

Policy name: HMPPS Prison Dogs Policy Framework

Reference: N/A

Re-issue Date: 01 July 2025

Implementation Date: 21 July 2021

Replaces the following documents (e.g. PSIs, PSOs, Custodial Service Specs) which are hereby cancelled:

- NSF6.9 PSI 20/2011 Prison Dogs,
- Service Specifications:
- Nights, Output 11
- Communication & Control Rooms - Outputs 4, 8, 18, 19, 20
- Provision of Secure Operating Environment: Gate Services - Outputs 4, 16
- Secure Management - Output 16

Introduces amendments to the following documents: none

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Action required by:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HMPPS HQ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governors |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Sector Prisons | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heads of Group |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contracted Prisons | <input type="checkbox"/> Contract Managers in Probation Trusts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Probation Service | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other providers of Probation and Community Services | |

Mandatory Actions: All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

For Information: Governors¹ and Local Delivery Unit Heads / Heads of Departments must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored: Oversight and effective management of HMPPS dogs falls within the portfolio of accountability held by Operational Response and Resilience Unit. Within ORRU, a specialist Inspectorate Team provide organisational assurance that this policy is being applied and that only approved professional practices are used. This assurance is enabled through a programme of capability building

¹ In this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons.

work including expert advice, visits to prisons and regional teams, training and operational support.

There is an existing procedure for security audits in prisons. No amendments to this procedure are made by this framework. However, Governing Governors / Directors, should have in place a forum and procedures that assure them that all practice relating to the deployment of prison dogs is managed and prioritised effectively and according to local context.

Resource Impact: This policy framework has been written in conjunction with NDTSG, regional dog teams, T10 project team and PSP South review. Any impact upon resourcing does not form part of this policy and is led by group; dependent upon risk, need and budget in consultation with NDTSG.

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Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Paul Cawkwell, Prison Group Director.

Approved by OPS for publication: Sarah Coccia and Ian Barrow, Joint Chairs, Operational Policy Sub-board, 21 June 2021.

Revisions:

Date	Update
29 November 2025	Paragraph 8.3 added “must be informed” Paragraph 10.12 added: “For the sake of this policy framework, a dynamic risk assessment means the process of continually observing and analysing risks and hazards in an environment. The process allows handlers to quickly identify real and potential new risks and take steps to mitigate them and it is not a formal risk
01 July 2025	This policy updates outlines the procedures for the management of HMPPS dogs in circumstances where the designated handler is pregnant or on maternity leave. It includes clear and guidance on the administration of care and maintenance allowance payments during these periods, ensuring continuity of animal welfare and operational standards. This policy update provides clear and comprehensive guidance on the management of HMPPS dogs during periods when the designated handler is unable to provide care or perform operational duties. It also includes additional updates to ensure consistency and continuity in service delivery.

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1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 Prison Service Dogs are valuable assets that provide the organisation with enhanced capabilities for searching, patrolling and maintenance of security. They are a formidable resource and there is good evidence to support the value of their contribution to the fight against criminal activity and illicit supply reduction. The range of services dogs provide to HMPPS are reviewed regularly and continue to adapt in response to new and evolving threats. It follows that when developing our operating practices, we must remain compliant with working dog legislation and ensure that our care and welfare arrangements for dogs are maintained to the highest of standards.
- 1.2 Professional practice and oversight of HMPPS's dog operation is underpinned by this policy framework and adherence to it will ensure consistent application of training and licensing standards, retention, deployment and decision-making to dog team resources. This framework document is further supported by, and should be read in conjunction with, the Prison Dogs supplementary guidance document, which provides detailed guidance on the management and care of Prison Dogs. The documents should be used together to inform and enhance local policy and procedures.

2. **Evidence**

- 2.1 Dogs have been deployed by HMPPS for over 50 years, for their abilities to detect illicit items, and as a less lethal use of force asset during serious incidents. From a review of available literature, we can determine that dogs are an effective security tool in the fighting and prevention of crime. Despite the costs related to feeding, vet care, and training, dog effectiveness studies show dogs deliver excellent value for money (Handy, Harrington, & Pittman, 1961; Mesloh, 2006; Wolf, Mesloh, & Henych, n.d.). Court based decisions have been made on the basis of evidence provided through the use of dogs, leading to a high standard of reliability on dogs as security assets. This is evidenced by the admissibility of dog-identified evidence ([e.g., Pieterse and Holloway \(1995\) R v Sykes \(1997\)](#))²
- 2.2 Other studies also determined that dogs are more effective than machines in finding drugs, tracking, searching and rescuing, and that the presence of dogs can be effective in reducing the need to use lethal force in some situations (Stitt, 1991). In addition, the few studies on police dogs, along with more general literature on the topic, have shown dogs to be cost effective and effective tools within crime control strategies (Mesloh, 2006; Wolf, Mesloh, & Henych, n.d.).
- 2.3 There is conclusive evidence to support the use of HMPPS Dogs as both proactive and reactive security assets in a wide range of operational activities including:
 - The location and retrieval of illicit items, evidence, or people;
 - Assistance with the control of potential and actual disturbances;
 - The enhancement of staff and public safety.
- 2.4 The conveyance and use of illicit items in prison is one of the biggest challenges facing our criminal justice system today. Drug misuse is prevalent and contributes to violence, crime and vulnerability within prisons, and this threatens safety and the ability of our hard-working prison staff to deliver effective regimes. The presence of mobile phones

² [Admissibility and probative value of expert evidence of tracker dog scent identification](#)

enables ongoing criminality by allowing prisons to remain in communication with their networks and contact victims. The debt resulting from the supply, distribution and use of illicit items is also a significant cause of violence, intimidation and self-harm across the estate, endangering both staff and other prisoners. Evidence tells us that if we are to improve safety, prevent reoffending and tackle serious and organised crime, we must reduce the conveyance of phones and other illicit items in our prisons. If we are successful, we have a chance at enabling prisoners to engage positively with rehabilitation, in a calm and safe environment.

- 2.5 HMPPS dogs have a significant role to play in the detection of illicit items. HMPPS has considered the evidence supporting the use of dogs and has made significant investment in more detection dogs over the recent years. The deployment of HMPPS dogs has contributed significantly to the advancement of detection and retrieval of illicit items.
- 2.6 A study by David Wayne Welker from the Southern Illinois University Carbondale (2011) has highlighted the importance of effective and structured training for dogs and handlers. Further, a study conducted by UC Davis in 2011 found that handler's beliefs and expectations can have an influence on detection-dog performance. This is particularly significant as it suggests that handlers will need to be aware of issues around unconscious bias.

3. **Outcomes**

- 3.1 This Policy Framework seeks to set boundaries and authorities for the deployment of dogs in prisons to ensure:
 - Escapes are detected and deterred;
 - Threats to the security, safety, order and control of the establishment are detected and deterred;
 - Threats to public protection are detected, reported and deterred;
 - Maintenance of the highest of standards of care and welfare;
 - Crime and suspected criminal activity are detected, reported and deterred.
 - There is effective and lawful information exchange with establishment staff;
 - There are effective and lawful information exchange and working arrangements with other agencies;
 - Security measures are applied lawfully, safely, fairly, proportionately, and decently;
 - HMPPS remains compliant with all applicable working dog legislation;
 - Only authorised persons, vehicles, goods and other items enter and leave the establishment.

4. **Legal Requirements**

The use of working dogs in prisons and YOIs across England and Wales is regulated by several pieces of legislations.

- Animal Welfare Act 2006;
- Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Act 2019;
- The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006;
- Dogs Act 1871;
- Animal Health Act 1981;

- The Road Traffic Act 1988;
- Animal Welfare (Electronic Collars) (Wales) Regulations 2010;
- Under the Docking of Working Dogs Tails (England) Regulations 2007, Docking of Working Dogs Tails (Wales) Regulations 2007;
- Section 27; Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991;
- Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953, Animals Act 1971, section 3;
- Food Hygiene Regulations 2013, under EU Regulation (EC) 852/2004, Annex II;
- Animals Act 1971, section 2;
- Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015, Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015;
- Control of Dogs Order 1992;
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991;
- Pet Animals Act 1951; Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999, Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014;
- Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963;
- Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

5. **Mandatory actions to uphold Approved Professional Standards**

- 5.1 In addition to the legal provisions set out above, all staff must also comply with the approved professional standards set throughout this Policy Framework. It is the responsibility of *all front-line staff* to ensure that they have read, understood and comply with this policy framework and supplementary guidance. *All Governors and senior management* are responsible for promotion and monitoring compliance with the stipulations contained herein. This HMPPS Prison Dog Policy Framework is incorporated in the National Security Framework (NSF). All instructions included in this Policy Framework *are mandatory*.
- 5.2 This policy framework provides instructions for managers and front-line staff to ensure that training, care and deployment of prison dogs always operates within the boundaries of authority set out in this framework. The Operational Response and Resilience Unit (ORRU) will ensure it is reviewed regularly, and that it remains aligned to departmental priorities, reflects regulations and law, and includes the latest evidence-based practice.

6. **National Dog and Technical Support Group (NDTSG)**

More detail on this section is contained within Chapter 2 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 6.1 NDTSG is a central resource providing professional oversight of HMPPS dogs and are responsible for the following dog services:
- Production of drug detection dog training kits;
 - Training delivery for Advanced Tornado Dogs and Arms and Explosive Dogs.
- 6.2 NDTSG is part of Operational Response and Resilience Unit (ORRU) and is based at two sites at Hatfield and Kidlington. Only NDTSG and trained dog handlers with qualification to advanced level tornado should be deployed in the event of a serious

incident. Their deployment will be co-ordinated by National Incident Management Unit (NIMU) in accordance with The Incident Management Manual Policy Framework

- 6.3 The Head of ORRU and ORRU managers with designated responsibility for prison dog policy, will continue to monitor and identify all legislation relevant to the deployment and welfare of prison dog teams. They have responsibility for determining the range of specialist skills required to deliver HMPPS dog service expectations, including consideration of how and when dogs are deployed, training delivery, how working dogs are cared for, the selection process for dogs and handlers and how HMPPS will conduct related governance and assurance processes. ORRU is responsible for HMPPS dog policy. The Head of ORRU may delegate their authority in respect to this policy and its procedures to an ORRU Head of Function band 8 or above who will be named "ORRU Manager" in this policy.

Licensing

- 6.4 HMPPS dog teams; a handler and a dog must be licenced to perform each operational duty they undertake. All teams will be relicensed by the National Dog Inspectorate (NDI) for each specialism on at least an annual basis.

The National Dog Inspectorate

- 6.5 The NDI is part of NDTSG and is responsible for governance and assurance of HMPPS dog training and operations. The NDI is a central resource providing professional oversight of HMPPS dogs and is responsible for the following dog services:
- Licencing all HMPPS dogs and handlers;
 - Design and development of Dog Training Curriculums;
 - Monitor and identify all legislation relevant to the deployment and welfare of prison dog teams;
 - General-purpose Dogs and Search Dog training for trainers.

Accreditation

- 6.6 All assessments must be carried out by a NDTSG assessor that is independent to the recent training (within the past month) to that GP/Search dog team. The NDTSG assessor must be satisfied that the dog team being assessed meets the required standards to operate safely and efficiently prior to issuing a 12-month licence. Dog teams who meet the standard but need to improve on identified elements will be licenced for 3 months and will then be required to retake a re-assessment before the end of the period to ensure the identified areas of concern have been addressed.
- 6.7 All HMPPS dog teams must undertake accreditation on completion of their initial training and annually thereafter. The accreditation assessment may be brought forward before their due date with the agreement of the NDI to facilitate training calendars and operational commitments. It cannot be extended beyond their annual due date without the express authority of an ORRU Manager and only under exceptional circumstances. The decision-making process and reasons for this extension must be recorded within the dog's record of service.

Failure to meet Accreditation standards.

- 6.8 Any failure of the dog team in any aspect of the accreditation shall invoke the following procedure:
- The assessor must submit written evidence outlining the reasons for failure in the dog's record of service;
 - A structured action plan of the remedial training, required to bring the team to the accredited standard, must be agreed with the trainer and handler;
 - The Dog team will be afforded an opportunity to re-accredit within 60 calendar days;
 - The re-accreditation should be completed by the assessor who withheld/withdrew the teams' licence unless they are unavailable;
 - Only the element where competency was not evidenced needs to be revisited.
 - Any HMPPS dog failing the re-accreditation within the 60 days will remain withdrawn from operational duties and the dog may be removed from service;
 - If reaccreditation is not achieved within 60 days a full assessment will need to be undertaken to achieve operational status.

7. Dog Unit Management

More detail on this section is contained within Chapter 3 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 7.1 All dog handlers must have clear lines of responsibility and accountability for their handling role, to a dog unit/line manager. Managers of HMPPS dog handlers must be familiar with all facets of dog policy, deployment and legislation to enable effective oversight of dog team operation. There is no prerequisite requirement for HMPPS Dog section managers to have previously served as a dog handler.
- 7.2 Managers should make or ensure a planned assurance assessment has been completed for home, private and establishment kennels where a dog is to be housed, prior to the dog being located there. Documentation should be completed to satisfy this requirement in relation to home kennelling arrangements (see Annex D).

Dog Records

- 7.3 Each operational prison dog must have a Dog Service Record maintained/updated by the dog/line manager and stored securely. All records must have a corresponding document wallet to contain all documentation relating to the dog. Dog Service Records must be completed and retained by the dog unit/line manager for a period of seven years after the record is closed upon the death or disposal of the dog.

Dog Food

- 7.4 All prison dogs must be fed with food supplied under the national contract unless derogation has been given in writing by an ORRU Manager. Guidance must be in place governing the amount and frequency of dog food issued to handlers relevant to the type of dog and nutritional information from the manufacturers.

Dog related incidents

- 7.5 A dog related incident is where a dog is involved and one of the following occurs:

- Dog bite or attack on a person;
 - Near miss (e.g., attempts to bite or attack a person, a dog on the loose);
 - Dog bites or attack (or attempts) on another animal;
 - A missing dog;
 - Acts of cruelty or welfare concerns relating to HMPPS dogs
 - Any other dog related incident involving actual or potential serious harm, significant damage to property or reputational damage.
- 7.6 Handlers must report all incidents involving the use of dogs to the appropriate Prison Group Director's (PGD) office. The incident must be reported to NIMU and the NDI within 24 hours by telephone. An official Dog Incident Report form must be sent to the NDI as soon as possible after completion.
- 7.7 A written Dog Incident Report Form and Use of Force report must be completed and submitted to NDI following any use of force incident involving HMPPS dogs; once completed this should then be copied to the relevant Governor and PGD's office.
- 7.8 The dog must not be deployed operationally post incident until a review of the incident has taken place.
- 7.9 Medical attention must be sought as soon as possible following any injury caused by a dog to a prisoner, member of staff, visitor or member of the public. Staff must follow their local policies of recording incidents in the appropriate record book.
- 7.10 All allegations concerning cruelty or welfare of HMPPS dogs must be documented on Dog Incident Report and sent as soon as practicable to the NDI or Head of ORRU.

Dog Related Incident Committee (DRIC)

- 7.11 The Head of ORRU will designate an ORRU Manager to be the Chair of the DRIC. The Chair will refer significant dog related incidents, as defined in paragraph 7.5, to be considered by the DRIC.
- 7.12. The DRIC includes members of the NDI, NDTSG, health and safety lead, litigations lead and policy lead. Members of other groups such as HR, RSPCA and local dog teams, may be invited to the meeting if their input is required.
- 7.13 Following the reporting of an incident to the NDI, the Chair will call the DRIC for a meeting to consider the incident and issue the required actions. The committee should aim to meet in no later than 3 days from reporting the incident. The Chair of the Committee will ratify and send the actions required to the home establishment to implement/carry out the required actions. More details on the process are in the supplementary guidance Annex M.

Action to be taken in relation to a missing HMPPS Dog

- 7.14 If a dog handler loses their dog, they must verbally inform their manager immediately. In the event the manager is not contactable, the manager's manager must be informed straight away. The manager must contact the NIMU duty officer by telephone and report the incident using the Single Incident Line which can be found in The Incident Management Manual Policy Framework

- 7.15 The manager must also inform local kennels, vets, rescue centres and report the missing HMPPS dog to the police by telephone on: **101**. At the manager's discretion, if local dog handler resources are available, consideration should be given to deploying them to assist in the search for the missing dog.
- 7.16 The NIMU Duty Officer must contact the on call National Tactical Advisor (NTA) and pass on all of the information received. The on call NTA will contact the NDI on call point of contact who will liaise with the dog unit manager and confirm what actions have been followed and provide further advice and guidance.
- 7.17 If the dog is found, the dog unit manager must inform the on-call NDI member and all other agencies previously contacted as soon as possible. Incidents of this nature need to be recorded on a dog incident report. A copy of the report must be submitted to the NDI point of contact.
- 7.18 A health check of the dog must be carried out by the handler to confirm if any veterinary treatment is required.

Equipment

- 7.19 All equipment issued for use by HMPPS dogs must be procured locally by the establishment or group directorate from the recommended equipment list and comply with NDI guidance. **Equipment not included on the list must not be bought personally or locally, without specific authorisation from the NDI.** The equipment list is included at Annex G.
- 7.20 All dog units, establishments and group directorates, must maintain a supply of, and provide access to, the following equipment:
- Staff first aid kit;
 - Dog first aid kit;
 - Dog catcher;
 - Spare leads, collars, muzzles and general-purpose dog check chains;
- 7.21 Additional equipment available to handlers (to be used after appropriate training where applicable):
- Muzzle;
 - Leads and collars;
 - Half checks and harnesses (if required);
 - Check chains (general purpose dogs only).
- 7.22 *All dog handler equipment for personal issue must undergo a full risk assessment and be approved for use by the responsible manager prior to its issue. (Risk assessments and Safe System of Work (SSOW) must be in place prior to using equipment).* The NDI has a range of templates available for this purpose, which can be adapted locally.
- 7.23 **All HMPPS dogs must be micro chipped and wear a collar at all times as per 'The Control of Dogs Order 1992':**

2.—(1) *Subject to paragraph (2) below, every dog while in a highway or in a place of public resort shall wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to it.*

- 7.24 To ensure compliance with the law every HMPPS dog handler must be issued with a collar and tag for each dog. Dogs must have a flat leather collar with stainless steel/brass buckle and D-ring appropriate to the size of the dog up to a maximum of 1½” (40mm) These items are available from various suppliers.
- 7.25 All HMPPS dogs must have an identification tag securely attached to their collars. The owner of all HMPPS dogs will be recorded as ‘HMPPS’. The information on the tag must state the dog’s name, ‘HMPPS’ and include the National Single Incident Line (SIL) which can be found in the Incident Management Manual Policy Framework. On the reverse of the tag there should be an epaulette number reference relating to the establishment or dog unit where the handler/dog is predominantly based (e.g. WF001). The NDI must be informed of the epaulette reference for each handler.
- 7.26 If a staff member does not have epaulette numbers, the following should apply:
- All private sector prison dog ID tags should have a way of identifying the establishment and the handler. If no epaulette number, in addition to the SIL number and the dog’s name, the ID tag should include the establishment ID code, followed by the handler’s initials, as per the national list.
- 7.27 For dogs acquired by the service to assess and train, a temporary tag should be attached to the dog’s collar. The following information is required on the tag. HMPPS, 0207 1474021, a reference relating to the establishment or dog unit, e.g. WF and TPD01, TPD02 etc
- 7.28 No other dog tags or contact information can be attached to the dog.
- 7.29 When a report is made about a dog to NIMU Unit via the incident line, they will liaise with NDTSG to arrange appropriate follow-up.
- 7.30 Novice handlers must be provided with the necessary equipment prior to their training course commencing (see Annex D).
- 7.31 Electric Collars or Pinch Collars (German spiked collars) must not be used on HMPPS dogs under any circumstances.

Dog Admittance to Prison establishments

Additional information on Pets as Therapy (PAT) and assistance dogs is contained within Chapter 13 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 7.32 Admittance to prison establishments is restricted to the types of dogs listed below;
- General Purpose Dog Team (previously known as patrol dog team);
 - Advanced Tornado Dog Team;
 - Active Search Dog Team;
 - Passive Search Dog Team;
 - Admittance to PAT dogs or Police dogs will require the authority of the Governor of the prison and the Head of ORRU must be informed to allow maintenance of the PAT dog database.
- 7.33 Guide dog and assistance dog owners (staff and visitors) have important rights under the Equality Act 2010 (EA). Current organisations recognised are:

- Guide Dogs;
- Hearing Dogs;
- Medical Detection Dogs;
- Dogs for Good;
- Canine Partners;
- Dog A.I.D;
- Support Dogs.

7.34 Prisoners are not eligible to have assistance dogs in custody. It would be impossible to assure the assistance dog provider that the dog could be looked after in line with the agreed code and standards (e.g. lock downs where the dog cannot be let out, limited exercise opportunity etc.).

7.35 Access by staff or visitors who are registered blind and need to be accompanied by a Guide Dog for the Blind should be covered by a local risk assessment and noted in the prisons LSS before approval is given by the Governor or designated manager if appropriate.

7.36 Additional guidance on guide and assistance dogs entering establishments can be sought from the NDI team.

7.37 No other dogs, including assistance dogs, will be permitted entry without express permission being granted by the Governor. Wherever possible the Head of NDTSG should be informed, preferably in advance. There must be exceptional reasons for dogs, other than guide dogs for the blind, not included at point 7.32 to be admitted and the purpose of the visit must be clearly defined; exceptional reasons do not include staff bringing their pets to work. Decisions to admit other types of dogs need to be considered against the risk posed by incidents, accidents or the potential for the spread of infections. The following must be considered as part of the risk assessment process:

- what is the exceptional reason for entry?
- what are the proposed areas of access?
- who is the registered owner (are they responsible)? It should be noted that the decision maker will additionally carry liability?
- what breed is the dog (is it a dangerous breed)?
- temperament of the dog;
- is the dog fully vaccinated?
- are there any known ailments/illnesses?
- is the dog female and if so, is she spayed? (If not spayed, is she in season? this is likely to impact on the effectiveness of HMPPS working dogs);
- is third party insurance in place?
- is there a risk assessment in place?
- the impact on people who are allergic or afraid of dogs and what mitigations can be put in place.

7.38 Staff must not be permitted to bring their pets to work.

7.39 NDTGS will follow [PI 02/2018 - Records, Information Management and Retention Policy](#) in retaining and disposing of dog related incident reports.

8. **Procurement and Disposal of Prison dogs**

More detail on procurement and disposal is contained at chapter 4 of the supplementary guidance.

Procurement

8.1 HMPPS dogs become the property of HMPPS or private prison provider at the point agreed on the acquisition form and will remain as such until the point of disposal. This

must be documented before the dog undertakes any formal training or deployment in its designated role. HMPPS dogs must not be used for unofficial training purposes or be entered into any dog show, exhibition or demonstration without the approval of the Head of Function and must have a risk assessment in place prior to the activity taking place. HMPPS dogs may not be used in breeding programmes unless specifically agreed by the NDI due to the need for oversight to ensure compliance with law, legislation and animal welfare factors.

- 8.2 Procurement of HMPPS dogs must be authorised by establishment/regional team budget holder and only be undertaken to fill current vacancies in agreed operational numbers.
- 8.3 All HMPPS dogs must be purchased from suppliers using the authorised SOP procurement payment methods. Any dog identified for purchase above £3000 must be sanctioned by the local budget holder. The Head of ORRU must be informed. Dogs must not knowingly be purchased from breeders who run unethical breeding programmes or who operate outside the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- 8.4 The initial evaluation should, if possible, be agreed in the presence of the owner or supplier or their representative. Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure cost effectiveness, taking into account that dogs offered to the Prison Service comply with HMPPS operating requirements at the initial viewing stage, wherever possible. The dog must be capable, on the balance of probabilities, of complying with the requirements of this Policy Framework.
- 8.5 If the initial evaluation is successful an Acquisition Form must be completed (Annex A), clear agreement should be recorded in relation to the proposed price, payment requirements and any disposal or return requirements if the dog fails training. All terms and conditions must be agreed before the dog is acquired. A signed copy of the Acquisition Form must be given to the previous owner and a copy entered in the Dog Record of Service
- 8.6 All PGD regions, or prisons, must maintain a procurement/asset record of all dogs owned by HMPPS. Individual group directorates will determine what approach they adopted to meet this requirement. The procurement record/asset register must be updated to reflect cost of purchase, changes in handler, training records, acquisition of the dog and disposal.
- 8.7 A Temporary Training Record (TTR), included at (Annex H) must be opened on all procured dogs on acquisition and closed when a dog is either found unsuitable or on commencement of an initial course. A Dog Record of Service must be opened for all dogs achieving operational status and retained by the dog manager who is responsible, to ensure that this record is completed in full. There must be documented management checks by a designated member of staff (agreed by the Governor/Head of Group) to ensure that this is being carried out correctly.
- 8.8 All operational female dogs must be spayed, unless exceptional approval has been granted by the Head of ORRU.
- 8.9 All Veterinary reports on the dog should be retained if available. If none are available the acquisition can proceed and HMPPS must obtain its own Veterinary report,
- 8.10 General purpose dogs will be of the following breeds only: German Shepherd, Belgian Malinois, German Shepherd X Belgian Malinois, German Shepherd X Dutch Herder, Belgium Malinois X Dutch Herder. No other breed of dog has been approved for

procurement or training in general purpose dog duties. This list is subject to change by authority of the Head of ORRU. Spaniels, Labradors, Retrievers and other gun dog breeds may be procured for search dog duties. Consideration of breeds not included within this section for operational deployment must be first discussed with and approved by the Head of NDTSG.

- 8.11 There should be no cash payments made for the purchase of any HMPPS dog. All HMPPS dogs must be purchased from suppliers using the authorised SOP procurement payment methods.

Disposal

- 8.12 There are four primary reasons why it may be necessary to dispose of a HMPPS dog.

- Failure of the dog or handler to meet the expected standards of performance or behaviour.
- Age of dog or retirement of handler.
- Dog or handler health.
- A dog is deemed surplus to requirement.

This list is not exhaustive and other reasons presenting the potential for disposal of a HMPPS dog should be considered on a case by case basis.

- 8.13 The retirement/disposal of a HMPPS dog must be agreed by the dog unit/line manager and the relevant disposal process that must be followed for each type of decision is outlined in supplementary guidance section 4.8.
- 8.14 If any issues are identified with the standard of work delivered by a licenced dog or dog handler, this must be communicated to the national inspectorate team. This will ensure all concerns are recorded and appropriate remedial action can be taken in response.
- 8.15 In all instances involving the sudden unexplained death of a HMPPS serving dog an autopsy must be requested and the Head of ORRU informed.
- 8.16 Upon the death or retirement of a dog the disposal form must be completed, and copies retained in the Dog Service Record and sent to NDTSG by emailing NationalDogInspectorate@justice.gov.uk.
- 8.17 Following procurement, if a dog is deemed unsuitable for work with HMPPS the decision must be ratified by the trainer in consultation with their manager and the dog training record updated accordingly. The dog in question should be returned to the previous owner/breeder with a refund in purchase when appropriate or previously agreed or be re-homed. The appropriate action for returning or rehoming dogs unsuitable for work with HMPPS must be recorded on the initial acquisition form at the point of procurement.
- 8.18 HMPPS operational dog disposal options:
- Upon retirement or removal from operational duties due to age, ill health or operational standards (other than the reasons listed below) a HMPPS dog may be rehomed with its handler or a member of the public, if the temperament of the dog allows. (disposal form A) (Annex B);

- If the reasons for removing the dog from operational duties are related to control or safety concerns, i.e. aggressive tendencies or a bite/attack on a person or other animal, then a dog incident report must be completed and submitted to the NDI for consideration by the Dog Related Incident Committee.

9. Training, Training aids and Accreditation

More detail on this section is contained within Chapter 5 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 9.1 All HMPPS dog courses can only be delivered by HMPPS accredited trainers. HMPPS dog and handler training must be conducted in accordance with NDI guidance and delivered by a qualified HMPPS accredited trainer at the appropriate level. Trainer-led training will be provided in the following formats:
- Initial training course;
 - Re-team course;
 - Continuation training;
 - Re-licensing.
- 9.2 The initial training course is designed flexibly to train non-accredited staff or experienced handlers working with experienced or un-trained dogs. The course culminates in the team achieving the standards to be licenced, which will be assessed by a qualified assessor appointed by the Head of ORRU..
- 9.3 On completion of initial training, all HMPPS dogs must be able to demonstrate that they will remain under control, both on or off the lead, in a range of conditions that it might reasonably be expected to encounter whilst on or off duty. They must react correctly to words of command from the handler and conform, when necessary, to the handler's movements.
- 9.4 In addition HMPPS dogs must demonstrate they are capable of working steadily in areas or situations where personnel, animals, movement, food or other distractions are present and negotiate any obstacle that it might reasonably be expected to encounter during a tour of duty with due regard to health and safety requirements. They must display capability to work on the lead, both as a single team with its handler or as part of a larger team of dogs without causing problems to the other dogs.
- 9.5 During formal training, if a team does not demonstrate the required standard of safety, efficiency and control to remain in licence for operational deployment, they will not be accredited for operational service. The trainer will ensure that an appropriate development plan is put in place and will inform the appropriate line manager.
- 9.6 Following initial accreditation teams must receive the minimum amount of continuation training identified below prior to annual assessments:
- 10 days for General Purpose Dogs (GPD);
 - 5 days for an Active Drug Detection (ADD)/Passive Drug Detection (PDD);
 - 3 days for an Illicit Brewed Alcohol Detection (IBAD)/Mobile Phone Detection (MPD);
 - Explosive Detection Dog (EDD), as per the NCTAS standard;
 - 3 days for Firearms Detection Dog (FDD).

- 9.7 Continuation training will be provided through dedicated hours for EDD and days for all other disciplines spread throughout the year. This training is designed to maintain and improve standards and to work towards the development plans set for each team.
- 9.8 Annual assessment reports completed by the NDI will highlight any areas of concern and record them within the Dog Record of Service.
- 9.9 Only dog handlers who have successfully completed a 40-day initial GPD course with an accredited HMPPS GPD Initial trainer can handle General Purpose Dogs unsupervised. Non-accredited staff can only work with HMPPS General Purpose dogs under the direct supervision of an HMPPS accredited dog trainer.
- 9.10 Non-accredited/unlicensed staff must not be authorised to take dogs home, or to or from approved kennelling/establishment without supervision, until such time as they have completed a full training programme and been accredited/licenced by a member of the NDI team. All non-accredited staff under training must be under the direct supervision of a HMPPS qualified, accredited trainer in the appropriate discipline when exercising or handling a HMPPS Dog.

The Management of training aids and controlled substance

- 9.11 Drug detection dog training kits are issued on loan from NDTSG on a “one kit one trainer” basis. They contain controlled substances under the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#).
- 9.12 Only accredited drug detection dog trainers are authorised to access these substances for the purpose of drug detection dog training, no other handlers have any authority to access and/or use the drug dog training aids on loan from NDTSG.
- 9.13 Handlers are not permitted to have any other controlled substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in their possession for dog training purposes. All seized finds must be treated as evidence in accordance with [Management and Handling of Evidence Policy Framework](#).
- 9.14 Only authorised staff (Functional Heads and Group/Line Managers) are permitted to access the training aids for assurance purposes.
- 9.15 Drug training aids must be logged in, out and signed for by two persons to confirm that the conditions of the drug training aids are correct.
- 9.16 Drug training aids should be independently checked and signed for as correct frequently by dog unit/line managers or other nominated competent managers (at least monthly).
- 9.17 Training aids must be kept securely in an area not accessible to unauthorised staff or prisoners.
- 9.18 All precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of training aids, and any loss or damage must be notified immediately through local management to Head of ORRU by informing the NDI and NIMU.

Training for trainers

- 9.19 To attain accreditation for training of prison dogs, all HMPPS dog handlers must successfully complete the following training elements/assessments:

- NDTSG Training for Trainers course applicable to prison dogs;
- Take part in field observation visits by the NDI to assess the practical skill delivery of the training of prison dogs at designated venues;
- Evidence of a minimum of 1-year operational service dog experience in the discipline applicable to the training accreditation;
- First aid at work qualification.

Accreditation

- 9.20 Every prison dog and handler deployed within the HMPPS estate must have a current licence appropriate to the discipline they are deployed to.
- 9.21 All assessors must be accredited and appointed by the Head of ORRU. They must be experienced HMPPS dog handlers who have previously worked a licenced HMPPS dog in either (or both) general purpose or specialist search and have HMPPS trainer accreditation in either (or both) general purpose or specialist search with recent experience and operational competence of working as a trainer.
- 9.22 Assessment dates must not be extended beyond their annual due date without the express authority of an ORRU Manager and only under exceptional circumstances. The decision-making process and reasons for this extension must be recorded within the dog's record of service.
- 9.23 Dogs who fail an assessment by being unable to demonstrate the required standard, must be removed immediately from operational duties. They cannot be reinstated to operational dog duties until they demonstrate they have achieved the required standard.
- 9.24 If the dog is not resubmitted within the timeframe agreed with the trainer/ NDTSG or a decision is taken to permanently remove the dog from service by line management, then the NDI must be informed.
- 9.25 All appeals against an assessor's decision must be directed to the Head of ORRU.

10. HMPPS Dog Handler Role and Responsibilities

More detail on this section is contained within Chapter 6 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 10.1 All HMPPS dog handlers must be comfortable working with dogs in a hands-on capacity. Upon receipt of accredited training, they must be able to demonstrate basic obedience, positive reinforcement training techniques, and good handling skills when working with their allocated dogs. A full list of responsibilities pertaining to dog handlers can be found at chapter 6 the supplementary guidance.
- 10.2 HMPPS dogs must only be handled by HMPPS employees acting in compliance with an agreed job description and must hold a current licence issued by the NDI team before they are employed on dog handling duties.
- 10.3 All HMPPS dog handlers must be recruited using the published pre-selection process attached at Annex E. Candidates applying for a Prison Officer Specialist dog handler position must understand that they are likely to be required to handle two HMPPS dogs.

- 10.4 All staff applying for specialist training as GPD handlers who took up post after the 2 April 2001 are required to pass a suitable dog handler's fitness assessment before being accepted onto the training course in accordance with HMPPS Staff Fitness Testing Policy (May 2022). They must complete the fitness test annually to maintain operational dog handler status. Fitness assessments will be conducted by Health & Safety Performance Group (HASFG) staff in the officer's home establishment. In the case of an officer required to attend specialist training at short notice, HASPG will advise on a suitable location for the fitness assessment.
- 10.5 A GPD handler (in post after 2nd April 2001) must be able to satisfy the annual fitness testing requirements of the role to the following standards:
- Grip test: 35 KGF;
 - M.S.F.T: Level 5.8;
 - Shield test: 1 minute;
 - Speed/Agility: 32 seconds;
- 10.6 Dog unit/line managers should ensure all handlers for whom they are responsible have undertaken the general risk assessment training.
- 10.7 Safety of the public, staff and prisoners must always remain a high priority. Generic risk assessment guidance in relation to use of dogs is available on the health and safety section of the intranet. However, generic risk assessments are for guidance only and should be adapted to cover each operation.
- 10.8 Each dog section or area team must have a generic risk assessment in place for exercising HMPPS dogs when off duty. Exercise off the lead for HMPPS GP dogs must only be conducted in a secure area, with controlled access managed by the accredited handler. Individual GP dog handlers will need to complete, sign and submit to the manager an off-duty GP dog exercise area proforma for each exercise area used. Each proforma will need to be counter signed by the manager and kept on record locally.
- 10.9 Transportation of dogs to and from exercise areas potentially carries high risk. Handlers must consider measures to protect the public; this remains the responsibility of the handler and may require transportation via vehicle or muzzling.
- 10.10 The 8-foot rule: GP dogs are trained to bite and to protect the handler. Other people must not approach within 8 feet (2.5 metres) of a prison general purpose dog. Depending on the circumstances the handler will either warn other people not to approach within the distance or ensure that the dog is under control before the handler approaches or is approached by any person.
- 10.11 All HMPPS general purpose and tornado dogs must be kept on a lead and be in the control of the accredited handler at any time it is not in a secure area with controlled access.
- 10.12 Exercise off the lead for HMPPS general purpose and tornado dogs must only be conducted in a secure area, with controlled access managed by the accredited handler.
- 10.13 Handlers of HMPPS search dogs must complete a dynamic risk assessment of the area they intend to exercise their dogs, prior to letting the dog off the lead. For the sake of this policy framework, a dynamic risk assessment means the process of continually observing and analysing risks and hazards in an environment. The process allows

handlers to quickly identify real and potential new risks and take steps to mitigate them and it is not a formal risk assessment process.

- 10.14 HMPPS dog handlers will remain responsible for completing dynamic assessments of risk throughout the whole exercise period.

Considerations for working dog teams in the presence of other people.

- 10.15 When required to work with support staff, all dog handlers must routinely ask if anyone has an allergy to or fear of dogs. Where an individual indicates such an allergy or fear, dog handlers must consider the options available to them and explore alternatives on an individual basis. This should include:

- Utilising alternative support staff;
- Offering assurance;
- Consideration of the control measures.

- 10.16 Any concerns raised around fear or allergies prior to a search by a PDD dog on a person, dog handlers must consider the options available to them and explore alternatives on an individual basis. This should include:

- Offering assurance;
- Consideration of the control measures;
- Alternative methods of searching without using the dog;
- Escalation to a manager if the person refuses.

Considerations for work life balance, flexible work or change of circumstances.

- 10.17 Any request by a handler to reduce their working hours and/or work flexibly will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Human Resource Business Partners/ Shared Service Centre and take into account any issues, which may affect an individual's ability to work full-time.
- 10.18 A reduction in working hours, however, raises specific issues within the specialist field of prison dog handling which need to be taken into consideration. Dog teams (handlers and dogs) need to undertake the recognised minimum amount of training per year for each operational element. This cannot be reduced on a pro-rata basis due to a reduction in hours worked. An increase of free days or a reduction of hours will not reduce the basic daily animal welfare requirement.
- 10.19 In reducing the availability for work of a handler, there is also a necessary reduction in the availability for work for the dog. This can reduce the operational exposure of the animal and the team, which may hinder experiential development.
- 10.20 If individual circumstances change to the point where handlers are no longer able to meet the basic operational requirements of the role, consideration will be given to other band appropriate work. Any change in circumstances must be reported through line management.

Taking control of service dog(s)

- 10.21 HMPPS will consider taking control of its dogs from the handler's care in circumstances where the handler is unable to undertake the duties of their role. The consideration will

vary depending on the dog handler's individual circumstances, and how long they are likely to be unable to fulfil their dog handler's duties.

10.22 The instances below will trigger a review process on a case-by-case basis (not an exhaustive list):

- Suspension from duty, cross deployment from dog handler duties, extended periods of leave or other circumstances meaning the dog handler is unable to fulfil dog handler duties – will trigger an immediate review of how the dog(s) will be cared for;
- Inability to fulfil dog handler duties for more than 7 days but less than 28 days – will trigger a review of how the dog(s) shall be cared for;
- Inability to fulfil dog handler duties for 28 days or more, but less than 3 months – will trigger both a review of how the dog(s) is to be cared for and whether the dog(s) requires permanent re-teaming;
- Inability to fulfil dog handler duties for 3 months or more – will trigger a review of whether the dog(s) requires permanent re-teaming;
- The circumstances above do not include the handler's Annual Leave periods.

10.23 Reviews may consider relevant factors such as (not an exhaustive list):

- Welfare, characteristics, capability and age of the dog(s);
- Welfare and health and safety of the Dog Handler (including reference to any relevant medical information, occupational health reports, and/or risk assessments);
- Business need.

10.24 The reviews detailed above may be undertaken as soon as it is likely that the handler will be unable to fulfil their duties for a period sufficient to trigger the review. This may be at any point, not necessarily when the handler's inability to undertake their role reaches the necessary duration to trigger the relevant review (e.g. if it is known in advance that the handler will not be able to fulfil their role for the next 3+ months).

10.25 The manager undertaking the review will write to the dog handler concerned and explain why a review has been triggered and give the handler the opportunity to contribute their views. The handler will have at least 7 calendar days (this can be extended depending on the individual circumstances) to provide their view in writing and/or in a meeting. The handler may provide their views via or with the assistance of a recognised trade union representative or workplace companion. However, there may be occasions where the review needs to be undertaken at such pace that prior notice and the opportunity for the handler to contribute their views will not always be possible e.g., if the handler is suddenly incapacitated and the manager needs to take an urgent decision to ensure the dog(s) welfare.

10.26 Once the review is concluded, the manager will write again to the handler, setting out what they have considered, the outcome, and the reasons for them. They will also offer a meeting with the handler should they wish to discuss the outcome. If the dog handler is dissatisfied with the manager's decision, they can utilise the [HMPPS grievance procedures](#), should they wish.

10.27 Any decision to remove the dog(s) from a handler's care will be kept under regular review for a minimum of 28 days. The manager will revisit the original decision and consider whether the reasons that led to the removal of the dog(s) remain relevant.

The outcome should be communicated to the handler in writing as soon as possible. Where the review identifies a material change in the circumstances that led to the removal of the dog(s) the manager must take a fresh decision, repeating the process described in paragraphs 10.21 and 10.22, and reach one or more of the decisions set out in paragraph 10.25 and 10.26 (for example, it may now be possible to return the dog(s) to the handler's care or, conversely, where dog(s) are in the temporary care of kennels or another handler they may then be permanently reteamd with another handler or stood down from service).

Care and Maintenance Allowance Pay.

Additional information on this section is contained within Chapter 14 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 10.28 The care and maintenance allowance pay is an annual allowance added to a dog handler's salary who is accredited and in post. This is paid to compensate the handler for the time and responsibility of looking after prison dog(s) allocated to them in their off-duty hours.
- 10.29 Handlers are responsible for feeding and watering, exercising, grooming (not clipping), caring and maintaining, kennel cleaning as well as control and security of dog(s).
- 10.30 If the dog(s) are removed from the dog handler's care, the handler's care and maintenance allowance pay should be stopped (or adjusted to the number of dogs remain in their care), subject to paragraph 10.39 and 10.40. If the dog handler has been allocated a vehicle for transporting the dog(s), the vehicle may be removed from them if the dogs are removed. Similarly, handlers who are permitted to use their own vehicles for the transportation of HMPPS dogs and claim mileage expenses, in accordance with [Travel & subsistence PSI 15/2012](#), will no longer be able to claim such expenses for the period they are without dogs.
- 10.31 Where a handler is able to resume their duties and thus a decision is made to return dogs to their care, they will again be provided with a van for the purposes of transporting the dogs (or alternatively, with their manager's express permission, to be able to transport the dogs in their own vehicle and claim the mileage expenses for doing so in accordance with [Travel & subsistence PSI 15/2012](#)). They will also have their Care and Maintenance Allowance reinstated at the level appropriate to the number of dogs in their care.

Pregnancy and Maternity.

- 10.32 Handlers who are pregnant must inform their line manager within the right time frame in accordance with the [Maternity Leave Policy April 2024](#).
- 10.32 Ensuring the health and safety of new and expectant mothers in the workplace is vital. Pregnancy and becoming a new mother bring unique physiological and psychological changes that can make certain work activities potentially hazardous. Understanding employee's rights, responsibilities and the necessary precautions is therefore crucial to ensure safety, health and wellbeing.
- 10.34 A key step in supporting new and expectant mothers is to conduct a specific risk assessment for each individual. This assessment goes beyond the general workplace risk assessments, focusing specifically on the risks associated with pregnancy or becoming a new mother. It takes into account factors such as the nature of the work, exposure to harmful substances, physical demands and the overall working environment.

- 10.35 A specific risk assessment for new and expectant mothers is essential because pregnancy affects individuals differently. What may be safe for one person may pose risks to another. By conducting an individual risk assessment, the MoJ can identify any potential hazards that may affect the employee or the health of their child and take appropriate measures to eliminate or control those risks.
- 10.36 It is desirable for employees to notify their line manager (preferably in writing) about their pregnancy as early as it is practical to do so. This allows the line manager to initiate the risk assessment process and to make any necessary agreed adjustments to provide a safe and comfortable working environment in consultation with the employee, allowing new and expectant mothers to continue their employment with peace of mind.

The risk assessment and associated guidance can be found [here](#)

- 10.37 A service dog should not be removed from a dog handler merely because the handler is pregnant or is exercising or has exercised the right to take maternity leave. Managers must discuss with the handler the ongoing care of the dog as part of the new and expectant mothers risk assessment. In addition to the new or expectant mother's needs, managers should consider relevant factors such as (not an exhaustive list):
- a. Welfare, characteristics, capability and age of the dog(s);
 - b. Welfare and health and safety of the dog handler (including reference to any relevant medical information, occupational health reports, and/or risk assessments);
 - c. Business need.
- 10.38 The Care and Maintenance Allowance will continue to be paid to the handler during their maternity leave even if the dog(s) are removed from their care. For the avoidance of doubt the allowance will be incorporated into maternity pay irrespective of whether the handler is caring for the service dogs.
- 10.39 The Care and Maintenance Allowance will continue to be paid as per the amount prior to the pregnancy / maternity leave (for the same number of dogs) until the handler's return from leave and during the period of retraining and/or reteaming with another dog(s).

11. Assurance and Investigations

Additional information on this section is contained within Chapter 12 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

Investigations

- 11.1 All investigations concerning a dog handler's conduct must be dealt with under the terms of [PSI 06/2010](#) Conduct and Discipline and [PSO 1300](#) investigations.
- 11.2 All incidents concerning HMPPS dogs which may require investigation must be reported to the Head of ORRU. If a written or an accredited verbal allegation is made against a handler in connection with the care, health, welfare or security of their dogs, it must be reported immediately to the Head of ORRU.
- 11.3 If a dog is removed from a handler's control for any conduct or discipline reason a dog incident form must be completed, and the removal recorded on the Dog Record of

Service. The dog must only be returned to the handler once the concerns identified on the dog incident form have been addressed and the outcomes from any investigation or review have been agreed by the commissioning authority. The decision must be recorded on the dog incident form and the handler's suitability to retake responsibility for the dog must be agreed by the Governor or delegated manager with the Head of NDTSG. The Dog Record of Service must be updated to reflect the decision.

- 11.4 A Subject Matter Expert advisor must be considered by the commissioning manager as part of the investigatory process should they require an independent expert with the relevant training, knowledge and experience within a particular field which extends beyond that of regular staff. ORRU Subject Matter Expert advisors are available for formal investigations, referral to the police for criminal proceedings or any civil claims. Applications must be obtained through the ORRU Subject Matter Expert mailbox: ORRUSME@justice.gov.uk

Assurance by ORRU

- 11.5 ORRU will lead an assurance process for the operational delivery, training and accreditation. The Head of ORRU will appoint the assurance team which will be comprised of an ORRU manager and a member of the NDI. The assurance team must take into account procedures and services approved in this policy framework and other relevant policies/legislation.
- 11.6 The team will systematically evaluate the effectiveness of risk management, governance and control processes against the baselines and provide a feedback report to the line/unit manager. The report will include recommendations to address any identified areas of concern along with any support that can be provided.
- 11.7 **Dog unit/team assurance visits** – to be led by an ORRU Manager and supported by a member of the NDI. This is to provide assurance that HMPPS dog units/team are operating correctly and are compliant with HMPPS' dog policy, legal regulation and legislation. The team will:
- consider operational delivery, health & safety, animal welfare, procurement, training, disposal, administration and management of the dog unit/team;
 - examine procedural, training, dog and operational records of the dog unit/team over a period of the last twelve months;
 - consult with members of the dog unit/team and managers to include their considerations about performance and the working environment;
 - These assurance baselines are not listed in order of importance and all areas are marked equally to obtain the assessment.
- 11.8 **HMPPS dog training aid assurance visit** - to be completed by two members of the NDI. The purpose of the visit is to ensure that a system is in place to ensure all HMPPS dog training aids are 'fit for purpose', safe and secure, staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are fully compliant with the HMPPS' dog policy framework. The team will:
- examine the identification, storage, access and cross-contamination of training aids and review local policy and assurance records of the dog unit/team over a period of the last twelve months;
 - consult with members of the dog unit/team and managers to obtain confirmation of policy awareness and compliance;
 - The baselines are not listed in order of importance and all areas are marked equally to obtain the overall assessment.

- 11.9 The recommendations from each visit will be included in a report provided to the dog section manager. Should any critical findings be identified during the process the team will discuss this with the line/unit manager and Head of ORRU or their delegate to identify immediate action to be taken.
- 11.10 A Governor or a PGD may make a request to the Head of ORRU for an interim visit to a dog section, group directorate dog team or establishment dog unit if they have identified concerns about delivery or practice.

12. Tasking and Deployment of HMPPS dogs

- 12.1 HMPPS dogs will be deployed continuously for reasonable periods at the discretion of the handler. This will be dependent on the prevailing conditions at the time with due consideration to the Dogs Welfare, Standard Operating Procedure and Animal Welfare Act. *In broad terms, there are four key areas of capability and full details of their tasking, deployments, roles and responsibilities are contained within the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance document at the following sections.*
- Passive Search – Chapter 9 and 11;
 - Active Search – Chapter 9 and 10;
 - General Purpose – Chapter 8;
 - Advanced Tornado Dogs – Chapter 8.16.
- 12.2 HMPPS dogs may only be deployed to operate in the disciplines for which they hold a current licence issued by NDTSG. For example, search dogs must not be deployed to function as general-purpose dogs as they do not possess the required skills to fulfil the role.

NDTSG & C&R Advanced Tornado Dogs

- 12.3 When using advanced tornado dogs to support incident resolution, Silver Commanders must seek permission from the Gold Commander before deployment.
- 12.4 All operational dog handlers working for NDTSG and advanced tornado dog team handlers (in post after 2nd April 2001), must pass the C&R advanced fitness test to fulfil the requirements of the role. They must achieve the following pass standards:
- Grip test: 35 KGF;
 - M.S.F.T: Level 7.2;
 - Shield Test: 1 minute 30 seconds;
 - Speed/Agility: 30 seconds.

Deployment

- 12.5 All HMPPS dogs must be fit and agile with enough stamina to carry out the operational role. They must be responsive to the commands and body movements of the handler and be able to work confidently both as a single team with its handler or as part of a larger team of dogs without causing issues to the other dogs.
- 12.6 In normal circumstances, no dog should work for more than 12 hours. In operational emergencies, this may be extended to 16 hours. These hours should be taken as the hours that the dog is actually working not the hours which the handler is on duty. Dogs should have at least one day off duty each week. However, under emergency circumstances they may be employed seven days per week. HMPPS dogs should not

work for more than two and a half hours without being stood down, unless under emergency circumstances. All stand down periods will be for a minimum of 30 minutes.

- 12.7 All requests for the use of HMPPS dogs in operations outside of the HMPPS estate, not already covered in existing memoranda of understanding, must be subject to consultation and agreement with the Governor or manager responsible for the requested dog team resource and the Head of ORRU.
- 12.8 All HMPPS dogs may workday or night, although during the hours of darkness some form of artificial lighting must be provided to enable the handler to observe the dog's reactions. All areas where HMPPS dogs will be working must have been risk assessed and safe systems of work must be in place before the dog is used in that area.

Passive Search Dogs

- 12.9 Passive search dogs must only be used to search for items on the person and must not be used to search operational areas. When deployed on search duties, they must work only on a collar and lead or harness, under the direct control of the handler. Contamination prevention procedures must be employed during all operational deployments. More information is in the [Searching Policy Framework](#)

Active Search Dogs

- 12.10 Active Search Dogs must only be used to search for items in operational areas, staff areas and vehicles and must not be used to search a person. When deployed on search duties, handlers may work the dog off the lead. Contamination prevention procedures must be employed during all operational deployments. [More information is in the Searching Policy Framework](#)

General Purpose Dogs

- 12.11 General purpose dogs may be used flexibly and can provide valuable support to staff working under difficult conditions and during incidents. Their primary role is that of deterrence and when working as such judgement should be exercised about how they can be deployed safely and effectively. Governors have discretion to deploy dog teams in support of staff operations; they must always be used alongside staff deemed appropriate to address the situation, and never as a substitute.
- 12.12 During instances outlined above a thorough briefing must take place in advance of deployment, wherever possible. This will allow the dog handler(s) deployed to communicate their level of confidence in the dog(s) ability to deliver the required outcomes. This briefing must include the limits of the handler's responsibilities and the proposed tactics to be employed.

External Perimeter Patrols

More information on external deployment and equipment is included at section 8.13 of the supplementary guidance.

- 12.13 When deploying general purpose dogs on perimeter patrol duties, Governors must ensure that deterrence is the main objective. General purpose dogs must not be routinely used for external perimeter patrol duties as this may reduce the deterrent effect.
- 12.14 Prisons holding exceptional risk category A prisoners must operate external vehicle patrols with dogs when directed to do so by the Director of Long Term and High Security. An external perimeter road must be established to allow complete access around the full external perimeter of the prison. The dog must be kept in the dog cage

and provided regular exercise periods; exercise periods should always be within 50 metres of the vehicle.

- 12.15 In establishments holding category A prisoners, the Governor must agree the deployment of general-purpose dogs to support perimeter security with the PGD via risk assessment. This arrangement must be written into the Local Security Strategy (LSS). The risk assessment must be reviewed where there is a substantive change (i.e. failing of perimeter security systems, building work or breach of perimeter). More instructions on external perimeter checks/patrols can be found in the Conveyance Policy Framework and the Management of Internal Security Procedures PF
- 12.16 Dog managers must provide a brief report to the Head of ORRU on every occasion dogs are deployed in support of staff during incidents; including deployment outside of the perimeter on patrol duties. This is to allow NDTSG to develop insight into operational deployment and employ lessons learnt to inform alterations to the training curriculum.

Explosives Detection Dog/Firearms Detection Dogs

- 12.17 Routine arms or explosive searching can only take place within establishments holding Category A prisoners or as part of a pre-occupation search. All other deployments for this purpose must be requested through the Single Incident Line at NIMU.
- 12.18 All HMPPS explosives detection dogs (EDD) are trained to the National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme (NCTAS) standard. This is a government driven scheme, overseen by the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT). NCTAS has created a national standard of training and accreditation amongst all EDD organisations, leading to a national inter-operable EDD capability.
- 12.19 To achieve NCTAS accreditation all HMPPS EDD teams must demonstrate an ability to successfully complete and conduct the following:
- 100 hours annual training;
 - handler knowledge check;
 - handler competencies;
 - EDD competencies;
 - correct identification of substances during a stand based scent recognition assessment and correct identification of substances during the 4 conventional searches.
- 12.20 The four conventional searches include buildings, vehicles, route and open area. At least one of these searches must have a late hide at least 40 minutes into the search. The handler knowledge check covers, deployment, training kit, contamination and dog welfare.

13. Kennels, Kennelling and Veterinary

More information relating to this section is contained within Chapter 15 of the HMPPS Dog supplementary guidance.

- 13.1 All HMPPS dogs must be kennelled either on or off duty and kennels must be locked at all times, even when empty. Establishments regularly utilising HMPPS dogs must ensure arrangements are in place to provide kennelling and cleaning facilities to support dog operation when on duty. Establishments utilising HMPPS dogs on an occasional basis must provide a secure base of operation including access to water, cleaning and vehicle parking.

- 13.2 Each handler must be supplied with an approved kennel of authorised design in which to house their dog at their home address. Kennels will be procured and placed on suitable bases prior to any dog being housed with a handler.
- 13.3 HMPPS dogs must be subject to professional supervision and properly controlled at all times. This includes off duty kennelling arrangements, which are the responsibility of specialist dog handlers. The following principles must be applied;
- When off duty and at the handler's home, dogs must be secured in an approved kennel of authorised design. The only exception to this is when the dog is being exercised in accordance with the dog policy framework;
 - When off duty elsewhere and an approved kennel of authorised design is not available, HMPPS dogs must be secured in an approved vehicle cage. The only exception to this is when the dog is being exercised in accordance with the policy framework;
 - If, on the recommendation of a veterinary surgeon, the dog is required to be kept indoors for supervision or other reasons, guidance and authority should be sought from the NDI;
 - If a dog is required to be indoors for any other reason, guidance and authority should first be sought from NDI;
 - All queries about these instructions should initially be directed to NDI, who will, if necessary, consult with the Head of ORRU or their delegate.
- 13.4 This guidance relates to both working dogs kennelled in a home environment (e.g. within a kennel at their handler's home) or at a centralised location/establishment.
- 13.5 Line Managers of dog handlers have a responsibility to conduct home visits to check garden security, the kennel and run is being used correctly and is in good condition prior to any dog being housed with a handler. In addition to the initial check further checks must be completed at least annually, when a handler moves home or when other circumstances clearly dictate the need to perform a home visit i.e. receipt of a complaint from a member of the public. A checklist of requirements is available at Annex D.
- 13.6 All dogs left kennelled must be given access to plenty of fresh water and shelter from the elements. Attention must be given to ensure dogs receive sufficient exercise. Dogs must not be left unsupervised for any more than 8 hours (i.e. when the dog is kennelled at home the handler must not be away from the premises more than 8 hours).
- 13.7 Kennels must be kept clean and in good repair. Repairs to damaged kennels can be arranged, however, authorisation must be granted by the dog unit/line manager. Handlers must ensure that they remove any dog fouling from the kennel/run.
- 13.8 Kennels should be kept free of loose hair and dirt and in a clean condition. Walls should be washed/scrubbed with water and detergent to remove dirt and grease and all other areas should be rinsed with a dilute detergent solution and allowed to dry thoroughly. It is not recommended to clean wooden kennels in damp weather as the drying process can be prolonged. Dogs should not be placed in damp kennels.
- 13.9 If the kennel becomes infested with flea or other parasites, more stringent measures may be required. The dog handler or a manager must seek advice from veterinary clinics and/or pest control operatives.

- 13.10 Private kennelling services being used by HMPPS dog handlers must be made aware of the role of the dog. Care must be taken to ensure the kennels are licenced with the local authority and have adequate insurance of the type to cover HMPPS dogs. The kennel owners must be informed of any problem with an individual dog before it is placed in their care and contact numbers should be provided.
- 13.11 Agreement should be made about times that dogs can be brought in or removed from kennels. If possible, provision should be made to allow out of hours access for the handler to remove the dog in the event of a prison emergency.
- 13.12 Dogs must not be removed from private kennels, except by the handler or as authorised by the dog unit/line manager. In the cases of a disciplinary investigation, only the commissioning manager will be able to give permission for a dog to be removed from private kennels.
- 13.13 Staff will be allocated kennelling days equivalent to their annual leave entitlement plus an additional eight days to cover rest days before, during and after block leave. Each member of staff will be allocated this allowance at the beginning of the year. Any kennelling outside of this allocation will need to be applied for and authorised by the responsible functional head. There may be exceptional circumstances where kennelling payment may continue to be made for other reasons, as certified by the Governor/ PGD.

Veterinary Services

- 13.13 Authorisation to attend a veterinary practice must be obtained from the relevant line manager or trainer, who will appraise the severity of injuries or sickness prior to attendance. However, by exception, if the injuries or illness are life threatening/urgent, handlers may attend without prior authorisation and inform a manager or trainer at the first practicable opportunity.
- 13.14 Handlers must ensure that they conform to local surgery guidance and local risk assessment when attending a veterinary surgery. A muzzle should be used for general purpose dogs to protect other attendees if other control measures are not available.
- 13.15 Every effort should be made to use a local practice to the establishment/home of the handler (whichever is most convenient), however emergency treatment may be obtained from another veterinary practice should this become necessary.

14. Transportation

- 14.1 All HMPPS dogs must be transported in a cage designed for the purpose. All cages must have a rear escape route (hatch) Cages will be supplied by the establishment/group directorate and must be suitable for the safe transportation of the dog and be appropriate to the size of the dog. Dog handlers using their own vehicle should ensure that the size of the cage is at least big enough for their dog to stand, sit and lie down in a natural position, and turn around easily.
- 14.2 The welfare of HMPPS dogs is paramount and all dogs in transit must have access to clean fresh water at appropriate intervals.
- 14.3 During transportation of HMPPS dogs, sufficient ventilation should be provided to ensure that the dog does not become too hot. At times when the vehicle is stationary and dogs are located inside, the rear of the vehicle should be opened to provide natural

ventilation for air exchange to occur, provided when the handler has sight of and is close to the vehicle.

- 14.4 If the vehicle is stationary and unsupervised, measures must be taken to ensure that the vehicle is secure, but appropriate ventilation is available for the dogs. Every opportunity should be explored to park the vehicle in the shade. HMPPS dogs must never be left in a vehicle located in direct strong sunshine or high temperatures. Overheating, distress and suffering is likely when the temperature rises above 25°C for more than a few minutes. The temperature inside a vehicle in full sun on a hot day can quickly rise to double the temperature outside, leading rapidly to distress for the animal.
- 14.5 If the vehicle must be left unsupervised, it must be secured, including the rear of the vehicle which must be secured in such a way to prevent accidental or deliberate closure so that natural ventilation occurs. This must be completed using a boot stay/lock ensuring sufficient ventilation is provided to safely leave the vehicle. Additionally, best practice would be to ensure all handlers have access to a cooling mat and jacket for each dog and a temperature alarm should be fitted.
- 14.6 Dogs must be transported in accordance with the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Act 2006 and the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#).

The Road Traffic Act 1988

- 14.7 A person commits an offence if he does not take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which he is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice.