

**DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2015-078**

**OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS  
HELD AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG, CWMBRAN  
ON 13<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2015**

Present:

Mr Brian Thomas (Acting Chair)  
Mr Arthur Elliott  
Mr Eric Smith  
Mr Brian Williams  
Mr John Thomas

Also in attendance:

Mr Paul Harris (Deputy PCC)  
Mrs Siân Curley (Scheme Manager)  
Ms Maria Chapman (Scheme Administrator)

Apologies were received from:

Mr Justin Johnstone (Chair)  
Mr Anthony Angell  
Ms Jessica Tippins

***The meeting commenced at 3.15 p.m. after the ICVA training was completed.***

1.	<b><u>DEPUTY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE</u></b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1.1	<p>The Deputy Police and crime Commissioner updated the group on the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That the election of the Conservatives in May made it likely that the role of Police and Crime Commissioners would remain in place for a minimum of the next two elections.</li><li>• The Home Office had launched a consultation on the funding formula for the police service.</li><li>• The Force had seen significant changes to its operating model instigated by reduced budgets. There were 2 Local Policing Areas, both of which were in line with county borough boundaries. East was Newport and Monmouthshire and the West was Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen.</li><li>• 2 Superintendents were in charge of the 2 Local Policing Areas.</li><li>• The Force had significantly reduced supervisory ranks with a view to keeping Officers on the frontline.</li><li>• Inspectors had been put in charge of the 10 neighbourhood policing areas.</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service demand had been mapped and informed intelligent deployment of Officers at the times of greatest need.</li> <li>• Your Voice, the Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meeting replacement, had asked 12,000 residents what their local policing priorities were.</li> <li>• Victim satisfaction and public satisfaction with Gwent Police had increased substantially.</li> <li>• It was noted that Gwent Police</li> <li>• PCC was very supportive of local volunteers who wished to help the Police Force and / or the Office of the PCC.</li> <li>• Custody Detention Officers were now booking offenders into the custody suite which should help to release the Custody Sergeant to engage with Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs). It was noted by ICVs that sometimes there is a delay of up to half an hour before they can be shown around the cells.</li> </ul>	
1.2	<p>AE raised the issue of Military Police returning from Germany and suggested that they might be a suitable resource for future Officer recruitment.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> DPCC agreed to mention it to the Force</p>	DPCC
1.3	<p>AE also queried the percentage use of out of court disposals (cautions and restorative justice) against the traditional court hearing / criminal justice route.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> To see if these performance figures are available</p>	MC
1.4	<p>It was noted there was no custody representation at the meeting. It was identified that there had been a change of personnel and the circulation list had not been updated.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> To update circulation list.</p>	JT
2.	<b><u>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015</u></b>	
2.1	Minutes of 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2015 were agreed to be an accurate recording.	
2.2	<p>Matters arising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mr Brian Thomas to be marked on the Minutes as the Acting Chair when he deputised for the Mr Johnstone.</li> <li>2. Custody Suite in Newport had been contacted over the state of the waiting office that ICVs used – with a noticed improvement.</li> <li>3. Some concerns were raised that ICVs were being let into the custody suite but then kept for up to half an hour to access the custody cells.</li> <li>4. ICVs requested that Custody staff be reminded that ICVS</li> </ol>	

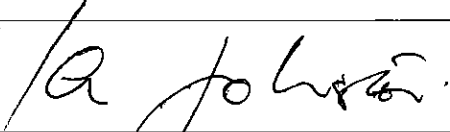
	<p>have the right of access to custody records.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Matters 3 &amp; 4 to be brought to the Custody Inspector's attention</p>	<b>MC</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>SCHEME UPDATE</u></b>	
3.1	<p>MC updated the ICVs on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Ivy Forkin had retired</li> <li>• Ms Julie Morgan was likely to resume duties in the Autumn</li> <li>• New recruits were to be interviewed and to be in place in the Autumn 2015.</li> <li>• 2 dates for ICV visits had not been made. Mr Smith confirmed that one had been missed due to a communication error and another by mistake.</li> <li>• It was agreed that ICVs would send their forms in by pre-paid envelopes.</li> <li>• That all raised estate issues had been rectified.</li> <li>• Reiterated that custody records need to be accessed and that it was recorded on the reporting form.</li> <li>• ICVs were requested to print their forms as the handwriting was sometimes difficult to read.</li> </ul>	
3.2	<p>It was noted that That the Gwent ICV Scheme handbook had been updated to include the following:</p> <p><i>"Custody Visitors can serve a maximum of two terms (six years) to ensure the Custody Visiting Scheme retains its independence. However, they are welcome to reapply following a three year break. The PCC reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to extend a period of appointment (with the individual's agreement) beyond the six year term. This may be done to retain particular skills within the scheme or to provide continuity."</i></p> <p>This policy approach has been recognised as best practice to ensure that Custody Visiting Schemes remain independent and provide opportunities for on-going professional development.</p>	
3.3	<p>The Performance Framework highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custody visits tended to be made at similar times and usually in the morning – which is seen to be regular pattern of visiting. ICVs were requested to mix up their visiting times to prevent routine visiting.</li> <li>• It had been noted that no visits took place on weekends. This needed to be rectified.</li> <li>• The number of custody records requested highlighted that only a small percentage of custody visitors are</li> </ul>	

	<p>accessing the custody records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of custody issues that were referred to the OPCC remains very low which highlights good working practice between the force and ICVs.</li> <li>• There were a few data sets that the force are working on to collect the performance data in Qlikview</li> <li>• There were areas of performance that the ICVs were not recording. It was identified that the forms did not prompt the required observations / notations. It was agreed to look at other ICV Schemes' recording methods with a view to revising the Gwent Scheme's methods. AE and ES volunteered to help.</li> <li>• ICVs requested that any new forms record whether detainees are asleep or their visit is refused. The performance framework would also need to be amended to reflect the difference.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To research other ICV Scheme report forms with a view to updating the Gwent reporting forms.</li> <li>ii. To update the ICV performance matrix to capture refused visits and detainees asleep as separate categories.</li> </ol>	<p>MC</p> <p>MC</p>
3.4	The Scheme Update provided a summary of the Home Office Report on Deaths in Custody 2014/15.	
3.5	<p>The Scheme update provided a summary of the Dorset PCC audit into the 'use of force' by Dorset Police. This raised a query regarding the current monitoring and oversight mechanisms in Gwent Police Force.</p> <p><b>ACTION: To request a report from Gwent Custody Inspectors on the monitoring and oversight of 'use of force' in the Gwent police custody suites and observations on how this data could be captured for the ICV Scheme performance framework.</b></p>	MC
4.	<p>The next meeting would be held in Conference Room 1, Police HQ at <b>3pm, 30th November 2015.</b></p> <p><b>*Following this meeting, the date for the next meeting had to be re-scheduled. The next meeting will now take place on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 at 3pm in Conference Room 1, Police HQ.</b></p>	

**Ian Johnston QPM, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**

I have monitored the Independent Custody Scheme minutes as per my statutory responsibility under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and am satisfied with progress.

Signed



Date

12.12.15

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Background papers	None

