

New guidance on police dogs published

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We've published new authorised professional practice on caring and working with police dogs

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From tracking suspects to supporting wellbeing, our four-legged colleagues play a vital role in policing, both on the frontline and behind the scenes.

As part of our [public order public safety \(POPS\) guidance](#) we have worked with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) to publish new national standards for the deployment and care of police dogs.

[Authorised professional practice \(APP\)](#) is the official source of professional practice for policing. Our police dogs guidance provides standards for forces on:

- how to setup and run a dog section successfully
- the training required of both animals and officers and staff, to work within these specialist sections
- animal welfare, care and management
- making the most of the broad range of skills that different breeds of police dogs possess to effectively support frontline policing

As policing and its challenges have evolved so has the number of police dogs and the variety of breeds joining the canine ranks. Police dogs now are used for a variety of purposes. German Shepherds, for example, have a wide range of skills and 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](#).

The new guidance has also been developed collaboratively with subject matters experts, including dog handlers and staff who work in dog sections, as well as Police and Crime Commissioners and animal welfare experts. It incorporates important legislation like the [Animal Welfare \(Service Animals\) Act \(2019\), known as 'Finn's Law'](#), introduced to protect service animals including police dogs and horses.

We have worked collaboratively with subject matter experts, including animal welfare, so the public can have trust and confidence that our canine colleagues are properly cared for before, during and after their time in service.

- [Read the new APP guidance on dogs](#)

Tags

Police dogs