



**Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Cheshire Police Dogs Welfare Visitors Scheme

**Guidance on duties and responsibilities
of the scheme**



1. Background

1.1. The death of a police dog 'Acer' whilst in training in Essex in 1997 and subsequent incidents involving prosecutions of police officers, resulted in an understandable loss of public confidence in police dog training methods and generated adverse comments in the media. This resulted in animal welfare organisations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and the National Canine Defence League (now known as the Dogs Trust) to withdraw from donating dogs to the police service.

1.2. In response, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Police Dog Sub-Committee embarked on a thorough review of police dog training and introduced two pilot Animal Welfare Inspection Schemes in Essex and Lancashire, which operated successfully. Subsequently, ACPO agreed that all forces should consider introducing an independent scheme, to be managed by police authorities (police authorities have since been replaced by Police and Crime Commissioners).

2. Objectives of the Scheme

2.1. The former Police Dog Welfare Inspection Scheme was introduced by Cheshire Police Authority in 2002, in consultation with the Chief Constable, the RSPCA and the Veterinary Surgeons participating in the scheme. The scheme is now known as the Police Dogs Welfare Visitors Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to enable the monitoring and reporting on the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed. The strategic aim of the scheme is to maintain public confidence and secure the welfare of police dogs by ensuring that police dog training methods and the operational use of police dogs are effective, humane, ethical and transparent.

3. Operation of the Scheme

3.1 The scheme comprises of three types of inspections undertaken by three separate individuals:

1. a Veterinary Surgeon inspects all police dogs whilst they are visiting the veterinary surgery premises for their annual inoculation and a report is completed for each dog.
2. impromptu visits undertaken independently by a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor to observe the dogs during the programmed training days and inspect the vehicles used to transport the dogs at the various training grounds throughout Cheshire and North Wales and at the kennels located at the Dogs Unit, Winsford.
3. the Police Dogs Unit Sergeant is responsible for visiting each Dog Handler's home every two years, to carry out an inspection of the conditions under which the dogs are kept.

3.2 The Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire is responsible for monitoring and receiving reports on the Scheme.

4. Police Dog Welfare Visitors

4.1 The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the scheme and have appointed independent Police Dogs Welfare Visitors who have a keen interest in dogs and ensuring standards are maintained.

4.2 The period of appointment is for three years and will be reviewed every three years thereafter. The key factors in renewing appointments of further periods must be the continuing ability and willingness of the Police Dogs Welfare Visitors to carry out the role effectively.

5. Veterinary Surgeons

5.1. The Veterinary Surgeons authorised to carry out the annual inoculation, inspection and health check are independent of the Police service. They will complete a report form for each police dog which visits the surgery and this will be returned to the Scheme Coordinator via the Dogs Unit.

6. Dog Unit Sergeants

6.1. The Dogs Unit Sergeants will undertake visits to inspect the conditions under which the police dogs are kept at the Handler's homes every two years and the appropriate report form will be completed and returned to the Scheme Coordinator.

7. Training

7.1 The Police Dogs Welfare Visitors will receive training on various topics including: police dogs training methods; animal welfare, transportation and health & safety. Training will be provided by the Dogs Trust and Police Dog Handlers.

8. Frequency and arrangements for inspection visits

8.1. Frequency of the visits will depend on the number of Police Dogs Welfare Visitors on the Scheme but it will be a minimum of one visit per month to the kennels at the Dog Unit, Winsford and one observation of the training every six weeks. Scheme Coordinator will co-ordinate the visits on a rota basis.

8.2. The visits to the kennels, at the Dog Unit, Winsford and/ or the various training grounds used throughout Cheshire and North Wales should be undertaken on a monthly basis to coincide with the programmed training days which are carried out Monday to Friday each week. Each police dog receives at least two days training in every six-week period.

8.3. Week prior of the planned visit Visitors should contact the Police Dogs Trainers to ascertain the location of the training ground being used on that particular day and if necessary any directions. The Police & Crime Commissioner may review the frequency of visits if necessary.

9. Scrutiny

9.1. The Scheme Coordinator will convene annual meetings of the Police Dog Welfare Visitors and the Dogs Unit Sergeants to review the operation of the scheme and receive updates on related matters.

10. Conduct of visits

10.1. When undertaking a visit, Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will at all times be accompanied by an officer or a member of staff at the training ground or the kennels. Police Dog Welfare Visitors must adhere to the advice given by the officer or a member of staff with regard to any health and safety issues. Police Dog Welfare Visitors will not normally be required to visit dog handler's private residences to inspect kennel facilities but may, in exceptional circumstances, be asked to accompany a police officer to a Dog Handler's home (see paragraph 11).

10.2. The Police Dogs Welfare Visitors will primarily be concerned for the welfare of the police dog by undertaking inspections of the animal, the kennel and the vehicle used to transport the dog. Should a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor have concerns regarding the identity of a particular dog, the Dogs Unit Sergeant will identify the particular dog for the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor.

10.3. Should a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor receive information or a complaint in confidence regarding the welfare of a particular dog, this information should be forwarded immediately onto the Scheme Coordinator. Scheme Coordinator will then arrange for the matter to be investigated.

10.4 Any issues relating to conduct of a member of the Dogs Unit must be brought to the immediate attention of the appropriate Dogs Unit Sergeant or Scheme Coordinator by email or telephone.

11. Police initiated visits

11.1. Exceptionally, circumstances may arise where the Police will wish to initiate a visit by a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor, in particular where there may be serious local concern about the treatment or wellbeing of a police dog and a special visit could help allay public fears. The Dogs Unit Sergeant shall be responsible on these occasions for contacting the appropriate Police Dogs Welfare Visitor to arrange a visit.

12. Completion of reports and follow-up action

12.1. Recording the facts of a visit is one of the most important aspects of the scheme and Police Dogs Welfare Visitors may wish to make notes in the course of the visit. Police Dogs Welfare Visitors will complete a report on all the police dogs in attendance at the training ground or kennels at the end of the visit. A 'Five Freedom' sheet need only be completed if there is an issue/ problem relating to the welfare of a particular dog. The report form should be completed in a private area, not in the presence of police staff.

12.2. If a visit discloses any aspects of ill-treatment of any police dogs at the kennels or training grounds or conditions there which are unsatisfactory, it must be recorded on the Report Form at the time of the visit. If a matter appears to require urgent attention, the officer/staff member in charge should be informed immediately. If the Police Dogs Welfare Visitors are not satisfied with the response or actions of the officer/staff member in charge with regard to the welfare of a police dog they must raise their concerns with the Scheme Coordinator who will notify Dogs Unit Sergeant.

12.3. If a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor has any further concerns about a visit, they should contact the Scheme Coordinator as soon as possible after the visit who will pursue the issue with the Chief Officer responsible for the Dogs Units in Cheshire.

13. Guidance

13.1. A copy of this Guidance is also available at the kennels, Dogs Unit, Winsford.

14. Expenses

14.1. Travelling expenses are payable to all Police Dogs Welfare Visitors at the rate set by HMRC.

14.2. Travelling expenses will also be payable to those Police Dogs Welfare Visitors formally appointed to attend any related meetings, training and conferences subject to prior consent being given by the Scheme Coordinator.

15. Insurance

15.1. All Police Dogs Welfare Visitors are covered by the Police and Crime Commissioners'/ Constabulary's insurance against personal injury whilst undertaking visits. Police Dogs Welfare Visitors are responsible for advising their motor vehicle insurers that they are undertaking a volunteer role and ensuring that their vehicle has 'business use' cover.

16. Appointment / re-appointment / termination of visitors

16.1. The process is detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding in Appendix 1.

17. Conduct and complaints appeal process

17.1. The process is detailed in Appendix 2.

18. Contact details

18.1. For further information please contact the Scheme Coordinator:

Karolina Kardas
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Runcorn Town Hall, Heath Road, Runcorn WA7 5TD
☎ 01606 364000
✉ pcc@cheshire-pcc.gov.uk



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Police Dogs Welfare Visitors Scheme Memorandum of Understanding

You will be issued with a copy of the full guidance for the Scheme, but you should particularly note the following points, which highlights the Police and Crime Commissioners' expectations of a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor.

1. Role and responsibilities

The purpose of your role is to observe and report upon the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed. The strategic aim of the scheme is to maintain public confidence and secure the welfare of police dogs by ensuring that police dogs training methods and the operational use of police dogs are effective, humane, ethical and transparent.

2. Appointment

Your appointment is initially for a probationary period of six months. You will be eligible for re-appointment every three years subject to the approval of the Police and Crime Commissioners and to the required vetting status.

3. Conduct

You must act professionally and responsibly with honesty and integrity when undertaking your role and to the highest professional standards. There should be no grounds for suspicion that a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor is influenced in any way by improper motives. You are expected to carry out duties in such a way as to never discriminate against, harass, behave offensively or bully any individual. You must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs and ensure appropriate dress is worn.

4. Identity Cards

Your identity card will be valid for the period that you are appointed as a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor. The identity card authorises you to visit the various training grounds and the kennels. The identity card should **only** be used for the purpose of making visits. If it is used for any other purpose, it will be withdrawn and your appointment as a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor may be terminated.



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5. Undertaking visits

You are required to make visits only when rostered.

6. Minimum requirements

You are expected to make a **minimum of six visits per year**; if there are exceptional circumstances, which prevent you from fulfilling this requirement, you should ensure that the Scheme Coordinator is aware of these. If you have not made a visit within a six-month period, the Scheme Coordinator will advise the Chief Executive who will contact you to ascertain the reason and seek an explanation.

7. Documentation

You are required to complete a Report Form for every visit made (even when there were no dogs observed) and submit copies promptly to the Scheme Coordinator.

8. Change in circumstances

You are expected to notify the Scheme Coordinator of any change in circumstances which may affect your position as a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor, e.g. if you are arrested, charged with, convicted of, or cautioned for an offence subsequent to your original application and vetting process; if you become Special Constable, Police Officer or undertake any other work which may present you with a conflict of interest.

9. Attendance at training seminars and panel meetings

You will be expected to attend the Induction Training and annual review meetings and any training arranged by the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

10. Impartiality and confidentiality

You must undertake not to disclose any information related to persons connected with police enquiries or police operations that you may acquire as part of your duties as a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor. All information must be protected against improper or unnecessary disclosure. You should be aware that improper disclosure of information acquired during the course of a visit may attract civil or criminal proceedings. Additionally, unauthorised disclosure of facts concerning police operations or the security of police stations/ premises may constitute an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1989.



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Police Dogs Welfare Visitors Scheme Memorandum of Understanding

11. Queries

Queries on any aspect of the scheme should be addressed to:

Karolina Kardas, Research and Volunteer Support Officer
Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Runcorn Town Hall
Heath Road
Runcorn
WA7 5TD

or email: Karolina.Kardas@cheshire-pcc.gov.uk

You must sign below to indicate your agreement to be bound by the Police Dogs Welfare Scheme Guidance and this Memorandum of Understanding. A copy of this agreement will be returned to you, for your future reference.

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Please fill your name in BLOCK CAPITALS

Name:.....

Signed:..... **Date:**.....



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Police Dogs Welfare Visitors Scheme Appointment, Termination, Complaints and Appeals procedure

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner operate a transparent and open system for appointments, re-appointments, managing conduct and complaints matters and appeal procedures. Managing these procedures quickly and effectively is vital in ensuring an efficient Police Dogs Welfare Scheme.

Section 1: Confirmation of appointment / re-appointment

1.1. On appointment each Police Dog Welfare Visitor is required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the Police and Crime Commissioner (the Commissioner) expectations of a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor and what levels of support and training will be provided.

1.2. All appointments are subject to a probationary period and appointments will only be confirmed on successful completion of this period. In deciding what is successful, the appropriate Chief Executive will be consulted and the following taken into account:

1. Number of visits undertaken.
2. Feedback from fellow Police Dogs Welfare Visitors.
3. Views from the Scheme Coordinator.

1.3.. Following a satisfactory probationary period, a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be notified in writing by the Chief Executive of their appointment for a three-year period during which they will carry out their duties in accordance with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding.

1.4. If, however, a Police Dog Welfare Visitor's appointment is not confirmed, the Chief Executive will notify the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor in writing of the decision. The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor has a right of appeal against the decision of the Chief Executive to the Commissioner. The appeals procedure is set out in Section 3 below.

1.5. At the end of each period of appointment and subject to the Police Dog Welfare Visitor personally wishing to continue, the following will be taken into account by the Chief Executive when considering whether to extend the appointment:

- Number of visits carried out to comply with rota.
- Attendance at training events and review meetings.
- Feedback from fellow Police Dogs Welfare Visitors.
- Feedback from others e.g. police officers, police staff.
- Views from the Scheme Coordinator.



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1.6. Each Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will receive notification, in writing of the decision of the Chief Executive whether or not to extend the appointment for a further period. There is a right of appeal to the Commissioner as set out in Section 3 if an appointment is not extended.

Section 2: Conduct and complaints matters

2.1. This section sets out the method by which conduct and complaints matters will be considered and the stages of resolution. Complaints may be made by Police Dogs Welfare Visitors, police officers and staff or others who may come into contact with Police Dogs Welfare Visitors in the course of their duties.

2.2 Conduct

2.3. A Police Dog Welfare Visitor's appointment may be terminated due to misconduct or poor performance as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

2.4. In the event of a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor being arrested, cautioned or charged with a criminal offence, the Chief Executive will write to the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor to suspend their appointment until the outcome of any criminal proceedings is known.

2.5. If the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor is subsequently found to be not guilty, they may be reinstated. In the case of a caution, the Chief Executive will review the appointment of the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor taking in account the nature of the offence. If the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor is found guilty of a criminal offence, the Chief Executive will consider the termination of their appointment.

2.6. The appeals procedure against termination is set out in Section 3 below.

2.7. Complaints

2.8. If the complaint involves allegations against a police officer or police staff, the matter will be referred to the Constabulary/ Force's Professional Standards Department for determination under the appropriate Police Regulations and force policies.

2.9. All complaints concerning the Police Dogs Welfare Visiting Scheme including complaints against individual Police Dogs Welfare Visitors should be made to the Chief Executives.



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2.10. The complainant must provide in writing:

- (a) the names of any Police Dogs Welfare Visitors concerned;
- (b) details about the nature of the complaint and the date when the events occurred that have led to the complaint being made;
- (c) their own name, address and contact details.

2.11. The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be advised of the nature of the complaint and will be offered the opportunity to provide any relevant information in writing within 7 working days.

2.12. The Chief Executive may contact any or all of the following to seek their views on a complaint: the complainant, fellow Police Dogs Welfare Visitors, Police Dogs Unit Sergeants and Handlers, and any other person who is able to provide relevant information. Once the Chief Executive has received any submissions from the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor, he will consider the matter and determine how to proceed.

2.13. Wherever possible, the Chief Executive will seek to resolve the complaint quickly and informally to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The aim is to resolve complaints wherever possible within two months. Dependent upon the nature of the complaint, during the investigation, the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor subject to the complaint may be suspended from undertaking visits.

2.14. Where informal resolution is not possible, or where the Chief Executive, after initial consideration, deems it to be appropriate, the complaint will be investigated and a report prepared. The Chief Executive and the Scheme Coordinator will consider the report and determine the complaint.

2.15. The Chief Executive may reach any one or more of the following conclusions and the decision will be final:

- (a) dismiss the complaint (in whole or in part);
- (b) uphold the complaint (in whole or in part).

2.16 If the complaint is upheld (or upheld in part), the Chief Executive will determine the level of sanction dependent on the seriousness/ nature of the complaint. The sanctions will range from:

- words of advice about a Police Dogs Welfare Visitor's future conduct;
- specific training/ re-training;
- requirement to resign or immediate dismissal from the Scheme.

2.17 The Chief Executive will notify the complainant parties of the decision within five working days.



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Section 3: Appeals procedure

3.1. The appeals procedure in relation to all matters regarding the confirmation, extension and termination of Police Dogs Welfare Visitor appointments will be carried out as follows:

- The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be advised in writing of any matters of concern regarding the confirmation of appointment/ re-appointment or termination as determined by the Chief Executive. A Police Dogs Welfare Visitor has a right to appeal to the Commissioner against the Chief Executive's decision not to appoint or re-appoint or to terminate an appointment.
- The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor must submit any grounds of appeal to the Commissioner in writing within 15 working days of the Chief Executive's letter.
- The Chief Executive will meet with the Commissioner to consider the report, including any written responses, or supportive documents from the Police Dog Welfare Visitor. The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be invited to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion and answer any questions, which the Commissioner may ask.
- The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor and the Chief Executive will be excluded from the decision making process which will be held immediately after the discussion.
- The Scheme Coordinator will notify the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor within five working days of the Commissioner's final decision.
- If the appeal is upheld, the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be appointed or reinstated immediately.
- If the appeal is dismissed, the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be advised and no further action will be taken. The Police and Crime Commissioner's Office will not enter into any further discussion or correspondence concerning any termination of appointment.



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Police Dog Welfare Visitor Scheme Appointment, Termination, Complaints and Appeals procedure

3.2. The appeals procedure in relation to the determination of complaints comprises:

- Within 10 working days, on notification of the outcome of the complaint the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor must advise the Chief Executive in writing if they wish to appeal against the determination of the complaint. The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor must set out the reasons for the appeal and submit any supporting documents they wish to be considered as part of the appeal.
- The Chief Executive will submit the appeal letter and any supporting documents provided by the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will also receive the complaint decision letter and any report produced by the Chief Executive on the determination.
- The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor will be invited to attend and listen to the discussions and answer any questions, which the Commissioner may ask.
- The Police Dogs Welfare Visitor and the Chief Executive will be excluded from the decision making process which will be held immediately after the discussion.
- The Scheme Coordinator will notify the Police Dogs Welfare Visitor within five working days of the final decision of the Commissioner.



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