

**MINUTES OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**

**HELD REMOTELY**

**ON 13th OCTOBER 2021**

**Present:** Ms Jean Munton - Chair, Independent Custody Visitor (JM)

Mr David Binding – Vice Chair Independent Custody Visitor (DB)

Ms Lesley Ball – Independent Custody Visitor (LB)

Mr Richard Holland – Independent Custody Visitor (RH)

Mrs Lisa Langley – Independent Custody Visitor (LL)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

Mrs Ceri Davis - Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

Inspector Roland Giles – Custody Newport (RG)

Karen Jones – Diversion Hub Manager (KJ)

***The meeting commenced at 6:05 p.m.***

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Chief Inspector Huw Jones, Custody Lead Nurse Louise Price and Michael Hallinan. |  |
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| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.  **Action updates**  Action 3 update - RG advised that Newport Custody was due to reopen following refurbishment at the beginning of December and there were no further plans to close Ystrad Mynach Custody.  Action 3 update - RG informed us that no decision had been made regarding the consideration of a partial collaboration with South Wales Police to detain Gwent Police detainees. RG to update at next meeting.  Action 3 update – RG advised that the St Giles Trust were able to provide peer support mentors for detainees under the age of 25 who had been involved with drug related crimes. A request to fund two peer support mentors would be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner. An update on progress would be provided at the next meeting.  Action 3 update – RG advised the E Safety pilot which was an electronic system used to record nearer misses within custody was still ongoing, but the Force were experiencing technical difficulties with extracting the data, however, submission of near misses was still being recorded.  Action 3 update - It was agreed by all to combine the refresher training for existing ICV’s with the training of the new recruits.  Action 4 – RG confirmed that the ICV poster was being displayed in Ystrad Mynach custody unit. | **RG**  **RG** |
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| **3.** | **Diversion Scheme Briefing** |  |
|  | KJ introduced herself as the Manager for the Diversionary Scheme Hub and gave a presentation on the Diversionary Scheme. CD to circulate presentation to all visitors.  The aim of the Diversionary Scheme Hub was to provide eligible offenders (usually those who have committed a low-level offence) with the support and guidance they need to keep them out of the criminal justice system.  KJ informed us that there were various service providers that sit within the Diversionary Hub including the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS), Women’s Pathfinder and 18-25 service.  We noted that the diversionary scheme was part of the two-tier model approach being taken in custody in relation to out of court disposals which was in line with the National Police Chief Councils Out of Court Disposal Strategy. Rather than the six disposal options that used to be available there are now only the following two:   * Community Resolutions * Conditional Cautions. (Simple Cautions are still being used for domestic violence offences only as we do not yet have a suitable disposal/diversion for these offences).   More information was also provided on the Women’s Pathfinder service which was involved with women in custody who had been detained following a low-level offence.  An adult out of court disposal (OOCD) would be given to offenders who had been involved with low level crimes. A case worker would conduct cell visits to identify detainees who met the criteria to receive diversionary services, a referral would then be made, and service support would be provided.  If detainees consented to engage with the diversionary scheme or the support service offered and did so within the specified time, their attendance at court for their initial offence would not be required.  We agreed that the presentation had been useful and provided us with a broader understanding of the work being undertaken to support people who enter custody and to try and deter them from a life of crime. | **CD** |
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| **4.** | **Custody Update** |  |
|  | RG informed us that the refurbishment of Ystrad Mynach custody suite was now complete and back in operation. The refurbishment consisted of an upgraded CCTV system installed throughout the unit, CCTV cell coverage had been increased and new lighting had been installed.  RG advised that Newport custody had closed for refurbishment which should be completed by December 2021. The refurbishment would see new beds, new lighting, new toilet flushes, new cell doors and an additional toilet for members of the public such as Solicitors and Independent Custody Visitors (ICV’s). There would also be an upgrade to Life Sign which is a monitoring system used to monitor detainee heartbeats when in the cells.  RG informed us that there would be two dedicated officers each weekend to transport detainees from the Newport and Monmouthshire area to Ystrad Mynach custody during the duration of the closure of Newport custody. This system would enable other officers to remain on patrol.  RG informed us that eight new Custody Detention Officers (CDOs) had been recruited and were due to start in January 2022. Their posts would commence in February 2022 once their training had been completed. This would see the number of CDOs increase to ten per shift.  RG advised us that following the Custody Sergeants course, an additional four Custody Sergeants had been recruited, with another course due to take place in the coming months where a further two Custody Sergeants were to be recruited. This would then see five Custody Sergeants on each shift.  RG advised us that ten PCs was due be trained to conduct jailer duties, this would improve resilience.  RG advised that CDO refresher training was also due to take place.  RG informed us that the Samaritans charity had recommenced their visits to the unit one day a week and contact details for the Samaritans would be displayed in all cells within Newport and Ysra Mynach custody units.  RG informed us there had been thirty-two adverse incidents recorded in custody over the past three months, which were largely due to detainees presenting at custody as unfit, mainly due to drug consumption and then then the detainees had deteriorated whilst in custody. A risk assessment conducted by the Custody Sergeant and an assessment by the Custody Nurse would inform the decision to triage the detainee to hospital. Some adverse incidents recorded were due to detainees self-harming whilst in the cell which were dealt with rapidly. The incident data is monitored on a weekly basis to identify any themes or lessons for learning.    RG informed us that the custody nurse continued to work with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to establish a suitable waiting room for detainees to utilise whilst under observation whiles in A&E.  RG advised that the introduction to custody of the tier two system as mentioned in the presentation on the diversionary scheme was a significant change to the way they had previously worked. This resulted in cautions no longer be given out, but a conditional caution given on the basis that all the conditions were met. The condition could be paying compensation, a diversionary course or an apology to their victim. If the conditions of the caution were not obeyed, then attendance at court would be necessary.  RG informed us that the protocol put in place for solicitors attending custody during Covid 19 had been rescinded and all solicitors are required to attend custody in person unless the detainee had presented as having covid 19 or Covid 19 symptoms.  RG advised us that all CDOs would be issued with a personal mobile phone. This would enable cell check data to be updated immediately. The mobile phones would also have a built-in walkie talkie radio system to allow urgent communication with other staff members.  RG advised us that Covid 19 continues to be an issue resulting in staff isolation.  RG informed us that the wellbeing plan for custody staff was now operational with regular visits and meetings with the welfare team and there was an upcoming Burn Out and Resilience course being rolled out for staff to attend.  LB advised us that there had been a notable difference in staff morale in the custody unit since the staffing issues had been addressed. |  |
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| **5.** | **Scheme Update and Performance Framework Update** |  |
|  | NW thanked the visitors for their continued support and for resuming face to face visits.  NW advised us that Bonnie Harris had left the scheme and had passed on her thanks and best wishes to the other scheme members.  NW informed us that there were seven visitors on the scheme with six currently undertaking visits and the remaining visitor awaiting an induction which would be carried out in the coming weeks.  NW advised that the shortlisting of ICV applicants would be taking place this week.  NW informed the scheme that since face to face visits had resumed the number of detainees accepting visits had increased significantly.  NW advised us that thirteen visits had taken place over the past three months with two missed visits. One visit had been overlooked and one visit had not been carried out due to the delay in the transfer from Newport Custody to using Ystrad Custody suite only.  NW asked visitors if they felt Covid safe whilst visiting Custody. All visitors confirmed they had no issues and felt safe with the personal protection equipment provided.  NW informed us that an enquiry had been made into the possibility of redesigning the visit report forms to enable additional space for comments. NW advised the possibility to redesign would be explored.  NW confirmed that the number of near misses in custody were being recorded but there had been technical difficulties extracting the data. This was under review.  We were advised that should a visitor be approached by a member of the media and asked to comment on an investigation, a no comment answer should be given and the OPCC should be informed immediately.  NW informed us that refresher training would be combined with the training of the new recruits following completion of the recruitment process and the Custody training Sergeant would be invited to give an input.  NW asked if all visitors had received the ICVA weekly updates and advised that ten Straight to Bitesize training videos were available to view on the Independent Custody Visiting Association website.  NW asked all visitors to ensure their ID cards were kept in date and that any vetting renewal forms that were sent out by the OPCC were returned in a timely manner. | **NW** |
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| **6.** | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  | It was requested that visitors who would prefer to attend the next meeting in person at Gwent Police Headquarters should notify CD via email prior to the meeting date. | All Visitors |
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| **7.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **6pm, on the 19th January 2022.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 7:05pm**

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| **Actions from Meeting dated 13th October 2021** | |  |  |  |
| **Minute Number** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Update** | **Complete/Ongoing** |
| **2.** | RG advised that the St Giles Trust had agreed to provide peer support mentors for detainees under the age of 25 who had been involved with drug related crimes. A request for the peer support mentors would be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner for the provision of two peer support workers within the custody. Update to be given at next meeting. | **RG** |  |  |
| **3.** | The Manger for the Diversionary Scheme Hub gave a presentation on the Diversionary Scheme. CD to circulate presentation to all visitors. | **CD** |  |  |
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