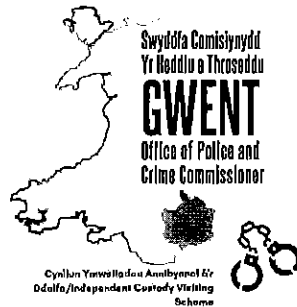


DECISION NUMBER: PCCG-2017-043



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS
HELD AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CROESYCEILIOG, CWMBRAN
ON 25TH MAY 2017**

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

Also in attendance:

Mrs Siân Curley (Scheme Manager)
Miss Jessica Tippins (Assistant Scheme Administrator)
Inspector Stephen Drayton (Custody Inspector)
CDO Laura Felvus (Custody Detention Officer)

The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m.

Action

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Ms Michelle Vaisey-Baker, Ms Lesley Ball and Mr David Binding.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3RD MARCH 2017

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

INPUT ON APPROPRIATE ADULTS

3. Custody Detention Officer (CDO) Laura Felvus provided an input to the group around Appropriate Adults (AA).

She distributed a number of information sheets to the group which explained the role in depth, along with details on what AAs could/could not do, when they were contacted, who they could support and the

legislation which supported the role. Copies of these documents would be distributed to all members with the minutes. JT

Ms Jean Munton (JM) made Inspector Stephen Drayton (SD) aware that she had recently witnessed a number of young people in custody who were waiting lengthy amounts of time for AAs. SD confirmed that he was aware of the issue and raised it monthly at the regular force custody meetings. It was recognised that resources were limited, but his team were trying to mitigate this as best they could by contacting social services for an AA (if a family member was unavailable) as soon as a youth entered custody. He confirmed that the contract with Hafal meant that AAs were available within an hour for those over the age of 18. We were made aware that all AAs from Hafal were volunteers.

CUSTODY UPDATE

4. SD provided the custody update to the group.

We were made aware of some changes in the staffing of custody. It was confirmed that Inspector Mark Smith would be leaving the unit to undertake a new role in Gwent Police. He would be replaced by Inspector Nicola Williams at the beginning of June. Inspector Drayton would also be leaving the unit in the next few months with another (transferee) Inspector taking his place in the next few months.

A need had been recognised by Chief Officers for more resources in the unit and as such, there was to be an uplift in the number of Custody Sergeants at the end of the summer, going from two to four per shift. There had also been another recruitment of CDOs following the loss of two. This meant there were now seven CDOs on each shift.

Two new nurses had been recruited in May following the loss of two currently working in custody. These new additions were undertaking training and were expected to commence the role in early June. It was confirmed that there would be at least one nurse in the unit 24/7. We acknowledged the difficulty in recruiting and retaining nursing staff in a custody environment due to the shift work involved.

We were made aware that as part of Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMICs) review into 'Children in Custody', the decision had been made in Gwent to review why young people were being detained in custody between the hours of 12am and 5am. Gwent was one of the only forces to expand the review to look into this.

A new partnership has been formed with the Samaritans. By the end of the summer, detainees would:

- Be able to receive a phone call from a Samaritan in their cell;
- Receive a visit from a Samaritan when the organisation was in custody;

- Receive a phone call from a Samaritan once they had been released from custody.

A new agreement with the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) meant that detainees would now be able to access clean needles from a vending machine situated just outside custody. This system was due to go live on 1st June 2017 and was paid for by the Police & Crime Commissioner. We noted that it was in the interests of all for the wellbeing of drug users to be taken into account due to the potential effects on individuals and different services if dirty/ wrong size needles were used.

An update was provided on the recent changes to bail. SD confirmed that there had been a reduction in the number of people being given bail compared to last year. The new changes meant that an Inspector now had to grant bail against a number of proportionate measures. More people were being released pending investigations rather than on bail, or, were charged via postal charging.

At the request of custody staff, SD asked the group to refrain from asking detainees whether they required any specific medications as this ran the risk of personal information being disclosed. They, therefore, agreed to pose questions such as 'Have you seen the nurse?' instead in order to ascertain whether they had any medical requirements.

An issue was raised by JM regarding custody staff's knowledge of the ICV role as some members of staff had needed to check with their Inspector to clarify whether certain access was allowed. Mrs Siân Curley (SC) commented that the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) used to deliver a training segment on ICVs to custody staff. She therefore offered for the OPCC to deliver this again if custody would like in order to provide some reassurance and clarity.

MISSED VISITS

5. Mrs Siân Curley (SC) made the group aware that there had been continued issues with missed visits where by the OPCC had not been notified in order to make alternative arrangements. As Newport was a designated suite, there was a legal duty to conduct visits and under existing arrangements and national best practice this should be weekly. As such, the Gwent scheme was not currently compliant which meant that in the future, the OPCC would have to start holding individuals to account should they repeatedly miss visits without reasonable explanation.

All visitors were reminded again to contact other ICVs or the OPCC as early as possible if they were unable to attend a visit.

A discussion was had into whether there was any further support the OPCC could provide in order to assist. However, the members in attendance felt that the existing service was more than sufficient.

SCHEME UPDATE

6. SC provided the group with the scheme update which was noted by the group.

It was noted that a correction needed to be made under item 5.3. The number of visits where it took over 15 minutes to access custody should read '1'.

We were updated on the mental health practitioner who was based in the force control room. In the first three months of her role, the force had seen a significant drop in the number of individuals being detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act. There were new laws which were due to be implemented shortly meaning that no children should be detained in custody under section 136 and adults should only be detained in a police station in exceptional circumstances. The Implementation date for this element of the Policing and Crime Act was to be confirmed by the Home Office following the General Election.

Finally, SC made us aware that the 'Learning the Lessons' bulletin provided to the group was sent to the Deputy Chief Constable's tracker meeting to review recommendations (no matter the topic). This was to mitigate the chances of circumstances raised in the bulletins occurring in Gwent.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

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

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8. We agreed that Councillor Brian Thomas' commitment to the scheme over the past thirty years would be acknowledged by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9. The next meeting has been scheduled for **3pm** on the **14th September 2017** in **Conference Room 1** at **Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog**.

Meeting concluded at 4.12 pm.

Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

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

Signed

Jeff

Date

13/10/17

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Background papers	None

