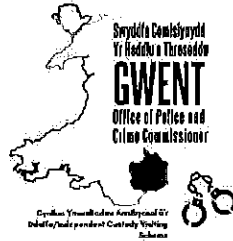


**DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2017-011**



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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS  
HELD AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG, CWMBRAN  
ON 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017**

Present: Mr Justin Johnstone (Chair)  
Ms Jean Munton  
Mr Richard Holland  
Mr Brian Thomas

Also in attendance:

Ms Eleri Thomas (Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner)  
Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker (Scheme Administrator)  
Miss Jessica Tippins (Assistant Scheme Administrator)  
Inspector Stephen Drayton (Custody Inspector)

***The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m.***

**Action**

**DEPUTY POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER**

1. The group welcomed the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner (DPCC) to the meeting. She informed the group that both she and the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) wished to attend these meetings on a regular basis.

We noted that this provided a good opportunity for the DPCC to meet volunteers and extend a thank you on behalf of herself and the PCC for their hard work and commitment. She apologised for not having attended sooner, but unfortunately, diary commitments had prevented her from doing so.

The DPCC articulated how important the role of an Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) was in ensuring the PCC worked collaboratively in delivering his duties, as well as ensuring safeguards and best practise for detainees and staff.

She made the group aware that both she and the PCC had recently visited the newly refurbished suite at Newport and was impressed with the work which had been achieved. The Chair, Justin Johnstone (JJ)

seconded this commenting that he and the other visitors had seen a vast improvement. Inspector Stephen Drayton (SD) confirmed that Gwent was currently the only force in the UK which had life sign monitoring in all of its custody cells.

Mr Brian Thomas (BT) asked the DPCC whether there were any plans for the future of the Ystrad Mynach building which was no longer being used for custody on a regular basis. The DPCC confirmed that a full review of the estates strategy was taking place to ensure Gwent Police were using their facilities to their best of their ability.

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. Apologies were received from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mrs Siân Curley, Mr Anthony Angell, Ms Lesley Ball, Ms Julie Morgan Mr David Binding and Ms Ruth Coulthard.

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2016**

3. The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record.

### **SCHEME UPDATE**

4. The Scheme Administrator, Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker (MVB) provided the group with the scheme update.

MVB confirmed that the scheme was now down to nine members as both Eleanor Weare and Stephen Spokes had stepped down. As the scheme was now visiting only one suite, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was content that this number of visitors would suffice.

We were made aware that since the last meeting, four visits had been missed, mainly down to visitors being unable to agree mutually convenient dates. All visitors were therefore asked to try and arrange visits as far in advance as possible to try and mitigate this.

Visits appeared to be pooling between 11am and 2pm on a Thursday. All were therefore asked to try and vary the days on which they carried out visits where possible. The Assistant Scheme Administrator (JT) confirmed she would continue to send monthly updates on visit times so members could identify any trends. BT made the group aware that he and another visitor had carried out their most recent visit on a Sunday and had found it very beneficial.

JT

In regards to issues raised, all general issues which had been raised at the time of the visit had been resolved by the Sergeant at the time. MVB advised that the OPCC were still receiving incomplete report forms, the areas frequently being missed were the total number of detainees / total adult detainees and total juvenile detainees. All visitors were therefore reminded to please double check all sections were complete before submission as a full picture of the amount of

people in custody at the time of an ICV visit is needed.

We were made aware that no custody records were recorded as being checked in December and January, it is unclear whether they have been checked and people are omitting indicating this on the form or whether none were checked at all. MVB therefore asked that visitors record every instance where they check a custody record and that for good practice some custody records should be checked during each visit.

The only occurrence of visitors waiting over 15 minutes was within one hour of the newly refurbished Newport suite reopening. This was deemed acceptable by both the visitors and the OPCC.

MVB confirmed that the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) Conference was being held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017, all ICVs were written to in December asking for any expressions of interest in attending. MVB advised that as no ICV from the Gwent scheme was able to attend, MVB would ensure any documentation from the conference that gets circulated would be distributed to all members.

As a training session had been held on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> February for ICVs around mental health awareness and juveniles in custody, the training proposed at the last meeting, around the mental vulnerability training that Appropriate Adults receive would now take place during the May meeting. SD confirmed that a newly recruited Custody Detention Officer (CDO) used to work for Hafal and so was in a position to attend and provide the talk. SD also confirmed that Gwent Police had recently renewed a contract with Hafal to supply appropriate adults for all Gwent detainees.

## **CUSTODY UPDATE**

5.

SD provided the Custody Update to the group.

He made the group aware that that the newly refurbished Custody Suite had been open three months, during which time there had been a vast improvement in detainee and staff safety. The new staffing model had seen an increase to seven CDOs and two Sergeants per shift. A new CDO recruitment process had been successful with the new intake starting in November 2016. A further two new CDOs were due to start in March 2017.

SD added that in order to support the new operating model, an investment had been made in nursing staff in order to move to a nurse led provision. This meant that the force would be recruiting two new full time nurses and two part time nurses to assist during the busiest times on weekends. Ms Jean Munton (JM) queried how this would affect the nurses ability to obtain a doctor's assistance if they required

it. SD confirmed that doctors were still available via Gwent Police's contract with Mountain Healthcare. It was acknowledged that with the level of training all nurses in custody now had, there would be very few circumstances in which a doctor would be needed.

We were made aware of custody's role in the recent drug raid operation in Newport. The operation meant that both Newport and Ystrad Mynach had to be staffed over a period of three days. The success of this meant that the force was looking to carry out more operations such as this and was confident that the custody provision was able to cope. It was confirmed that an agreement had been made between Gwent Police and the OPCC that if Ystrad Mynach was to be used for longer than 72 hours as an operational suite, ICVs would be informed by the OPCC in order for a visit to be organised.

SD confirmed that annually, custody staff were required to attend operational safety training sessions on both physical and theoretical procedures. We were informed that the next round of training would be taking place shortly. These sessions would include a variety of aspects e.g. fitness, first aid, use of PAVA spray at which ICVs were welcome to attend to watch if they wished. The sessions were confirmed to take place between 7am-4pm at Police Headquarters Gym on the following dates:

- 16<sup>th</sup> March
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March
- 27<sup>th</sup> March
- 3<sup>rd</sup> April
- 10<sup>th</sup> April

ICVs were asked to inform the OPCC if they were planning on attending any of these sessions.

One of the most notable pieces of legislation staff would be trained on would be the changes to police bail in line with the new Police and Crime Bill which comes in to effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017. This Bill meant that there was now an assumption that when detainees were arrested, they would get bail. It also stipulated that only an officer with the rank of Inspector or above would be allowed to grant bail for up to 28 days. Following that, only an officer of Superintendent rank or above would be able to grant bail for a further three months. After this, a request for further bail would need to be made to the Magistrates Court. ICVs commented that it would be interesting to see the impact this new Bill has on bail in Gwent and asked that an update be provided at the next meeting.

**SD/MS**

Other changes noted by the group were that investment had been made in a needle replacement scheme alongside the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS). This meant that detainees who were drug users would be given a token in order to obtain clean needles on their

exit from custody.

Also, a new intercom system in each cell allowed for telephone calling to be patched through to detainees, for example, from their solicitors. It was confirmed that staff were able to terminate these calls if the need arose and wouldn't listen into confidential phone calls e.g. with solicitors.

SD provided a brief update on the custody policy around detainees arrested under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act. Within the force control room, there was now a mental health practitioner who was able to assess a call prior to it entering custody. If the detainee still ended up in custody under Section 136, it would only be if they were violent or intoxicated. If they were not, they would be taken to St Cadoc's (which was a 24/7 facility). It was confirmed that all Section 136 data was heavily scrutinised at a Mental Health/Custody task and finish group. JM queried how many people go in to custody under a Section 136. This information was available on the performance framework under item 6.

Finally, SD informed the group that due to the changes in the operating model for custody, he had been promoted to the rank of Inspector in order to support Inspector Mark Smith. The group congratulated him on his promotion.

### **PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

6. The contents of the performance framework were noted under the scheme update.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

7. No further business was identified.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8. The next meeting has been scheduled for **3pm** on the **25<sup>th</sup> May 2017** in **Conference Room 1** at **Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog**.

**Meeting concluded at 3.52pm.**

**Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent**

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

Signed



Date

8/3/17

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Background papers	None