



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING
SCHEME
HELD REMOTELY
ON 18TH JUNE 2020**

Present: Ms Jean Munton (Chair)
Mr Michael Hallinan (MH)
Miss Bonnie Harris (BH)
Mr David Binding (DB)
Ms Lesley Ball (LB)
Ms Ruth Coulthard (RC)
Mr Richard Holland (RH)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)
Mrs Ceri Davis - Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)
Chief Inspector Huw Jones - Custody (HJ)
Inspector Owen Jones - Custody (OJ)

The meeting commenced at 2:05 p.m.

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	Apologies	
	No apologies for absence were received.	
2.	Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings	
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
	We noted that all actions had been completed.	

	<p>NW informed the visitors that due to the risks posed by Covid 19 she had not asked members of the Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme to assist in the training of custody officers about the ICV scheme but visitors would be invited to attend the next round of training should the restrictions be lifted.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Custody Update</p>	
	<p>HJ advised us that work was planned to take place at both Ystrad Mynach and Newport custody units, but it had been put on hold due to Covid 19. When work resumed, it was expected that work at Ystrad Mynach would be carried out first and it would be closed for three months, following that, the Newport suite would be closed for approximately three months.</p> <p>Whilst Ystrad Mynach was closed all detainees and staff would go to Newport and whilst Newport was closed all detainees and staff would go to Ystrad Mynach. We would be informed once a new date has been agreed.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic, staffing levels within both custody suites had remained good enabling them to run at full capacity.</p> <p>JM informed us that she was impressed with the way custody were responding to Covid 19 and the measures that had been implemented were very impressive.</p> <p>As face to face visits had ceased due to the risks posed by Covid 19 an alternative telephone monitoring process had been trialled by the Chair and Vice Chair. The detainee was able to speak privately to the visitor on the phone in order for the visitor to check on their welfare and to make sure they had received their rights and entitlements. This change in process ensured the safety of the visitors and anyone they would have come into contact with inside the custody suite by eradicating the risk.</p> <p>There had been some initial communication issues with the telephone calls, which resulted in a delay to the calls being taken by detainees. The main custody phone lines had been busy, and some custody staff were not familiar with the new process. HJ advised us that the Sergeants had been reminded of the process and informed the visitors that the most efficient number to call custody would be via the switchboard.</p> <p>OJ confirmed that the only reason for a visit to be declined would be due to risk of safety to visitors or staff and this the same procedure should be adhered to with the new process and it was important for the visitor to relay that at the time of the call/visit. This procedure would be reiterated to all Sergeants by the Inspectors.</p>	<p>HJ</p>

	<p>HJ provided a summary of the protection measures that had been put in place within custody in regard to Covid 19.</p> <p>HJ informed the visitors that to date, no custody staff had contracted Covid 19 but some had needed to self-isolate.</p> <p>HJ advised there had been no real concerns regarding the attendance of solicitors or appropriate adults to the custody suites. The majority of solicitors used the telephone and virtual links had been installed in the interview rooms to enable a solicitor presence if required. Although some appropriate adults from service providers were initially reluctant to attend prior to protective measures being put into place, there were minimal issues if they were family members.</p>	
4.	Scheme Update	
	<p>NW kept the visitors up to date with the progress of the new monitoring arrangements and with a comprehensive weekly custody update from HJ.</p> <p>NW thanked JM and DB for undertaking the trial of the alternative telephone monitoring process.</p> <p>NW advised us that Gwent Police had been recognised by the Gwent Law Society for the safety measures that have been put in place within custody. NW to send DB confirmation of this so this can be fed back to the National Expert Forum.</p> <p>The alternative telephone monitoring process was circulated prior to the meeting for comment and although it was acknowledged that face to face visits would be the preferred method, it was agreed that under the current circumstances we would continue with alternative method.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair would continue the trial for a further two weeks to ensure the process ran smoothly and following that the scheme would be extended to the other visitors.</p> <p>NW asked visitors to email JM to confirm their availability in order for JM to produce a new rota which would be sent to CD.</p> <p>NW to forward a copy of the rota to HJ.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NW</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NW</p>

5.	AOB	
	None.	
6.	Date of Next Meeting	
	The next meeting will be held at 6pm, on the 24th September 2020 in Conference Room 1 at Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog.	

Meeting concluded at 3:11pm