

**OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING  
SCHEME  
HELD REMOTELY  
ON 14<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**

**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)  
Mr Michael Hallinan – Independent Custody Visitor (MH)  
Mr Richard Holland – Independent Custody Visitor (RH)  
Mrs Lisa Langley – Independent Custody Visitor (LL)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)  
Mrs Ceri Davis - Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)  
Inspector Roland Giles – Custody Newport (RG)  
Ms Louise Price – Custody Lead Nurse (LP)

***The meeting commenced at 6:08 p.m.***

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies for absence were received from Chief Inspector Huw Jones and Roger Kerley.	

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>Custody Update</b>	
	<p>RG advised us that the staffing levels had not changed and there remained to be staff shortages. There was not always a custody Nurse present in both custody units due to staff shortages. Staff would be informed at which unit the Nurse would be present should detainees require medical attention.</p> <p>RG informed us that there are two upcoming Sergeants courses scheduled for the Autumn which would increase the staffing resilience.</p> <p>RG advised us that there was a pilot in place until September which would see Newport, Torfaen and Monmouthshire detainees taken to Newport custody and Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly detainees taken to Ystrad Mynach custody. This would assist with staffing levels in order to meet increased demand in Newport.</p> <p>RG informed us that the Newport unit would close on 13th September 2021 for refurbishment and it was scheduled to reopen in December 2021. During this time Newport staff would be transferred to the Ystrad Mynach unit. Both units would be operating during the Christmas period.</p> <p>RG advised us that the Ystrad custody unit was scheduled to close for refurbishment in January or February 2022, RG to advise on actual date once available. During which time custody staff from Ystrad would work from the Newport custody unit.</p> <p>RG informed us that the Ystrad Mynach unit would be undergoing an upgrade on the current CCTV cameras which would include additional CCTV cameras being fitted, this would increase the number of CCTV cameras in the unit from four to eight. This would assist when utilising the unit for all Gwent detainees.</p> <p>RG advised us that consideration was still being given to a partial collaboration with South Wales Police within the new policing model. This would result in all Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly North detainees attending the Merthyr Custody unit and being processed by South Wales staff. An update would be provided at the following meeting.</p> <p>LP advised us that when there is one custody nurse to cover both units, the custody nurse triages and prioritises the required location between both units. LP informed us that the officers are informed of the location of the nurse.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>RG</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>RG</b></p>

Detainees requiring medical attention would be transported to the unit where the nurse was present but normally the nurse would travel between both units.

JM questioned who would carry out the Covid procedures on new detainees when the nurse was not present. LP informed us that it would be carried out by the Custody Detention Officers (CDOs).

MH asked for clarity on the reason for reduced staffing levels within the custody unit, was this due to the Covid pandemic.

RG informed us that reduced staffing levels were not only within custody but Force wide. Custody staff reductions had not been affected by the Covid pandemic, but vacancies had arisen as a result of the Sergeant promotions process and CDOs transferring to other positions. Should it be decided that some detainees would be transferred to Merthyr Custody, this would determine the staffing requirements within Gwent, as a reduced number of CDOs would be required.

RG informed us that a three-month Pilot was now in place following negotiations with Social Services and Children's Services for securing a bed provision when children had been remanded after charge. A placement in a Residential Care Home in Newport had now be secured. This would only be utilised for non-secure detainees. A non-secure detainee would be children who did not present as a risk to the community and had never failed to attend court. Therefore, there would be no control on the child at the accommodation and they could leave at any time. Staff would then report the child as missing person. A meeting was scheduled in the coming weeks to review the pilot.

RG advised us that in order to obtain secure accommodation in the South Wales area a request was made via Social Services and the provision was almost always unavailable which would then result in the detainee remaining in custody overnight until their court attendance.

NW advised us that the shortage of secure bed provision was a wider issue and not just an issue in Gwent and that this was the responsibility of the Local Authorities and not the Force to provide the accommodation. The issue was being progressed by the OPCC with Welsh Government.

NW asked if all solicitors were attending in person, particularly for juveniles and vulnerable detainees. RG informed us that since the change of protocol in that Solicitors should attend the custody unit in person, not all Solicitors participated initially but attendance had improved. Following attendance at the National Custody meeting, RG confirmed that this was not dissimilar to other Forces.

RG confirmed that the Appropriate Adults (AAs) continue to attend the custody unit as per the requirement within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).


	<p>RG advised us that the Disparity and Scrutiny Panel commenced in May 2021 to review disparity in relation to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic detainees. The panel would be reviewing custody records at their next meeting.</p> <p>RG informed us that a three-month Revolving Door pilot was due to commence within Custody to provide additional diversion support for male adults over the age of twenty-five years of age. Diversion provision was already in place for females and eighteen to twenty-five-year olds.</p> <p>A discussion was held on the process of the Revolving Door Pilot. RG advised us that a conditional caution would mean the detainee would be advised to participate on the appropriate diversion scheme or rehabilitation course, victim awareness course or victim compensation within a specified period. If completed the detainee would then receive a caution, if not complied with the detainee would be referred to court. We agreed it would be beneficial for the Head of the Diversion team to be invited to the meeting to provide a summary of the work undertaken.</p> <p>RG informed us that Peer Support workers would be joining the Diversion Team. Peer Support workers had been through the Criminal Justice system and would visit the detainees in the cells and court to offer support, but this is in the early stages. Update to be given at the next meeting.</p> <p>RG advised us that the Youth Offending Service would be distributing letters and leaflets to AAs and children prior to voluntary attendance at custody informing the process, their rights and the role of the AA.</p> <p>RG informed us there had been minor problems with the E Safety pilot that was implemented to record the data for near misses within custody. A new pilot would commence next month to record near misses. Update to be given at next meeting.</p>	<p><b>CD</b></p> <p><b>RG</b></p> <p><b>RG</b></p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Scheme Update and Performance Framework Update</b>	
	<p>NW informed us that Ruth Coulthard and Jeff Seabourne had resigned from the scheme and a letter of appreciation had been sent from the Commissioner's Office to both Jeff and Ruth on behalf of the scheme for their valued support during their time on the scheme.</p> <p>NW introduced Lisa Langley as a new visitor to the scheme. Lisa had undertaken the training induction and a date was to be arranged for Roger to undertake the induction process in due course.</p> <p>NW informed us that there were currently seven visitors on the scheme.</p> <p>NW advised us six visitors had confirmed they were happy to commence face to face visiting.</p>	

	<p>NW suggested that rather than following a dual visiting model of face to face visits and telephone visits, visits could be alternated to each unit as opposed to both units visited every week, at least until further volunteers had been recruited as the majority of scheme members had indicated a preference of face to face visits as it was more engaging. NW informed us a that recruitment process would be commence shortly.</p> <p>In order to assist with recruitment and training of new recruits. NW proposed an extension of tenure for visitors whose tenure was due to end in 2022. NW to request confirmation of agreement to extend tenure by email.</p> <p>NW informed us that refresher training would be organised. NW to email possible dates.</p> <p>NW suggested that LL attended her visits for a two-month period with the Chair or Vice Chair while she was familiarising herself with the process.</p> <p>RG informed us that following the Government's announcement in relation to changes to Covid procedures, processes within custody would not be affected and would remain unchanged</p> <p>NW advised us that the Risk Assessment Operating Policy should be read, and confirmation received by NW before face to face visits could be undertaken. Once all confirmations had been received JM could then collate an updated visiting rota for face to face visits to commence.</p> <p>NW informed us that over the past quarter the majority of telephone visits were carried out within the daytime and asked that visits are spread out throughout the day, evenings and weekends.</p> <p>NW requested for all visit report forms to be submitted as soon as possible in order to assist with collation of the statistics for the Independent Custody Visiting Association and with the identification of any recurring issues during the visits. CD to follow up on any outstanding report forms.</p> <p>NW informed us that five minor issues had been reported during the visits which were dealt with immediately at the time by the Custody Sergeant, with six issues reported to the OPCC for follow up and satisfactory Force responses were obtained.</p> <p>NW asked if the ICV posters were on display in custody and RG informed us that the ICV posters were being displayed within custody in Newport and he would ensure they were displayed in the Ystrad unit.</p> <p>NW advised us that the data for near misses had not been collated for June and there were no near misses recorded in April and May and acknowledged this may be due to issues with the E- Safety system. RG informed us that training had been given regarding what constitutes a near</p>	<p><b>NW</b></p> <p><b>NW</b></p> <p><b>NW/All Visitors</b></p> <p><b>CD</b></p> <p><b>RG</b></p>
--	---	---

	<p>miss or an adverse incident and the issue with the E-safety system was being addressed.</p> <p>NW informed us that the number of detainees accepting a visit remained low but would hopefully increase when face to face visits commenced.</p> <p>NW asked if all visitors had received the ICVA weekly updates and advised that 'straight to resource' training was included within the update and would be beneficial to view and assist with ICV training.</p> <p>NW asked all visitors to ensure their ID cards were up to date. CD to circulate the process for renewing ID cards.</p>	<b>CD</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Chair and Vice Chair Nominations</b>	
	<p>NW advised us that the majority of ICVs had voted for the length a person could act as Chair and Vice Chair to be unlimited provided they were elected on an annual basis.</p> <p>Visitors provided their nominations at the meeting and as a result the current Chair and Vice Chair was voted to remain for another year.</p> <p>Both JM and DB accepted the nomination to remain in the roles.</p> <p>NW thanked all visitors for their hard work.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Detainee Mental Health Briefing</b>	
	<p>LP informed us that Aneurin Bevan University Health Board now had a 24/7 Crisis Team which allowed custody staff to divert detainees to the crisis team should it be necessary. A pre-release assessment was carried out and if a detainee had been identified as an immediate risk of self-harm or suicide the staff nurse now had the ability to refer the detainee to the crisis team.</p> <p>During office hours the team was located within the local boroughs and outside of that time it was in Newport. The officer would convey the detainee to the crisis team immediately upon release from custody. If there were major concerns for the safety of the detainees and they would not attend voluntarily this could be facilitated in the custody unit. LP informed us that having this additional service to utilise is working well.</p> <p>LP advised us that the number of detainees presenting to custody with mental health concerns had increased as a result of Covid pandemic. The reduced contact with services had affected people's mental health.</p> <p>LP informed us that the presence of the Mental Health Practitioner within the Force Control Room (FCR) allowed detainee checks to be carried out whilst the detainee was being conveyed to custody. The custody nurse</p>	

	<p>would have medical history of the detainee before the arrival. This presented great communication between the custody nurse and the FCR.</p> <p>LP advised us if there could be an improvement within the Mental Health services to assist custody nurses it would be obtaining urgent access to children assessments during out of hours times. The service is available within Aneurin Bevan but due to the lack of nurses there was only one nurse covering the borough. Occasionally custody nurses were required to go out of the area to obtain the assessment. Children's Services are reviewing the accessibility of the obtaining children assessments under the age of eighteen years of age.</p> <p>LP advised us that an Inspector within the Force had taken the lead on the obtaining children assessments with Children's Services and reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding around accessing the assessments rapidly.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	No other business was discussed.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	The next meeting will be held at <b>6pm, on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021.</b>	

**Meeting concluded at 7:27pm**

<b>Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent</b>	
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 16.08.2021

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
Name	Nicola Warren
Position	Governance Officer

Telephone	01633 642200
Email	<a href="mailto:Nicola.Warren@gwent.pnn.police.uk">Nicola.Warren@gwent.pnn.police.uk</a>
<b>Background papers</b>	None



