

# Welfare and care of police dogs

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The welfare of all police dogs must be at the forefront of every decision made around their care, training and deployment, when on duty and off duty. All police dogs are officially owned by the chief constable of that particular force, with most living with their individual handler.

Chief constables must ensure compliance with the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#). All staff who work with, or have contact with, police dogs must act in accordance with current animal welfare legislation.

Chief constables or police and crime commissioners may take part in [The Animal Welfare Independent Visitor Scheme](#) to assess and monitor police dog welfare and ensure any issues are reported and addressed.

Chief constables should ensure that there is a policy in place regarding the care of police dogs when not on duty. The requirements are set out in the NPCC Police Dog Standard as a minimum and should include, but not be restricted to:

- kennelling police dogs when the handler or person in charge is no longer in a position to care for them
- police dogs wearing identification when at private kennels
- having a procedure for reporting complaints by members of the public
- custody and control of a police dog by others
- exercising of police dogs
- risk assessments for off duty care and exercise
- kennelling for annual leave periods
- kennelling for police dogs that do not reside with their handler
- H&S requirements

In addition, chief constables should have a policy in place that allows and encourages veterinary surgeons to report any concerns that they may have with regard to the police dog.

## Procurement, retirement and euthanasia

Chief constables should ensure that they have robust policies and procedures in place that are compliant with NPCC standards, animal welfare and legislation regarding the procurement, retirement and euthanasia of police dogs.

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