



Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme for Dogs Memorandum of Understanding

The Animal Welfare Independent Visitor's Scheme ("AWS") is a scheme set up to promote and ensure the welfare of those animals working within police forces. As part of the AWS, independent visitors ("Independent Visitors") are appointed to check on the welfare of the animals. Taking part in the AWS is voluntary and decided individually by each police force. The AWS guidelines for dogs are issued by Dogs Trust, in consultation with The National Police Chiefs Council ("NPCC").

The Essex police force has agreed to join the AWS for dogs.

The AWS will be managed by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex "PFCC"

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is between Dogs Trust, the PFCC and the Police Dog Unit Manager for the Police Force (the "Dog Unit Manager") and outlines the expectations of each party regarding the AWS. This MOU is not intended to be legally binding.

A. PFCC

Across the Police Force, the PFCC will:

1. Appoint suitable Independent Visitors onto the AWS, in accordance with the guidelines in the AWS booklet (provided by Dogs Trust from time to time).
2. Be responsible for the administration and effective management of the AWS and the collation of all relevant documentation and Animal Welfare reports.
3. Arrange yearly panel meetings for Independent Visitors, Dog Unit Managers and Dogs Trust representatives to attend.
4. Take positive and timely action regarding any animal welfare issues that are raised.
5. Issue an AWS information handbook to all Independent Visitors.
6. Provide a reporting system to record visits which document that each of the following "5 welfare Needs" are being met for each dog:
 - a) The need for a suitable environment.
 - b) The need for a suitable diet.
 - c) The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
 - d) The need to be housed with or apart from other animals; and
 - e) The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

B. Dog Unit Managers:

Across the Police Force, the Dog Unit Manager will:

1. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that all needs of each Police Dog for which they are responsible for are met to the extent required by good practice, including but not limited to the "5 Needs".
2. Assist and support the PFCC to ensure the smooth and effective running of the AWS.
3. Provide to the Independent Visitors and/or Dogs Trust on request all information relevant to the AWS, including but not limited to:

- a) Vets' yearly welfare reports.
 - b) List of current handlers.
 - c) List of current police dogs.
 - d) Training reports (if required);
 - e) Information regarding dogs being retired or withdrawn from service.
 - f) Risk assessments to ensure the safety of Independent Visitors and staff; and
 - g) Standard Operating Procedures and policies relating to animal welfare.
4. Investigate any concerns raised by the PFCC and Independent Visitors to the satisfaction of the PFCC
 5. Facilitate visits by Independent Visitors to police dog training venues, police owned kennels, private council licensed kennels used by the police and police stations where dog handlers deploy from.
 6. Facilitate Independent Visitors having access to police vehicles used to transport police dogs, in order to inspect these vehicles.
 7. Cooperate fully with the requirements of the AWS.
 8. Ensure dog handlers' home kennels are checked by the Dog Unit Manager (or other suitable person nominated by the Dog Unit Manager) at least once every two years, to ensure they are fit for purpose, safe, clean and free from hazards.
 9. Arrange for all current working dogs to be seen by the vets at least once a year to ensure they are fit to work.
 10. Ensure that where the Police Force accepts a dog from a Dogs Trust rehoming centre:
 - a) The Police Force will pay to Dogs Trust's minimum adoption fee if the dog is not returned to Dogs Trust at the end of the trial period. This can either be paid directly to the rehoming centre or via an invoice raised and sent to the Police Force by Dogs Trust's accounts department; and
 - b) Any dog taken on a trial period must not engage in any form of bite work during this trial period. This is to ensure that if the dog is returned to Dogs Trust at the end of the trial period, it will ensure and facilitate the safe onward homing of the dog with civilians and provide assurance that no unwanted working dog protection or aggression behaviours reside in the dog.

C. Dogs Trust


Dogs Trust will:

1. Provide an AWS coordinator for the Police Force, who will liaise with the PFCC to provide support to set up the AWS for the Police Force in accordance with the AWS booklet.
2. Provide welfare training to the Police Force's police officers and Independent Visitors, if required.
3. Attend the Police Force's AWS panel meetings.
4. Carry out yearly AWS inspections of the Police Force.
5. Issue those Police Dog Units which Dogs Trust confirms are complying with the AWS a certificate of compliance (valid for 12 months).
6. Notify the Police Force of any dogs suitable for its working requirements which are up for adoption in Dogs Trust's rehoming centre.
7. Police Dog units that accept a dog from a Dogs Trust rehoming centre will be allowed a trial period of up to a maximum of 6 weeks to assess the dog's suitability for its intended role.

The PFCC and the Dog Unit Manager both acknowledge that only those Police Forces which have signed up to AWS and hold a current AWS certificate of compliance issued by Dogs Trust are permitted to adopt a dog from Dogs Trust.

Dogs Trust

Signature:


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Name: ...Louise Crawford
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Role: Animal Welfare Scheme
Coordinator.....

Date: ...21st April 2021
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PFCC

Signature 
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Name: Roger Hirst

Role:
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

Date: 4 May 2021

Dog Unit Manager

Signature:
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Name:

Role:

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Date: