

# Guidance on police dogs and horses – have your say

Published on 29 November 2023

We're consulting on new guidance related to police dogs and mounted units

News 4 mins read

As part of our public order public safety (POPS) guidance, we're seeking feedback on new authorised professional practice (APP) we've developed for mounted police and police dog handlers.

For each, we set out:

- how forces can setup and run these sections effectively
- the training and standards required, of both animals and officers and staff, to work within these specialist sections
- standards for animal welfare, care and management
- how forces can use and deploy canine and equine colleagues effectively to support frontline policing

## Mounted police

Mounted police (police horses and riders) are used within policing for a variety of purposes, such as:

- public order and crowd control
- high-visibility patrols
- community engagement
- ceremonial duties

Police horses offer several advantages, including giving officers a higher vantage point to scan their surroundings and spot potential issues. It also allows officers to steer through crowded areas quickly and get to locations unreachable by car or bicycle.

**Research has shown** the presence of police horses and their riders on patrol in their community can boost the public's confidence.

## Police dogs

General purpose police dogs, such as German Shepherds, have a wide range of skills. They are often deployed to:

- assist officers with tracking and apprehending suspects
- support the policing of planned and unplanned events
- search for missing people
- recover evidence
- control other dangerous dogs
- protect their handler in dangerous situations

Other breeds, like Cocker Spaniels, Springer Spaniels and Labradors, can detect drugs, money, explosives and weapons with their sharp sense of smell.

As they approach retirement, many police dogs are retained as wellbeing dogs to support police officers and staff who have experienced trauma. The National Police Wellbeing Service, Oscar Kilo, makes wellbeing dogs available to all forces who wish to introduce a dog as part of their wellbeing provision through its **OK-9 dogs scheme**.

Read about a **shift in the life of a dog handler** in issue four of Going equipped.

## Have your say

Our consultation closes at 11:59am on Thursday 7 February 2024.

To have your say, read the consultation document then complete the online questionnaire.

## Mounted police APP

- **[Read the mounted police APP consultation document](#)**
- **[Complete the mounted police APP consultation questionnaire](#)**

## Police dogs APP

- [Read the police dogs APP consultation document](#)
- [Complete the police dogs APP consultation questionnaire](#)

Note that although many aspects of this APP and associated links are publicly accessible, some areas are restricted. This is due to GDPR requirements and/or the sensitivity of the information. Links to those specific sections are restricted only to police forces and government agencies.

## Tags

Public order   Public safety   Police dogs