Canine-9-9: UK police set up dog DNA database
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"As a force we are committed to doing all that we can to prevent dog thefts from happening."

Under the scheme, known as DNA Protected, a swab of the dog's DNA is taken from its mouth and stored on an external database accessible to police around the country to establish whether a dog is lost or stolen.

Owners can provide samples from their pets by buying a £74.99 ($105, 88-euro) mouth swab kit before submitting it for storage. An advertising drive is also being planned.

All of the force's service dogs have been profiled, said MacDonald.

Chris Allen, head of forensic services at Gloucestershire Police, said: "DNA is unique and a fact that has enabled forensic services to identify criminals for many years.

"With the application of the same processes used for human identification, the DNA Protected service promises a searchable database of canine DNA information."

Gloucestershire police and crime commissioner Chris Nelson called dog theft "one of the most distasteful elements of lockdown".

"We have to adopt whatever means we can to stop this shocking trade and hopefully advances in science will help," he added.

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