



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME HANDBOOK

**June 2024
Next Revision June 2026**

ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME

Contents

1) Signatories	3
2) Background	3
3) Objectives of the scheme	4
4) Eligibility	4
5) Training	5
6) Accreditation and Handbook	5
7) Term of office	5
8) Frequency of visits and arrangements for visits	5
9) Confidentiality.....	6
10) Conduct of visits	6
11) Safety and security	7
12) Access to all areas where animals are held, trained and transported	7
13) Medical conditions	7
14) Completion of reports and follow up action	7
15) Reports on treatment and conditions	7
16) Serious injury or death of a police animal	7
17) Complaints procedure.....	8
18) Reports on issues arising out of visits.....	9
19) Expense Policy	9
20) Insurance	9
21) Publicity guidelines	9
22) Appendices	1
Appendix 1 – Report Form	1
Appendix 2 - Animal Welfare Visitor Role Description.....	1
Appendix 3 – Person Specification.....	1
Appendix 4 – Volunteer Memorandum of Understanding.....	1
Appendix 5- Expenses Form	1
Appendix 6 - Volunteer Exit Form	1
Appendix 7 – Risk Assessment.....	1

1) Signatories

This handbook is reviewed every two years to ensure it aligns with both National and Local policies and best practices. Any amendments to this handbook must be made in consultation with the signatories listed below or their designated representatives.

The following signatories approve the policies outlined within this handbook:

Michelle Buttery, OPCC CEO

**Chief Superintendent Sukesh Verma,
Nottinghamshire Police**

2) Background

The 1997 death of a police dog whilst in training and the subsequent prosecution of police officers, resulted in an understandable 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 NCDL to stop donating dogs to the service. In response to these issues, the ACPO Police Dog Sub-Committee embarked upon a thorough review of police dog training and has developed a six-point strategy aimed at restoring public confidence by ensuring that police training methods are humane, ethical, and transparent.

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. Chief Constables must ensure compliance with the Act. With all staff who work with, or have contact with, police dogs expected to act in accordance with the legislation.

The act stipulates that five welfare must be met when caring for dogs, these include:

- A suitable place to live - Animals should have the right type of home, including shelter, enough space, and somewhere comfortable to rest and hide.
- A healthy diet - Animals should have access to fresh, clean water all the time and should be given the right type and amount of food to keep them fit and healthy.
- The ability to behave normally - Animals should have enough space and the right kind of facilities to allow them to behave normally.
- The company he or she needs - Animals should be given appropriate company. Some animals should have company, and some should be kept on their own.
- To stay healthy - Animals should be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease and should be treated by a vet if they are sick or injured.

Central to this issue of re-building public confidence and ensuring that the welfare of animals engaged in police work is maintained and any mistreatment is identified and dealt with promptly, is a need for transparency. In other words, the training and welfare of animals engaged on police work must be open and, as importantly, be seen to be open. To this end, an Animal Welfare Scheme was introduced which enables members of the local community to observe and report upon the conditions under which the police dogs are housed, trained, and transported.

Animal Welfare Visitors are independent members of the local community, who may be accompanied by professionals from animal welfare organisations, who will visit police animal training centres unannounced to check on the welfare of animals engaged in police work. They come from a variety of backgrounds and sections of the community and have no direct or indirect involvement in the criminal justice system. This is to prevent possible conflicts of interests for the individual, and to maintain the independence of the scheme as a whole.

The scheme was established by the Nottinghamshire Police Authority in consultation with the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire along with the RSPCA. The operation of the scheme is now the responsibility of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, and that responsibility is exercised, in consultation with the Chief Constable. The Commissioner has the final responsibility in all matters relating to the operation of the scheme.

3) Objectives of the scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to enable members of the local community with the assistance of the appropriate national animal welfare organisations to observe, comment and report on the welfare of animals engaged in Police work, with a view to securing greater understanding and confidence in these matters.

These arrangements also provide an independent check on police training methods and the conditions under which the animals are transported and housed in order that it can be demonstrated that such methods are humane, ethical and open to public accountability.

4) Eligibility

Animal Welfare Visitors should be independent persons of good character who are able to make unbiased observations and complete reports about the detail of their visits. Applicants who has been convicted of an offence, or who has been charged with any animal welfare issue may not be suitable for this volunteer role. Applicants will therefore be asked to disclose any relevant convictions and consent to vetting checks being made by Nottinghamshire Police and other professional animal welfare organisations. The Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (NOPCC) reserve the right to refuse an applicant to become an Animal Welfare Visitor.

The NOPCC will not appoint magistrates, serving or former police officers or special constables as Animal Welfare Scheme (AWS) volunteers. Other people may be excluded if they have direct involvement in the criminal justice, for example solicitors or probation officers.

Each application will be treated on its own merits, but the NOPCC seek to prevent any conflict of interest in order to maintain the independence and integrity of the scheme.

5) Training

Applicants will be invited to attend an information/training session organised by the NOPCC in consultation with Nottinghamshire Police and other animal welfare organisations. The training will be a maximum of one day in duration and cover training methods and transportation for the animals, animal welfare and health and safety.

The NOPCC may also arrange training sessions in response to new training practices and procedures adopted by Nottinghamshire Police.

Experienced AWS volunteers have the opportunity to train new recruits during their 6 months probationary period, acting as mentors.

6) Accreditation and Handbook

Following notification of their appointment and training, the NOPCC will issue each AWS volunteer with a Nottinghamshire Police identity card. The identity card will authorise the holder to enter the HQ kennels to undertake a visits in accordance with the scheme. The pass should be worn visibly on the outer clothing when on Nottinghamshire Police premises.

AWS volunteer identity cards should be used only for the purpose of making visits. If anyone is found to be using their card for any other purpose it will be withdrawn and their AWS volunteer role will be terminated.

AWS volunteers will receive a handbook containing details of the operation of the scheme, a list of the police premises subject to the scheme, a list of the members of the visiting panel, including contact telephone numbers and a list of police dog handlers and their dogs.

7) Term of office

Newly appointed AWS volunteers will complete a six-month probationary period.

The term of office of AWS volunteer should be three years with an option for renewal for further three-year terms.

8) Frequency of visits and arrangements for visits

Nottinghamshire Police dog kennels should receive a minimum of one visit every month. Access will be granted between the hours of 8am-4pm and subject to staff being available. AWS volunteers may inspect the conditions in which dogs are kept and be allowed access to any welfare, and training records respectively. They may also speak

to trainers, trainees, dog handlers, support staff and veterinary surgeons used by Nottinghamshire Police Dog Section.

The AWS volunteer may request, via the Inspector and following a security check, any police dog handler who is on duty to attend a police station suitable to both. If the officer is unable to attend, for example if the officer is attending an incident, a full explanation should be given to the AWS volunteer and the explanation should be recorded on their report.

AWS volunteers may also wish to look at 'offsite' training which may involve walking over farmland and rough fields. This type of visit should be arranged through the Volunteer Manager or Nottinghamshire Police Dog Section.

The Commissioner may review the frequency of visits from time to time in the light of experience.

9) Confidentiality

During the course of their duties, AWS Volunteers may acquire confidential information and will therefore be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. AWS volunteers should be aware that the improper disclosure of information acquired during a visit might attract civil or criminal proceedings. Confidential information must not be included in the written reports sent to the NOPCC.

Should an AWS volunteer receive information or a complaint regarding the welfare of an animal, this information should be forwarded immediately to the RSPCA representatives on the panel. The RSPCA representative will investigate any allegation made.

AWS volunteer names, addresses or telephone numbers are issued in the strictest confidence and are shared with other AWS volunteers only for the purposes of arranging visits. Personal details should not be used for any other purpose.

10) Conduct of visits

When conducting a visit the AWS volunteers will visit in pairs and always be accompanied by a dog handler or a member of staff from the Nottinghamshire Police Dog Kennels. AWS volunteers must adhere to advice given by dog handlers and members of staff at the Nottinghamshire Police Dog Kennels with regard to health and safety issues. Volunteers will not be entitled to visit officer's private residences to inspect kennel facilities, but in exceptional circumstances, a volunteer may be asked to accompany a police officer to a dog handler's home. However, volunteers may raise concerns about the welfare of a specific animal to the Inspector who may authorise the inspection of kennels maintained at a dog handler's home. Following consultation with the AWS volunteer concerned, the Inspector will submit a full report to the NOPCC.

All visits carried out by AWS volunteers must meet the accepted standards endorsed by the RSPCA, the NOPCC and Nottinghamshire Police.

11) Safety and security

In the interests of security and safety of the AWS Volunteer, they will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times during visits.

AWS Volunteers are provided with Health & Safety advice as part of their initial training. In addition, the NOPCC will carry out risk assessments periodically to ensure the safety and accessibility of the locations for AWS Volunteers and will distribute the risk assessments accordingly.

12) Access to all areas where animals are held, trained and transported

AWS Volunteers will wish to satisfy themselves that these areas are clean, tidy and in a reasonable state of repair and that bedding is clean and adequate. It is not necessary to inspect stores but AWS Volunteers should establish that there are adequate stocks of bedding and food. They may inspect empty kennels to check they are in an acceptable condition to house the animals.

13) Medical conditions

AWS Volunteers 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.

14) Completion of reports and follow up action

At the conclusion of each visit and before leaving the police premises, the AWS Volunteer will complete a report form and sign it and ask an officer to sign it too. The report is to be photocopied and the copy to be held in Dog Section, whilst the original should be sent, as soon as possible, to the Volunteer Manager at the NOPCC using the pre-paid envelopes provided.

The Volunteer Manager will distribute a log of all reports to keep panel members informed at Animal Welfare Team Meetings.

15) Reports on treatment and conditions

If a visit discloses any aspect of the treatment of animals or conditions which are unsatisfactory, they should be included on the report and raised with the duty officer at the time. Any action which the duty officer takes should also be recorded on the report form.

16) Serious injury or death of a police animal

Where a serious injury or death of a police animal occurs, the Superintendent responsible will notify the NOPCC.

17) Complaints procedure

(i) Complaint made against an Animal Welfare Volunteer

Any complaint made against an Animal Welfare volunteer should be communicated to the Volunteer Manager as soon as possible (but at least within 14 calendar days following the incident that is the subject of the complaint). The Volunteer Manager will investigate this by speaking to the parties concerned and seeking to address the complaint informally. Should the severity of the complaint be significant or form part of a series of complaints relating to a particular individual, a formal process to remove the volunteer may be invoked.

(ii) Complaint made by an Animal Welfare Volunteer

Any AWS volunteer who wishes to make a complaint about their general role and conditions, or any other relevant matter, should notify the Volunteer Manager as soon as possible. In all cases, complaints will be investigated by speaking to the parties concerned and seeking to address the complaint informally. If necessary, depending on the severity or consistency of the complaint, the NOPCC will review the circumstances leading to the complaint and consider what, if any, remedial action is required to resolve it.

If the complaint is about the Volunteer Manager, the matter should be notified to the Chief Executive of the NOPCC.

Complaints against an individual police officer or member of police staff must be immediately brought to the attention of the Volunteer Manager who will seek to resolve these in discussion with Nottinghamshire Police.

(iii) Removal of an Animal Welfare Volunteer

There may be occasions when the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner may need to consider suspending/removing from the Scheme, either because of misconduct or unacceptable performance within the role. This may include such matters as:

- being convicted of a criminal offence
- breaching confidentiality
- inappropriate behaviour
- bringing the Scheme into disrepute
- unsatisfactory performance in the role
- falsifying an expense claim

If such an occasion should arise, the Volunteer Manager will notify the volunteer concerned of their immediate suspension pending investigation.

The Volunteer Manager will notify the circumstances and make a recommendation to the Chief Executive for them to assess and make a determination on removal of the volunteer from the Scheme. The Volunteer Manager will advise the volunteer

concerned that their removal from the scheme is being considered. Details of the grounds for removal will also be given in writing.

The Volunteer Manager will notify the volunteer in writing of the decision made by the Chief Executive. A decision to remove the volunteer from the scheme will take immediate effect.

(iv) **Right of Appeal against Removal from the Scheme**

Should the volunteer concerned be dissatisfied by the decision to remove them from the Scheme, he or she will have the right of appeal to the Police and Crime Commissioner. This appeal should be made in writing within 14 calendar days of receiving the letter informing them of their removal. The volunteer will be informed in writing of the outcome of their appeal.

18) Reports on issues arising out of visits

The Volunteer Manager will immediately take up any issues arising from reports with the Officer in Charge of Dog Section.

The Volunteer Manager will call 2 team meetings a year for AWS volunteers where concerns may be discussed with the Inspector in charge of Dog Section.

19) Expense Policy

The AWS role is voluntary, but travel expenses will be payable to all volunteers. Expenses include public transport fares, or private car mileage at 45p per mile will be paid. Expenses can also be claimed for attending training sessions. Expense claims must be made on the appropriate form (Appendix 6 Expenses Form).

Rail tickets can be purchased in advance by contacting the Volunteer Manager. Taxis should be authorised by the Chief Finance Officer who will arrange for payment on the Commissioner's Account. Public Transport and parking expenses will be reimbursed upon proof of purchase (receipt/ticket).

20) Insurance

The NOPCC has arranged appropriate insurance cover for the AWS volunteers during visits, through Nottinghamshire Police.

AWS volunteers will receive information and advice on Risk Assessments carried out by the Nottinghamshire Police.

21) Publicity guidelines

It is generally desirable that the role and aims of the scheme should be promoted to the public. AWS volunteers must, however, bear in mind that the purpose of publicity is to

inform the public about the scheme and not draw attention to individual cases or to themselves.

Any invitation to speak to the press, or local groups or organisations, about any aspect of AWS scheme be referred to the NOPCC and should not be undertaken by individual volunteers, except at the request of the Commissioner, who will in normal circumstances have consulted with the Chief Constable.

AWS volunteers should remember that they are accountable to the Commissioner, and not to the press or individual members of the public.

22) Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report Form



Portrait v2 ANIMAL
WELFARE VISITORS I

Appendix 2 - Animal Welfare Visitor Role Description.



AWS-3 Role
Description.docx

Appendix 3 – Person Specification



AWS-2 Person
Specification.docx

Appendix 4 – Volunteer Memorandum of Understanding



AWS-4
Memorandum of Un

Appendix 5- Expenses Form



Travelling Expenses
Form.doc

Appendix 6 - Volunteer Exit Form



**Volunteer Exit
Form.docx**

Appendix 7 – Risk Assessment

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME
RISK ASSESSMENT**

WORK ACTIVITY		HAZARD		LIKELIHOOD		RISK
No	DESCRIPTION OF TASK	DESCRIPTION INCLUDING POTENTIAL SEVERITY	H M L	EXISTING CONTROLS IN PLACE?	H M L	HAZARDS AND LIKELIHOODS
1	Animal Welfare Visitors entering kennels to make visits.	Attack from dogs	H 3	AWS Visitors will always be accompanied by an officer or staff of the Dog Section during a visit who will ensure that the dogs are secure in the kennels before proceeding with the visit.	L 1	2
2	Animal Welfare Visitors in kennels.	Fire emergency.	H 3	AWS Visitors to establish on the first and subsequent visits emergency evacuation procedures and location of fire exits and muster points and who to report to in the event of a fire alarm.	L 1	3
3	Animal Welfare Visitors in kennels.	Bomb threat/suspect device.	H 3	Specific procedures in place for visitors to Police premises. ASW Visitors to establish on the first and subsequent visits emergency evacuation procedures and muster points and who to report to.	L 1	3
4	Exposure to infection in kennels.	Risk of infection/transfer of disease.	H 2	Access to dogs with infection controlled and communicated to AWS Visitors prior to entering kennels. Ensure use of decontamination processes.	L 1	2
5	Animal Welfare Visitors in kennels.	Accident – injury from trip or fall.	H 2	AWS Visitors to receive a safety briefing by escorting staff on first and subsequent visits to establish whether there are any health and safety hazards they should be aware of.	L 1	2

FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED

FURTHER CONTROL MEASURES REQUIRED	ACTION (PERSON RESPONSIBLE)
Ongoing training a team level for AWS Visitors on Health & Safety issues.	Volunteer Manager and Force Lead Officer for Kennel Environment.

HAZARD SEVERITY OF INJURY	1 Minor cuts, grazes, sprains 2 Serious injury, fractures, concussion 3 Major injury or death.
LIKELIHOOD POTENTIAL TO OCCUR	1 Unlikely to occur 2 Is quite likely to occur 3 High probability of occurring

RISK RATING

6-9	High Risk, not acceptable, further controls required.
3-4	Medium Risk, require further controls. Is the risk justifiable in relation to the training need.
1-2	Low Risk, no further control measures are required.

MATRIX

SEVERITY	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
			POTENTIAL	

**Any queries in respect of this scheme should be
addressed to:**

**Nottinghamshire Police and Crime
Commissioners Office**

email: officepcc@notts.police.uk