



Dog-Related Incidents Policy

OFFICIAL

Publication Scheme Y/N	Policy section can be published on Force Website Procedure section should be withheld
Department of Origin	Matrix
Policy Holder	Ch Supt Head of Matrix
Author	Inspector – Head of Dogs and Mounted Section
Related Information	Animal Welfare Act 2006 Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Call Grade & Response Policy Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (As amended) Dogs Act 1871 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Victims Code of Practice Care Act 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014
This Version	Version 7.0 – Created 19/05/2020
Date of Next Review	19/05/2022

May 2020



Policy

Statement

Merseyside Police requires all dog-related incidents to be dealt with consistently using the full range of legislation currently available. It is our intention to fully investigate suspected offences, prevent the likelihood of an offence occurring, gather intelligence and provide education regarding the subject, both internally within the organisation and also externally to our partner agencies.

The ownership of a certain type of dog(s) can amount to a criminal offence. Allowing any dog(s) to be dangerously out of control in a public place or a private place is also a criminal offence. Legal action may be taken against the owner and/or person in charge of the dog(s) at the time of the offence.

Merseyside Police is totally committed to the protection of people from injury and the fear of injury by dogs, along with damage to property caused by dogs.

Aims

The main aim of this policy is to ensure that all our responses to dog-related incidents are proportionate, lawful, accountable, necessary and consistent, with every case being resolved at the earliest point and the safety of the public and our employees being the primary objective. This approach is designed to provide the highest protection to the communities of Merseyside.

The policy is underpinned by procedure that provides clear and unambiguous direction for all Merseyside Police personnel who have to deal with a dog-related incident. This direction should provide value for money, effective investigation and clear management of all dog-related incidents.

Objectives

- a) Reduce the risk of harm to the public.
- b) Reduce the opportunities for the criminal use of dogs.
- c) Ensure that log and case management is of the highest standard possible, with underpinning accountability.
- d) Respond to intelligence and information regarding dog-related incidents.
- e) Introduce a force wide virtual 'dog register' through the use of Niche.
- f) Maximise the number of detections regarding dog-related incidents and bring those responsible to justice.
- g) Reduce the number of dog-related antisocial behaviour incidents.
- h) Maintain a victim-orientated approach to any dog-related incidents and the way in which they are disposed of.

- i) Pro-actively enforce compliance with court orders where dogs have previously been subject to court proceedings. (Op Newberry)
- j) Deal with dogs in police secure kennels expeditiously in line with animal welfare guidelines and at minimal costs to the public purse.
- k) Protection of other animals from either the criminal use of dogs or irresponsible ownership, by means of education and enforcement in partnership with other agencies.

Application and Scope

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to Merseyside Police must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant policy and associated procedures.

This policy document sets out principles to help guide decision making and is in some parts quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case. Non-statutory policies, including College of Policing APP, provide guidance only. They are 'living documents' and it is recognised that there may be a better way of doing this. Accordingly, if staff depart from a policy but are able to give a good rationale for their actions, and have acted with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported.¹

The Chief Officer lead for this policy is the Assistant Chief Constable responsible for Matrix .

Incidents will be graded and responded to in line with the [Call Response Policy](#).

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).

Outcome Evaluation

The Head of Operational Support (Corporate Support & Development) is responsible for audit and inspection and can provide relevant management information to assist evaluation.

In general terms effective implementation should:

- a) Ensure the fullest investigation that will result in the prompt and proper disposal and conclusion of any individual case.
- b) Provide reassurance and keep victims and owners of dangerous dogs informed of the progress of relevant cases, by adhering to the victims' care guidance.

¹ This paragraph inserted 21/06/2016 to emphasise appropriate use of discretion. Version number remains unchanged.