

Cumbria Police Authority
28 June 2006

Agenda Item No. 25

Report by the Clerk & Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION OF AN ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME

Background

Cumbria Police Authority currently operates a successful Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. In the course of discussions as part of the amalgamation process with Lancashire it has been brought to the attention of the Authority that Lancashire also run an Animal Welfare Scheme. The purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider whether or not to introduce such a Scheme in Cumbria.

RECOMMENDED: That the Authority introduces an Animal Welfare Scheme as set out in the report.

Detail

The Constabulary has recently approached the Authority suggesting that an Animal Welfare Scheme be established in Cumbria. Such a Scheme is already in operation in Lancashire. Responsibility for introducing and operating an Animal Welfare Scheme lies with the Police Authority, following consultation with the Constabulary.

The primary purpose of the Scheme would be to provide public reassurance with regard to the welfare of dogs engaged in police work, This would be achieved by enabling members of the local community, with the assistance of the appropriate national animal welfare organisations, to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed by Cumbria Constabulary.

The Scheme will provide an independent check on the way police dog handlers carry out their responsibilities with regard to the welfare of the animals in their care.

The Scheme suggested for adoption is attached at [Appendix 1](#). It has been developed in consultation with Lancashire Police Authority to ensure that it is compatible with their Scheme to ease assimilation of the Schemes in April 2007.

Discussions have taken place with the Constabulary throughout the development of the Scheme to make sure that it is practical and will add value. It has also been sent to the RSPCA who have indicated verbally that they are content with the Scheme as proposed, but at the time of writing written confirmation of that position is still awaited. The RSPCA have also indicated that they will provide assistance with the training of Animal Welfare Visitors.

Attached at Appendices 2 and 3 are the Memorandum of Understanding and Code of Conduct Undertaking that Animal Welfare Visitors will be required to sign on joining the Scheme.

As the Constabulary's facilities are located at Carleton Hall it is proposed that to establish the Scheme in the first instance Animal Welfare Visitors are recruited from amongst existing Independent Custody Visitors on the Northern Panel. It is suggested that four Animal Welfare Visitors are appointed in the first instance, with a view to increasing numbers if necessary in the light of experience. Future recruitment would be by public advertisement.

Subject to the approval of the Authority the intention is to commence visiting in September 2006.

C R Alcock
Clerk and Chief Executive

14 June 2006.

Background documents: There are no background papers.

Race and Diversity Implications: None known.

Human Rights Act Implications: None known.



CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME

Introduction

Animal Welfare Visitors (“Visitors”) are independent members of the local community, who may be accompanied by professionals from animal welfare organisations, who visit the police dog training centre at Carleton Hall unannounced to check on the welfare of the dogs engaged in police work. They should reflect the overall makeup of the population of Cumbria and have no direct or indirect involvement in the criminal justice system to ensure impartiality.

Cumbria Police Authority has established the Animal Welfare Scheme (“the Scheme”), the primary purpose of which is to provide public reassurance with regard to the welfare of dogs engaged in police work, in consultation with the Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary and after consultation with the RSPCA. The operation of the scheme is the responsibility of the Police Authority, and that responsibility will be exercised, in consultation with the Chief Constable. The Police Authority has the final responsibility in all matters relating to the operation of the scheme.

Purpose of the Animal Welfare Scheme

The primary purpose of the Scheme is to provide public reassurance with regard to the welfare of dogs engaged in police work, This is achieved by enabling members of the local community, with the assistance of the appropriate national animal welfare

organisation(s), to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed by Cumbria Constabulary.

The Scheme provides an independent check on the way police dog handlers carry out their responsibilities with regard to the welfare of the animals in their care.

Appointment of Animal Welfare Visitors

The Police Authority will be responsible for the selection and appointment of Animal Welfare Lay Visitors. Initially Animal Welfare Visitors will be drawn from within the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme but over time the Police Authority will move to making appointments to the Animal Welfare Scheme by separate public advertisement.

All Visitors will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and a Code of Conduct Undertaking.

Subject to the exceptions set out below any person over 18 residing and/or working in Cumbria will be eligible for appointment to the Scheme.

Number of Visitors

It is considered important that the members of the Scheme should, if possible, be representative of the local community. The Police Authority will try to achieve a balance in terms of age, gender and ethnic minority representation. The Police Authority will have authority to vary the number of visitors on the panel in the light of experience. Initially the Scheme shall consist of 4 Animal Welfare Visitors drawn from members of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

Eligibility

Visitors should be independent persons of good character who are able to make unbiased observations in which the community can have confidence and which the police will accept as fair criticism when it is justified. They must be 18 years of age and live or work in Cumbria. There is no upper age limit. Anyone who has been convicted of an offence, or who has been charged with any animal welfare issue may not be suitable for this reason. Applicants will be required to complete an application form, included in which must be details of any such convictions and consent to enquiries being made by the police and the appropriate professional national animal welfare organisation(s). Where the information provided by the police and the appropriate professional national animal welfare organisation(s) differs from that provided by the applicant, the Police Authority will discuss the discrepancy with the person concerned before deciding whether or not to appoint.

The Police Authority will not appoint Members of the Police Authority, serving or former police officers, special constables or members of police staff as Animal Welfare Visitors. Other people may be excluded, after discussion with the individual applicant, if they have a direct involvement in the criminal justice system such as solicitors or probation officers. Veterinarians providing services to the Constabulary will also be excluded from the Scheme.

All applications will be treated on their merits, but the over-riding factor will be to prevent possible conflicts of interest for individuals, and to maintain the independence and integrity of the Scheme as a whole.

Training

Successful applicants will be invited to attend an induction training session organised by the Police Authority in consultation with the Chief Constable and the appropriate animal welfare organisations. The training will be of one half day's duration, on such topics as training methods, animal welfare, transportation and health and safety.

The Police Authority may also periodically arrange training sessions in response to new training practices and procedures adopted by the Constabulary.

Accreditation

Following notification of their appointment, the Police Authority will issue each Visitor with an identity card. The identity card will authorise Visitors to enter the Police Dog Training Centre at Carleton Hall and appropriate police stations to undertake visits in accordance with the Scheme. The identity card should be worn visibly on the outer clothing when on police premises.

Visitors identity cards should be used only for the purpose of making visits. If anyone is found to be using his or her card for any other purpose, it will be withdrawn and that persons appointment as a Visitor may be terminated.

Identity cards remain the property of the Police Authority at all times and must be surrendered to the Police Authority on request. Any Visitor leaving the Scheme must return their identity card to the Police Authority.

Handbook

Each Visitor 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 details, a list of police dog handlers and their dogs, and a synopsis of the procedures for dealing with police dogs.

Term of Office of Animal Welfare Visitors

Newly appointed Visitors will complete a 6 month probationary period.

The term of office of Animal Welfare Lay Visitors should be three years with an option for renewal for a further three year term. Each Animal Welfare Visitor should hold office for the period for which he or she is appointed provided that the Police Authority may, in its absolute discretion, terminate his or her appointment at any time.

Removal of Animal Welfare Visitors

Although the work is entirely voluntary, the Police Authority has the right to terminate the appointment of any Visitor whose conduct is not considered to be of the required standard.

Visitors should notify the Clerk/Chief Executive to the Police Authority if they are arrested and charged with a criminal offence or under investigation for any animal welfare issue and will be suspended from undertaking further visits, pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings. The Police Authority will consider whether to withdraw the accreditation of any Visitor convicted of a criminal offence or who abuses his or her position as an Animal Welfare Lay Visitor by behaving in an inappropriate manner during visits.

Where a Visitor fails to make a visit and attend panel meetings within a 6 month period the Police Authority will write to the person concerned to seek an explanation. Failure to provide an explanation that satisfies the Police Authority will lead the Police Authority to revoke that individuals accreditation.

The Police Authority's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Appeal Process will apply to members of the Animal Welfare Scheme.

Frequency and Arrangement of Visits

The Police Dog training Centre at Carleton Hall, Penrith should receive fortnightly visits. Access will be granted between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm, subject to staff being available. Animal Welfare Visitors may inspect the conditions in which dogs are kept and be allowed access to any welfare, training and veterinary records appertaining to those animals. They may also speak to trainers, trainees, dog handlers and support staff.

Visits will be conducted in accordance with a rota prepared by the Scheme Administrator.

From time to time, Animal Welfare Visitors may also wish to look at 'offsite' training. Such 'offsite' training may involve Animal Welfare Visitors walking over farm land and rough fields. These visits are likely to be initiated by the Constabulary.

The Police Authority may, in consultation with the Chief Constable, review the frequency of visits from time to time in the light of experience. At a future date the Police Authority may, in consultation with the Chief Constable, consider extending the Scheme to police stations and dog handlers operating in Basic Command Units.

Conduct of Visits

All visits must be conducted in pairs – visits by individual Visitors will not be permitted.

When conducting a visit the Animal Welfare Visitors will, at all times, be accompanied by a dog handler or a member of staff at the Dog Training Centre. Visitors must adhere to advice given by dog handlers and members of staff of the Dog Training Centre with regard to any health and safety issues. In exceptional circumstances, Visitors may be asked to accompany a police officer to a dog handlers home to inspect kennel facilities – see under ‘ Constabulary Initiated Visits’. However, the Visitors may wish to bring to the attention of the Officer in Charge of the Police Dog Training Centre any concerns they may have regarding a particular animal and that Officer will then take the appropriate action in relation to inspecting kennels maintained at a dog handler’s home.

All visits carried out by Animal Welfare Visitors must meet the expected standard endorsed by the RSPCA, Cumbria Police Authority and Cumbria Constabulary.

Should Animal Visitors have concerns regarding the identity of a particular dog, the Animal Welfare Visitors may request that the dog’s electronic tag is scanned. This must be done in the presence of the Animal Welfare Visitors.

Animal Welfare Visitors may also have access to appropriate records with regard to training, welfare and veterinary treatment of individual police dogs.

Constabulary Initiated Visits

Exceptionally, circumstances may arise where the Constabulary will wish to initiate a visit by the Animal Welfare Visitors, including to a dog handlers home address. This may especially be the case if there is serious local concern about the treatment and well-being of police dogs, and a special visit could help allay public fears. The Officer in Charge of the Dog Training Centre will be responsible on these occasions for contacting Visitors and arranging a visit. Equally, if a specific complaint is received by the Police pertaining to animal welfare, the officer tasked with investigating the initial complaint should consider involving Visitors. This would include allegations in relation to an officer’s home address. The Constabulary may also on occasion wish to invite Visitors to observe training being held at locations other than Carleton Hall.

Completion of reports

At the conclusion of each visit and before leaving the police premises, the Animal Welfare Visitors will complete a visit report form. The top copy of the report should be sent, as soon as possible, to the Scheme Administrator at the Cumbria Police Authority

using the pre-paid envelopes provided. The second and third copy is to given to the Officer in Charge, one to be retained at the Police Dog Training Centre and one to be forwarded to the Superintendent (Operations). The final copy is to be retained by the Animal Welfare Visitors.

Any matters requiring immediate attention should be raised with the Officer in Charge at the time of the visit and recorded on the report form.

Confidentiality

During the course of their duties, Animal Welfare Visitors may acquire confidential information about police issues. Visitors should be aware that the improper disclosure of information acquired during a visit may attract civil or criminal proceedings. Confidential information must not be included in the written reports to the Police Authority of the results of visits.

Should an Animal Welfare Lay Visitor receive information or a complaint in confidence regarding the welfare of a particular dog this information should be forwarded immediately to the RSPCA. The RSPCA will investigate any allegation made in the normal way.

Visitors names and contact details are provided in the strictest confidence, and are given to other Visitors purely for convenience in making personal contact. Such details should not be divulged to any other person.

Reports on issues arising out of visits

The Scheme Administrator will arrange for reports on the operation of the Scheme to be made to the relevant Police Authority Committee and, on an annual basis, to the Police Community Liaison Forums.

Expenses

The work is entirely voluntary, but travelling expenses will be payable to all visitors on the same basis as to Independent Custody Visitors. Only public transport fares, or 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 form.

Insurance

The Police Authority has arranged appropriate insurance for Visitors.

All Animal Welfare Visitors will receive information and advice on Generic Risk Assessments carried out by Cumbria Constabulary.

Publicity Guidelines

It is generally desirable to use opportunities to promote to the public the role and aims of the Scheme. Visitors should, however, bear in mind that the purpose of publicity is to inform the public about the Scheme and not to draw attention to themselves.

Visitors should refrain from discussing individual cases. Under no circumstances should individual cases or specific events be discussed except in general anonymous terms which support any explanation of the purpose of the Scheme.

It is a matter of discretion for Visitors as to whether or not to discuss the role of the Scheme with the press and public. If an invitation to speak to a local group or organisation appears to be of use in promoting the role and scope of the Scheme, it is a matter for Visitors' own discretion whether or not to accept the invitation.

Any doubts as to the wisdom of accepting such invitations should be addressed to the Scheme Administrator.

Under no circumstances should Visitors make themselves available to respond to requests for specific information from the press, other organisations or individuals about individual cases or events that may involve the Scheme or Visitors. Any such matter should be directed to the Chief Constable via the Press Office at Force Headquarters, Penrith (telephone 01768-21 , fax 01768-21 or e-mail).

In the case of the press, local radio and television or business/in-house magazines, etc. there is no reason why Visitors should not participate in interviews which publicise the role and scope of the Scheme in general terms. This may include quotes and personal comments of a positive nature. The inclusion of personal photographs in any such article is a matter for individual discretion

It is suggested that the advice of the Scheme Administrator is sought before an interview or talk is given. It would also be appropriate to seek advice before submitting articles for publication.

It is a question of personal preference for Visitors themselves to decide whether or not to reveal their own identities in these matters. Anonymity can lead to misunderstanding in the media and where possible Visitors should be willing to reveal their identities. In doing so Visitors should be aware that they might then be contacted directly by members of the public and if that occurs they should bear in mind that they are first and foremost accountable to the Police Authority. There is no necessity to reveal full personal addresses.

Visitors should inform the Scheme Administrator of their intentions in relation to publicity so that there is co-ordination at a local level. Details of publicity gained for the Scheme will be included in the regular reports to the Police Authority to enable it to be monitored overall.

Scheme Oversight

The Professional Standards Committee will receive a six monthly report on the operation of the Scheme. The Committee will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Scheme and making any necessary amendments to the Scheme to ensure its smooth operation.

The Personnel Committee will be responsible for the appointment of Visitors to, and their removal from, the Scheme.

Scheme Administrator

The Deputy Clerk to the Police Authority will act as Scheme Administrator.



**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY
ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME**

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

You will be issued with a copy of the full guidance for the Scheme, but you should particularly note the following points, which highlights the Police Authority's expectations of each Animal Welfare Visitor.

1. **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The purpose of your role is to observe and report upon the conditions under which police dogs are housed, trained, transported and deployed. Your concern is for the welfare of those police dogs.

2. **APPOINTMENT**

Your appointment is initially for a period of three years.

After three years you will be eligible for re-appointment for a further three years subject to the approval of the Scheme Administrator and the Personnel Committee. Re-appointments beyond six years will require the confirmation of the Police Authority. The Clerk and Chief Executive will submit a report to the Personnel Committee seeking the necessary approvals.

3. **IDENTITY CARDS**

Your identity card will be valid for the period that you are appointed as a Visitor. The identity card authorises you to visit the police dog training centre at Carleton Hall and police stations. The identity card should only be used for the purpose of making visits. If it is used for any other purpose, it will be withdrawn

and your appointment as a Visitor will be terminated. Identity cards must be returned on termination of appointment as a Visitor.

4. UNDERTAKING VISITING

You are required to make visits in pairs at all times. There are no exceptions to this requirement, and staff are aware that they should not allow anyone who is unaccompanied to make a visit. You can only make a visit when accompanied by another Visitor from the Scheme.

5. VISITS

You are expected to make a minimum of 12 visits per year; if there are exceptional circumstances, which prevent you from fulfilling this requirement, you should ensure that the Scheme Administrator is aware of these. If you have not made a visit within a six month period, the Scheme Administrator will contact you to ascertain the reason and seek an explanation.

6. DOCUMENTATION

You are required to complete reports for every visit made and submit them promptly to the Scheme Administrator.

7. CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES

You are expected to notify the Scheme Administrator of any change in circumstances which will affect your position as a Visitor, e.g. if you are charged with a criminal offence or become a Magistrate, Special Constable, Police Officer or undertake any other work which may present you with a conflict of interest.

8. ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING SEMINARS

You will be expected to attend the training events arranged by the Police Authority and encouraged to attend regional or national conferences where appropriate.

9. ATTENDANCE AT PANEL MEETINGS

You will be expected to attend periodic meetings of Scheme members. If you have not attended any such meetings within a twelve month period, the Scheme Administrator will contact you to ascertain the reason and seek an explanation.

10. IMPARTIALITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

During the course of your duties, you may acquire confidential information. That information must be protected against improper or unnecessary disclosure. You should be aware that improper disclosure of information acquired during the course of a visit may attract civil or criminal proceedings. Additionally,

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY
RESTRICTED WHEN COMPLETE.

unauthorised disclosure of facts concerning police operations or the security of police stations may constitute an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1989.

You must undertake not to disclose any information related to persons connected with police enquiries or police operations that you may acquire as part of your duties as a Visitor.

11. QUERIES

Queries on any aspect of the Scheme should be addressed to the Scheme Administrator, Stuart Edwards –
Telephone: 01768 217732;
Fax: 01768 217738; or
E-mail: stuart.edwards@cumbria.police.uk

You should sign below to indicate your agreement to be bound by the guidance for the Cumbria Animal Welfare Scheme. A copy of this agreement will be returned to you for your reference.

C R Alcock
Clerk and Chief Executive to the Police Authority

Animal Welfare Visitor

Name: Signed:
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date:

Scheme Administrator

Name: Signed:
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date:



**ANIMAL WELFARE VISITOR
CODE OF CONDUCT**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. I undertake to treat everyone with whom I come into contact with dignity and respect and to carry out my duties with integrity and to the highest professional standards.</p> <p>2. I understand that as an Animal Welfare Visitor I will be expected to carry out my duties on behalf of the Police Authority in such a way as to never discriminate against, harass or bully any person.</p> <p>3. I understand that discrimination or harassment can be based on many grounds.</p> <p>4. I understand that I have a responsibility not to behave offensively to others either in word or deed. Offensive behaviour can manifest itself in many ways.</p> <p>5. I undertake to maintain strict confidentiality within the scheme regarding any information or personal details which I may learn whilst carrying out the duties of a Visitor.</p> | <p>6. I understand that it is important to develop and maintain professional relationships with police and police authority personnel, based on mutual respect and understanding of each others' legitimate roles.</p> <p>Certain types of behaviour on the part of Visitors have the potential to create tension and conflict and should be avoided.</p> <p>The above must be set against the need to strike the right balance: establishing effective working arrangements without developing a relationship that is too close.</p> <p>A relationship which is too close will seriously affect the ability of Animal Welfare Visitors to provide an objective and constructive report on conditions and procedures</p> |
|---|--|
- Name:
- Signed:
- Date:

FOOTNOTE

Discrimination or harassment can be based on many grounds. Some examples are listed below:

- Race
- Gender
- Religious or political beliefs
- Disability, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Alleged offences.

Offensive behaviour can manifest itself in many ways. Some examples are listed below:

- Verbal remarks
- Non-verbal suggestion
- Physical bullying
- Persistent criticism
- Other behaviour *e.g. practical jokes and gossip.*

Certain types of behaviour have the potential to create tension and conflict. Some examples are listed below:

- Failing to appreciate police priorities
- Engaging in petty criticism
- Criticising officers in reports without bringing that criticism directly to their notice
- Adopting an overly adversarial approach
- Concentrating on finding fault and trying to catch the police out
- Criticising police action or questioning their judgements in areas outside the visitor's remit
- Telling or suggesting to the police what they should do
- Breaching confidentiality.