

DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2019-009



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS
HELD AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG, CWMBRAN
ON 06th DECEMBER 2018**

Present: Mr Justin Johnstone (Chair)
Ms Jean Munton
Mr Jeffery Seabourne
Ms Lesley Ball
Mr David Binding
Mr Richard Holland

Also in attendance:

Miss Jessica Tippins (Scheme Administrator)
Mrs Ceri Davis (Assistant Scheme Administrator)
Inspector Stefan Williams (Custody Inspector)

The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

1. Apologies were received from Ms Ruth Coulthard, Ms Sarah Allan, Mr Michael Hallinan

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6TH SEPTEMBER 2018

2. The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record. Referring to the action on page 1, JT confirmed that the entry on page 5 had now been inserted into the handbook.

JT confirmed she was still awaiting an update in regards to the virtual reality technology, as the custody package had not yet been completed. Once this was available, an invite would be sent out to all ICV's.

JT

JT confirmed she would be having a meeting with Gwent Police to discuss training for all front desk staff in order to ensure they are aware of the roles of ICV's and that they are to be given immediate access. JT agreed to give an update at the next meeting.

JT

JT confirmed that all the recommendations made in regards to the 'Detainee Dignity' briefing have now been addressed and resolved.

We were made aware that the OPCC review was now complete and the new structure was in place. JT agreed to send out an electronic version to all ICV's. The ICV Scheme Administrator would now sit with the Governance Officer from 1st January 2019. This individual would be at the next meeting in March. Overall management of the scheme had also changed and now sat with the Head of Assurance and Compliance. The Administrative Assistance would continue as the Assistant Scheme Administrator. The Chair welcomed the new Assistant Scheme Administrator to the meeting.

JT

CUSTODY UPDATE

3. Staffing Update

Inspector Williams (SW) provided the custody update. SW informed the group that Windsor Lewis had joined the custody team as a temporary Inspector. He also advised that two Sergeants had gone on to be temporary Inspectors, which had caused staffing issues throughout the summer period. It was hoped this would be rectified with the six new Sergeants who were in the process of being trained.

SW advised that three additional Sergeant roles had been created in the unit. This included a Strategic Sergeant whose duties included assisting with staffing, in particular rotas, which had been reassigned to the unit from the rotas department.

The second role was that of a Bail and Investigator Sergeant, who supported in areas such as domestic violence investigation, managing changes in the bail act and managing digital files.

The third role was a Training Sergeant, who was due to start in the new year. This was to be collaborative on an all Wales basis.

SW advised that recruitment for CDO's was continuing. The Chair (JJ) asked if there was any ICV training confirmed in the new CDO training. JT confirmed she would speak to the Strategic Sergeant to confirm.

JT

Estates

SW confirmed that Ystrad Mynach Custody Suite would be opening full time from 7th January 2019. It would also be open for key weekends in December. JT queried with SW that two visitors had attended Ystrad Mynach today to do an Inspection as it was scheduled to be open, but

the unit was closed. SW informed us that it was only open as a tail end of an operation not as a key weekend.

This operation therefore finished early. JT asked if Custody was to be closed early that the OPCC be informed in order to cancel any planned visits.

We were made aware that a CCTV upgrade in Ystrad Mynach was awaiting sign off.

ICVs were informed that the opening of Ystrad Mynach custody was expected to potentially result in an uplift in arrests overall. This is because previously officers may have used voluntary attendance or discretion (particularly in areas quite a distance from the Newport suite), many may now choose to arrest and process.

One ICV queried the medical provision at both units once Ystrad Mynach reopened. SW confirmed that there would be a Nurse at each unit on a 24/7 basis.

SW informed that Newport Central had recently completed a full-unannounced fire evacuation involving the custody unit, which went extremely well. There were roughly 16 – 20 detainees in custody at the time.

Performance

SW provided the following custody statistics:

- Arrests were down slightly on the previous months.
- Average time spent in custody was longer due to a change in the National Guidance, which advised the use of bail. This has now changed and so more investigation is taking place whilst detainees are in custody.
- Average time was 13.34 hours within the last month.
- Average waiting time was shorter at just over 17 minutes.
- We were informed that the average time from when rights were given, to when fingerprints and photos were taken was now shorter.
- Observations for level 3 had dropped from 55 last month to 39 this month.
- Observations for level 4 had dropped from 34 last month to 28 this month.
- Arrests had gone down from the previous month.
- Arrest for Domestic Violence alone in June were 165, in July 256, 263 in August, 193 in September, 210 in October and 293 in November

It was thought the increase in domestic violence arrests was due to targeted work by Gwent Police. These investigations were very lengthy with many implications.

SW advised that time spent in custody was likely to be longer, not because staff were not doing their job but because staff were doing their job.

SCHEME UPDATE

4. Gwent Police had requested all ICVs sign a Confidentiality Agreement due to the new GDPR regulations in place. This asked ICVs to agree not to share any information that may be seen / heard whilst within the units. Various issues were raised by the group regarding the wording on the form. It was agreed that all would have the form to review and inform JT of any comments so she could get amendments made.

**ALL/
JT**

JT verified that there were now nine active members on the scheme as Anthony Angell had left. She confirmed a letter of thanks for his service had been sent on behalf of the group.

ICV's confirmed that receiving the weekly ICVA's bulletins were useful and would like to continue receiving them.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE

5. JT informed the group that out of the ten scheduled visits over the last quarter, only seven were completed; three were missed due to a visitor not being able to attend.

There had been a great improvement in visit times; however, they were still largely in the AM period. A wide spread of days was positive, but visitors were asked to still vary between afternoon and evening visits. Two weekend visits was noted as an improvement on the last quarter.

JT confirmed no major issues raised.

JT informed there was a low detainee acceptance rate last quarter but no refusals, which indicated that detainees were not available, e.g. were in interview etc.

JT re-iterated that if a detainee was seen with no issues were raised and ICVs were happy with the visit then there was no need to check the custody record.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6. The rota for 2019 was being completed by the Chair and would be sent out shortly.

JJ

JT asked ICVs whether they felt with the opening of Ystrad Mynach, a recruitment drive was require. It was agreed by all to see how visiting with nine ICVs goes and discuss again at the next meeting in March.

JT advised that ICVA had released a lot of training packages around 15 topics in all. We agreed for JT to distribute the list of packages and arrange a training day in February in which all will be covered.

JT

One ICV queried when the proposed changes to PACE were planning to come into effect. JT confirmed she would find this out.

JT

A discussion was held around the two failed visits due to access not being given. SW informed us that this was due to critical staffing levels and a near miss, which then resulted in a safety issue. It was noted that this was not communicated back to the ICVs at the time. The second failed visit was due to the computer systems being down which then created a large backlog. It was agreed that communication via the custody suite desk and Newport Central front desk needs to be improved.

JT confirmed she would raise the breakdown of communication with the Newport Central front desk staff to the ICV's with the Inspector.

JT

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The next meeting will be held at 6pm, on the 7th March 2019 in Conference Room 1 at Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesycellog.

Meeting concluded at 7:25pm

Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

I have monitored the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Minutes and am satisfied with progress.

Signed



Date

5/2/19

Contact Officer

Name

Jessica Tippins

Position

Engagement Officer

Telephone

01633 642200

Email

Jessica.Tippins@gwent.pnn.police.uk

Background papers

None