professionals from animal welfare organisations. To prevent possible conflicts of interest, and to maintain the scheme's impartiality, Independent Visitors do not have any direct or indirect involvement with the criminal justice system.

Role of animal welfare organisations

Since its inception, Dogs Trust has supported Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners to set up and run the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme for their force, through the provision of information, meetings and training for both police officers and Independent Visitors.

Dogs Trust ensures that the scheme is running in accordance with the guidelines set out in this booklet and awards those who are complying with the scheme with a certificate of compliance.

Only those forces that are members of the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme are allowed to adopt or rehome dogs from Dogs Trust.

All forces are encouraged to engage with a professional animal welfare organisation to act as a consulting body, and if necessary as an Independent Visitor.

Only welfare organisations which are members of the Association of Dog and Cat Homes (ADCH) are to be used. Details can be found at www.adch.org.uk

Animal welfare standards

The Animal Welfare Independent Visitors will inspect the training, housing and transport of police dogs to ensure that they meet animal welfare standards. The Five Welfare Needs are documented in legislation for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The below guidelines are based on **Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (which applies in England and Wales) and Section 24 (1) of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.**

The need for a suitable environment

Your dog needs a safe environment and whether they live inside, outside or in a kennel, they need protection from hazards. Examples of hazards in the kennel include: inappropriate items being left in the kennel, increasing risk of injury to the dog; and the risk from cleaning chemicals used in and around the kennels.

Dogs are naturally inquisitive and may put themselves in danger if they are left to explore unsupervised. They need a safe, comfortable place to rest, situated in a dry, draught-free area. Living in a cold or damp place can lead to suffering. Dogs living in kennels need protection from adverse weather or other threats. All dogs must be able to choose different areas to spend time in, either around the home or kennel, which will help them avoid things that may worry them by resting in a place where they feel safe.

A dog is naturally disinclined to soil their living space and needs regular opportunities to use a toilet area, or they may become distressed. Some dogs may need access to a toilet area more frequently, for example: very young, very old and those that are ill. It is essential that kennels are regularly spot cleaned, this allows for a clean environment whilst keeping their familiar scents on unsoiled bedding/flooring. Full cleans of the kennel can be completed when the dog leaves the kennel. In the event of infectious disease, full cleans must be completed.

Dogs are vulnerable to heat stress. In hot weather they rapidly become distressed and can die in enclosed areas, such as conservatories, vehicles, balconies and outdoor kennels. On warm days, these are inappropriate environments for a dog, even for a short time. Their bodies cannot cool like humans', and so heat can become dangerous very quickly.

See advice on how to notice signs of heat stroke and how to keep your dog cool at: www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-care/warm-weather-advice

If travelling with a dog in a vehicle is necessary on hot days, ensure the vehicle's temperature control is set to cool the environment with air-conditioning before, and during, the journey. Appropriate temperature settings must be regularly checked whilst the dog is in the vehicle to ensure the vehicle is being cooled to an appropriate temperature. Dogs must not be left in a vehicle during hot weather; keeping windows open is not sufficient to cool the vehicle for the dog. Where possible, travelling with dogs or putting dogs in vehicles on hot days should be avoided. When transporting dogs in vehicles, dogs must travel in line with legal requirements and either be secured with a crash-tested car harness or transported in a suitably sized crate. When the dog is in the vehicle, they must be checked regularly.

See Dogs Trust's
**'Guidance for
Dogs in Vehicles'**
in the appendix
to this handbook.



What forces need to do

- Dogs are to be provided with a safe, clean and quiet environment, with adequate protection from hazards.
- Dogs are to be provided with a comfortable, clean, dry, quiet, draught-free rest area, which has appropriate ventilation and is lit either naturally or artificially. Multiple suitable resting spots are provided to allow choice for the dog.
- Dogs are to be provided with somewhere they can go to avoid things that frighten them, such as alternative rooms or spaces in the kennel/home.
- Dogs who are kept in kennels (including home kennels) should be checked at least three times per day with a last check at night, to ensure they are not in danger or distress.
- Dogs are to have access to an appropriate place, away from where they rest, which they can use as a toilet area as regularly as required, and at least every few hours. This must be spot cleaned regularly.
- Full cleans must be carried out on kennels/homes where there may be a risk of disease transfer and upon a dog leaving a kennel.
- Any place that the dog is left is to be large enough to allow the dog to move around in comfort, able to fully stretch out when resting, and have effective ventilation and temperature control to avoid them becoming too hot or too cold. The dog must be able to freely move around the kennel without any part of their body coming into contact with the walls or ceiling.
- When in transport, dogs are to be comfortable and safe at all times. Dogs must travel in line with legal guidelines, requiring them to be secured with a safety harness or transported in a suitably sized crate.
- Dogs are not to be left unattended in any situation, or for any period of time that is likely to cause them distress, or render them unsafe. Kennel and home environments should be secure at all times to prevent incidents of dogs escaping, straying or being stolen.

The need for a **suitable diet**

A dog needs a well-balanced diet to stay fit and healthy. Meals designed for humans will not provide dogs with the balanced nutrition they need and some human foods, containing xylitol, grapes, raisins, chocolate, caffeine, garlic, onions or other ingredients can be harmful or even fatal to dogs.

An individual dog's nutritional needs depend on their age, sex, activity, the type of food they eat, their state of health and whether they have been neutered.

Some dogs, such as those that are pregnant, or nursing puppies, have special dietary needs. Diets designed for adult dogs are not always suitable for growing animals and puppies. Growing dogs may have special dietary requirements. Other dogs, for example; senior dogs, working dogs and those with poor health, may also require a special diet. Food packaging guidelines can provide guidance on the appropriate quantity of food for the dog's particular life stage, activity levels and body condition.

However, kennel staff, dog handlers and other caregivers should check-in regularly with a vet for advice on selecting and maintaining a diet that meets all of the dog's nutritional needs, especially when they are actively working or during developmental life stages (e.g. puppyhood, adolescence, pregnancy and lactation).

Adult dogs usually need two meals a day, and the quantity depends on the type of food, their body condition and how active they are. Your vet will be able to help advise on the amounts needed for your individual dog.



A healthy adult dog should have a stable weight appropriate to their age and level of activity. Dogs should be neither too thin nor too fat. Overfeeding a dog will lead to them becoming overweight, which can lead to health problems, such as painful joints or diabetes. Underfeeding a dog will cause them to lose weight, suffer and can cause health problems.

Regular check-ups with your vet will help you assess the dog's body condition score and identify any changes in their condition or cause for concern.

You can find further guidance on diet and nutrition for dogs on the Dogs Trust website: <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-care/diet-and-nutrition>

Digestive problems

Dogs can suffer from digestive problems that can be caused by their diet being changed suddenly.

It is also a good idea to avoid strenuous exercise for at least one hour before, or after meals as this may cause discomfort and contribute to bloat or stomach torsion. Very small quantities of food can be used as a reward during training, check with a vet if regular meals need to be adjusted to accommodate this to prevent weight gain.

Alongside a healthy diet, fresh, clean, drinking water must be provided at all times.

What forces need to do

- **Dogs must be provided with clean, fresh drinking water at all times. Carry water in a suitable container in case clean water is not available.**
- Dogs must be given a balanced diet suitable for their individual needs in order to maintain a suitable body condition for their age, sex, level of activity and state of health and to ensure that they are not overweight or underweight.
- Be aware that any change in the amount dogs eat or drink may be a sign of ill health. If a dog's eating or drinking habits change, the kennel staff, dog handler or caregiver are to consult a vet as soon as possible.
- Read and be guided by the feeding instructions relating to the dog food purchased and discuss these with your vet where necessary.
- All dogs (including puppies, pregnant and lactating dogs) that have specific health needs, are to be provided with diets that meet their individual requirements. Take guidance on this from your vet.
- Adult dogs are to be fed twice a day unless advised otherwise by a vet. Puppies and adolescent dogs will need to be fed more often following veterinary guidance.
- Dogs' diets must not to be changed suddenly. Changes should be made gradually over several days.
- Where possible, avoid feeding dogs for one hour before, or after, strenuous exercise.
- If you notice any changes or are uncertain what is the best choice for the individual dog, seek advice from a vet or veterinary nurse.



The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

The way a dog behaves is individual and the way they respond to stimuli may be influenced by factors including genetics, prior learning, health, and changes in their environment. Giving a dog choice to engage in normal behaviour patterns is considered important for promoting a positive welfare state. To promote choice and to find out a dog's preferences, kennel staff and dog handlers are to observe the dog's behaviour when interacting with the environment, people and non-human animals. This will enable them to provide the dog with valuable sources of enrichment and mental stimulation. For example, if a dog shows a preference for digging when in an outdoor enclosure, it may be enriching to provide the dog with a sandpit with hidden toys or treats in.

Dogs are intelligent animals and can suffer from a lack of mental stimulation and choice to exhibit normal behaviours, especially within kennel environments which can be limited in space and engaging stimuli. This can lead to dogs developing undesirable behaviours, such as excessive barking or destructive behaviour, which may impact their physical and mental health. Therefore, dogs should be provided with a range of enrichment options both inside and outside of their home/kennel. There is no evidence to suggest that using certain toys or food within the home/kennel environment negatively affects the performance of working dogs.

Dogs experience a range of emotions: how they behave and their body language can help you understand what they are feeling and whether they are physically and mentally fit and healthy. Using daily records to monitor dogs at home and in the kennel environment is essential for helping kennel staff and dog handlers recognise changes in behaviour patterns and physical state. Keeping daily records will assist kennel staff and dog handlers in meeting the individual needs of the dogs in their care and serve as a useful handover tool for other staff who may not have seen the dog in a while or met them before.

Most working dogs need regular exercise and opportunities to walk, run, explore, play, sniff, socialise and investigate. The amount of exercise a dog needs varies between individuals. For example, younger dogs may need to have their exercise restricted during periods of rapid growth to avoid developmental problems but can be provided alternative forms of mental stimulation, such as scent-based enrichment. Veterinarians are qualified to advise on the appropriate duration and types of exercise a dog needs in relation to their age and health status. Try to avoid exercising dogs in extreme weather, or during events which they may find frightening, such as firework displays.

Training incorporating aversive methods can cause pain, suffering and distress. These techniques can compromise a dog's welfare, leading to fearful responses, including aggression, and may exacerbate the undesirable behaviours they aim to address or lead to new ones developing. Therefore, reward-based, evidence-led methods must be used to teach dogs new behaviours and cope with new or challenging situations. **Positive reinforcement training uses rewards that the individual dog is motivated by (e.g. toys, food and praise) and can help to build a bond between dog and handler, prevent undesirable behaviours and encourage dogs to problem-solve.**



Positive reinforcement and habituation methods can be used to introduce puppies gradually and positively to noises, objects and activities they will meet in their environment, some of which may otherwise be frightening when first experienced. Police kennel staff, dog handlers and puppy fosterers should follow a programme of socialisation and habituation to ensure puppies are gradually and positively exposed to stimuli and situations they need to be confident and comfortable with in their working and non-working life. This exposure should be done at the puppy's pace, ensuring they are calm and relaxed throughout and are not showing signs of fear, anxiety or distress.

If kennel staff, dog handlers or other caregivers are concerned about a dog's behaviour, it is important to seek professional advice from a veterinary professional to rule out any medical causes. Veterinary staff can then refer to a qualified trainer and/or behaviourist, to identify and discuss any behaviour and training queries further.



What forces need to do

- Dogs need choices within their living accommodation (i.e. home, kennel), which promote natural behaviours and a positive welfare state. This should include multiple bedding options and a range of food-based, environmental, auditory and social enrichment options suitable for the individual dog.
- Dogs are to have access to safe toys and suitable food enrichment to interact with, which may include safe chews and food dispensing toys.
- Dogs are to be able to rest undisturbed when they want to and should have a range of bedding options to choose from in different areas of the house or kennel (e.g. in the kennel a bedding option should be provided on both sides of a shutter partition). Puppies, older dogs or those with compromised health may need more rest and adaptations (e.g. raised beds/bowls) to their living environment and resting areas.
- Dogs are to be provided with regular opportunities for positive interactions with people or other suitable dogs, should they find this to be an enriching and positive experience.
- Dogs are to have the exercise they need, at least daily, unless a vet recommends otherwise, to keep them fit, active and stimulated. Exercise should also be mentally enriching by giving the dogs choice during sessions, allowing them to naturally interact with their environment, such as sniffing, digging and playing.
- Keep daily records on behaviour and health to ensure kennel staff, dog handlers and other caregivers can monitor the behaviour and health of individual dogs. If kennel staff, dog handlers or other caregivers become aware of changes in behaviour they should seek advice from a veterinary professional, who can refer to a qualified trainer and/or behaviourist if required.
- Take responsibility for habituating dogs gradually and positively to different environments, people and animals to enable dogs in their care to thrive, in both their working and non-working environments. Police forces operating puppy development programmes should communicate socialisation and habituation plans to puppy caregivers (e.g. puppy walkers/fosterers) and support them in promoting positive early life experiences and training.

- **Reward-based training methods, including the use of food, toys and praise, are to be used when handling and training dogs in their working and non-working settings.** The handler should use preference tests and observe the dog's behaviour to determine what motivates individual dogs. No kennel staff, dog handler or other caregiver should use aversive methods. **Guidelines on how to use of reward-based training methods, for training work-related behaviours, and approved equipment can be found in the Approved Police Practice manual.**
- Police kennel staff, dog handlers or other caregivers have a duty of care to report any welfare concerns, including the use of aversive methods, to their line manager, who can seek further advice from a qualified veterinarian and qualified trainer and/or behaviourist.
- Dog behaviour experts referred to are to have a combination of appropriate qualifications, up to date knowledge, skills and experience and are to treat dogs in such a way that their welfare is protected.
- Appropriate qualifications could be: member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) or a Clinical Animal Behaviourist (CAB) registered with the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC).
- All dogs are to be kept under control at all times using ethical and reward-based handling methods.



The need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

Dogs are sociable animals that generally enjoy and value company. Consequently, many dogs do not like being left alone and may suffer if left without company, or with nothing to do for long periods of time. Some dogs can become distressed and suffer if they are left on their own, even for short periods. It is recommended that dogs are only left without human interaction for a duration the individual dog is comfortable with, either in the home or kennel environment. Kennel staff and dog handlers should be aware of signs which could suggest the dog is uncomfortable being left alone, such as vocalising and pacing. If concerning separation related behaviours are suspected, in-home/-kennel cameras can be set up to monitor the dog's behaviour. If staff are concerned about a dog's ability to cope alone, they should seek help from a vet and a qualified behaviourist.

The length of time individual dogs can be left varies, depending on factors such as age, training, previous experience of being left alone, lifestyle and housing conditions. However, **no dog should routinely be left on their own for prolonged periods. If the time alone is excessive, dogs may begin to display separation related behaviours.**

Learning how to appropriately interact with people, dogs and other animals is an essential part of social development for a puppy. Puppies that are deprived of appropriate opportunities to develop social behaviour may lack confidence and essential social skills as an adult. However, if a dog has appropriate contact with people, other dogs and animals early in their life, they are more likely to feel relaxed and confident socialising, which can have a positive impact on their welfare both in a working and non-working capacity. Dogs that have not had opportunities to develop socially, perhaps by being removed from their mother or littermates too early, or which have had bad experiences involving people or other animals, may become uncomfortable and fearful in social situations.

Dogs that are worried may show characteristic signs, such as flattening of the ears, lowering of the tail, hiding, cowering, vocalising and aggression or other signs of stress, such as excessive panting, yawning or licking lips.

Dogs are social species and can sometimes benefit from sharing kennel spaces but may need time to get to know each other. However, it is essential they have their own space and are able to rest undisturbed by other dogs. It is important that the dogs are comfortable sharing resources, such as toys, in their shared environment. If handlers or kennel staff observe behaviour that may indicate the dog is not comfortable sharing resources, the dog should no longer share the kennel/housing with other dogs. Dogs can establish close bonds with people whom they regularly interact with. The bond between dog and human can be strengthened through consistent, positive interactions.



What forces need to do

- Dogs who value interactions are to have opportunities to spend enough time with people and friendly dogs so that they do not become lonely or bored.
- Dogs must have a choice whether to interact or not with others.
- Puppies are to be given regular and appropriate opportunities to learn how to interact with other dogs, animals and people.
- Dogs are never to be left alone long enough to become distressed.
- If more than one dog is kept, individual needs must be considered and where appropriate, they can be kept together for company. The dogs must have their own space to rest undisturbed as often as they require.
- When dogs live together, they are to be provided with enough resources (e.g. toys, beds, food and water bowls and places where they feel safe) and space to meet the needs of all the dogs housed together.
- Always check health issues with a vet before allowing puppies to mix with other dogs.
- If dogs are not fully vaccinated, check with a vet before mixing them with other dogs.
- Dogs are to be provided with regular choices to exercise, play and engage in enrichment and training appropriate to the individual needs of the dog.
- Ensure that children are not left alone with a dog and are closely supervised by an adult when interacting with a dog.
- Dog handlers, kennel staff and caregivers are to be consistent, kind and gentle in the way they, and others, interact with the dog and encourage desirable behaviours, such as polite greetings and calm interactions.
- Forces are to ensure dogs are cared for by a responsible and suitably trained person/s. Those looking after dogs have a legal responsibility to ensure their welfare and it should be checked they understand the dog's needs and any special requirements they may have.

Police dog units may have a central police kennelling facility but a number of forces use appointed/approved private kennel facilities, which are inspected under the Independent Visitors Scheme.

- Forces are never to leave a dog unsupervised with another person or kennelling establishment who are not suitably trained or informed about the individual dog's needs. The dog should not be left in the vicinity of animals or persons who may deliberately or accidentally harm or frighten them.
- If a dog shows behaviours that suggest they are becoming, or are, uncomfortable around other dogs (e.g. licking lips, avoiding interactions, vocalising) handlers are to avoid the situations that lead to these behaviours and seek advice from a veterinary professional and a suitably qualified dog behaviourist.

Police kennel staff, dog handlers and caregivers (such as volunteer foster carers should be aware of the specialised member of staff within that dog unit to notify about behaviour concerns regarding social interactions. This may be the dog unit's Police Dog Instructors or Police Dog Trainer, who may also work with an external Clinical Animal Behaviourist for complex cases.



Chester was adopted to Warwickshire Police from Dogs Trust Kenilworth

Image: Bullivant Media

The booklet, **'The welfare of seized dogs in kennels: A guide to good practice, produced in consultation with police dog legislation officers, local authority dog wardens and animal welfare officers'**, is a useful resource for those caring for and inspecting dogs in a kennelled environment.

The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Dogs each experience their own feelings and emotions. Individual dogs may show pain and suffering in different ways, and some changes may only be very subtle. Any change in the way a dog behaves can be an early sign that they are ill, or in pain. If you notice any signs that the dog may not be feeling their best, like those listed below speak to your vet as soon as possible:

- Change of eating habits (more or less)
- Drinking water excessively, drinking less or not at all
- Changes to their weight (increase or decrease)
- Becoming withdrawn, lethargic and/or unwilling to exercise or play
- Becoming more clingy/seeking attention
- Cry or move away when approached or touched
- Repeatedly licking a particular area
- Show uncharacteristic avoidance or aggression when approached.

Some dogs may only show subtle signs of discomfort like leaning away whilst lip-licking, yawning, holding their ears back or panting. These are only a few of the ways some dogs might express discomfort, you can find more information in the body language poster in the appendix to this booklet.

They may also show specific signs of ill health such as:

- Discharges from the eyes, ears or nose
- Excessive salivation, vomiting, difficulties passing urine, diarrhoea or constipation
- Coughing or wheezing
- Shivering, twitching, tremors or seizures
- Excess panting
- Excessively scratching and developing skin sores
- Limping
- Swellings or lumps on the body/legs.

This list is for guidance only and is not exhaustive.

Dogs are vulnerable to a range of infectious diseases and other illnesses. Regular veterinary checks will help to identify any early signs of illness. Dogs need regular parasite treatment plus yearly vaccines.

Many people choose to have their dogs neutered. If the Police Force does not intend to breed from a dog, it is very important to discuss with a vet the benefits of neutering and the most appropriate timing for the procedure, taking into account the dogs age, breed, lifestyle and behaviour. If a force does decide to breed from a suitable dog, a vet should be consulted to help the force consider the challenges associated with this, the risks of inherited conditions and exaggerated features that could affect the welfare of the puppies, and the welfare of the mother during pregnancy and post-birth. Forces should consider the intensive care and facilities required to breed a litter and whether their dog unit is equipped for this (considering physical equipment/PPE, ability to control disease, and staffing). If the force is planning to sell puppies to other government agencies, they should ensure puppies are microchipped before sale and not sold under eight weeks. Raising puppies is difficult and time consuming, and the puppies are the responsibility of the force/kennel staff/caregivers, with their own needs and the same legislative protection as any dog.



What forces need to do

- All persons responsible for a dog's care are to take sensible precautions to keep dogs safe from injury.
- Handlers are to monitor dogs daily and watch out for signs of injury, disease or illness, and consult a vet if they have any concerns. They are to make sure someone else does this if they are absent.
- If a change in a dog's behaviour is noted, a vet is to be contacted and the advice given followed.
- Handlers are to check dogs' coats regularly and groom them daily, to maintain a healthy coat. Daily grooming is a requirement for police dogs as it promotes personal interaction between dog and handler as well as daily physical checking of the dog's health.
- A vet is to be consulted as to how often a dog needs a health check (minimum every 12 months) and about what precautions can be taken to protect a dog's health. Vet advice is to be followed closely and alternative therapies should not be used unless advised by a vet.
- Routine preventative healthcare, such as vaccination and treatments to control parasites (e.g. fleas and worms), as well as monitoring any current health problems the dog may have, is to be carried out as an essential part of keeping a dog healthy. Neutering will be discussed with the vet to understand the best options for the individual dog.
- Dog faeces are to be regularly cleaned up to avoid disease transmission.
- All persons responsible for a dog's care are to take sensible precautions to keep them safe, including prevention of access to poisonous food, plants, chemicals and any other hazards.
- All persons responsible for a dog's care are only to use medicines and drugs that have been prescribed by a veterinary surgeon for the individual dog – prescription instructions must be followed accurately.
- All persons responsible for a dog's care are always to consult a vet if they are concerned that a dog has eaten or come into contact with anything that could be harmful.

- **Dogs are required to wear a collar and identity tag when in a public place and when off duty.** Collars are to be of the correct size and fit and are not to cause any pain or discomfort. Handlers are to keep the microchip database up to date with any changes in keeper or contact details. **There is a legal exemption within the [Control of Dogs Order 1992](#) which allows armed forces, police, and emergency rescue dogs not to wear a collar.** In some circumstances, wearing a collar may not be appropriate when a dog is working as it could cause an injury to the dog if the collar were to get caught on something. When dogs are wearing collars and/or harnesses observations should be made on the fit of the collar and/or harness.
- Harnesses should be introduced gradually using reward-based methods to ensure dogs are comfortable and confident with the harness being fitted and used. Collars and harnesses should not tighten around the dog or have any other mechanisms which cause pain or discomfort.
- Forces are to seek the advice of a vet before allowing a dog to breed and take all reasonable steps, which may include breed specific testing or xrays, to ensure that they will be able to provide the care required during pregnancy as well as finding suitable homes for the puppies. Mothers should be allowed time to recover from whelping and lactating before returning to work and dogs should not be overbred.
- Any puppies bred must be housed in an appropriate environment, ensuring their needs are met. Those not suitable for police work may be rehomed to families and due diligence should be undertaken in rehoming. Advice can be sought from Dogs Trust.





Guidelines for the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to enable Independent Visitors to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which dogs are housed, trained and transported with a view to securing greater understanding and confidence in the handling and care of dogs within the police service. The scheme covers all people who interact with the dog; including trainers and handlers, and covers all places such as police dog units, kennels and police vehicles.

Appointment of Independent Visitors

The Police and Crime commissioner in consultation with the Chief Constable will be responsible for the selection and appointment of Animal Welfare Independent Visitors. The nominated Police Dog Officer for the force will provide the necessary support to the Police and Crime Commissioner. Subject to the exceptions set out below, applications will be sought from any person and professionals from animal welfare organisations.

The panel of Animal Welfare Independent Visitors should be representative of the local community and try to achieve a balance in terms of age range, gender and ethnic minority representation.

Eligibility

Independent Visitors should be persons of good character who are able to make unbiased observations in which the community can have confidence and which the police will accept as fair criticism when it is justified. Anyone who has been convicted of a criminal offence, or who has been charged with any animal welfare offence may not be suitable for this reason. Applicants will be asked to include on their application form details of any such convictions and consent to enquiries being made by the police.

Magistrates, serving or former police officers or special constables and OPCC staff are not eligible to become Independent Visitors as this could be seen to lack transparency. Other people may be excluded, if they have a direct involvement in the criminal justice system such as solicitors or probation officers.

Each application will be treated on its merits, but the overriding factor will be to prevent possible conflicts of interest for individuals, and to maintain the independence and integrity of the scheme as a whole. There will be a vetting or screening process required by individual police forces to ensure the safe appointment of suitable Independent Visitors taking into account local security risks or issues.



Training

Before undertaking duties as an Animal Welfare Independent Visitor, the individual should receive training, consisting of such topics as training methods, animal welfare (which can be provided by a representative from Dogs Trust), transportation and health and safety. Additionally, periodic and refresher training days are to be available for all Independent Visitors to attend and must include any updates in legislation and or recommendations arising as a result of learning from incidents or experiences.

One annual practical dog training day should be arranged for all Independent Visitors and animal welfare organisations to attend annually where they should meet with staff of the dog units.

Accreditation and handbook

Once appointed, the Independent Visitor will usually be issued with an identity card signed by the Chief Constable and including the holder's photograph; this is dependent on the force's procedures. The identity card will authorise the holder to undertake a visit in accordance with the scheme. The pass should be worn visibly on the outer clothing when on police premises.

Independent Visitors identity cards should be used only for the purpose of making independent visits. If anyone is found to be using their card for any other purpose, it will be withdrawn and that person's appointment as an Independent Visitor may be terminated.

Each Independent Visitor will receive a local handbook, produced by the force, containing details of the operation of the scheme, a list of the police premises subject to the scheme, a list of the members of the visiting panel, including contact telephone numbers and a list of all current police dog handlers and their dogs.

Term of office for animal welfare visitors

Newly appointed Independent Visitors will complete a six month probationary period. The term of office for Animal Welfare Independent Visitors should be three years with an option for a further three year term.

Although the work is entirely voluntary, the Police and Crime Commissioner has the right to terminate the appointment of any Independent Visitor whose conduct is not felt to be of the required standard. Independent Visitors should notify the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner if they are arrested and charged with a criminal offence or under investigation for any animal welfare offence. They will be suspended from undertaking further visits pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings. The Police and Crime Commissioner will consider whether to withdraw the accreditation of any visitor convicted of a criminal offence or who abuses his or her position as an Animal Welfare Independent Visitor by behaving in an inappropriate manner during visits.

Where a visitor fails to make an independent visit and/or attend panel meetings within a three month period, the Police and Crime Commissioner will write to the person concerned to establish whether this is simply an oversight (e.g. because report forms have not been submitted), or to seek an explanation.

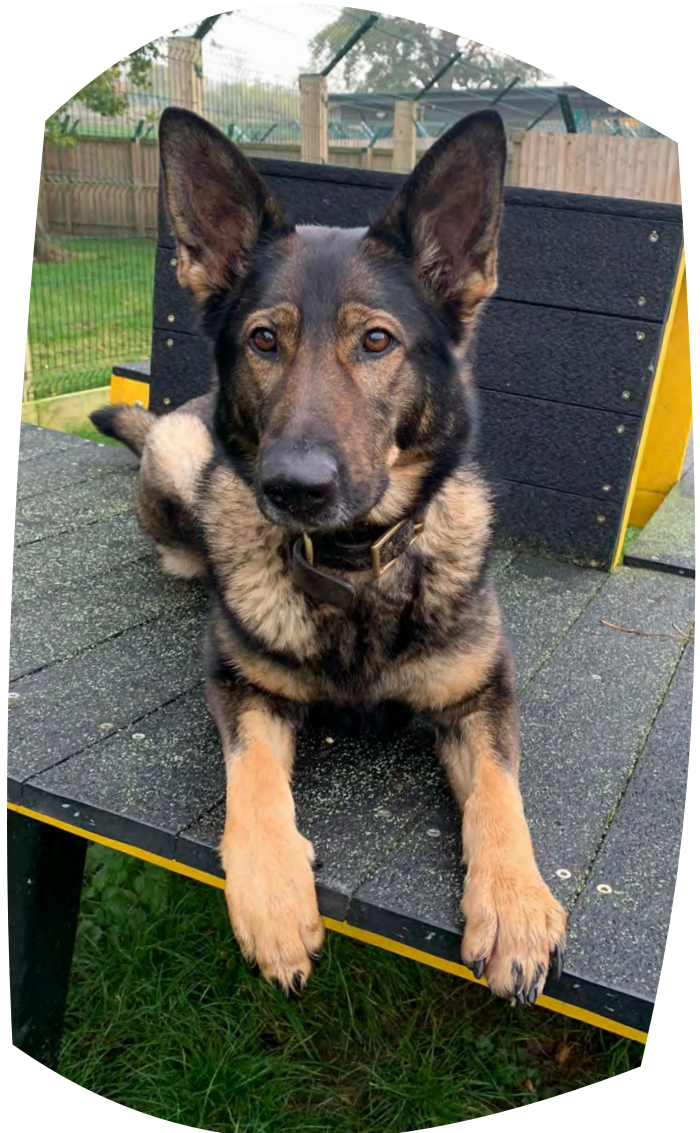
Where an individual has not made any visits or attended any panel meetings within a six month period, and no good reason for this has been notified to the administrator of the scheme, the Police and Crime Commissioner will automatically revoke that individual's accreditation.

Frequency of visits

The dog unit or location from where dog handlers deploy should ideally be visited every three months. The Animal Welfare Independent Visitor will liaise with the nominated Police Dog Officer. **All dogs and handlers are seen at least once in any 12-month period.** This may require some coordination by the nominated Police Dog Officer to ensure all the dogs and handlers are seen. No dog should go 12 months without being seen by an Independent Visitor.

Animal Welfare Independent Visitors may inspect the conditions in which dogs are kept and be allowed access to any welfare, training and veterinary records appertaining to those animals. They may also speak to trainers, trainees, dog handlers and support staff and see force policy and Standard Operating Procedures relating to the health and management of dogs.

Police dogs are often boarded in private boarding kennels and the Independent Visitors are to review those facilities as well. Whilst the boarding kennels will hold an Animal Boarding Establishment Licence issued by the Local Authority and will be subject to the conditions of the licence, police dogs can pose additional dangers to boarding kennel staff due to the nature of police dog training. Any adaptations made by the boarding kennels to safely manage the kennelling of police dogs need to be reviewed to ensure all aspects of animal welfare are still maintained accordingly.



From time to time, Animal Welfare Independent Visitors may also wish to look at 'offsite' training. Such 'offsite' training may involve Animal Welfare Independent Visitors walking over rough fields. With this in mind the Police and Crime Commissioner will look to appoint those people who would be capable of carrying out this type of activity. Because of the diverse locations, Animal Welfare Independent Visitors should, in those instances, arrange visits through the Scheme Administrator or the nominated Police Dog Officer.

The Police and Crime Commissioner may review the frequency of visits from time to time in light of experience.

Should an Animal Welfare Independent Visitor have concerns regarding the identity of a particular dog, the Animal Welfare Independent Visitor may request that the dog's microchip is scanned in front of them so the microchip number can be verified against the dog's identity.



Confidentiality

During the course of their duties, Animal Welfare Independent Visitors may acquire confidential information about police issues, and Independent Visitors will be asked to sign an undertaking of confidentiality. Visitors should be aware that the improper disclosure of information acquired during a visit may attract civil or criminal proceedings. It is stressed that confidential information must not be included in the written reports of the visit to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Should an Animal Welfare Independent Visitor receive information or a complaint in confidence regarding the welfare of a particular dog, this information should be forwarded immediately to the nominated Police Dog Officer (acting for the Police and Crime Commissioner and the PCC administrator for the scheme) and the animal welfare organisation representative on the panel.

Other **Independent Visitors' names, addresses, or telephone numbers are given to individual Independent Visitors in the strictest confidence**, and are given to Independent Visitors purely for convenience in making personal contact. Such details should not be divulged to any other person.

Conduct

When conducting a visit, the Animal Welfare Independent Visitor(s) will at all times, be accompanied by a dog handler, or a member of staff at the dog training centre. Independent Visitors must adhere to advice given by dog handlers or members of staff at the dog training centre with regard to any health and safety issues.

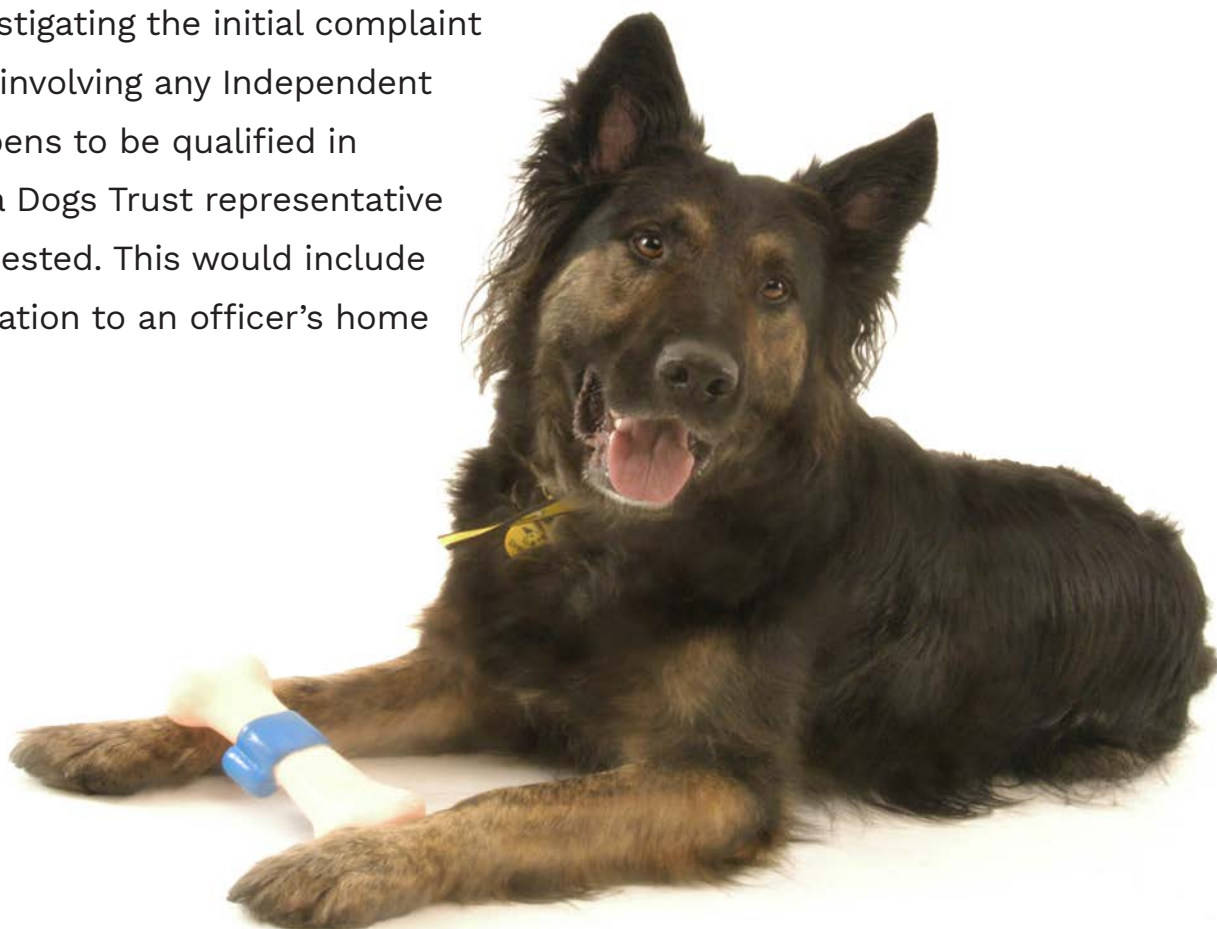
All visits carried out by Animal Welfare Independent Visitors must meet the accepted standards outlined in this booklet and detailed in the training provided by Dogs Trust.

Inspections of **home kennels**

Independent Visitors will not normally be entitled to visit officers' private residences to inspect kennel facilities but will seek to inspect written records that handlers' home kennels have been regularly inspected (at least every two years) by a suitable representative of the police force. The Independent Visitors will bring to the attention of the nominated Police Dog Officer any concerns they may have regarding a particular animal and that officer will then take the appropriate action in relation to inspecting kennels maintained at a dog handler's home. Following consultation with the Independent Visitor, the nominated Police Dog Officer will submit a full report to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Visits at the **request of the police**

Circumstances may arise where the police wish to initiate a visit by an Animal Welfare Independent Visitor, in particular where there may be serious local concern about the treatment and well-being of police dogs, and a special visit could help allay public fears. The nominated Police Dog Officer will be responsible on these occasions for contacting an appropriate visitor and arranging a visit. Equally, if a specific complaint is received by the police pertaining to animal welfare, the officer tasked with investigating the initial complaint should consider involving any Independent Visitor who happens to be qualified in animal welfare, a Dogs Trust representative can also be requested. This would include allegations in relation to an officer's home address.



Completion of reports

At the conclusion of each visit, the Animal Welfare Independent Visitor will complete a report form as soon as possible. Copies are to be sent within 14 days of the visit to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the nominated Police Dog Officer.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner shall periodically distribute all reports amongst the panel in order to keep panel members informed of the scheme's progress.

Reports on issues arising out of visits

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) will call two panel meetings per year. The panel will consist of Independent Visitors for that force, Dogs Trust (or other animal welfare organisation) representatives, Dog Unit Manager and PCC administrator for the Animal Welfare Scheme, which will allow the discussion of visiting arrangements and any concerns to be brought to the attention of the officers in charge. Issues arising out of visits will also be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner, and subsequently to any relevant Police and Community Forums.

It is also expected that Independent Visitors will report on their visits in general terms to their local Police and Community Forum, at an appropriate time of the year, e.g. the Annual General Meeting and Panel Meetings. Such reports may be given in writing or verbally.



Expenses

The work is entirely voluntary, but travelling expenses will be payable to all Independent Visitors on the same basis as to members of the Police and Crime Commissioner office when travelling on business. Only public transport expenses and private car mileage at the agreed rate will be paid. Expenses can also be claimed for attending training sessions. Expense claims must be made on the appropriate form.

Insurance

The Police and Crime Commissioner's office will arrange appropriate insurance for Independent Visitors. All Animal Welfare Independent Visitors will receive information and advice on risk assessments.

Publicity Guidelines

It is generally desirable that the role and aims of the scheme should be promoted to the public. Independent Visitors must bear in mind that the purpose of publicity is to inform the public about the scheme and not draw attention to individual cases or to themselves.

Any invitation to speak to the press, local groups or organisations (other than the Police and Community Forums), about any aspect of independent visiting should be referred to the Police and Crime Commissioner's office and should not be undertaken by individual Independent Visitors except at the request of the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, who will in normal circumstances have consulted with the Chief Constable. Independent Visitors should remember that they are accountable to the Police and Crime Commissioner, and not to the press or individual members of the public.



Appendix

Page 7 - 'The need for a suitable environment'

1. Advice on spotting heatstroke and keeping your dog cool

www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-care/warm-weather-advice

Warm weather advice



Walk your dog when it's cooler: early morning or late evening

Do the tarmac test: if you can't comfortably hold your hand on tarmac for five seconds, then it's too hot for your dog's paws



Ensure your dog has plenty of water and shade all day

Take extra care

Flat-faced, overweight, unwell and older dogs are at increased risk of heatstroke

Exercise is the most common trigger for heat-related illness so take care not to over-exert your dog

Dogs die in hot cars



Never leave your dog in a warm car

In as little as 20 minutes, a dog could die in a hot car.

If you see a dog in distress in a hot car, call 999 immediately.

Winding down a window is not enough to help your dog



Page 7 - 'The need for a suitable environment'

2. Dogs Trust's guidance for dogs in vehicles

1. Dogs Trust policy is that dogs should never be left unattended in a vehicle on a warm day
2. The relevant Act must be followed at all times:
 - England and Wales: [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#)
 - Scotland: [Animal Health and Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#)
 - Northern Ireland: [Welfare of Animals Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#)

In addition to these points, extra considerations specifically for working dogs that often need to be left unattended in vehicles are as follows:

1. Plenty of fresh water must be available at all times
2. All canine vehicles must have:
 - a. Air conditioning in the dog's kennel, including an alarm system that alerts a fault in the system
 - The alarm must be monitored at all times
 - b. Temperature monitoring in the dog's kennel
 - c. Run-lock to allow continuous A/C when the engine is off
 - d. Regular servicing of all the above
 - e. Kennels in each vehicle should be as large as possible to maximise ventilation
3. In temperatures <20C, it may be appropriate to leave the vehicle parked in the shade with the boot fully open
 - a. 20C is based on the thermoneutral zone of dogs, which is approximately 24C¹ and allows for variation in internal and external factors such as the individual dog and environmental humidity
4. In temperatures >20C, the A/C with alarm system should be used. If it is not possible to close the vehicle due to location, duration or work requirements for the dog, the following should both be implemented:
 - a. Ensure the vehicle is parked in a completely shaded area
 - The area must remain in the shade as the sun moves throughout the day
 - b. Air conditioning should also be left on with the boot open
5. *High humidity increases the impact of warm weather, so extra precautions should be taken e.g. cooling mats, ice packs etc.
 - Dogs must have the space to comfortably move away from a cooling mat to prevent them from becoming too cold whilst lying down
6. All dogs left in vehicles should be checked at least every 30 minutes, so a member of staff must be allocated for this role if the handler is unable to return to the vehicle at this frequency. The check must include:
 - a. The wellbeing and demeanour of the dog, particularly for signs of heat stress that can lead to death in less than 20 minutes in a hot vehicle
 - b. The availability of drinking water
 - c. Ongoing air-conditioning

Reference:

1. McNicholl, J., Howarth, G. S. and Hazel, S. J., 2016. Influence of the environment on body temperature of racing greyhounds. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* 3 (53)

3. WSAVA Body condition score chart

The WSAVA Global Nutrition Committee detail a dogs body condition score: under ideal, ideal and over ideal.

<http://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Body-Condition-Score-Dog.pdf>

WSAVA
Global Nutrition
Committee

Body Condition Score

UNDER IDEAL

1 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernible body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.

2 Ribs, lumbar vertebrae and pelvic bones easily visible. No palpable fat. Some evidence of other bony prominences. Minimal loss of muscle mass.

3 Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

IDEAL

4 Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.

5 Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked up when viewed from side.

OVER IDEAL

6 Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernible viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.

7 Ribs palpable with difficulty; heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be present.

8 Ribs not palpable under very heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distention may be present.

9 Massive fat deposits over thorax, spine and base of tail. Waist and abdominal tuck absent. Fat deposits on neck and limbs. Obvious abdominal distention.

German A, et al. Comparison of a bioimpedance monitor with dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry for noninvasive estimation of percentage body fat in dogs. *AJVR* 2010;71:395-398.

Jeusette I, et al. Effect of breed on body composition and comparison between various methods to estimate body composition in dogs. *PLoS One* 2015;10:e0121882.

Kealy RD, et al. Effects of cal restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *JAVMA* 2002;220:1315-1320.

Lallamne DP. Development and validation of a body condition score system for dogs. *Carnine Pract* 1997;22:10-15.

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4. Guidance on diet and nutrition for dogs

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-care/diet-and-nutrition>

Chocolate is toxic to dogs



 **Never give your dog chocolate as a treat. Make sure children and visitors know this too**

 **Never leave chocolate unsupervised on tables or kitchen surfaces**

 **Make sure bins are dog-proof**

 **If you think your dog has eaten chocolate, seek veterinary advice immediately**

Symptoms of chocolate poisoning include:

- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- excessive thirst
- excitability
- drooling
- changes in heart rate
- seizures



5. Signs your dog may be stressed and how to help and body language poster

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/behaviour/signs-your-dog-may-be-stressed>

Dog body language



I'm relaxed



Being able to recognise when your dog might be feeling worried or frightened will help you respond appropriately, and keep you, your dog, and others safe.

We need space

Signs of fear or anxiety to look out for:



Leaning away whilst lip-licking



Yawning, leaning away



Ears back, lip-licking



Pausing with ears back, tail lowered, paw lifted



Leaning back with tail tucked, ears back



Lowered body posture, tail tucked



Approaching with low, wagging tail and ears back



Teeth exposed in 'smile' shape, ears back, eyes squinted/shut tightly

We need space now



Crouched and growling with ears back and tail under



Tense, leaning forward, tail outwards/up, staring, snarling, growling



Rolling onto side or back, tail tucked, ears back, tense, one or both back legs raised

Not all dogs will show these signs or in the combinations described, and others may show some of these signs in other emotional states. The whole body, context and individual dog must be taken into account when reading a dog and judging how to react in a situation.

Page 24 - 'The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease'

6. The Control of Dogs order 1992

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/901/article/2/made>



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The Control of Dogs Order 1992

UK Statutory Instruments ▶ 1992 No. 901 ▶ Article 2

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Previous: Provision Next: Provision Plain View Print Options

What Version

- Latest available (Revised)
- Original (As made)**

Opening Options

More Resources

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

Wearing of collars by dogs

2.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) below, every dog while in a highway or in a place of public resort shall wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to it.

(2) Paragraph (1) above shall not apply to—

- (a) any pack of hounds,
- (b) any dog while being used for sporting purposes,
- (c) any dog while being used for the capture or destruction of vermin,
- (d) any dog while being used for the driving or tending of cattle or sheep,
- (e) any dog while being used on official duties by a member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces or Her Majesty's Customs and Excise or the police force for any area,
- (f) any dog while being used in emergency rescue work, or
- (g) any dog registered with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

