

MDP Dog Unit awarded national accreditation

As the first non-Home Office Police Force to receive this national recognition for dog training, the MDP has been uniquely awarded the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) dog school accreditation for each of its three training centres: at HM Naval Bases in Clyde and Devonport, and MDP headquarters in Wethersfield, Essex. The accreditation was awarded, following a NPCC Police Dog Working Group (PDWG) inspection.

Superintendent Pam Hewitt, Head of MDP Operational Capability Centre, said:

We're really pleased to receive national accreditation for our police dog training school. This involved a great deal of hard work by the Force Dog Officers and training teams, whose personal drive and determination to attain such high recognition has been remarkable.

Assistant Chief Constable Andrea Bishop said:

I'm delighted that our police dog training school has been recognised nationally. Thank you to the Force Dog Officers and everyone involved in the accreditation process.

This is a tremendous accolade for the Force, which highlights the hard work and dedication we put in to training both our dogs and handlers to the highest possible standards.

It seems particularly fitting too that this achievement coincides with our 50th anniversary celebrations, marking the role that our police dogs and handlers have carried out in the MDP throughout the past half century and prior to the formation of the Force in 1971.

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The path to national accreditation

Using the nationally recognised 'Dog Handler Pathway' as a training model, the MDP Dog Unit has developed a bespoke package of training courses. These enhance learning and development opportunities for its staff and ensure the MDP continues to deliver a professional, specialist policing service.

The bespoke courses are aimed at two levels; the 'Team Trainer Pathway', to

train new instructors, and the 'Instructor Pathway', for maintaining the skills of existing training staff. The Team Trainer Pathway comprises of additional qualifications, including a L3 Teaching Qualification, IOSH Risk Assessor, Practical Training Assistant accreditation, and Canine First Aid Qualification. There are also further opportunities to complete distance learning training packages, including Understanding Canine Aggression.

Preparation for achieving accreditation involved a peer review by Avon and Somerset Police, providing the MDP with a benchmark. Engagement with other external partners, including the Dogs Trust Lay Person Scheme, also took place, to ensure excellence in dog welfare provision.

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Louise Crawford, Dogs Trust Animal Welfare Scheme Coordinator, said:

Dogs Trust is delighted to work with the MDP Dog Unit and to welcome it onto the Animal Welfare Scheme in collaboration with local police forces. This is a very positive step forward as it ensures that the five welfare needs* of all their working dogs are being adhered to.

The Dog Unit has considered all aspects of MDP dogs' welfare, both physical and mental, which enables each dog to enjoy their days of service and their retirement. These are exciting times and I look forward to supporting the MDP in the future.

*The five welfare needs of all working dogs relate to: environment, diet, behaviour patterns, housing and protection from pain, suffering injury and disease.

More information:

The MDP has the second largest police dog capability in the UK, with over 200 operational police dogs and handlers across the MOD.

Dog capabilities range from General Purpose Police Dogs, to cash detection dogs with scanning ability, to dogs specially trained to detect explosives, narcotics and firearms. The Force use Tactical Firearms Support dogs, in support of operations, and Arms Explosive Search (AES) dogs also act as a high-profile deterrent, in response to the threat of terrorism.

Find out more about the work of MDP dog teams and [other specialist roles and teams](#).

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Puppy power!

Four puppies – Bria, Bonnie, Cerys and Harri – have recently joined the MDP Dog Unit. Follow #MDP_PoliceDogs, on the Force [Facebook](#) and [Twitter pages](#), for the latest updates on their progress.

Coming soon...

British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) visit the MDP Dog Unit at HM Naval Base Devonport and meet puppy Harri.