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**Comisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddu  
Dyfed-Powys  
Police and Crime Commissioner**

# **Animal Welfare Lay Visiting Scheme**

## **Terms of Reference**

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1.0	March 2016	Hannah Hyde	
2:0	February 2020	Caryl Bond	Handbook updated to include further information on the Scheme.
3.0	March 2022	Caryl Bond	Handbook updated in line with the Dogs Trust Animal Welfare Policy.
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4.1	September 2024	Tom Walters	Handbook updated to be become ToR, volunteer policy and Frequency and Timings of visits

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## **1. Volunteer Policy**

The Volunteer Policy is an overarching policy covering the broad principles of volunteering for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). All volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Policy. It is also available on the PCC's [website](#) or by request to the Commissioner's office.

The Policy provides further information on the following aspects of volunteering:

1. Management of the volunteer schemes;
2. Eligibility criteria;
3. Recruitment, application and vetting;
4. Training;
5. Probationary period and tenure;
6. Volunteer roles, responsibilities and standards;
7. Expenses and insurance;
8. Termination of appointment; confidentiality and disposing documentation;
9. Publicity guidelines; and
10. Welfare and Support
11. Settling difference and complaints against the Police.

## **2. Animal Welfare Scheme Handbook**

This Handbook provides detailed guidance on the Animal Welfare visiting arrangements within Dyfed-Powys.

## **3. Introduction to the Animal Welfare Scheme**

The death of a police dog 'Acer' whilst in training in Essex in 1997, and the subsequent prosecution of police officers resulted in a considerable loss of public confidence in police dog training methods, generated adverse comment in the media and caused animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and the Dogs Trust to stop donating dogs to the police service. In response to these issues, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Police Dog Sub-Committee embarked upon a thorough review of policedog training resulting in the development of a strategy aimed at restoring public confidence by ensuring that police dog training methods are humane, ethical and transparent.

The training and welfare of animals engaged in police work must be open and, as importantly, be seen to be open. To this end, an Animal Welfare Lay Visitors Scheme was introduced.

In 2006, the Animal Welfare Act brought in an even greater responsibility for police forces to provide for the needs of the dogs in their care. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 applies to England and Wales.

The purpose of these visiting arrangements is to enable appointed members of the local community and professionals from animal welfare organisations to observe, comment and report upon the welfare of animals engaged in police work and the condition under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed with a view to securing greater understanding and confidence in these matters. These arrangements also provide a mechanism for an independent

check on the way police Dog Handlers carry out their responsibilities with regard to animals in their care.

The former Dyfed-Powys Police Authority established an Animal Welfare Lay Visiting Scheme in consultation with the Chief Constable in 2002. In November 2012, the first PCC for Dyfed-Powys was elected, and following consideration of the benefits of the Scheme, decided to continue with its administration.

#### **4. Animal Welfare Standards**

The Animal Welfare Scheme visitors inspect the training, housing and transport of police dogs to ensure that they meet animal welfare standards. The five welfare needs are documented in legislation for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The five welfare needs are:

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- The need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

For further information on the five welfare needs and what forces should do to achieve them, please see the [Dogs Trust Independent Animal Welfare Scheme Handbook](#).

#### **5. Who are our Animal Welfare Visitors?**

Animal Welfare Visitors are independent members of the local community who visit police dogs and their handlers, police dog training centres and police accommodation where dogs are kept. Visits can be pre-arranged or unannounced. Independent Visitors come from a variety of backgrounds and sections of the community. To prevent possible conflicts of interest and to maintain the scheme's impartiality, our independent visitors do not have any direct or indirect involvement with the criminal justice system.

#### **6. Eligibility and Appointment**

The eligibility criteria to become an Animal Welfare Visitor is detailed in the Role Specification in [Appendix A](#). Each application will be treated on its merits, but the overriding factor will be to prevent possible conflicts of interest for individuals and to maintain the independence and integrity of the scheme as a whole. The panel of Animal Welfare Scheme visitors should be representative of the local community and try to achieve a balance in terms of age range, gender and ethnic minority representation.

#### **7. Management of the Scheme**

The Scheme is co-ordinated via the OPCC through the Assurance Team with the scheme managers being the point of contact. Visitors will be informed of direct contact details on joining the scheme and will be kept updated of any changes.

## **8. Induction Training**

All Animal Welfare Visitors will be invited to attend an initial one-day induction training session organised by the PCC's office and will also be expected to undertake refresher training annually in order to maintain levels of knowledge and ensure best practice. Training will be provided by the PCC's office, Dyfed-Powys Police's Dog Section, and representatives from the Dogs Trust. The training day will provide Visitors with the basic knowledge and skills they will need to make visits.

Animal Welfare Visitors are expected to attend a training visit to the Dog Section in Dyfed-Powys Police prior to taking up their duties. They will then need to complete a minimum of two visits in the company of experienced Animal Welfare Visitors as part of their training, prior to taking up their role.

## **9. Visiting Arrangements and Procedures**

### **9.1 Number of Animal Welfare Visitors**

The PCC's office will appoint sufficient Animal Welfare Visitors to ensure that an appropriate number of random visits are made to all Dog Handlers across Dyfed-Powys.

### **9.2 Frequency and Timing of Visits**

It is an expectation of the scheme that all Dog Handlers receive **at least** one visit in any six-month period.

Visitors are provided with an assigned Dog Handlers list every six months, which lists the Dog Handlers each volunteer is expected to visit.

The timing of visits is a matter for the independent visitor but visits must be undertaken in accordance with the Assigned Handler's List issued by the OPCC. This is to ensure that all visits are carried out before the end of the six month period. It is recognised that all dogs and their handlers are on call and occasionally visits may need to be rearranged due to unexpected operational needs. If the officer is unable to attend, a full explanation should be given to the Animal Welfare Scheme visitor and the explanation should be recorded and communicated back to the OPCC. No Handler should go 12 months without being seen by an independent visitor. The arrangement and the completion of visits before the end of each 6-month rota will be monitored by the OPCC and progress will be discussed within Panel meetings. Panel meetings will be arranged in the middle of each 6-month rota period to allow for any concerns in arranging or carrying out visits on time to be discussed.

Visitors are provided with the contact details for the Dog Handlers they are assigned to. Visitors will contact the Dog Handler directly to arrange the visit.

Visitors should arrive at police headquarters / police station / agreed location, at

an agreed time. The frequency of visits may be reviewed from time to time; therefore, it is preferable that Visitors should try to avoid making visits at regular or predictable times.

### **9.3 Meetings and Training**

The OPCC will call one panel meetings per year. The panel will consist of all Animal Welfare Visitors, Dogs Trust (or other animal welfare organisation) representatives, the Manager of the Dog Section and the PCC administrators for the Animal Welfare Scheme. Visiting arrangements and any concerns will be discussed at the meeting. OPCC will liaise with the Police Sergeant of the dog section to mitigate and if necessary monitor any concerns or issues raised. Issues arising out of the meeting and any action taken in response, will also be reported to the Police and Crime Commissioner. One annual practical dog training day is arranged for all Independent Visitors and animal welfare organisations to meet with staff from the dog section.

### **9.4 Chair Responsibilities**

The Animal Welfare Scheme will be chaired by a volunteer who has expressed an interest in carrying out the role. The individual with the highest number of votes will become Chair for a period of 1 year; however, the length of time a person can Chair the meeting is unlimited subject to successful annual election. If the Chair nominates themselves, it has to be seconded by another member and then voted on by the whole meeting. Only in exceptional circumstances will a member of OPCC staff undertake the role of Chair.

The role of the Chair will be:

- To Chair panel meetings, ensuring that they run to time.
- To ensure their own familiarity with all concerns and trends identified by Animal Welfare Visitors during the preceding period to the meeting and be able to constructively bring these to the attention of the scheme managers in advance of meetings.
- To scrutinise responses given to any queries raised at meetings or as a result of matters detailed on report forms.
- To assist in the recruitment and selection of new AWVs.
- To keep a regular dialogue with the scheme managers on all other matters including identified training requirements, conduct of colleagues, rota allocation etc.

### **9.5 Authorised Visitors**

Animal welfare visits should only be made individually or when accompanied by another accredited Animal Welfare Visitor. No more than two visitors should visit together, as larger parties could constitute an additional burden on police staff. Under no circumstances may visitors be accompanied by any unauthorised persons.

### **9.6 Visiting Procedures at the Dog Section, Pembrey**

On arrival at the Dog Section and kennels at Pembrey, visitors should request to see the Duty Officer and present their identity card. They should then be given



immediate access to the following areas:

- Kennels;
- Food preparation room for the animals; and
- Dog vans (if they are on site).

Pembrey kennels should be visited at least once in every six-month period by a different visitor. This will be pre-arranged during the creation of the rota.

### **9.7 Visiting Procedures at Stations**

On arrival at the station, Visitors should request to see the Dog Handler and present their identity card. The dog should be presented for checking by the Visitor. Additionally, kennels and dog vans should be inspected if on site.

### **9.8 Access to areas where animals are held, trained and transported**

Visitors should satisfy themselves that the areas are clean, tidy, in a reasonable state of repair and that bedding is clean and adequate. It is not necessary to inspect stores, but visitors should establish that suitable arrangements exist for adequate stocks of equipment and food.

Inspections should also be undertaken of empty kennels to check they are in an acceptable condition to house the animals.

### **9.9 Police initiated visits**

Circumstances may arise where Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) will wish to initiate a visit by an Animal Welfare Visitor (including at a Dog Handler's home address). A special visit could help allay public fears / concern about the treatment and well-being of police dogs. The Officer in Charge of the Dog Section will be responsible on these occasions for contacting the PCC's office to arrange a visit. Equally, if a specific complaint is received by DPP pertaining to animal welfare, the officer tasked with investigating the initial complaint should consider involving Animal Welfare Visitors.

### **9.10 Security and Safety of Animal Welfare Visitors**

In the interests of the security and the safety of visitors, they must be accompanied by a member of staff during the visits. Visitors must adhere to advice given by Dog Handlers and other staff with regard to any health and safety issues.

### **9.11 Medical Conditions of Animals**

Visitors will wish to pay particular attention to any animal suffering from illness, injury or disability. They should satisfy themselves that, if appropriate, a veterinarian has been informed and establish what instructions for medical treatment have been given and whether they have been carried out.

Any concerns should be noted on the report form accordingly and raised with the Handler at the time of the visit.

### **9.12 Physical checks of animals**

Visitors should ensure that the welfare and physical condition of the animal is satisfactory. Any concerns should be noted on the report form accordingly and raised with the Handler at the time of the visit. In all circumstances, the visitor **must** seek the permission of the handler prior to making any cursory physical examination. The visitor must adhere to the advice given by the Handler as to whether the physical examination may be carried out by the visitor or not. If a physical examination is refused by the handler, the visitor may request that the handler do so whilst being observed by them.

### **9.13 Inspections of home kennels**

Independent Visitors will not normally be entitled to visit officers' private residences to inspect kennel facilities but will seek to review written records that Handlers' home kennels have been regularly inspected (at least every 3 years) by a suitable representative of the police force. The Independent Visitors will bring to the attention of the OPCC any concerns they may have regarding a particular animal and the OPCC will then take the appropriate action in relation to inspecting kennels maintained at a Dog Handler's home. Following consultation with the Independent Visitor, the nominated Police Dog Officer will submit a full report to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **10 Completion of reports and follow up action**

### **10.1 Completion of report forms**

At the conclusion of each visit, Animal Welfare Visitors will complete a report form either electronically or via paper. Copies are to be sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner within 14 days. Animal Welfare Visitors should **not** retain any copies of the report form for their own records. [Appendix B](#) sets out the recommended checks visitors should consider as a basis to complete their visit report forms.

### **10.2 Reports on unsatisfactory treatment and conditions**

If a visit discloses any aspect of the treatment of dogs or the conditions in which they are kept that are unsatisfactory, they should be included on the report and raised with the Dog Handler at the time. Any action which the handler takes should also be recorded on the report form. Should a visitor have concerns regarding the identity of a particular dog, they may request that the dog's electronic tag is scanned. This must be done in the presence of the visitor.

### **10.3 Reports on issues arising out of visits**

Issues arising out of visits will be submitted to the OPCC who will consider the most suitable action. Feedback of actions taken to resolve matters arising from visits will be provided.

## **11.0 Confidentiality**

During the course of their duties, Animal Welfare Visitors may acquire confidential information about police issues. Visitors will therefore be asked to sign an undertaking of confidentiality.

Visitors should be aware that the improper disclosure of information acquired during a visit may attract civil or criminal proceedings. It is stressed that confidential information must not be included in the written reports to the OPCC.

Should a Visitor receive information or a complaint in confidence regarding the welfare of a particular dog, this information should be forwarded immediately to the OPCC, who will take appropriate actions to the concerns raised.

Visitors' and Dog Handlers' contact details are given to visitors with the strictest confidence purely for convenience in making personal contact. Such details must not be divulged to any other person.

When a visitor leaves the scheme, they must ensure that all documentation relating to their role is returned to the OPCC.

## **12.0 Monitoring the Scheme**

To achieve the objectives of the Scheme, reports of trends emerging from visits undertaken are presented to the PCC, who monitors all aspects of the Scheme across the Dyfed-Powys area.

## **13.0 Termination of appointment**

Newly appointed Independent Visitors will complete a six month probationary period. The term of office for Animal Welfare Independent Visitors should be three years; however, a member may apply to serve for additional terms subject to an interview and review from the OPCC. It is noted that the OPCC hold the right to refuse that member permission to serve for a second term and may also withhold their reason(s) for doing so following the three-year term review.

Although this role is entirely voluntary, the OPCC has the right to terminate a Visitor's appointment if their conduct is not felt to be of the expected standard. Visitors will sign a Code of Conduct on joining the Scheme and will be expected to abide by the standards set out in that document. If conduct falls below that standard, the OPCC will consider whether that person should continue in the role.

Where a visitor fails to make a visit within six months or fails to attend training without having notified the OPCC, they will be contacted in order to establish if it is simply an oversight, or to seek an explanation. The OPCC may need to consider the visitor's position on the scheme.

Visitors should notify the OPCC office if they are arrested and charged with a criminal offence, or if they are under investigation for any animal welfare issues. Their involvement in the scheme will be suspended pending the outcome of any proceedings.



## **14.0 Expenses**

The work is entirely voluntary, but travelling expenses will be payable to all visitors when travelling for visits. Only public transport expenses and private car mileage at the agreed rate will be paid. Expenses can also be claimed for attending training sessions. Expense claims must be made on the appropriate OPCC form. Further information can be found in the Volunteer Policy. If for any reason your visit has had to be abandoned, you must notify the scheme manager as soon as practical and specify the reasons that the visit has been abandoned.

## **15.0 Role of organisations**

Since its inception, Dogs Trust has supported Chief Constables to set up and run the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme, through the provision of information, meetings and training for both police officers and Independent Visitors. Dogs Trust inspects the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme for each force and awards those who are complying with the scheme with a certificate of compliance. Only those forces that are members of the Animal Welfare Independent Visitors Scheme are allowed to adopt or rehome dogs from Dogs Trust and other reputable welfare organisations. All forces are encouraged to engage with a professional animal welfare organisation to act as a consulting body, and if necessary, as an Independent Visitor.

## Appendix A

<b>Animal Welfare Lay Visitor – Role Specification</b>	
<p><b>The criteria contained within this Role Specification will form the basis for short-listing suitable applicants to become Animal Welfare Lay Visitors. These criteria are the necessary requirements to enable an effective performance within the role.</b></p>	
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Competency</b>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be 18 years of age or over;</li> <li>• Will ideally live, work or study in the Dyfed-Powys area;</li> <li>• Must have been resident in the UK for at least 3 years before applying;</li> <li>• Must be willing to undertake regular visits to Dyfed-Powys Police Dog Handlers, as stipulated by the relevant rota;</li> <li>• Must be willing to attend annual training sessions;</li> <li>• Must not be a serving member of a police force or Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and have no conflicting involvement in the criminal justice system;</li> <li>• Have an understanding of the importance of equality and fairness of all;</li> <li>• Be able to communicate with different people both orally and in writing;</li> <li>• Must exercise independence and impartiality;</li> <li>• Must be able to report on findings in a constructive manner;</li> <li>• Must be able to maintain confidentiality;</li> <li>• Must be willing to undergo vetting and provide references;</li> <li>• Must be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of animal welfare issues or have demonstrable experience of the same.</li> </ul>
Working with people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to demonstrate the ability to work as part of a team;</li> <li>• The ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with a wide range of people.</li> </ul>
Effective communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing;</li> <li>• Able to demonstrate the ability to manage commitments and make a reliable contribution to the Scheme.</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to demonstrate enthusiasm for the role.</li> </ul>
Respect for people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to treat all people fairly and with respect, to value diversity and respond sensitively to difference;</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to be open to new ideas and methods of working.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

### REPORT FORM GUIDANCE Recommended checks



Does the dog have ready access to water?

Does the dog look like it is getting a nutritionally adequate diet to stay healthy?

Is the dog contained within a suitable environment?

Is the environment clean?

Can the environment be maintained in a clean condition?

Is the dog's shelter free from hazards, such as sharp objects?  
(*Shelter refers to either (a) the transport or (b) the kennel.*)

Is the dog's shelter free from extremes of weather?

Is there a comfortable resting area?

Is the dog free of any sign of pain, injury or disease?

If no, has the condition been diagnosed?

Is the condition being treated properly?

Does the dog have enough space to express its normal behaviour?

If it is working or in transit, does the dog get enough opportunity to express its normal behaviour?

Is the dog free of any obvious signs of fear and distress?

If it is showing fear, distress or mental suffering, has the cause been identified?

Appendix C

