

OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING
SCHEME
HELD REMOTELY
ON 14th APRIL 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)

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 6:05 p.m.

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	Apologies	
	Apologies for absence were received from Ruth Coulthard, Jeffery Seabourne and Chief Inspector Huw Jones.	
2.	Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings	
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.	

3.	Custody Update	
	<p>RG advised us that the staffing levels had not changed, and consideration was being given to a partial collaboration with South Wales Police Force 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 our next meeting.</p> <p>RG informed us that all the safety procedures regarding Covid were still in place. However, a concern had been raised by a Social Worker where there was a requirement for a number of representatives to be in an interview room at any one time, making social distancing difficult. This was addressed by the Appropriate Adult (AA) remaining in the room and the Solicitor monitoring the interview on the telephone from outside the room. Protective screens were now in place within the interview rooms to provide additional protection.</p> <p>RG advised us that all Custody staff had received their first Covid vaccination.</p> <p>NW questioned if there had been an increase in Solicitors attending custody in person. RG informed us the Solicitors are continuing to use the telephone process and there had not been an increase in attendance to the custody suite.</p> <p>RG advised us that the Niche system had been updated to enable detainees to give their consent to receive legal advice from a Solicitor via the telephone and not in person. This would be obtained when the detainee was booked into custody. RG confirmed the majority of detainees were providing their consent to receiving advice via the telephone.</p> <p>RG informed us the Children in Custody Multi-Agency Monitoring Panel meeting was still in place to review processing relating to children detained in custody overnight. They were looking to increase this to incorporate a scrutiny and audit meeting to include children in custody during the day, which would see custody records being audited and any concerns or lessons to be learnt being fed into the multi-agency monitoring panel meeting.</p> <p>RG advised us that Government funding had been secured to allow a pilot to take place to secure a local authority residential care home place within Gwent to be used for children who would otherwise be remanded in custody overnight. There was only one facility in place currently which was within the South Wales Police area. A tendering process was due to</p>	RG

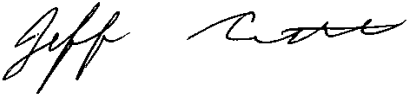
	<p>take place which would then allow Social Services to confirm the appropriate care home. The pilot would run for three months. An update would be given at the next meeting.</p> <p>RG confirmed that secure accommodation was only utilised in circumstances where the child was suspected to be a risk to the public and that it was not requested very often. NW asked if secure accommodation was also considered for children who would be at risk of exploitation if they were to be released from custody. RG confirmed this was considered during the process.</p> <p>RG advised us there had been no concerns with the attendance of Appropriate Adults and Hafal, the Appropriate Adults service provider had a 100% attendance rate.</p> <p>RG informed us that a new E Safety portal was being piloted to record all near misses and accidents in custody. RG informed us that the protocol for recording adverse incidents would change once agreed by the Criminal Justice department and should see a reduction in the number of near misses being recorded as some incidents were previously being recorded as near misses when a detainee had presented to custody with a pre-existing injury. RG to provide an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>A weekly custody meeting was in place to identify any themes or issues to be raised. The officer safety training team also attend the meetings in order to feed back to divisional officers who bring detainees into custody.</p> <p>RG advised us that a Senior Point of Contact had been nominated per shift to assist with the link between the detainees and the diversion department. It was expected that this would increase the diversion from court rate. An update would be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>RG confirmed that the Samaritans would be attending the unit again once a week. This had stopped due to Covid restrictions.</p> <p>RG advised us that detainee drug testing had recommenced in both units. This had previously been halted due to Covid restrictions.</p> <p>RG informed us the new Strategic Sergeant for Custody had been in place since February and would attend our next meeting. CD to send meeting invite.</p> <p>RG informed us that a quarterly Custody Disproportionality Scrutiny Panel had been established to review data and audits on Race disparity in Custody. The first report would be available in the coming weeks with the initial meeting taking place mid-May.</p>	<p>RG</p> <p>RG</p> <p>RG</p> <p>CD</p>
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	<p>RG asked if a member of the scheme would like to attend the meeting along with a member from the Independent Advisory Group. Visitors to inform CD if they would like to attend.</p> <p>RG agreed to send the Terms of Reference for the Custody Disproportionality Scrutiny Panel to NW to circulate to all visitors.</p> <p>Louise Price (LP) introduced herself as the Custody Lead Nurse who is responsible for both Newport and Ystrad Mynach custody unit. LP informed us when detainees arrived in custody and disclosed, they had consumed a large quantity of drugs the detainee would then be taken to Accident and Emergency (A&E) to be assessed. LP informed us that the detainees were being released from A&E back to custody before it was safe to do so. To ensure detainee safety, detainees should remain in A&E for six hours. LP advised us a meeting was due to take place with Nurses from the A&E department to formalise a protocol to ensure the safety of all detainees being discharged back to custody. An update would be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>LP confirmed that when it was necessary for detainees to be admitted to A&E regardless of the reason, the Custody Nurse would attend A&E to obtain any evidential samples required. This was to ensure there was no delay in medical care required.</p> <p>We asked which hospitals detainees were treated at and LP confirmed Newport detainees with minor injuries would attend the Royal Gwent Hospital and The Grange Hospital for A&E. Ystrad Mynach detainees would attend Ystrad Fawr Hospital with minor injuries and The Grange Hospital for A&E. We were informed that utilising the minor injury units had allowed the detainees to return to custody quicker.</p>	<p>All visitors</p> <p>RG/NW</p> <p>LP</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Scheme Update</p>	
	<p>NW advised us there were currently eight visitors on the scheme although not all visitors were participating in the telephone monitoring process. However, the telephone monitoring process would continue until the Covid restrictions allow meeting indoors. Face to face visits would then recommence following a completion of a risk assessment. We would ascertain what visiting preferences ICVs had and hoped to run a face to face process but would consider a dual visiting process should it be necessary for the time being.</p> <p>NW acknowledged that whilst telephone monitoring was not ideal, it had enabled the identification of concerns to be raised by detainees that may not had been identified had ICVs been conducting custody record checks and they had not been able to speak directly with the detainees.</p>	

	<p>NW informed us that there had been three missed visits over the past three months, and asked ICVs to inform the Chair if a visit could not be carried out as per the rota or to rearrange for the visit to take place another day. JM offered to cover any visits that could not be carried out.</p> <p>NW advised there had been a few occasions where custody staff had arranged to call the ICV back to conduct a telephone visit, but this had not been carried out. A discussion took place regarding the process and NW agreed to recirculate the monitoring process instructions to the visitors as well as to RG who would then circulate to all custody officers to remind them of the process.</p> <p>RG requested to be kept informed of any issues arising in order to identify any possible trends.</p> <p>LB informed us she felt the telephone monitoring process was useful and allowed more time to engage with the custody officers.</p> <p>NW noted on one of the ICV reports that the cell patch system had been used and reiterated that ICV visits should be carried out in private and custody staff should be out of hearing range. When using the telephone monitoring process detainees should be taken to a secure room to speak in private or if face to face visits then the custody officer should remain outside the cell.</p> <p>NW informed us that the ICV interviews had commenced this week and a further interview was to be conducted in the coming week. NW thanked the Chair for assisting. An update would be given at the next meeting, or before, via email, if appropriate.</p> <p>NW advised us there were still four report forms outstanding for this year. The data on the report forms was used for monitoring to identify issues and trends and also collated and to provide statistics every quarter to the Independent Custody Visiting Association and the National Expert Forum (NEF) so it was important that they were sent as soon as possible after the visit had taken place.</p> <p>NW informed us there had been four minor issues raised that had been dealt with immediately by the custody Sergeant. There had been two issues raised with the OPCC that had now been resolved; these were regarding the central heating not working and the audio on the CCTV not working.</p> <p>RG informed us that the CCTV in the Ystrad Mynach unit was due to be upgraded and increased to enable the monitoring of eight cells as instead of four. In September the Newport custody unit will close for three months to undertake a refurbishment that had been scheduled last year but put on hold due to Covid restrictions. All detainees would go to Ystrad Mynach custody during the closure. RG to inform the OPCC when the closure date had been confirmed.</p>	<p>NW</p> <p>NW</p> <p>RG</p>
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	<p>NW informed us there had been a slight increase in the uptake of calls being accepted which could be attributed to the distribution of ICV leaflets and posters.</p> <p>RG confirmed he would recirculate the message to custody staff with regards to distributing the ICV leaflets to encourage uptake.</p> <p>NW requested feedback from the ICVs with regards to the 'straight to ICV resources' and there were mixed opinions as they could be a little long. DB suggested it would be beneficial before resuming face to face visits to receive refresher training. It was agreed this would be useful. DB to feedback this back to the NEF.</p>	<p>RG</p> <p>DB</p>
5.	Performance Framework	
	The performance framework collates all the data from the visit forms which then allows easy identification of any trends that may occur. This item is for information purposes only.	
6.	Any Other Business	
	<p>NW informed us the risk assessment documentation would need to be reviewed to ensure it is up to date in relation to resuming face to face visits. Visitors would be given the option to resume face to face visits or to remain conducting telephone visits in the short term.</p> <p>LP confirmed that all relevant personal protective equipment would be provided, and temperatures taken on arrival at the custody unit.</p> <p>LP confirmed the Covid policy and procedure triage form used within custody is the same format used in all A&E departments. The information is then updated on the detainee custody record.</p>	NW
7.	Date of Next Meeting	
	The next meeting will be held at 6pm, on the 14th July 2021.	

Meeting concluded at 7:14pm

Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent	
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 03/06/2021

Contact Officer	
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Background papers	None

