

POLICE DOG WELFARE SCHEME: ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

BACKGROUND

- 1 The Scheme was established in 2002. Volunteers observe and report upon the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed. The strategic aim of the scheme is to maintain public confidence and secure the welfare of police dogs by ensuring that police dog training methods and the operational use of police dogs are effective, humane, ethical and transparent. The scheme operates alongside the other two types of annual inspection of the dogs undertaken by the Veterinary Surgeon and of the kennels at the Handler's home by the Police Dogs Unit supervisor.

OPERATION OF THE SCHEME⁶⁵

- 2 Two Police Dog Welfare Visitors undertake impromptu visits to observe the dogs during the programmed training days and inspect the police vehicles used to transport the dogs. The Visitors also visit and inspect the kennels and the dogs being housed there. The visitors check the dogs against the 5 freedoms and a report is completed for each dog in attendance. Any issues or concerns raised by the visitors are brought to the attention of the Dogs Unit Supervisor via the Commissioner's office. The Constabulary currently has 31 general purposes and specialist dogs and 2 trial dogs.

OVERVIEW

- 3 The following table details the number of visits undertaken in 2015/16 and some of the issues raised by the Visitors.

No of visits undertaken	No of Dogs seen	Issues raised
23 (8 – Training grounds) (15 – Kennels)	53*	<p>Positive comments were reported on the health and wellbeing of all the dogs. The dogs appeared happy to be working and were well groomed. Handlers treated the dogs very well.</p> <p>All visits to the kennels reported of the high standards of the cleanliness and particularly the dedication and helpfulness of the kennel staff.</p> <p>All the vehicles observed were clean and tidy and provision for drinking water for the dogs had been made.</p> <p>Two issues of concern were raised in 2015/16 about:-</p> <p>(1) the condition of the flooring in parts of the kennels. The Constabulary has now allocated funding for the floor to be replaced.</p> <p>(2) the impact (weight loss) on some dogs as a result of a change in food</p>

		and supplier. The Constabulary has advised that the new food has been trialled and some dogs will revert back to the previous food.
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** This figure includes dogs which may have subsequently retired or died and also trial dogs which may no longer be with the Constabulary.*