



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING
SCHEME
HELD REMOTELY
ON 6TH OCTOBER 2020**

Present: Ms Jean Munton - Chair, Independent Custody Visitor (JM)
 Mr David Binding – Vice Chair Independent Custody Visitor (DB)
 Miss Bonnie Harris – Independent Custody Visitor (BH)
 Ms Lesley Ball – Independent Custody Visitor (LB)

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 Roland Giles – Custody Newport (RG)
 Inspector Steven O'Brien – Custody Ystrad Mynach (SO)

The meeting commenced at 18:08 p.m.

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	Apologies	
	Apologies for absence were received from Mr Richard Holland and Mr Michael Hallinan.	
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.	

3.	Custody Update	
	<p>HJ advised the visitors that there had been some staffing changes within the Custody management team including two new Inspectors and a Lead Nurse. CD to invite the new Lead Nurse to our next meeting. HJ introduced Inspector Giles who was stationed at the Newport custody suite and Inspector O'Brien who was stationed at the Ystrad Mynach custody suite.</p> <p>HJ advised us that the planned work due to take place at both Ystrad Mynach and Newport custody units was still on hold due to Covid 19. When work resumed, it was expected that work at Ystrad Mynach would be carried out first, so it would be closed for three months, following that, the Newport suite would be closed for approximately three months. Whilst Ystrad Mynach was closed, all detainees and staff would go to Newport and vice versa when Newport was closed. We would be informed once a new date for the work had been agreed.</p> <p>HJ advised us that there was a review being undertaken of the current operating model for custody, but it was still in its infancy. He would provide us with further details nearer completion.</p> <p>HJ thanked the visitors for persevering with the change in the visiting process.</p> <p>LB informed us that she felt the telephone visits were going well and they were a good alternative for face to face visits in the current situation with the Covid 19 pandemic but not as a permanent replacement.</p> <p>NW informed the visitors that other Force areas had also had a low uptake in the number detainees participating in the telephone visits but was hopeful that once the process had been embedded the numbers would increase.</p> <p>NW reiterated that there needed to be an element of flexibility when visitors were expecting a call from Custody in order to conduct the phone visit but there was also an expectation that the Custody Officer should call to communicate a new time if it was not possible for the call to take place at the agreed time.</p> <p>HJ informed us that new processes had been put in place as a result of local area lockdowns due to Covid 19. This resulted in Ystrad Mynach custody being split into two separate areas and detainees only being accepted from the Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent areas.</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>HJ</p>

	<p>This was to ensure detainees were not mixing and to protect risk of the virus spreading to other areas. Newport custody had also been split in to three separate areas to accommodate Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport detainees.</p> <p>HJ advised us there had been no concerns regarding the attendance of Appropriate Adults and that Solicitors were still using remote access. All detainees were permitted to sign their custody record to consent to receive services from a Solicitor or AA remotely.</p> <p>HJ informed us that a court process could be held remotely (Virtual Remand Hearing) if a detainee had Covid 19 or was symptomatic and had been remanded for court.</p> <p>SO informed the visitors that there was a Track and Trace procedure in place within custody for any visitors entering custody.</p>	
4.	Scheme Update	
	<p>NW advised us there were currently eight visitors on the scheme and four of the visitors were conducting telephone visits.</p> <p>NW informed the visitors that the number of detainees in custody from July to September 2019 was very much the same as the numbers for the same period in 2020, however fewer detainees were accepting a visit due to the change in process.</p> <p>To encourage further uptake in telephone visits NW advised us that a poster had been designed explaining the role of an Independent Custody Visitor which was to be displayed within custody. CD to distribute the poster with the minutes.</p> <p>It was suggested a smaller version of the poster be handed out to all detainees as part of their rights and entitlements. NW to contact OPCC engagement team to arrange.</p> <p>NW informed us that HJ had provided an updated list of phone numbers for ICVs to use when conducting telephone visits. CD to distribute the list and the new Inspectors details to all ICV members.</p> <p>NW advised us that a scoping exercise to reintroduce face to face visits had been undertaken in readiness for when the local lockdown restrictions were lifted. We agreed to run a dual process of face to face and telephone visits as there was an even split in terms of preference.</p> <p>NW asked the visitors to let her know if they would be interested in being involved the ICV element of custody training once restrictions had been lifted.</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>NW</p> <p>CD</p>

	<p>NW informed us that the recruitment process had been put on hold due to Covid 19 and there were two candidates still awaiting interview. Due to the local lockdown, the recruitment process and training would have to take place online in the coming months.</p> <p>A discussion was held relating to the advertising of the ICV role and in order to encourage a wider audience during the Covid 19 pandemic, HJ agreed to contact the Deputy Head of Corporate Communications department and request they link in with the OPCC Engagement team to arrange an ICV recruitment drive with the use of social media and the Police and Crime Commissioner's weekly newsletter.</p>	HJ
5.	Alternative Monitoring Process	
	<p>NW advised that the telephone visits were not a replacement for face to face visits but a good alternative in the current situation. They were working well and although there was a low detainee uptake. If a call was accepted by the detainee, the call could be taken in a private location which maintained an element of independence. NW was hopeful that numbers accepting a call would increase following the launch of the ICV poster and distribution of the ICV leaflet.</p> <p>HJ advised the visitors he was happy to be contacted should they have any queries.</p>	
6.	National Expert Forum	
	<p>DB explained the National Expert Forum (NEF) was a national forum that all police forces within the UK were registered to. The board met quarterly to discuss shared work and projects, to seek practical advice, to raise trends and discuss issues that needed to be addressed nationally. DB was the Welsh regional representative. DB confirmed there was a mixed approach across Forces, some visits were being conducted face to face, but the majority were by virtual means. Gwent were not an outlier in the low uptake of telephone visits, this was an issue across the board.</p> <p>NW informed us that the OPCC reported good working practices and required improvements to the NEF via the NEF representative to the Independent Custody Visiting Association.</p>	
7.	Near Misses	
	<p>NW queried why the number of near misses a dangerous occurrence which did not result in an injury or damage to property, but clearly could have done) recorded had reduced in the last few months. There were 7 recorded in June, 5 in July and 3 in August 2020.</p>	

	<p>HJ advised the visitors that the number of near misses within custody had reduced recently due to being more pragmatic with the recording of them.</p> <p>NW asked what lessons were learnt as a result of near misses. HJ informed us that all near miss forms were completed daily by the Sergeant and recorded for improvement purposes and included within the Force custody training programme.</p>	
8.	Performance Framework	
	<p>We received an update on the performance framework for our information.</p> <p>NW advised us that there had been a good spread of visit times and days over the past three months although there were a few missed calls. NW reminded visitors to inform the Chair if they were not able to make the scheduled calls.</p> <p>NW reminded visitors that visit forms should be submitted as soon as possible and that there were still a number of outstanding forms to be sent in.</p> <p>Once outstanding visit forms had been received, CD to distribute updated Performance Framework spreadsheet to all visitors.</p>	CD
9.	Any Other Business	
	<p>HJ thanked visitors for their flexibility around the new visiting process which was only expected to be short term but had turned out to be much longer.</p>	
10.	Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>The next meeting will be held at 6pm, on the 21st January 2021 in Conference Room 1 at Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog.</p>	

Meeting concluded at 19:22pm

Actions from Meeting dated 6th October 2020

Minute Number	Action	Owner	Update	Complete/Ongoing
3	HJ advised the visitors that there had been some staffing changes within the Custody management team including two new Inspectors and a Lead Nurse. CD to invite the new Lead Nurse to our next meeting. HJ introduced Inspector Giles who was stationed at the Newport custody suite and Inspector O'Brien who was stationed at the Ystrad Mynach custody suite.	CD	The Lead Nurse has been invited to our next meeting.	Complete
3	HJ advised us that there was a review being undertaken of the current operating model for custody, but it was still in its infancy. He would provide us with further details nearer completion.	HJ		
4	To encourage further uptake in telephone visits NW advised us that a poster had been designed explaining the role of an Independent Custody Visitor which was to be displayed within custody. CD to distribute the poster with the minutes.	CD	Poster circulated to all with the minutes.	Complete
4	It was suggested a smaller version of the poster be handed out to all detainees as part of their rights and entitlements. NW to contact OPCC engagement team to arrange.	NW	Posters and leaflets dropped off at Custody 06.01.2021 for distribution.	Complete

4	NW informed us that HJ had provided an updated list of phone numbers for ICVs to use when conducting telephone visits. CD to distribute the list and the new Inspectors details to all ICV members.	CD	New Inspector details along with updated contact numbers have been circulated.	Complete
4	A discussion was held relating to the advertising of the ICV role and in order to encourage a wider audience during the Covid 19 pandemic, HJ agreed to contact the Deputy Head of Corporate Communications department and request they link in with the OPCC Engagement team to arrange an ICV recruitment drive with the use of social media and the Police and Crime Commissioner's weekly newsletter.	HJ		
8	Once outstanding visit forms had been received, CD to distribute updated Performance Framework spreadsheet to all visitors.	CD	Performance framework spreadsheet updated and recirculated to all visitors.	Complete

