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Comisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddu Gwent | Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent:  
**Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD**



The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DF

11<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Dear Home Secretary,

### **HMICFRS and HMIP Unannounced Joint Inspection of Gwent Police Custody**

As required by statute, I am writing to you with my comments on the unannounced joint HMICFRS and HMIP inspection of Gwent police custody suites that took place between 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome this report which reflects the progress made by Gwent Police since the last inspection in 2012. During their visits, Inspectors looked at key areas including strategy, treatment and conditions, individual rights and health care.

I am pleased to see that HMICFRS and HMIP concluded that overall it was a 'positive report' for Gwent Police and highlighted that:

- They were pleased to find that the majority of detainees in police custody were treated with respect and consideration, and were held safely in good conditions;
- The collation and extraction of data from force information systems was better than they normally find elsewhere, and performance was well understood;
- That significant progress had been made with regards to health provision and that detainees received a sound and reliable health care service; and
- That detainees held in police custody in Gwent are treated decently.

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg, a phan ddaw i law, byddwn yn ateb yn y Gymraeg – ni fydd hyn yn gohirio ein hymateb. Os hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg o hyn ymlaen, neu os ydych wedi cael eich gwahodd i gyfweiliad neu gyfarfod ac yr hoffech ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg, anfonwch e-bost at: [Commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk). Darperir gwasanaethau cyfieithu.*

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and where received, we will reply in Welsh - this will not delay our response. If you wish to receive correspondence in Welsh hereafter or if you have been invited to an interview or meeting and you wish to use Welsh, send email to: [Commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Commissioner@gwent.pnn.police.uk). Translation services will be provided.

I acknowledge that the Inspectors also identified some areas for improvement within their report; providing recommendations on how Gwent Police can further increase standards across its custody suites. This includes:

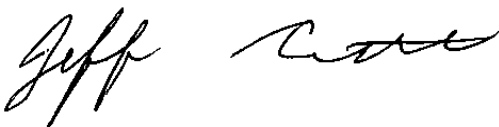
- Improving the quality of custody records;
- Strengthening its joint working with local authority partners to ensure that children charged and refused bail were always looked after properly; and
- Raising the standard of risk assessments for detainees before their release.

I welcome this report and can confirm that some of the areas outlined for improvement were rectified immediately following the inspection. Ensuring the safety of detainees, police officers and staff working in our custody units is of paramount importance. We have invested significantly in improving our custody suites in Gwent to prevent harm and create a safe modern environment for all. This includes the installation of CCTV and life-sign monitoring in all cells to monitor the movement and breathing of detainees. I do however acknowledge that there is always room for improvement and as such I will be working with Gwent Police to ensure we improve against the highlighted areas so that we can continue to enhance safety in our custody suites, especially for the vulnerable people we often deal with.

As part of my role I am also responsible for running the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Gwent, which involves specially trained volunteers making unannounced visits to police custody units to check on the welfare of detainees and the facilities they are held in. These volunteers will also be able to assist in monitoring progress against the highlighted areas of the inspection report as part of their unannounced weekly inspections and quarterly meetings with my office. Quarterly reports are also submitted by my office to the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) where any areas of concern can be raised and discussed at a regional/national level. I was pleased to welcome the Chief Executive of ICVA, Katie Kempen, to Gwent also in July, where she had the opportunity to visit the newly refurbished custody suite in Newport. An article was subsequently produced by Katie following this visit and is detailed here for your information: <https://custodyvisiting.wordpress.com/2017/07/10/walking-the-job-in-gwent/>

I am confident that Gwent Police is in a good position and will continue to build further on this in the future in line with the report's recommendations. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the officers and staff who work in our custody suites for their efforts; they have difficult jobs to do in often challenging circumstances.

Yours sincerely



**Jeff Cuthbert B.Sc., MCIPD**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**

Cc: Wendy Williams, HMI  
Julian Williams, Chief Constable