



**MINUTES OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**  
**HELD REMOTELY AND PARTLY IN PERSON IN HAWTHORNE MEETING**  
**ROOM,**  
**POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2022**

**Present:** Ms Jean Munton - Chair, Independent Custody Visitor (JM)  
Mr David Binding – Vice Chair Independent Custody Visitor (DB)  
Mr Richard Holland – Independent Custody Visitor (RH)  
Ms Jackie McAndrew – Independent Custody Visitor (JM)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)  
Mrs Ceri Davis - Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)  
Inspector Roland Giles – Custody Newport (RG)

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

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Michael Hallinan, Marilyn Rankin, Lesley Ball, Linda Mason, Lisa Langley, Custody Nurse Louise Price, Chief Inspector Huw Jones and Custody Inspector Nikki Hughes.	
2.	<b>Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings</b>	
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
3.	<b>Chair and Vice Chair Nominations</b>	

	<p>Visitors provided their nominations by email prior to the meeting and as a result the current Chair and Vice Chair were voted to remain for another year.</p> <p>Both JM and DB accepted the nomination to remain in the roles.</p> <p>NW thanked them for their hard work over the last year.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Custody Update</b>	
	<p>JM advised us that a visit had been attempted at the Newport custody unit this week, but the unit was closed. RG apologised for not informing the OPCC of the pre-planned closure, the unit had been closed for two days to carry out serv.</p> <p>RG advised us that if there were difficulties for family members, acting as AAs, travelling to a custody unit, officers would assist in transporting them to the unit or? continue to contact Social Services Services to avoid the juvenile being detained overnight.</p> <p>RG clarified the items that could be given to detainees for distraction purposes including items such as cross word books, Sudoku books, colouring books, foam footballs and stress balls. Distraction boxes were only given to detainees who would benefit from them and provided once a risk assessment had been carried out. A plastic ball had been withdrawn after an issue was raised that it could be used as a weapon if thrown at the officers.</p> <p>JM asked if an update was available on the pilot scheme in Newport regarding safe accommodation for children detained in custody. RG informed us that there were no further pilots in place at the present.</p> <p>NW advised us that the issue with obtaining secure accommodation for juvenile detainees was a national issue and not solely an issue for Gwent which was the responsibility of the local authorities.</p> <p>RG informed us that there were no longer issues with obtaining ambient and hot food, but this was being monitored to ensure orders received were correct, as there had been an issue with food received with a short shelf life.</p> <p>RG informed us that the food suppliers' contract was due for renewal next year and a meeting had been planned to discuss the requirements of the next contracts to improve the choice of food available.</p> <p>RG advised us that Covid had caused some staffing issues and there was only one member of staff working from home at present. However, both custody units have remained open during this time as resilience has been provided by the Local Policing Area and the newly trained Sergeants.</p> <p>RG informed us there were four officers on the Custody Detention Officer (CDO) training course. Following completion of the training, one CDO</p>	

	<p>would be operational immediately to fill a vacancy and three would provide resilience.</p> <p>RG advised us the staffing level of Sergeants was up to establishment level. There were thirty-eight CDOs with an establishment of forty and two additional CDOs had recently been recruited.</p> <p>RG advised there were officers in reserve who would be undertaking their training in the coming months.</p> <p>RG informed us the new Custody Inspector was now in post. Inspector Nikki Hughes would be overseeing the Ystrad Mynach custody unit and Inspector Roland Giles would cover the Newport unit.</p> <p>RG advised us that Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) Reviews and PACE Custody Authorities would no longer be conducted by Response Inspectors and would be carried out by the Custody Inspectors; this should see an improved quality in the custody reviews. This will also allow more time for the Response Inspectors to cover demand on the streets and to deal with high risks incidents.</p> <p>RG informed us that an issue had been raised by another force and shared with Gwent regarding the plimsole shoes provided to detainees. There had been an incident where a detainee had self-harmed and caused a ligature with the string from the plimsole. A meeting took place between the Inspector and the plimsole manufacturers to discuss this issue and the manufacturer has provided assurance that the plimsoles were the best and there are no alternatives to them. The manufacturer advised these incidents were rare and there had only been three incidents in the past eight years where a detainee had self-harmed with them. RG advised that different shoes were being sourced to provide an alternative.</p> <p>RG advised us that waiting times for detainees being booked in following arrival were being monitored daily and had been good.</p> <p>NW advised us a visit was carried out at Ystrad Mynach unit and it was extremely busy, therefore the visitors prioritised visiting juveniles, the vulnerable and female detainees and took the decision not to visit the rest of the detainees to give the officers the space required to carry on with their duties. NW asked if there were issues with staffing as the ICVs had not encountered this level of busyness in the unit before. RG advised this was due to Newport custody being closed and the demand was diverted to Ystrad Mynach. Newport had subsequently reopened so demand was split over the two units and the pressure reduced.</p> <p>ICVs had attended just outside the handover period, and it was still going on and asked what times the handover period was in order to avoid these times. RG advised that it would be helpful if visits were not conducted during 6pm -- 6:45pm whilst the shift handover would be taking place.</p>	
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	<p>RG informed us that a monthly report provided by Hafal the Adult Services provider detailing their performance had not been provided for some time and this had been followed up by the Force.</p> <p>RG advised there had still been issues with Social Services attending the unit during the night to safeguard juveniles, they only attended if the juvenile was being interviewed at night. This meant juveniles were kept in custody for longer periods than required. During the day the Youth Offending Services would attend. This has been raised and there are issues with staff levels in Social Services. The Deputy Chief Constable has also raised the issue at a higher level.</p> <p>RG informed us an Autistic male who was transitioning to a female had carried out a 24-hour cell visit for charity and provided feedback to the officers. It was very successful experience and beneficial to all involved and she would like to have an input in the Autism and Transgender training. A meeting has taken place with the training Sergeant to discuss feedback and involvement.</p> <p>RG advised us that the Force Open Day had been successful and over five hundred children had their fingerprints taken at the custody stall, tried on the handcuffs and had a look around the fake prison cell.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Scheme Update &amp; Performance Framework Update</b>	
	<p>NW advised us that there were nine custody visitors on the scheme and thanked the visitors for their continued support.</p> <p>NW advised us that Lesley Ball's tenure would sadly be coming to an end in the coming months. Her support has been gratefully received for a number of years. NW and the scheme members wished her well for the future.</p> <p>NW advised us that the number of visits had increased in the last quarter, twenty-six visits had been scheduled and twenty-two visits had taken place. One missed visit was due to unforeseen circumstances, another due to illness, one was due to a water issue at Newport custody and there was a final visit report form still outstanding. There had been a wide spread of days and times that visits had been carried out.</p> <p>NW thanked JM for collating the rota and for stepping in to cover visits at short notice to ensure visits weren't missed.</p> <p>NW asked visitors to submit visit forms as soon as possible so they could be monitored and to ensure she was able to complete the quarterly statistical information for the Independent Custody Visiting Association.</p> <p>NW asked visitors to look at the rota in advance, if visitors were aware they would be on holiday or unable to make a visit that they were scheduled for, to please liaise with other visitors as soon as possible to attempt to arrange cover for the scheduled visit. If visitors were unsuccessful in arranging this,</p>	

	<p>to notify the Chair/OPCC as soon as possible in order to allow the Chair/OPCC adequate time to assist them in trying to organise cover.</p> <p>NW advised us that she had become aware that the Custody staff had offered a drink to the ICV's while they were waiting for the visit to commence and as a result some ICV's were expecting drinks.</p> <p>NW advised that under the Gifts and Hospitality policy visitors should not be requesting or accepting drinks, food or gifts from the force. Although a one-off hot or cold drink would not be an issue during extreme weather. ICVs are independent of the force, and this could be perceived as bribery if it was a regular occurrence. NW requested that report forms were as legible as possible for recording purposes. NW advised us that it had been suggested that the checklist was taken off the end of the visitors report form and a copy kept in the folder within custody.</p> <p>NW asked visitors to email her if they had any further suggestions for improving the visitor form and she would amend it where appropriate.</p> <p>A discussion was held regarding the use electronic report forms. NW informed us that an electronic report form would be considered in the future.</p> <p>NW advised us that an issue had been raised where a detainee claimed to have been assaulted whilst in custody. The OPCC followed this up and the Force advised the detainee had a pre-existing injury and was taken to hospital for an x-ray. There was no significant injury, and the detainee was seen by the Force Health Care Practitioner upon return from hospital. The detainee had been provided with the opportunity to make a complaint whilst in custody but refused and was then provided with the details of the online complaints procedure prior to leaving custody.</p> <p>NW asked for an update the level of Near Misses (organisational failure or gross negligence to detainees or staff) in custody. RG informed us that Near Misses were being recorded on a Be Safe Portal for investigation or review. There had been issues obtaining the data due to the complexity of the system.</p> <p>RG advised us that adverse incidents were reviewed weekly. An adverse incident was a detainee that had arrived in custody intoxicated, with a head injury or self-harming in the cell or who become unwell whilst in custody. RG to include an update on adverse incidents in the custody update at the next panel meeting.</p> <p>NW informed us that the number of detainees accepting a visit had increased from 48% in April to 79% in June.</p> <p>NW advised us there had been minimal delays in accessing custody in the last quarter and sixteen visits had been granted within five minutes.</p>	<p><b>RG</b></p>
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	<p>NW asked the visitors to watch the bitesize training resource contained within the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) newsletter in relation to transgender.</p> <p>It was requested that the Autistic male who was transitioning to a female and carried out a 24-hour cell visit in Newport Custody for charity attend our refresher training session to give an input about her stay in custody.</p> <p>NW asked visitors to ensure their ID Cards were kept up to date. NW confirmed that the Warrant Cards Department was now located in the new Headquarters.</p> <p>NW informed the visitors that we were currently Code Compliant with regards to Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and working towards achieving Silver Compliance level.</p> <p>NW thanked JM for attending the Force Open day with the OPCC Engagement Team and distributing leaflets promoting the ICV Scheme, which forms part of achieving Silver Compliance.</p> <p>Visitors asked what they could do to assist with achieving Silver Compliance and NW advised us that visitors supporting her with ICV input at CDO/Sgt Training, attending engagement events, obtaining detainees' ethnicity, age and gender was assisting with working towards achieving Silver Compliance.</p> <p>NW agreed to circulate the list of upcoming OPCC engagement events and future Custody training dates that were due to take place over the coming months, should any ICVs wish to attend.</p> <p>NW advised us that the next CDO training course was planned for September and to let her know if any visitors would be interested in attending and provide an input.</p> <p>NW informed us that the Custody Training Sergeant would be attending the Visitors' refresher training day.</p> <p>A discussion was held regarding the ICVs obtaining the detainee age, ethnicity and gender information. As this information was obtained and held by the force and it was suggested that the information could be obtained directly from the force, as opposed to the ICVs obtaining it from the detainees.</p> <p>NW informed us that this information had been requested by the Home Office and the visit report forms had been revised to include this data. During an online Q and A session, the ICVA advised there was an element of independence by the ICV obtaining the information from the detainees as opposed to obtaining it from the force. Also having this data recorded on our Performance Framework allowed us to identify any trends.</p>	<p><b>NW</b></p> <p><b>NW</b></p>
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	<p>Some ICVs were not comfortable requesting the information and NW advised them to ask the officers for the information but to use their own judgement to determine if the information provided was correct before recording it. NW advised us that the ICVA had been advised about ICVs reservations in asking for this information and the ICVA would be circulating correspondence for ICVs use to advise on the best way to ask these questions.</p> <p>DB sits on the Force Scrutiny Panel and informed us that they were looking at this in depth, and confirmed the definition of the ethnicity groups had been set by the Home Office.</p> <p>DB suggested it would be beneficial if we received a presentation from the Scrutiny Panel at the end of the year on what they are doing and how they were doing it. DB to speak to Laurence Carrington regarding a presentation to the panel.</p> <p>JM asked if there had been any issues with the Anti Rip clothing provided to detainees whilst in custody.</p> <p>RG informed us that there had been sporadic issues, after being washed several times, the garments became threadbare. The laundry company were not the suppliers of the garments and therefore only washed them and did not inspect them. There are companies that could check the garment and replace them, when necessary, but the force don't have that contract in place. The Inspector and custody staff check the garments as part of their daily tasks along with the bedding and towels to ensure they are fit for purpose.</p>	<b>DB/NW</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	No other business was discussed.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	The next meeting will be held at <b>6pm, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022.</b>	

**Meeting concluded at 7:20pm**


Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with my code of conduct.

Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signed



Date

**06/09/2022**

Contact Officer	
Name	Nicola Warren
Position	Governance Officer
Telephone	
Email	Nicola.Warren:Gwent.Police.uk
Background papers	





