

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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**

**HELD REMOTELY**

**ON 21STJANUARY 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)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

Mrs Ceri Davis - Assistant Scheme Administrator, OPCC (CD)

Inspector Roland Giles – Custody Newport (RG)

***The meeting commenced at 6:05 p.m.***

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Mr Richard Holland, Chief Inspector Huw Jones, Louise Price (Lead Nurse), Ruth Coulthard and Jeffrey Seabourne. |  |
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| **2.** | **Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings** |  |
|  | The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.  **Action 3**, The Lead Nurse had sent her apologies and hoped to attend the next meeting.  **Action 4**, JM informed us she had not received the poster and requested it be sent again. CD agreed to circulate the poster. The ICV posters and leaflets to be delivered to Newport Custody unit. RG confirmed he had not received the posters due to them being delivered to Ystrad Mynach. RG to obtain posters and ensure leaflets distributed to detainees. | **CD**  **CD**  **RG** |
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| **3.** | **Custody Update** |  |
|  | RG informed the visitors that there had been some staffing changes made within Custody following the new force staffing model. As a result of this there was one Inspector to cover both Custody Suites and additional Response Inspectors were starting in February. They would be responsible for dealing with Custody Reviews, Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) Reviews and Inspections.  RG confirmed there would be two Force Response Inspectors on shift at all times one in the East and one in the West. There number of Response Inspectors was increasing from five to ten.  RG informed us that the process for resolving or escalating any matters of concern whilst conducting a custody visit would remain the same. However, if the Custody Inspector was not available, the Response Inspector could be contacted.  RG advised the visitors that a Strategic Sergeant was being recruited to assist the Inspector with the running of the units.  RG informed us that the previous decision to change the Custody staff working pattern of six days on and four days off would not be implemented. This was following feedback from the staff, Unison and the Federation. The current working pattern would remain as four days on and four days off.  RG informed us that five Sergeant’s remained across a shift, two in Ystrad Mynach and three in Newport, with ten Custody Detention Officers (CDO’s) split between the two custody suites. Four new CDO’s and one PC had been recruited, who were expected to be working independently in the coming weeks.  RG advised us that a number of Sergeants had moved to different posts and the positions were not being replaced. There were currently four Sergeants on two shifts.  RG informed us that at present they have one member of staff self-isolating due to Covid 19.  RG informed us the Sergeants training course had been completed but not all staff were able to complete the course due to Covid 19. The three officers who had completed the course were in the process of completing their mentoring period before they could provide resilience cover in the Custody unit.  NW asked if there was sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the detainees and were they provided with a mask when they left custody. RG confirmed there were no shortages of PPE for detainees whilst in the custody unit or leaving the unit. CDO’s and Sergeants were being provided with fitted protective masks for dealing with Covid or symptomatic detainees.    RG informed us that the Virtual Remand Hearings were still taking place from Ystrad Mynach. This was a court process that could be held remotely (Virtual Remand Hearing) if a detainee had Covid 19 or was symptomatic and had been remanded for Court.  RG informed us that clarity was being sought from the legal department with regards to how long a Covid detainee could be kept in custody when they had been processed by the Court but not been remanded into custody and realised on bail. The process on releasing the detainee was not straight forward when they were Covid positive.  RG informed the visitors that the Track and Trace procedure was still in place within custody for any visitors entering custody.  RG advised us that Custody would be going on to the Forces Scrutiny Panel to look at disparity and disproportionality within Custody.  NW asked if Covid had impacted the sourcing of accommodation for Juveniles even further. RG confirmed obtaining secure accommodation for juveniles was challenging and the nearest secure accommodation was usually in Bristol or Dyfed Powys. There was a PACE and Remand meeting held every month with various organisations in order to try to improve the amount of secure accommodation available. RG confirmed the amount of secure accommodation requests made by Gwent were very low.  RG advised us that he attended the Gwent Review and Monitoring Panel monthly which monitors juveniles within custody for all Gwent local authority areas and a robust monitoring process was in place for juveniles coming into custody.  RG advised us there had been no concerns with the attendance of Appropriate Adults and Hafal, the Appropriate Adults service provider had submitted a monthly report that showed 100% attendance and 100% within the time scale required.  RG informed us that a Perpetrator Referral Scheme ‘Phoenix’ for Domestic Violence Offenders had started. This would be offered to all offenders regardless if the offender was charged or not.    The offender would be required to give their consent prior to the referral to the organisation who worked with the offender to try to break the cycle of offending. |  |
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| **4.** | **Scheme Update** |  |
|  | NW advised us there were currently eight visitors on the scheme and six of the visitors were conducting telephone visits. The uptake of detainees accepting visits was still low but consistent at 10% of visits. No major concerns had been raised on the visit forms. One missed call had been recorded and the ICVs confirmed there were no issues with contacting the custody suites.  NW informed us the number of near misses recorded had reduced and asked if this was due to the policy being reviewed and a new recording process being put in place, as previously minor incidents were being recorded as adverse incidents. The Inspector confirmed the new recording policy had been submitted to Chief Officers for approval.  DB informed us that the National Expert Forum meeting was scheduled for the following week. The data received from other Forces indicated that other ICV schemes who were conducting telephone visits also had a low uptake in the number of detainees participating in calls.  A discussion was held regarding the low uptake of detainees accepting visits. JM advised that she was hopeful the ICV poster would encourage further uptake in telephone visits once they had been made available and informed us that despite the low uptake of visits there had been positive feedback from the detainees regarding the interaction between the detainee and the custody staff.  JM suggested that when the ICVs contacted the custody units to conduct the telephone visits, they should enquire if the ICV leaflet had been distributed to the detainees and if this was not the case, ask the Custody Staff if the leaflets could be handed out and then make arrangements to call back to conduct the visit.  NW thanked the visitors for supporting the scheme as it was very much appreciated.  JM advised us that all the Custody Sergeants were very cooperative and very helpful when conducting telephone visits. |  |
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| **5.** | **Bitesize Training** |  |
|  | As the training material was a direct training resource, it was agreed that the training slides to be circulated and any questions emailed to NW. | **All visitors** |
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| **6.** | **Performance Framework** |  |
|  | We received an update on the performance framework for our information.  NW advised us that there had been one missed call that had been overlooked. There had been 10% uptake of calls accepted. There had been a good spread of visiting(calling) times and days recorded over the past three months.  RG confirmed that it would be difficult to conduct a telephone visit at 6:30pm which was the hand over period and 8 - 9am which was when preparation was taking place for detainees to attend court but otherwise there were no issues. |  |
| **7.** | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  | DB asked if there was CCTV in the units. RG confirmed that all the cells within Newport custody suite had CCTV cameras and there were four cells in Ystrad Mynach that had CCTV cameras. Plans to upgrade the cameras in all the cells at Ystrad Mynach had been delayed due to Covid 19.  RG advised the live cameras were constantly recording and the recordings were archived for three months before deletion. There was almost 100% camera footage at Newport Custody. All officers wear body worn cameras. All cells in Newport had life sign monitoring fitted, to monitor detainees who had become unwell. It would sound an alarm should the detainees heart stop beating or if the detainee stopped breathing. Not all cells in Ystrad Mynach had been fitted with a life sign monitor but would do once the upgrade had taken place.  NW advised that not all responses had been received with regards to the length of appointment of the scheme Chair as to whether it should be unlimited or every three years, provided they Chair was elected annually. NW asked those with a preference email her. |  |
| **8.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **6pm, on the 14th April 2021 in Conference Room 1 at Gwent Police Headquarters, Croesyceiliog.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 7:05pm**

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| **Actions from Meeting dated 21st January 2021** | |  |  |  |
| **Minute Number** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Update** | **Complete/Ongoing** |
| 2 | The Lead Nurse had sent her apologies and hoped to attend the next meeting. | **CD** | The Lead Nurse has been invited to our next meeting. | **Complete** |
| 2 | JM informed us she had not received the poster and requested it be sent again. CD agreed to circulate the poster. | **CD** | Poster sent out. | **Complete** |
| 2 | The ICV posters and leaflets to be delivered to Newport Custody unit. RG confirmed he had not received the posters due to them being delivered to Ystrad Mynach. RG to obtain posters and ensure leaflets distributed to detainees. | **RG** | Leaflets and posters are now in place in both units | **Complete** |
| 5 | As the training material was a direct training resource, it was agreed that the training slides to be circulated and any questions emailed to NW. | **All Visitors** |  |  |