Decision log 2023.013



**MINUTES OF THE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**

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

**POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON 11TH JULY 2023**

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

Mr Richard Holland – Independent Custody Visitor (RH)

Mr Alan Heywood – Independent Custody Visitor (AH)

Ms Linda Mason - Independent Custody Visitor (LM)

Mr Michael Hallinan - Independent Custody Visitor (MH)

Mr David Binding - Independent Custody Visitor (DB)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Nicola Warren - Scheme Administrator, OPCC (NW)

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

Mrs Sian Curley – Chief Executive, OPCC (SC)

Inspector Martin Cawley – Custody Newport (MC)

***The meeting commenced at 6:11 p.m.***

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|  | **Notes and Actions** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from Marilyn Rankin, Lisa Langley, Chief Inspector Mark Thomas, Custody Nurse Louise Price and Ystrad Mynach Custody Inspector Andy Brunker. |  |
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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.  DB confirmed more information around the recording of detainee ethnicity would be available from the disproportionality scrutiny panel meeting in December. CD to send invite to Gwent Police Governance and Assurance Inspector to attend in December 2023.  MC informed the visitors that Ystrad Mynach unit had been temporarily closed until October 2023 to assist with staffing levels. All detainees would be conveyed to Newport Custody unit.  As wellbeing of staff was a priority, Sergeants had regular one to one meetings with officers ensuring referrals were made at the appropriate times. A wellbeing dog attended the unit bimonthly.  MC advised the visitors that staffing levels had been near the sufficient number of officers required and that a leave embargo had been put in place to ensure sufficient staff were available over the summer holiday period. MC advised us that succession planning and forecasting would assist with ensuring correct staffing levels were met going forward.  MC informed the visitors that officers and staff had access to Care First,an independent Employee Assistance Scheme, , who provided advice on health and wellbeing and Occupational Health who provided medical support and counselling. Gwent Police had a Welfare Chalet available to staff.  MC advised the visitors that there was a Trauma Risk Management (TRIM) officer available who offered support to staff exposed to potentially traumatic incidents, but this was not always utilised.  MC advised the visitors there was a discrepancy with the Near Miss figures provided by the Health and Safety department. MC would ensure a message was included in the weekly newsletter to ensure all officers were recording near misses correctly. When staffing levels were below the recommended level, this would be a health and safety risk and should be recorded as a near miss.  A discussion was held around custody officers being aware of the Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme and understanding the process.  NW confirmed that she attended Custody Training to provide information on the scheme and asked visitors if they like to attend to provide an ICV perspective. NW to circulate the training dates and visitors to contact NW should they wish to attend.  A discussion was held around an incident that had occurred whilst a visit was being carried out. NW advised the visitors that should an issue arise, and the visitors were not satisfied with the response they received from the custody officer, this should be escalated to the Custody Sergeant. If the response was still not satisfactory, it should be raised with the Custody Inspector and then reported to the Scheme Manager.  MC informed the meeting that a reformed addict had been introduced into the custody unit to speak with detainees as peer support worker. The support worker would be working with Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) and feedback was being collated on how successful this had been.  MC confirmed the use of theTreadMatch device (a scanner for gathering footwear impressions during the detention process) had increased significantly.  MC confirmed that the life? sign had been replaced in several cells but one cell the equipment was still intermittent and was waiting for be replaced.  MC advised the meeting that a scanning device that had been installed to detect any metal objects that detainees could be in possession of when arriving in the custody unit, it was not yet operational as staff were waiting for training from the supplier.  MC confirmed that issues with the CCTV cameras had been rectified.  MC informed the meeting when an item of clothing was seized as evidence it was recorded with the same coded as a strip search. Some work was being carried out to clarity the coding to establish the figures on actual strip searches as opposed to just seizing clothes for evidence.  NW asked if there had been any issues with Appropriate Adults (AA) attending the unit. MC confirmed there had been no issues with AAs attending during office hours but there had been issues with attendance from Social Services out of hours. In these cases, the juvenile would be bailed and remain in custody. There was an agency used for AA but only for adult detainees. They were looking at potentially training staff to attend for young people.  SC informed the meeting that Strip Search of children had been on the national agenda with all Police Forces and Commissioners’ Offices in England and Wales and Welsh forces had had been asked to report to the Minister of the Social Justice on strip search of children. It had been identified that the figures had been recorded differently across England and Wales.  DB advised the visitors that the Disproportionality and Scrutiny Panel were looking at the figures and the way in which they were recorded.  MC informed the visitors that following a change in protocol from the College of Policing, detainees should be allowed to keep all ligatures and officers should justify why they have been taken from them. A risk assessment would be undertaken to determine if ligatures should be removed.  JM gave feedback that a small number of detainees were not being kept updated whilst in custody. When a detainee had made a request for a member of the public to be informed of their detention, when this had been carried out it was not always fed back to the detainee.  MC informed the meeting that officers would contact the investigating officer for an update to feedback to the detainees in a more timely way. | **CD**  **NW/All visitors** |
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| **3.** | **Chair and Vice Chair Nominations** |  |
|  | Visitors provided their nominations by email prior to the meeting and as a result the current Chair and Vice Chair were voted to remain for another year.  Both JM and DB accepted the nomination to remain in the roles.  NW thanked them for their hard work over the last year.  NW informed the visitors that JM had met with the OPCC Engagement Team to record a short video to promote the scheme which would circulate within the communities to promote the scheme.  NW advised the meeting that a strategy was being prepared to assist with the next recruitment phase with a view of reaching a wider audience to encourage more interest and to increase diversity on the scheme.  NW confirmed a proactive approach was being carried out to reach more diverse communities and had contacted positive outreach workers. |  |
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| **4.** | **Briefing on Force Culture** |  |
|  | SC introduced herself as the Chief Executive of the OPCC. SC gave a talk on Force Culture and Impartiality   * Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. * Failure to act or call out inappropriate behaviour. * Victims of inappropriate behaviour will be supported. |  |
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| **5.** | **Custody Update** |  |
|  | MC informed the visitors that the force was focussing on children in custody, domestic abuse and domestic violence to ensure investigations were being progressed effectively, and when no further action was the outcome, safeguarding advice was provided to the victims.  MC informed the visitors there were three CDOs in the training process and four Custody Officers being mentored which would increase staffing to five CDOs and five Custody Officers on each shift. |  |
| **6.** | **Scheme Update & Performance Framework Update** |  |
|  | NW informed the meeting there were eight visitors on the scheme and two of the visitors were taking break and would resume visits in the coming months.  MC to advise the OPCC of any planned closures in the future.  NW reminded us that Ystard Mynach Custody unit remain closed throughout the summer period due to staffing issues.  This would be reviewed at the end of the summer. Any scheduled visits should be conducted at Newport Custody unit.  NW informed the visitors there had been a good spread of visit times and days and a visit had been conducted over the weekend.  NW reiterated that visitors should submit the visit form as soon as possible for processing to the scheme administrator by post or via email.  NW asked the visitors if they could monitor the level of time it takes for an Appropriate Adult (AA) to attend for juveniles and vulnerable adults. AAs should attend when practicable.  MC confirmed there was an agency service used to obtain AAs but currently only for adult detainees.  NW asked MC what the process was with the Mental Health Nurse assessing a detainee before their attendance in court.  MC confirmed if a detainee disclosed mental health issues a risk assessment would be carried out prior to attendance in court.  MC informed the visitors when attending incidents where mental health concerns were present, before any prosecution action was taken, a Mental Health Nurse was required to confirm if the individual had the capacity to understand their actions.  SC informed the visitors the Mental Health Practitioners based in the contact centre had access to medical records.  NW advised the visitors there had been issues with accessing to custody this quarter with eight visits gaining access within five minutes.  NW asked all visitors to review the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) newsletter and watch the bitesize training resources on learning disability.  NW informed the visitors we were working towards achieving silver compliance level as part of the Quality Assurance Framework in preparation for assessment in September 2023.  NW gave out an updated Anti Racism Policy from the ICVA and asked all visitors to read and sign. | **MC**  **All visitors**  **All visitors**  **All visitors** |
| **7.** | **Any Other Business** |  |
|  | None. |  |
| **8.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next meeting will be held at **6pm, 16th October 2023.** |  |

**Meeting concluded at 7:57pm**

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| 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 |

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| Contact Officer |  |
| Name | Nicola Warren |
| Position | Governance Officer |
| Telephone | 01633 642200 |
| Email | Nicola.warren@gwent.police.uk |
| Background papers | None |