

Police Dogs

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Policy Statement

- Summary**
- Police Dogs will be withdrawn from service for one of the following reasons:
- Reaching retirement age;
 - Suffering from ill health;
 - Behaviour is deemed to pose an unnecessary risk to people; or
 - Failure to pass course/licensing (three attempts).

This policy outlines the procedure West Yorkshire Police (WYP) will follow in relation to retirement, transfer, re-homing, long term kennelling and rarely, euthanasia.

- Scope**
- This policy procedure applies to West Yorkshire Police Dog Support Unit Officers and staff and the nominated officer (Dog Support Unit Sergeant), Dog Support Unit Inspector and Chief Inspector.
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Principles

- General**
- General purpose police dogs are trained in accordance with the ACPO Police Dogs Manual of Guidance.
 - The dogs are taught obedience, searching, tracking and to use force where necessary to detain a person by means of biting.
 - Specialist search dogs are trained to search and locate specific items.
 - These dogs are not trained to use force but, like any animal, they are capable of independent thought.
 - All police dogs live at home with their handlers when not working. Handlers have sole responsibility of the care of the dogs.
 - The Dog Support Unit is based at Carr Gate along with the kennels.
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Rehoming

- Principles**
- The majority of police dogs are retired after reaching the end of their working life. Where a trained police dog is retired or withdrawn from service, it will in the first instance be offered to the handler to keep if they so wish.
 - If they decide to retain the dog, they will sign a disclaimer thereby assuming liability from the Chief Constable.
 - In the event that a handler is unable/unwilling to retain the dog, then the

Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer will decide whether the dog can be rehomed with a member of the public or a charitable body.

- In deciding whether a dog can be rehomed to a member of the public or a charitable body, the following must be considered:
 - The role the dog has been trained to undertake (general purpose or specialist search);
 - The operational history of the dog;
 - The training history of the dog;
 - The experience, character and profession of any party wishing to assume responsibility for the dog;
 - The suitability of any premises where the dog would reside; and
 - Any other factors considered pertinent to the safe rehoming of the police dog.
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Transfer

Principles

- In the event that a dog fails to meet the required standard in training or licensing and it is deemed that the dog is unsuitable then, the Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer will decide whether the dog can be transferred to an external organisation (Armed Forces/Prison Service).
 - In deciding whether a dog can be transferred to an external organisation, the following must be considered:
 - The role the dog has been trained to undertake (general purpose or specialist search);
 - The operational history of the dog;
 - The training history of the dog;
 - The suitability of the external organisation and
 - Any other factors considered pertinent to the safe rehoming of the police dog.
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Long Term Kennelling

Principles

- It is recognised that the long term kennelling of a dog can have a detrimental impact on their welfare, behaviour and social development.
- When a police dog has been resident in the kennels for 28 continuous days and in order to avoid unnecessary suffering, a review must be undertaken. (An exception to this would be if the handler is on an extended period of sick leave or annual leave and the period in kennels is not detrimental to the dog's welfare).
- On reaching the 28th day of a dog being in kennels, the Dog Support Unit

Sergeant as nominated officer will chair the review. The review team must include a member of the kennel staff.

- During the review, the following must be considered:
 - The dog's behaviour while in kennels;
 - The projected period of time the dog is to be in kennels;
 - The return date of the handler;
 - Whether it is appropriate to re-handle the dog in order to prevent it suffering; and
 - Whether it is appropriate to offer the dog to another police service where there is no opportunity to re-handle the dog internally.
 - If it is deemed appropriate in the interests of the dog and its welfare, the review may be brought forward.
 - If an early review is undertaken the Dog Support Inspector must be included in the review.
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Euthanasia

Safety

- Where a dog's actions for reasons of safety has been brought to the attention of the Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer, they must (where risk allows):
 - Review of the training records of the dog;
 - Review of the operational history of the dog;
 - Where there is no immediate risk to persons, hold a discussion about the dog and its behaviour, with the handler, training and kennel staff;
 - Consider all relevant circumstances including the option of consulting an external expert to provide further opinion; and
 - Inform the Dog Unit Inspector of the situation regarding the dog and the possibility of euthanasia.
- If the course of action is deemed to be euthanasia, the Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer will authorise the veterinary surgeons contracted by West Yorkshire Police to undertake this.
- Where the Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer notifies the Dog Support Inspector of a concern relating to the safety of a dog, they must (where risk allows) ensure that:
 - This policy has been followed;
 - They have been party to any decision to have a dog euthanised; and
 - Where a dog has been euthanised, the circumstances and decision-making process is referred to the Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector as soon as practicable.
- Where the Dog Support Unit Inspector notifies the Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector that a dog has been euthanised for reasons of safety, the report and decision-making process must be reviewed by them. And they will be the point of contact for any appeals as to the process.

**Illness or
Welfare**

- Where a dog's welfare or health has been brought to the attention of the Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer, they must:
 - Hold a discussion with the handler regarding the dog's welfare and health
 - Review of the training records of the dog;
 - Consult with the contracted veterinary surgeons and inspection of the health and treatment records of the dog
 - Consider as to whether a second opinion is required in relation to a diagnosis;
 - Determine, in partnership with the veterinary surgeon, whether the dog should be euthanised to prevent further suffering;
 - Inform the Dog Support Unit Inspector of the decision.
 - Where the Dog Support Unit Sergeant as nominated officer notifies the Dog Support Unit Inspector for reasons of welfare or to prevent further suffering that a dog will be or has been euthanised, they must:
 - Review the decision-making process, if appropriate; and
 - Notify the Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector as soon as practicable.
 - Where the Dog Support Unit Inspector notifies the Dog Support Unit Chief Inspector that a dog has been euthanised for reasons of welfare or to prevent further suffering, it must be recorded that they have been notified.
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Administration

Principles

- Retirement/Rehome of any Police dog will be recorded on Chronicle details to include:
 - Leaving date;
 - Leaving reason;
 - Personal details of new owner;
 - Rationale and authorisation; and
 - Upload copy of disclaimer form.
- Transfer of any Police dog will be recorded on Chronicle details to include:
 - Transfer date;
 - Leaving reason;
 - Organisation details of new owner;
 - Rationale and authorisation; and
 - Upload copy of transfer of ownership form.
- Euthanasia of any Police dog will be recorded on Chronicle details to include:
 - Euthanasia date;
 - Euthanasia reason; and
 - Rationale and authorisation.
- Long term Kennelling Reviews will be recorded on Chronicle details to

include:

- Start date;
 - Reason for kennelling;
 - Expected end date; and
 - Review date and rationale.
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Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following guidance:

- Police Dogs Manual of Guidance
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Further Information

Further guidance in relation to this policy can be sought from:

- Dog Support Unit intranet page.
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