



DANGEROUS DOGS

MAY 2009.

1. CONTEXT.

- 1.1 Any action under this policy must have a legal basis (e.g. Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 etc.) and must comply with the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Those actions should use the least intrusive and damaging means necessary to achieve the aims, which must be legitimate, justified and proportionate.
- 1.2 This Policy may be made available for public disclosure.
- 1.3 Any 'Dangerous Dogs' that are seized must be added to the 'Dangerous Dogs' database maintained by the Operations Dog Unit. This will enable accurate tracking of all cases.
- 1.4 Local Authorities now have responsibility for dealing with stray dogs. If a stray dog is believed to be 'dangerous' or of a prohibited type, a police response may be required.
- 1.5 Dogs that are classed as 'Dangerous' due to type only and are too young to be accurately assessed will be subject to 'Dog Legislation Officers' (DLOs) examination to determine whether they should remain with the owner until such a time that they can be accurately assessed - (over 9 months of age).

2. TIMESCALES.

- 2.1 A dynamic risk assessment should accompany each Dangerous Dog case in order to ensure public safety and justify any delays.
- 2.2 The potential for owners to become upset and animals to become distressed is great when Police decide to seize and remove Dangerous Dogs. This may have an adverse impact on public confidence, co-operation and the Force's reputation. There can also be high financial costs for kennelling, veterinary attention etc.
- 2.3 Dangerous Dogs cases, therefore, must be progressed speedily and concluded at the earliest opportunity. Criminal Prosecutions or other legal proceedings should be commenced as soon as possible and in any event within 14 days of the incident - (unless exceptional circumstances apply).
- 2.4 Line Managers must closely supervise and monitor all Dangerous Dogs cases.

3. ALLOCATION.

- 3.1 OCUs will be responsible for investigating, recording and progressing cases involving dangerous dogs. The Operations Dog Unit should be consulted prior to any action being taken.
- 3.2 The Operations Dog Unit will provide dog handlers to accompany OCU staff and advise on the options available. (DLOs can identify whether an animal is likely to be an illegal pit bull type dog).

3.3 The removal of Dangerous Dogs should be undertaken by adequately trained Police Dog Handlers who will have at their disposal specialist items of Personal Protective Equipment – (PPE) and handling equipment to deal with such animals. Untrained and inexperienced officers should not attempt to control a dangerous dog unless there is no other option to protect the public.

4. CASE MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

4.1 The Officer in the Case will:

- a) Ensure that an OASIS log has been created for each incident involving Dangerous Dogs. **N.B.** The log should contain the words **DANGEROUS DOG**.
- b) Consult with a supervisor regarding whether the dog should be seized or not - (Operations Dog Unit duty supervisor should be consulted prior to seizure except in cases of urgency).
- c) Ensure that the dog is properly and lawfully seized (*if applicable*).
- d) Ensure that the dog's owner agrees and signs an undertaking where the dog is not seized (**Appendix C**) and complies with this undertaking - (DLOs will assist with this process).
- e) Complete an IMS log and OASIS 'SIG' Marker (*if applicable*).
 - *Intelligence Management System – (IMS)*.
 - *Street Index Gazetteer – (SIG)*.
- f) Ensure details are provided for inclusion on the Dangerous Dogs Database by completing the dog seizure form (**Appendix D**).
- g) Obtain and complete any relevant statements of evidence.
- h) Arrest and Interview the dog's owner and any offenders (*if applicable*).
- i) Prepare the file for CPS / Force Solicitor (including intelligence checks and previous convictions).
- j) Ensure that the Victim(s) is/are aware of who the investigating officer is and ensure full compliance of the 'Victims Code'.
- k) Keep the dog owner updated as to the condition of their dog and the progression of the case.
- l) On conclusion of the case, ensure that all Court decisions are upheld (e.g. dog destroyed, returned, exempted) and that owner is provided with relevant information and documentation: veterinary treatment consent form (**Appendix E**) - (DLOs will assist with this process).

4.2 The OCU Line Manager will:

- a) Conduct regular reviews of cases, ensuring that the investigation is being progressed competently and expeditiously, and within appropriate timescales.
- b) Provide support and guidance to the officer in case.
- c) Liaise with OCU Finance Managers and ensure costs for kennelling, veterinary attention etc. are minimised.

4.3 The Operations Dog Unit Inspector (or delegate) will:

- a) Be responsible for updating this policy when appropriate.
- b) Maintain a Force Dangerous Dogs Database.
- c) Maintain professional relationships with the Kennel Contractor and ensure contractual compliance.
- d) Provide advice to Staff and ensure consistency throughout the organisation.

- e) Ensure all OCU Staff are supported with specialist Dog Handlers and DLOs when appropriate.
- f) Provide advice upon the appropriate disposal of disputed cases (whether Section 1, Section 3, Section 4B etc.).

4.4 The Chief Inspector (FCC) will be responsible for the correct grading of incidents to ensure the proper deployment of resources within the appropriate timescale.

4.5 The Force Legal Services Department will be responsible for the processing of cases under section 4B of the dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and the presentation of such cases before the Court.

4.6 The Chief Superintendent (HQ Operations) will be responsible for providing corporate policy regarding Dangerous Dogs.

5. APPENDICES.

- **A - Risk Assessment**
- **B - Process Map**
- **C - Undertaking by Owner of a Prohibited Dog**
- **D - Dog Seizure Form**
- **E - Veterinary Treatment Consent Form**