

**MINUTES OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**

**HELD BOTH REMOTELY ON TEAMS AND IN PERSON IN HAWTHORN MEETING ROOM,**

**POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 29TH JANUARY 2025**

**Present:** Jean Munton - Chair, Independent Custody Visitor (JM)

Mike Hallinan– Independent Custody Visitor (MH)

Alan Heywood – Independent Custody Visitor (AH)

Linda Mason - Independent Custody Visitor (LM)

Mike O’Farrell - Independent Custody Visitor (MO)

David Salmon - Independent Custody Visitor (DS)

Booker Skelding – Independent Custody Visitor (BS)

Also in attendance:

Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

Ceri Hiscox - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CH)

Inspector Martin Cawley – Custody Ystrad (MC)

Sergeant Lesley Cheverton – Custody Ystrad (LC)

***The meeting commenced at 6:09p.m***

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from R Holland, A Williams,  A Robinson and L Langley. |  |
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| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.  NW advised the meeting that Inspector Delaney had moved from Custody and would transfer their actions to Inspector Cawley.  Action 2  NW informed the meeting the Performance Matrix had been forwarded to Inspector Delaney for review as requested and the Inspector advised that a new Performance Matrix was being developed which would supersede this. | **CH** |
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| **3.** | **Custody Update** |  |
|  | MC advised the visitors that staff numbers were almost at full establishment.  MC informed the visitors that detainee waiting times were consistently low within the custody area as result of the improved layout and operational working model.  MC informed the visitors that the scrutiny of children in custody continued, and that Custody Sergeants were strongly challenging officers about appropriate grounds when bringing children into custody.  They are aiming to feedback to officers the necessity for arrest with the same scrutiny used around children in custody, ensuring that when issues are identified, they inform learning. The scrutiny on investigations had also increased to reduce prolonged investigation times.  MC informed the visitors that the Health Care provision was changing imminently to a new service provided by Mitie. This was tri force across the whole of Southern Wales. The transfer was being monitored to ensure there was no loss to services currently provided and that the detainees were receiving the correct level of service.  MC informed the visitors that due to a change in staffing structure there were three Custody Inspectors on shift and that they could raise any issues live time with them.    AH asked whether all detainees see the healthcare practitioner or only those that make a request.  MC confirmed that not all detainees would see the healthcare practitioner (HCP), only those who had requested it or those that had been identified as needing to see the HCP following a risk assessment.  MC informed the visitors that it been identified during His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspection that the process used when requesting an HCP to assess a detainee was not being recorded sufficiently. The process had been changed and all requests would be made via an email form (except in an emergency) to ensure a full audit trail was recorded.  LM raised in the meeting that there had been a shortage of blankets whilst carrying out a recent visit.  NW asked the Custody Inspector if a process was in place to ensure that there were sufficient levels of blankets. MC to ensure this and confirm to NW.  MC confirmed that there was an officer on each shift who was responsible for the audit of blankets etc to ensure there was sufficient provisions available.  MC confirmed that there had been an issue with the heating within the custody unit and that it had been rectified.  MC confirmed that the issue with the drainage pipes had been resolved.  MC advised the visitors that the issues regarding the lighting being too bright, causing migraines within the custody, was being assessed by the estates department and the implementation of dimmable lighting was being considered.MC to provide an update at the next meeting. | **MC/NW**  **MC** |
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| **4.** | **Scheme Update and Performance Framework Update** |  |
|  | NW advised the meeting that there were thirteen visits scheduled between October and December. Twelve visit forms had been received with one visit rolling over to the next month.  NW advised the meeting that Ystrad Mynach was the primary custody suite with Newport suite being used as an overflow for large events.  NW advised the meeting that the visits carried out had been mostly weekday morning and afternoon visits with one evening visit. NW asked the visitors to ensure a random spread of times with an occasional weekend visit.  NW reminded the visitors that if they were unable to make a visit that they were scheduled for, to liaise with the other ICVs to attempt to arrange cover for their scheduled visit.  NW advised the meeting that no major issues had been raised by the ICVs since the last meeting. Some minor issues raised included the unit being extremely busy, however, staffing was now at full establishment so this should improve.  NW informed the visitors other minor issues included a request for medication or detainees waiting to see the nurse, detainees requesting a drink, a detainee requesting a telephone call, and a 17-year-old had not been informed of their rights, this was raised with the Sergeant and an Appropriate Adult (AA) had been requested. All of the custody issues raised by ICVs were dealt with immediately by the Custody Sergeant.  NW confirmed that visitors had noted on the visit report forms that the ICV checklist questions had been asked when conducting visits with the detainees, which was appreciated.  NW informed the visitors that the near miss information was outstanding for the past quarter. NW to follow up.    Of the visits conducted; entry was granted within five minutes for six of the visits, within five to twelve minutes for two visits and over fifteen minutes for three visits. Although the ICVs were admitted to the custody area within fifteen minutes, there were a number of occasions where they were waiting long periods for the visit to start. NW asked the visitors to note any delays when entering the unit as there seemed to be long waits prior to visits starting.  NW asked the visitors if the entry time into custody had improved since the move to Ystrad Custody suite and the visitors confirmed the revised custody unit layout was more efficient and seemed to work better.  NW asked the visitors to note any staffing issues. LC advised the visitors that the improved layout within the custody unit was working well, detainees were booked in within ten minutes, there was a separate juvenile wing and increased staffing numbers.  NW asked how many female officers were in custody with the regards supporting females under the age of eighteen and menstrual matters.  LC confirmed there were now two female CDOs and two Custody Sergeants on each shift and that the ratio of male to female was not an issue.  NW reminded the visitors of key areas to note during visits including prioritising detainees with ethnic heritage as well as those under eighteen and vulnerable adults.  NW reminded the visitors to ensure their ID cards were up to date.  NW informed the visitors that His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had conducted an inspection within Newport custody and that these inspections were carried out within all forces.  NW advised the visitors that a number of concerns had been raised within the report with areas for improvement which the visitors could assist with when conducting their visits.  NW informed the visitors that some of the recommendations within the report had been completed during the upgrading of the Ystrad custody unit.  NW informed the visitors that HMICFRS would conduct a follow up inspection to ensure the recommendations had been put into place.  NW to advise the visitors when the follow up inspection had been conducted.  NW shared the HMICFRS inspection report and discussed the areas for concern, areas for improvement, the recommendations and how the ICVs could assist when conducting the visits.   * **Ineffective oversight of custody services**   ICVs were reminded to check CCTV is working and if present when Use of Force has been used, to check it has been recorded on the custody record that it has been justified and proportionate.   * **Risk assessments and risk management needs to improve**   ICVs were reminded to check the custody records to ascertain if observations and where possible if any changes in levels had been recorded.   * **Improve translation services at booking desk**   ICVs were asked to check this during each visit.   * **Improve safety and environment of custody suites**   A check would be conducted by an OPCC representative to ensure notices advising CCTV is in operation throughout the suite were being displayed.  A check would be conducted by an OPCC representative to ensure a door with a suitable design to the shower room door had been changed to ensure privacy.  ICVs are not able to review CCTV they are able to check that it’s working. ICVs were asked to check with the Custody staff if CCTV is working and pixelated in toilet area.   * **Clinical healthcare governance needs to be more robust**   ICVs were asked to check custody records (with consent) of those who have requested to see the healthcare practitioner to ensure this is recorded by the custody officers.  ICVs were asked to monitor if the confidential complaints process for healthcare services had been advised. ICVs were asked during their visit by checking with the detainees if they have been advised of the complaints process when they have disclosed that they are unhappy with the service provided by the Healthcare providers.   * **Improve reviews under Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE)**   ICVs were asked to monitor this during their visits by checking custody records and note on the visit forms if complete.   * **Put in place scrutiny over Appropriate Adult (AA) provision**   ICVs already note if an AA has been called. ICVs were asked to also note the request and arrival times on the visit report form for monitoring.   * **Better scrutiny of use of force**   ICVs were asked when checking the custody records (with consent) or if ICVs were present when use of force was used, they would be asked to check if this has been recorded correctly on the custody records.  NW informed the visitors that some additional checks would be added to the  ICV Checklist to provide additional scrutiny and circulated to the visitors.  NW informed the visitors that all officers involved in the use of force should complete the required use of force form, so if two officers were involved two forms should be used and not one form.  NW asked the Custody Sergeant if the recommended changes would be made to Newport Custody unit given that it was still to be used as an overflow unit for detainees.    LC advised that the Newport unit had only been utilised as an overflow unit on two occasions over the Christmas period and that there had been no issues with capacity with the current number of thirty-one cells and that the need for the additional ten cells in Ystrad Mynach unit may not be required.  MH asked how the visitors would know if the Newport unit was being utilised.  MC to advise the OPCC of any key dates which may result in the Newport unit being used as an overflow.  LC informed the visitors that key dates were likely to be Halloween, Christmas, New Year and large football events.  MH asked if there was any guidance or training given to officers when detaining and arresting an individual of the opposite sex.  MC confirmed when officers carry out an arrest they would be guided by the current demand at that moment in time. In custody this was easier to manage with having the resources in place. When officers go through training the best practice is that female officers would and should be involved in searches etc. of females.  NW confirmed that a refresher training session was scheduled in the coming months. NW would invite the Custody Training Sergeant to give an overview on the reviewing of custody records. There would also be a presentation given by Adferiad, the service that provides Appropriate Adult (AA) support to vulnerable adults.  NW asked the visitors to include as much information as possible when completing the visit report forms, specifically the time the AA was requested and the time the AA arrived.  LM advised the visitors that a visit had been conducted whereby a detainee had been abusive to the visitors.  NW advised the visitors that should detainees be abusive whilst they are requesting consent to view the custody records, the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) advise to observe the detainees through the door hatch and be guided by the advice from the Custody Detention Officer (CDO) based on their risk assessment.  NW asked the visitors to advise of any specific areas they would like to cover in the training session. | **NW**  **All Visitors**  **MC/CH**  **NW**  **All Visitors** |
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| **5.** | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  | NW informed the visitors that they would be contacted to arrange a convenient time to conduct their three yearly reviews.  MH asked the visitors to inform NW prior to the panel meeting should there be any items they wish to be included on the agenda for discussion. | **All Visitors** |
| **6.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **6pm, 30th April 2025.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 7.25pm**

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| **Jane Mudd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent** | |
| **I confirm that 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**  **A black line in a white background  AI-generated content may be incorrect.** | **Date**  **24.04.2025** |

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| **Contact Officer** |  |
| **Name** | **Nicola Warren** |
| **Position** | **Governance Officer** |
| **Telephone** | **01633 642200** |
| **Email** | **Nicola.Warren@gwent.police.uk** |
| **Background papers** |  |