



MINUTES OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME
HELD BOTH REMOTELY ON TEAMS AND IN PERSON IN OAK MEETING
ROOM,
POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 19TH OCTOBER 2022

Present: Ms Jean Munton - Chair, Independent Custody Visitor (JM)
Mr David Binding – Vice Chair Independent Custody Visitor (DB)
Mr Richard Holland – Independent Custody Visitor (RH)
Mr Michael Hallinan – Independent Custody Visitor (MH)
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)
Chief Inspector Huw Jones – Custody (HJ)

The meeting commenced at 6:05 p.m.

	Notes and Actions	Action
1.	Apologies	
	Apologies for absence were received from Marilyn Rankin, Linda Mason, Custody Nurse Louise Price and Ystrad Mynach Custody Inspector Nikki Hughes.	
2.	Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings	
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. NW informed us the Safer Accommodation pilot had concluded and an evaluation had taken place which recognised that the model piloted was not a sustainable solution for the issue of alternative accommodation for children in Police custody in Newport, Gwent or across Wales.	

	<p>This matter has been reported back to the Welsh Government task group who are now considering next steps. Policing in Wales continues to monitor the situation across all Welsh Police Forces and will work with Welsh Government and partners to identify alternative approaches.</p> <p>JM advised us that when obtaining the detainees age and ethnicity from the custody officer it was recorded as how the detainee had identified themselves.</p> <p>DB informed us that the statistics from the Scrutiny and Proportionality Panel would be available in the coming months and an update would be provided at our next panel meeting.</p> <p>A discussion was held around recording detainee ethnicity. The Home Office set the ethnicity options for recording the data, but the data could be inaccurate should the detainee identify differently to how they present. NW to obtain clarity from the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA).</p>	NW
3.	Custody Update	
	<p>RG advised us that both Newport and Ystrad Mynach Custody units had remained opened over the past quarter with no closures because of staffing shortages. There had been a planned closure of the Newport unit for three days to carry out refurbishment work on the showers.</p> <p>Four Custody Detention Officers (CDOs) had been successfully appointed following a recruitment process. Three officers would undertake the CDO training course and one CDO was from another force. Following completion of the training, three CDOs would be operational immediately to fill the vacancies and another post would be vacant in the coming months.</p> <p>RG advised us there were five officers on a Sergeants training course. Following the completion of the course the available vacancies would be filled and would provide resilience cover when required.</p> <p>HJ advised us obtaining resilience Sergeants in custody had been challenging as there was a shortage force wide. Sergeants would be brought in from the local policing areas but only if there was sufficient supervision within the area. There would be four Sergeants on each shift with two covering each unit.</p> <p>HJ informed us several resilience Sergeants had been promoted to temporary Inspectors due to a shortage of Inspectors.</p> <p>HJ thanked RG for his hard work in ensuring the appropriate staffing levels.</p> <p>HJ advised us there had been a number of the Senior Management Team covering over the weekend when the Inspectors were on rest days.</p>	

	<p>RG informed us that Sergeants would work overtime to ensure staffing levels in order for both custody units to remain operational.</p> <p>HJ informed us each shift had four Sergeants with an organisational staffing number of five. When staff levels had not been at full capacity due to sickness or training courses, to ensure staffing levels overtime would be utilised but staff welfare would be monitored for officers providing cover through overtime.</p> <p>NW asked if Covid had was having any impact on staffing and RG advised that only one member of staff had been off due to Covid.</p> <p>RG informed us that two Bail Sergeants had been recruited, the role was to manage the bail returns and those released on bail and two Decision Making Sergeants would manage the voluntary attendees to custody.</p> <p>RG informed us he attended the National Custody Forum Conference. There was an input from an Independent Custody lead regarding deaths within police custody. There had not been a death in custody nationally relating to self-harm for a number of years which was positive. There were concerns with deaths following the release from custody.</p> <p>RG informed us that nationally there had been scrutiny over strip searching whilst in custody. Ensuring there were grounds for the strip search, ensuring it had been carried out in a professional manner and documented correctly and ensuring an Appropriate Adult had been present for vulnerable detainees and children.</p> <p>RG advised us that an audit and deep dive had been undertaken across both units on detainee records where a strip search had been conducted with another audit to be carried out in the coming months.</p> <p>RG informed us that authority would be required from the Sergeant when detainee clothing needed to be removed, and anti-harm clothing provided due to their behaviour or risk and if clothes were seized for forensic purposes and replacement clothing provided.</p> <p>NW asked if Appropriate adults were attending when required. RG advised there had still been issues with Social Services attending the unit during the night to safeguard juveniles, they only attended if the juvenile was being interviewed at night. This meant juveniles were kept in custody for longer periods than required. This has been raised and there are issues with staff levels in Social Services.</p> <p>HJ informed us of significant changes to pre-charge bail were taking place following the introduction of Kay's Law and would be implemented from 28th October 2022. Detainees would no longer be released under investigation. They would be charged, no further actioned or bailed with or without conditions.</p>	
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	<p>The changes will allow policing to protect more victims whilst at the same time improve the timeliness and quality of outcomes. The changes would remove the presumption against pre-charge bail to encourage greater use where it was necessary and proportionate.</p> <p>It would introduce new pre-charge bail time periods for suspects which would be more balanced and proportionate, provide better protection for victims through a new duty to seek the views of victims on pre-charge bail conditions and introduce a three hour pause on the detention clock where an arrest had been made for breach of pre-charge bail conditions.</p> <p>HJ informed us that Sergeants could bail up to a period of three months which had previously been up to twenty-eight days. Inspectors could authorise an extension after three months for up to six months if required.</p> <p>HJ advised us that awareness training was taking place for officers on the new legislation and training would be given at the force training days and shared on force media platforms.</p> <p>HJ informed us that when Kay's Law was implemented, this would increase demand within custody significantly.</p> <p>HJ advised us that the introduction of a Bail Portal was being considered to hold all detainee documents relating their bail conditions. This could be accessed via a weblink by the detainee and their legal representative. The portal would update and notify the detainee of any changes. Detainees without access to technology would receive bail updates by letter.</p> <p>RG informed us that a staff wellbeing and morale questionnaire had been circulated to all custody staff, which included twenty statements to answer relating to the running of the unit, officer wellbeing, morale and support received from the management team. The questionnaire is anonymous and would be completed via a portal. RG to provide an update on the questionnaire feedback at the next meeting.</p> <p>RG informed us of the Appropriate Adult (AA) cartoon video that had been created to show AAs who were not legal representatives what the role of an AA was, what they can expect, what the rights of the detainees were and about solicitors. The video could be sent out to officers and then shown to the AA before they attend custody or sent to the AA directly. RG welcomed comment from the ICVs.</p> <p>RG informed us that custody staff would be trained on access to the Police National Database (PND) which stores more detail than the Police National Computer (PNC). PNC holds information on convictions cautions and arrests, whereas the PND holds additional information such as intelligence logs and information that may not have resulted in a conviction.</p> <p>RG advised us there were three CDOs that had been trained in Neurodiversity to assist with detainees who had Neurodiversity needs.</p>	<p>RG</p>
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	<p>Another training course would be run and hoped to have a Neurodiversity Champion on each shift over both units.</p> <p>RG informed us that the food supplier's contract was due for renewal next year and a meeting had taken place to discuss the requirements of the next contract to improve the choice of food available.</p> <p>RG asked if the visitors would record on the visit report forms any feedback, they received from detainees relating to the food.</p> <p>RG informed us that there were no issues with obtaining ambient and hot food.</p> <p>RG advised us that the adverse incidents in custody were reviewed by the Inspector on a daily basis and reviewed monthly with the Chief Inspector. Two themes had been noted; one was detainees presenting to custody having consumed drugs, this would be picked up at the custody desk by the Sergeant through a risk assessment. The detainee would then be assessed by the Healthcare Practitioner and transferred to hospital. Another theme was detainees coming into custody with head injuries.</p> <p>All officers are advised when a detainee discloses drug taking or a head injury, they should not be taken into custody but transferred to the Accident & Emergency Department of the Grange Hospital.</p> <p>RG informed us there had been an incident in custody where a detainee had self-harmed which had been picked up by an officer conducting a check and took immediate action. This highlighted the importance of ensuring checks were carried out on time and correctly.</p> <p>RG informed us they had super soakers in custody, these were used to put at the bottom of cell doors to absorb any water or spillages within the cell and to ensure no spillages go into the corridor. They are single use and are then disposed of.</p> <p>RG advised us that the exercise yard in the Newport unit had been deep cleaned.</p>	All visitors
4.	Scheme Update & Performance Framework Update	
	<p>NW advised us that there were eight custody visitors on the scheme. Sadly, Lesley left the scheme as her tenure had sadly reached its conclusion. She would be missed as her support has been gratefully received for a number of years. A thank you letter had been sent to Lesley, unfortunately she was unable to attend this meeting to say her farewell but will be attending the beginning of our next meeting.</p> <p>NW advised us a recruitment drive had commenced and we hope to interview potential ICVs in December and appoint in January 2023.</p> <p>NW informed us that unfortunately Jackie would be leaving the scheme at the end of the year.</p>	

	<p>JM informed us of the professional work of the CDO escorting them on one of their visits.</p> <p>HJ asked if visitors good feedback positive work by officers. The officer would then receive a recognition in the custody weekly update.</p> <p>The visitors agreed there had been a significant improvement with cooperation from the custody staff.</p> <p>NW informed us the refresher training took place in August and thanked everyone who attended.</p> <p>NW asked if visitors would watch the bitesize training resource contained within the recent ICVA newsletter.</p> <p>NW asked the visitors to ensure their vetting and ID cards were up to date.</p> <p>NW informed us we are working towards silver compliance level as part of the Quality Assurance Framework.</p>	
5.	Terms of Reference	
	NW circulated the Terms of Reference to all visitors. The only change was the meeting are now taking place in person and online.	
6.	Any Other Business	
	No other business was discussed.	
7.	Date of Next Meeting	
	The next meeting will be held at 6pm, 25th January 2023.	

Meeting concluded at 7:42pm

Jeff Cuthbert B.SC., MDIPD, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent
<p>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.</p> <p>Any such interests are recorded below.</p> <p>The above request has my approval.</p>

Signed



Date

05/12/2022

Contact Officer	
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Background papers	

