EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

5th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Surrey Police fight dog theft forensically

28 July 2022



Surrey Police are turning to DNA technology to tackle dog thefts in the county.

Wednesday 27th July **Surrey Police** officially launched its partnership with **DNA Protected**, a UK-wide dog DNA database service designed to deter theft and help ensure a stolen dog's safe return to its owner.

Over the past two years there has been a national increase in demand for dogs and puppies as we all spent a lot more time at home during the pandemic. Unfortunately, this demand also created a gap in the market for dog thieves and illegal breeders.

DNA Protected is a service from **Cellmark Forensic Services**, who hope that their innovative technology and partnership with police forces across the UK will be a game-changer when it comes to the prevention and investigation of dog thefts.

Much like a property register database, DNA Protected securely stores a profile of your dog's unique DNA, produced from a simple mouth swab, on the forensic database. Police forces across the country can swab a dog they believe to be stolen and send the sample off for analysis and comparison against the database.

Like ours, a dog's DNA cannot be changed or removed. If the swab comes back with a match, it can be used to reunite you with your beloved pet and provide valuable evidence in dog theft investigations.

Wildlife Crime Officer, **PC Hollie Iribar**, said, "Surrey Police are excited to support this unique opportunity to get ahead of the game when it comes to tackling dog thefts. These investigations are complex and can be emotionally fraught. We often see and feel that a dog clearly has a connection with its owner but trying to put that to paper and prove it beyond doubt in a courtroom is challenging. Our hope is that our partnership with DNA Protected will help us prove beyond dispute who the rightful owner of a stolen dog is, so we can focus our attention on prosecuting those responsible."

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, **Ellie Vesey-Thompson**, said, "Over the last year we have heard from Surrey residents who are worried about dog theft and recognise the deep emotional impact that this crime has on individuals in our communities. In many cases, dogs feel like part of the family, and I understand how distressing it can be when they are stolen.

"Working to ensure that our residents across Surrey are safe and feel safe in our communities is a key priority of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan and supporting those concerned about dog theft is important to us.

"That's why we welcome this new partnership with Surrey Police. Not only will this provide a powerful deterrent to those involved in these thefts, but it will also give residents who sign up to the scheme more peace of mind that if they are a victim of a dog theft there is a much better chance of them being reunited with their dog."

David Hartshorne, Managing Director at Cellmark Forensic Services said, "We developed the DNA Protected service with the police to assist with crime prevention and to help reunite stolen or lost dogs with their owners. The powerful forensic DNA tools we use to identify people and investigate crime are now being used to help combat dog theft."

Dog owners can purchase a sampling kit by visiting the DNA Protected website at https://www.dnaprotected.co.uk/. The payment is a one-off fee which includes the cost of DNA profiling, storage of your dog's profile on the database for at least ten years, and a dog tag and window sticker to let people know that your dog is on the forensic database. The site also sells branded collars, leads, and other accessories to show you have DNA protected your dog.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY