



HORSE PURCHASE POLICY

Executive Summary

This policy outlines the official procedures for the acquisition and assessment of horses intended for operational use within the West Midlands Police (WMP) Mounted Unit. It provides a structured, compliant, and flexible framework to ensure that high quality horses are sourced, trialed, and acquired in accordance with national requirements set out by the [College of Policing Mounted Police APP](#), NPCC Mounted Policing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and WMP Chief Constable.

Initially WMP will need to purchase operational police horses and therefore rely on other forces including Gloucestershire and the Metropolitan Police Service for procurement. Thereafter circumstance would dictate the level of training required at purchase therefore maintaining broad access to diverse sources – including both regular suppliers and one-off contributors is essential. Horses donated or offered at no cost will also be considered under this policy and subject to the same procedures and criteria.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

WMP has adopted the [College of Policing Mounted Police APP](#), with supplementary information contained herein, which reflects local practice and the needs of the communities served by WMP.

Scope

The Chief Constable has overall direction and control of WMP and is accountable for all policies and supporting documents of the organisation and its actions. Adherence to this force policy will be expected from all police officers and staff involved in the purchasing and assessment of horses.

Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Ensure a continuous intake of horses suitable for operational policing duties
- Establish a fair, consistent and transparent process for trialling, vetting, and purchasing horses
- Enable thorough evaluation of each horse's potential before financial commitment
- Ensure compliance with all relevant WMP procurement and welfare standards

Definitions/Acronyms

APP	Authorised Professional Practice
HH	Hands High
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
MTE	Mounted Training Unit
MU	Mounted Unit
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
SA	Suitability Assessment
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
WMP	West Midlands Police



Policy Statements

1. ACQUISITION AND TRIAL PROCEDURE

1.1 The following sequential process must be followed for all horse acquisitions:

1.2 Horse (s) offered to WMP

1.2.1 Initial contact to be made with potential supplier or donor.

1.2.2 Approved providers should be used where possible.

1.2 Suitability Assessment (SA)

1.2.1 Horse viewing to be conducted by two people who are ideally National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) trained officers, intermediate riders, or horse trainers to assess suitability to be trialed.

1.2.2 Should circumstance arise where this is not possible, the circumstance, rationale and risk assessment must be documented.

1.2.3 If the horse is successful at suitability assessment stage and accepted to trial where the horse will have an electronic police record for the 2-to-6-week period, the rationale and circumstance of the viewing / SA should be recorded within the WMP horse online management system against the horse's profile.

1.2.4 Minimum requirement of those conducting the assessment will include a dynamic risk assessment of the situation, with those present only performing activities with which they are comfortable.

1.2.5 The SA may be halted at any time at the discretion of either party if felt unsafe or unsuitable to continue.

1.2.6 It is to be made clear that until confirmation in writing is received by the seller from WMP of intention to purchase the horse, which must be on conclusion of a successful assessment and trial period, that there is no commitment from WMP to purchase the horse, and the assessment or trial may be halted at any time at the discretion of WMP if circumstances arise.

1.3 Agreement on Terms

1.3.1 Price and trial period terms to be agreed with owner.

1.3.2 Price is subject to the horse passing the pre-trial requirements and trial assessment period without issue.



- 1.3.3 Should the horse display any negative behaviours or health issues that are determined to be of an undisclosed, pre-existing nature, WMP have the right to terminate the trial prior to the agreed timeline.
- 1.3.4 Bloods will be taken at vetting; these will be kept for 6 months by the practice conducting the vetting. If adverse behaviour or health issues arise after purchase, the bloods may be tested to determine if there are any medications / identifiable issues present at time of purchase that were not disclosed.
- 1.3.5 Any adverse behaviours, health issues or blood results that are determined to be pre-existing where the owner should, could or would have known at the time of trial or purchase will be passed to WMP legal team for consideration and progression.

1.4 **Pre-Trial Requirements**

- 1.4.1 Five-stage veterinary assessment with bloods and a clear / negative strangle test.
- 1.4.2 Both vetting and strangles testing will be at the cost of the purchaser (WMP).
- 1.4.3 If a recent five-stage vetting certificate is available, it may be accepted.
- 1.4.4 Where possible, release of patient history with any vet that has attended the horse.
- 1.4.5 Additional X-rays or other diagnostic tests on a case-by-case basis if deemed required and authorised by the Mounted Unit (MU) Chief Inspector.
- 1.4.6 Horses must be strangles-tested before arrival at WMP MU, a clear guttural pouch wash is required to maintain closed herd status.

1.5 **Trial Commencement**

- 1.5.1 Horse arrives at designated trial location and begins a trial (2-6 weeks*).
- 1.5.2 *Horses should be of a standard commensurate with that of a general riding horse of reasonable fitness working 5 days a week on a consistent basis. If this is not the case, the trial period may be revised in consultation with the owner to allow for completion of the assessment in line with the individual horse's ability, aptitude, and adaptability.
- 1.5.3 Horses on trial will not be used for policing purposes. This includes operational duties and lessons for officers; however, they will be assessed in their approach and attitude towards meeting new sights, sounds and negotiating obstacles to ensure they have the natural confidence and trainability required for the role.



- 1.5.4 Horses are required to arrive sound, in good health and preferably recently shod, along with their passport showing up to date equine flu and tetanus vaccinations. (First 2 sets of injections as minimum requirement).

1.6 **Assessment Completion**

- 1.6.1 The horse will be assessed on behaviour, adaptability, and performance against the basic criteria for a police horse outlined in Appendix C of the SOP – Initial Assessment Checklist and Appendix D Criteria to allow a (Remount) Police Horse on the public highway.
- 1.6.2 The trial must be documented via the WMP online horse management system and supervised by the MU Equine Manager in consultation with the MU Inspector.
- 1.6.3 If illness or injury prevents full assessment, the trial may be extended by mutual agreement.
- 1.6.4 In case of health issues during trial, the owner will be consulted before veterinary care is provided unless emergency treatment is necessary as per [WMP Horse Indemnity - Agreement of Trial.docx](#)
- 1.6.5 A recommendation will be made by the Equine Manager to the MU Inspector and MU Chief Inspector based on the trial results. If approved, the purchase will proceed.
- 1.6.6 If a horse is found unsuitable during the trial, it will be returned to the owner within 7 days of a decision. This will be documented on the [WMP Horse Indemnity - Agreement of Trial.docx](#)

1.7 **Final Decision**

- 1.7.1 The MU Chief Inspector, upon recommendation from the MU Equine Manager and in consultation with the MU Inspector, will determine whether to proceed with the purchase.
- 1.7.2 All records including health, behaviour and training will be reviewed as part of the process to ensure a balanced and reasoned recommendation is put forward.

1.8 **Payment Terms**

- 1.8.1 The purchase price agreed at the time of viewing will be honoured unless renegotiated during the trial.
- 1.8.2 Consultation must take place with the Operations Finance Business Partner and a purchase order will be raised as per policy.
- 1.8.3 An invoice must be completed and submitted by the MU Equine Manager.
- 1.8.4 The payment must be authorised by the MU Chief Inspector or Contracts and Procurement.



1.9 Purchase Completion

- 1.9.1 Once purchased, the horse's passport must be changed to reflect ownership in accordance with current legislation and timelines set out by the relevant governing body.
- 1.9.2 In England, this is currently 30 days and is governed by UK national regulations, specifically the [Equine Identification Regulations 2018](#).
- 1.9.3 Quarantine period must be a minimum of 21 days.
- 1.9.4 Operations / Force Insurance Team must be informed of all purchases so that any required changes can be made.
- 1.9.5 Operations Finance Partners must be informed of all purchases so the assets on the force balance sheet can be amended accordingly.

2. HORSE SELECTION CRITERIA

- 2.1 When evaluating a horse for suitability, the following characteristics must be considered:
 - Age: Between 4-9 years preferred
 - Height: Minimum of 16hh, preferably 16.3hh and above
 - Gender: Geldings or mares
 - Colour: Any: preference will be given to solid colours for horses likely to be used in frequent ceremonial duties
 - Breed Type: Medium to heavy build, draft type horses preferred
 - General health and physical condition
 - Physically well-proportioned, with good feet and conformation capable of weight bearing duties
 - Bold, calm, steady and trainable temperament
 - Non-reactive to traffic
 - Schooled to a level commensurate with its age
 - Capable of being ridden confidently by a range of officers once trained
 - The horse's passport must be inspected at the time of viewing
 - The horse must be microchipped

3. HORSE INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

- 3.1 Prior to the commencement of the trial, a [WMP Horse Indemnity – Agreement of Trial Form](#) must be signed by both the owner and the designated WMP representative. This agreement details the responsibilities of both parties during the trial period.



Relevant Legislation / Policies / Procedural Guidance

- [College of Policing APP](#)
- [Equine Identification Regulations 2018](#)
- [WMP Horse Indemnity – Agreement of Trial](#)
- NPCC Mounted Policing Standard Operating Procedure - available on request from EU Manager

Equality Impact Assessment

WMP places trust in their employees to comply with force policies and to work in accordance with and in support of:

- [WMP Vision and Values](#)
- [Code of Ethics | College of Policing](#)
- [Voice of the Child](#)

	What impact has this policy had on the nine protected characteristics in relation to the three general duties? (If applicable)	How will this updated policy positively impact each of the nine protected characteristics in relation to the three general duties? If not, explain why it will not.
Age (including children and young persons)	No impact	N/A
Disability	No impact	N/A
Gender Reassignment	No impact	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity	No impact	N/A
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No impact	N/A
Race	No impact	N/A
Religion or Belief	No impact	N/A
Sex	No impact	N/A
Sexual Orientation	No impact	N/A

Publication Instructions

Suitable for publication to public.



Document Control

Strategic Lead: <i>[role and name]</i>	Chief Superintendent [REDACTED] Head of Operations
Policy Author(s): <i>[role and name]</i>	Chief Inspector [REDACTED] Chief Inspector Operations
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FET Lead: <i>[role and name]</i>	ACC O'Hara [REDACTED] Assistant Chief Constable - Operations
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Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the Strategic Lead.

All policies are subject to a formal consultation process which encompasses Legal, Professional Standards, Faith Groups, Trade Unions, Independent Advisory Groups and wider force groups and any other relevant parties. A record of consultation can be found on the Policy Portal.

It is responsibility of the Strategic Lead to ensure that all links within the policy are correct and accessible.

Amendment History:

Version Number:	Effective Date:	Summary of Amendments:	Author:
1.0	30.12.2025	New Policy	C.I. [REDACTED]