



Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent Decision	
PCCG-2024-004	POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR GWENT DECISION
SUBJECT	Review of Custody Provision
SUMMARY	To record the decision of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the use of Ystrad Mynach as the single unit for Gwent Police.

DECISION

1.	To invest £986,000 into Ystrad Mynach Custody Unit to ensure it meets Home Office compliance, thereby providing a single unit for Custody provision for Gwent Police. The investment will add an additional 10 cells; enhance CCTV and 'Lifesign' monitoring; create a specific juvenile/vulnerable adult area; and improve the custody desk area.
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Jane Mudd, 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	24/05/2024

Contact Officer	
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Background papers	Situational Report on Custody Review (attached)
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Board: Op Model Programme Board

Paper Number: May 2024

Paper Type: Situational Report

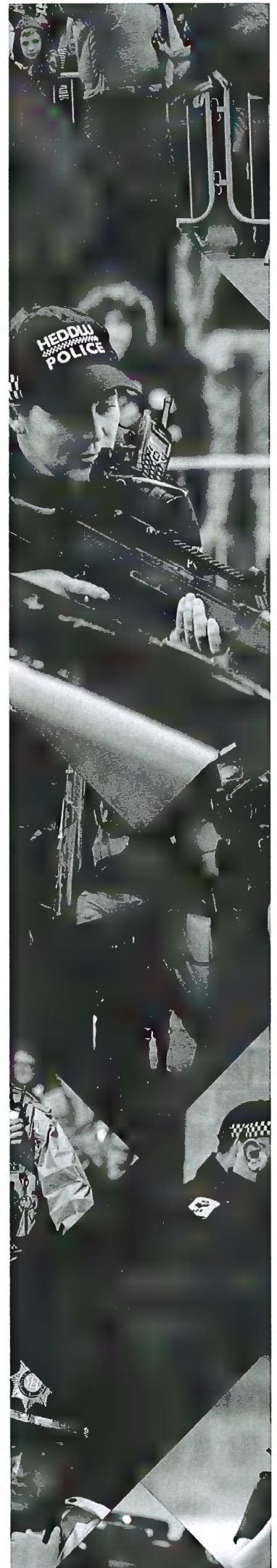
Project Name: Custody Review

Project / Work-stream: Custody Services

Project Sponsor: ACC Hobrough

Project Lead: Supt Thomas

Report Author: Insp Chris Isaac and Matthew Reece



PROTECTIVE MARKING: PROTECT, SUBJECT TO PUBLICATION STRATEGY

Background

This report will look at the current custody provisions in Gwent and options for a more efficient and effective Custody provision for the force for the period between now and the opening of the Torfaen Custody unit (GPOF).

The Force has been operating with a Custody Model of two fully functioning 24/7 units since January 2019. More recently the Force has reverted to a one-unit model with Ystrad Custody closing from June 22nd until September 9th 2023. During this time Newport Custody was the sole unit in operation apart from several occasions where detainee numbers outstripped available cells in Newport or for pre-planned Operations.

Ystrad was then re-opened to act in conjunction with Newport on 22nd December 2023 to address demand during the Christmas and New Year period. On the 21st of January 2024 Newport Custody was then closed with Ystrad Custody being trialled as the single unit provision, this is still in place to date. The aim of this is to ease the impact of abstractions and reduce pressure on the custody team whilst allowing for the continuation of a robust approach to managing offenders.

When any one unit is in use the unused site is maintained in standby mode to facility operations and unexpected increases in demand if required.

The current resourcing model for Gwent custody is as follows:

- The Custody management team consists of one temporary Superintendent, one Chief Inspector, two Inspectors one training/strategic Sergeant and a Lead Custody Health Care Professional.
- Each custody unit is split into four shifts and work a 4 on 4 off pattern. Each shift work on a rotational basis; two-day shifts 0700-1900 and two-night shifts 1900-0700 followed by four rest days.
- Newport has an establishment of 12 Sergeants and 20 CDOs
- Ystrad Mynach has an establishment of 8 Sergeants and 20 CDOs
- Each shift has an established Health Care professional with 8 authorised nurses

In addition to the above there are also two Bail Sergeants, and two Justice Outcomes Officers. One Sergeant from the pool of Custody Sergeants is being used to support the Bail and VA process. This is due to increased demand following changes in bail legislation.

Although there are 20 Sergeants and 40 CDOs, there are abstractions that impact custody service delivery, which in turn cause abstractions from LPAs who provide cover.

Feasibility / NPEG Compliance of current provision

During the last decade Gwent has reviewed its custody provision on several occasions due to similar problems that have been identified and until the GPOF development is complete it is unlikely that a solution will be achieved.

In essence, Gwent does not currently have a custody unit in a convenient location for the whole force and the two that are available are dated and struggle to operate effectively when nearing full capacity. Any partial closure of one of the units is unlikely to yield significant financial savings due to both units forming part of a larger station that needs to remain operational and staffing levels need to be maintained when you combine the demand to one unit.

Another consideration for our Custody provision is their current National Police Estate Group (NPEG) compliance rates, as it stands:

- NPEG compliance for Newport is 45%
- NPEG compliance for Ystrad is 64%
- NPEG compliance for Newport with additional 10 cells is 54%
- NPEG compliance for Ystrad with additional 10 cells is 82%

Appendix D provides a detailed breakdown of the compliance rates drawing direct comparisons between the two units as well as the adjusted scores should either have additional cells.

The advancement in custody service provision over the past decade has meant that neither unit is fit for purpose and both struggle when reaching their capacity. Ystrad Mynach is seen as the more modern facility due to its layout, ability to segregate vulnerable prisoners more easily, vehicular access and provision for remote monitoring of interviews in complex/serious cases.

Some examples of the shortcomings in both units are as follows:

- No facilities to detain minors.
- No facilities to detail persons with Mental Health Issues.
- Additional support space (Interview Rooms).
- Improved Charge Desk facilities.
- Hand washing facilities to Cells.
- Improvements to cell Equipment.
- Attend to ligature points.

More recently a compliance report was completed in June 2023 by Corstorphine and Wright. The purpose of this report was to undertake a visual inspection and subsequent compliance report of two custody suites, to assess and understand how they compare to current guidance. This report is embedded in this document but covers many of the same areas, this report also completed a RAG assessment allowing greater clarity regarding prioritising work.

It should be noted that the Home Office regularly review their Custody requirements for safer detention and as time progresses all compliance rates will reduce as the guidance is updated.

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In regard to current costings Gwent currently pay £4250 monthly regarding basic maintenance for both Newport and Ystrad custody unit. There are also additional maintenance costs for items such as doors/locks etc which equate too approximately:

£6k for Newport
£3k for Ystrad

Gwent also runs a rolling program of mini and major refurbishment for both units, these are done on a 5yr (mini) and 10yr (major) cycle. Newport Custody is due a mini refurbishment in 1yr with Ystrad requiring one in another 3 years.

Should we choose the option of having an additional 10 cells this would take then have a lead time of 16 weeks with an additional 3 weeks of preparation/installation work being required before use. During this time additional work such as improvements within Custody would be completed i.e. for Ystrad rework of the custody area and CCTV in all cells. The additional cell area would come with an 18-month warranty and have a 25-year guarantee.

To illustrate estimated costings, Ystrad additional 10 cells would be:
£750K

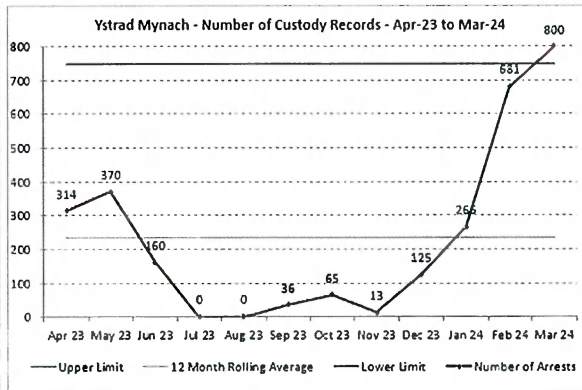
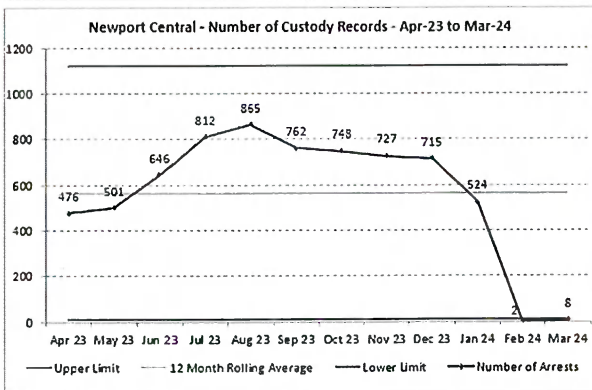
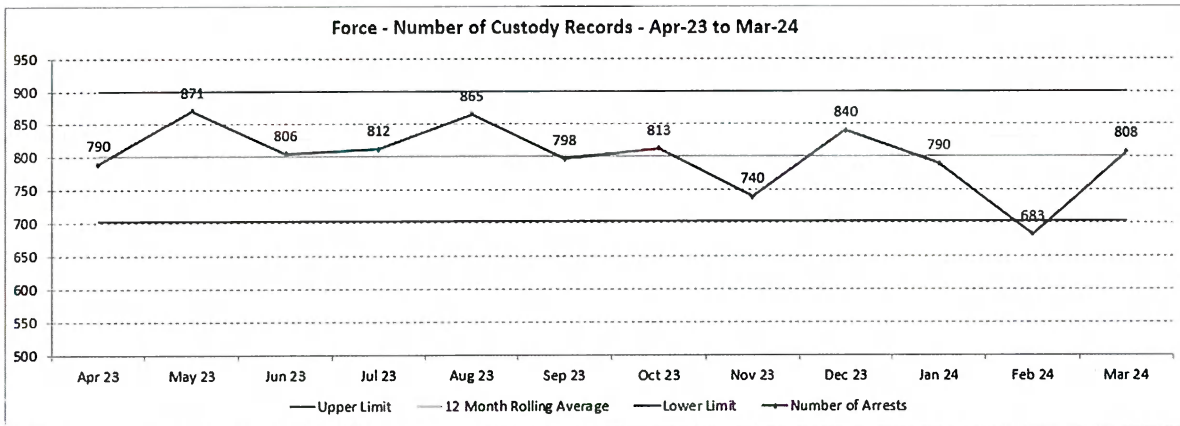
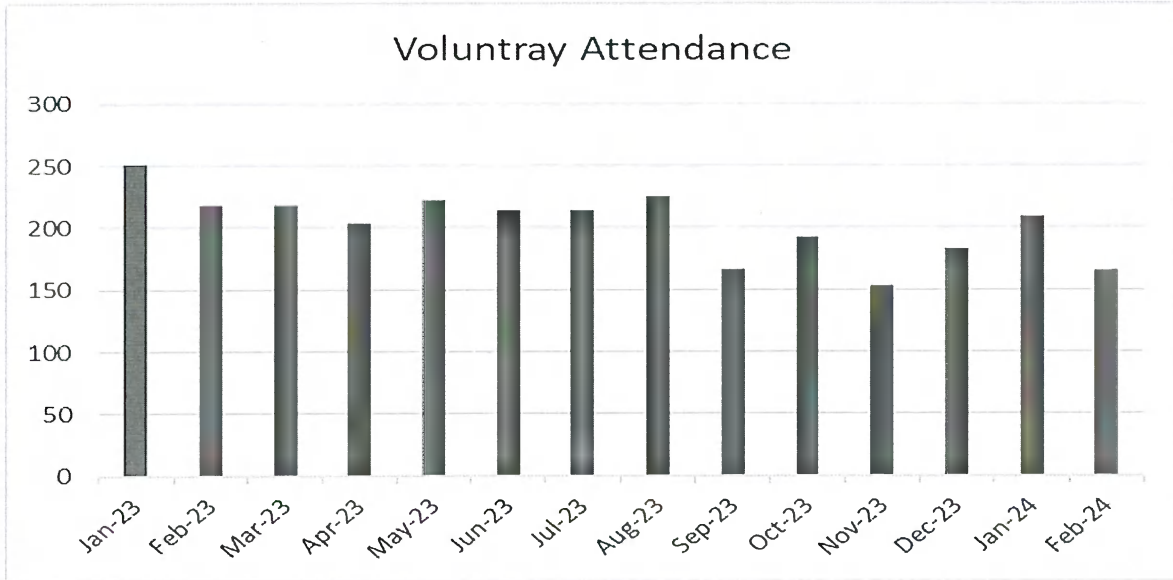
CCTV in all cells.
£51K

Work to create a specific Juvenile/Vulnerable adult area.
£75K

Work to improve the custody desk area including desk 4.
£110K

Gwent Custody data

Below is arrest and voluntary attendee data, the purpose of this is to highlight demand since April 2023.



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Arrests by LPA - Mar 23 to Feb 24

Newport	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24
Current Year	297	326	317	305	363	361	311	332	283	292	260	206
Last Year	289	335	285	305	293	326	272	314	283	312	325	307
Upper Limit	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
12 Month Rolling Average	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304
Lower Limit	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222
	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23
Previous Year	289	335	285	305	293	326	272	314	283	312	325	307
Standard Deviation	41.22											

Torfaen	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24
Current Year	136	120	118	126	110	130	108	117	105	126	120	109
Last Year	103	104	126	99	135	126	110	133	111	115	136	126
Upper Limit	137	137	137	137	137	137	137	137	137	137	137	137
12 Month Rolling Average	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119	119
Lower Limit	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23
Previous Year	103	104	126	99	135	126	110	133	111	115	136	126
Standard Deviation	9.18											

Caerphilly	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24
Current Year	192	190	211	177	167	187	186	193	188	214	218	241
Last Year	212	186	191	198	227	209	178	226	199	205	185	178
Upper Limit	236	236	236	236	236	236	236	236	236	236	236	236
12 Month Rolling Average	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197
Lower Limit	158	158	158	158	158	158	158	158	158	158	158	158
	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23
Previous Year	212	186	191	198	227	209	178	226	199	205	185	178
Standard Deviation	19.48											

Monmouthshire	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24
Current Year	54	66	79	70	63	70	76	49	67	85	53	45
Last Year	64	63	54	51	82	72	69	64	62	68	81	62
Upper Limit	89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89
12 Month Rolling Average	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
Lower Limit	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23
Previous Year	64	63	54	51	82	72	69	64	62	68	81	62
Standard Deviation	11.89											

Blaenau Gwent	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23	Jun 23	Jul 23	Aug 23	Sep 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24
Current Year	83	67	93	95	77	97	80	94	88	112	82	65
Last Year	73	75	77	69	68	73	87	101	88	83	88	81
Upper Limit	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112
12 Month Rolling Average	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
Lower Limit	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23
Previous Year	73	75	77	69	68	73	87	101	88	83	88	81
Standard Deviation	12.71											

The above data highlights increases and decreases in arrest figures between March 2023 to February 2024.

Newport has seen a drop in arrest figures from Oct 2023 with a slight increase as expected in December 2023 before continuing the downward trend.

In Torfaen we have seen a slight drop in arrest figures during this time

In both Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent, we have a drop of approx. 40-50 from December 2023 until the end of February 2024.

Caerphilly is the only area to see an increase in arrest figures this could be attributed to the fact the primary Custody Unit is now in Ystrad (Caerphilly area).

Custody footfall			
	2022	2023	2024
Jan		828	790
Feb		772	683
Mar		772	808
April	786	790	
May	767	871	
June	773	806	
July	833	812	
Aug	816	865	
Sep	738	798	
Oct	845	813	
Nov	766	740	
Dec	818	840	

Custody footfall as well as voluntary attendee numbers have been reviewed and over the last two years. We have seen some fluctuations in these numbers month to month but generally we are seeing small increases year by year. The biggest changes highlighted above were in May 2023 against 2022 where there were over 100 more arrested on the year before. More recently in February 2024 we saw 89 fewer arrests than in February 2023. Currently there are no obvious reasons for these more notable changes in arrest numbers.

For voluntary attendees the numbers have again stayed quite consistent, the main drop being in the figures from February 2023 against February 2024. Again, there is no obvious coloration.

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Cell utilisation data

The table below provides an illustration of the cell utilisation since January 2024 when the force adopted a single custody provision within Ystrad Mynach. Unsurprisingly there is a trend for the highest volume of prisoners being detained over both Friday and Saturday nights within average volume of detainees of 22, before these are slowly released at various points the following morning. Similar to when the Force only used Newport Central, the demand during mid- week seems less predictable with an average of 17 detainees during this period.

During the time period of 22nd January – 31st March 2024 the maximum number of detainees at any given time was 28 with the minimum number being 4 (please note I have not included the first opening day of custody within these figures). Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that during this time period there has been periods of high demand as a result of a few Six Nations weekends which can impact upon detainee numbers.

There has also been 25 separate days where the number of cells utilised has exceeded 20 which is still within the maximum capacity of Ystrad Mynach.

Date	Time																							MAX	MIN		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			23	
	00:00	01:00	02:00	03:00	04:00	05:00	06:00	07:00	08:00	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00			23:00	
22/01/2024	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	6	7	6	6	8	8	8	8	9	9	10	12	15	15	15	2	
23/01/2024	13	16	17	17	17	19	20	20	22	19	14	15	15	13	13	14	11	9	8	9	8	7	5	6	6	22	5
24/01/2024	8	10	12	12	12	13	13	12	10	8	9	12	11	13	10	12	12	14	14	15	15	15	14	14	14	15	8
25/01/2024	14	13	12	10	11	10	10	10	9	8	10	9	8	8	9	9	12	11	11	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	8
26/01/2024	15	16	15	15	13	12	12	13	13	12	12	13	14	12	13	14	14	12	12	11	12	13	14	13	13	16	11
27/01/2024	15	14	14	14	16	18	18	18	19	19	15	13	13	13	11	10	7	7	10	12	12	13	15	15	15	19	7
28/01/2024	11	12	12	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	13	14	13	12	11	13	15	16	15	15	16	16	16	16	11
29/01/2024	15	17	17	15	15	17	16	16	16	13	13	11	11	9	10	10	11	12	12	12	11	10	11	11	11	17	9
30/01/2024	11	10	9	9	11	11	11	11	8	8	11	13	14	16	15	13	14	15	16	16	16	14	14	15	15	16	8
31/01/2024	17	17	18	17	18	17	17	17	20	16	15	12	12	12	14	14	16	16	15	16	17	19	18	16	16	20	12
01/02/2024	18	18	19	20	19	19	17	17	14	14	15	17	17	15	16	18	21	21	20	21	23	23	21	21	21	23	14
02/02/2024	21	22	21	20	20	19	19	19	15	12	13	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	11	11	12	11	12	13	13	22	10
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20/03/2024	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	18	15	11	12	12	13	10	11	11	11	12	12	15	13	11	13	14	18	10	
21/03/2024	16	18	18	18	19	19	17	17	14	15	14	13	14	15	12	11	12	12	13	14	16	14	12	19	11		
22/03/2024	13	13	14	14	13	11	11	11	10	10	8	10	13	10	10	9	8	9	8	9	10	11	13	13	14	8	
23/03/2024	12	12	15	17	18	20	20	20	18	18	17	17	18	18	15	15	12	10	9	11	10	11	10	12	20	9	
24/03/2024	12	12	14	15	16	14	14	15	14	14	14	16	17	17	19	19	19	17	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	12
25/03/2024	16	19	19	19	17	15	15	16	14	10	10	10	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	11	13	14	14	14	19	10	
26/03/2024	15	17	18	18	17	15	15	17	19	19	19	18	18	17	16	11	11	11	11	11	12	14	12	13	11	19	11
27/03/2024	12	13	14	14	15	15	15	15	12	10	12	12	12	9	8	4	6	7	6	7	9	8	8	7	15	4	
28/03/2024	7	8	7	7	7	9	9	10	11	13	10	10	12	14	14	14	11	12	13	13	12	11	11	11	14	7	
29/03/2024	9	10	11	10	10	9	9	10	9	10	11	12	12	11	12	11	11	10	9	9	10	12	14	14	14	9	
30/03/2024	16	15	14	15	16	20	20	20	17	15	14	12	10	9	10	9	7	5	7	7	8	7	7	7	20	5	
31/03/2024	9	10	12	15	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	19	17	13	13	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	10	20	9	

For clarification the data only includes detainees where detention has been authorised and therefore does not necessarily show the full demand within custody as there will be several occasions where detainees are held within the waiting area either waiting for an available cell or waiting to be processed. This is a result of the pressure placed upon the sergeants to process existing detainees within the unit. Also, this data would not take into consideration the number of cells which may be unavailable for use, such as awaiting cleaning after contamination or closed off due to safety concerns.

Contingency planning

During the trial period in Newport and Ystrad, in the event that detainee numbers were higher than cell capacity then the free unit was used as overflow. If unplanned this was managed by Bronze Inspectors in conjunction with the Silver in FCC, Gold would also be notified. The Inspector would direct Custody Sergeants and Detention Officers to travel and open the overflow unit following a check that it was safe, clean and had the necessary provisions to manage (food, blankets etc).

Following detainee numbers returning to manageable levels in the primary unit then the overflow unit would close and await any remaining detainees to be disposed of. Staff would then return to the primary unit and complete their duties.

For a planned event such as football or an Operation, force planning or Custody SMT should be notified for resource management to be completed before hand with a comprehensive plan to open and then close the overflow unit.

Arrival – Booking in

Analysis of the Niche Custody extract has been undertaken to review the time between the detainees arriving at the custody unit and the creation of the custody record. This analysis has covered the period from 22nd January – 31st March 2024 where Ystrad Mynach was the only custody provision within Gwent.

The table below provides a breakdown of the volume of custody records created by the arrival to creation time. During this period 1648 custody records were created with approximately 47% waiting between 10 minutes and 1 hour.

Volume		
Less than 10 mins	460	28%
Between 10 mins and 1 Hour	776	47%
More than 1 Hour	412	25%

A comparison exercise has also taken place to establish if there has been an impact upon the booking in times based upon a one custody unit model. As a result, an analyse of the similar time period from the previous year (February & March 2023) has taken place to compare the booking in times from when a two-custody unit were in operation.

The table below provides a breakdown for the booking in time during this time which suggests that a greater percentage of records were created in less than 10 minutes compared to the current model. In addition, less records were created after more than an hour, although the volume between 10 mins and an hour is fairly consistent.

Volume		
Less than 10 mins	584	40%
Between 10 mins and 1 Hour	611	41%
More than 1 Hour	286	19%

One of the main complaints from officers is waiting times. The process within custody has always been driven by the Custody Sergeants with them booking in, completing all the associated admin such as adding additional arrests as well as booking in property. Custody Sergeants also review cases, provide charging rationale / bail rationale, general advice, serve ID papers, manage ongoing risk assessments upon persons leaving custody. They also confirm means of transport home for detainees as well as creating all disposals including civil orders such as DVPNs which can be very time consuming. This is also compounded during handover times with the unit not receiving any further detainees between 0600 until handover is complete, with this being repeated at 18:00.

These processes within custody whilst being the norm are somewhat disjointed and require a great deal of organising from the Custody Sergeants. As the unit becomes busier this is much harder to manage resulting in extended waiting times and persons being kept in custody longer than they should, therefore breaching PACE. The layout and size of both Newport and Ystrad compound this further meaning the custody area is chaotic when busy.

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To address this Custody SMT have looked at several measures to alleviate these delays:

The first relates to handovers – Surrey Police have introduced a process where the handover is provided to a single Sergeant thus allowing others to continue the booking in process. This positively impacts on waiting times and the flow of the unit, this has been endorsed by HMICFRS.

The second relates to giving Sergeants dedicated roles with the unit. Whilst in Ystrad desk 1 and 2 have been assigned designated booking in desks with desk 3 looking only at disposals. When staffing has allowed there has also been a decision-making Sergeant and a Custody Detention Officer (CDO) on desk 4 assisting with admin.

These measures are still embedding within the unit and are being evaluated on a regular basis by the Custody SMT to assess the impact.

It should be noted that these measures cannot be utilised across a two-unit model. Simply put there are not enough staff across two units to implement. At least four Sergeants need to be available to effectively run these processes.

Response Officer – Time Spent Within Custody

An analysis of iR3 has taken place during February 2024 to establish the amount of time officer spend within custody along with the number of officers that attend the unit during any given day.

The analysis has identified that on average Response Officers spent 1 hr 23 mins within the custody unit which has been taken from the arrival and departure times on iR3. The data has been broken down to sector level which illustrates both an average and median figure for each area during this time period.

The data has also been analysed to review the number of distinct officers who attended custody each day. The average across all sectors suggests that 12 officers per sector attend custody on a daily basis, although this figure is slightly higher within both Newport East & West. Please note that these figures are based upon officers and not vehicles and therefore do not take into consideration units which are double crewed.

The table below provides a brief overview of the findings.

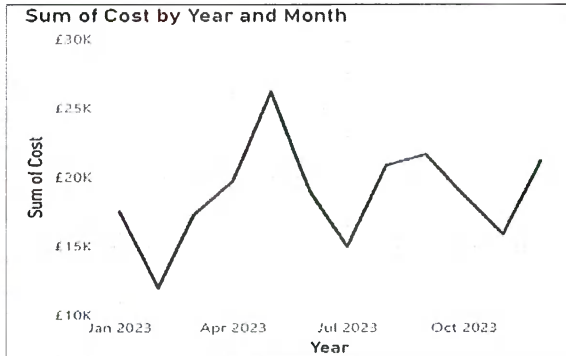
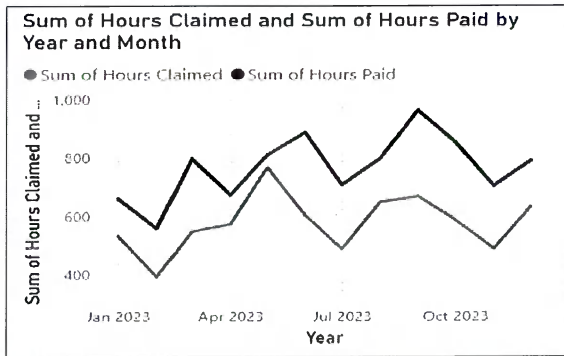
<u>Response Officers</u>	Newport West	Newport East	Monmouthshire	Caerphilly South	Caerphilly Central	Caerphilly North	Blaenau Gwent
Average Duration - Time spent in Ystrad Mynach	01:39:26	01:42:52	01:26:04	01:08:26	01:14:35	01:14:03	01:19:30
Median Duration - Time spent in Ystrad Mynach	01:12:35	01:20:07	01:11:19	00:50:33	00:52:53	01:00:06	01:00:07
Max officer trips - per day	15	16	10	12	12	10	13
Min officer trips - per day	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Median officer Trips - per day	7.5	4	3	4	4	4	7

*It should be noted this data is specific to all visitors travelling to Ystrad Custody and not specific to officers making arrests.

Police Officer Overtime – Custody Cover

An analysis of Police Officer overtime in relation to custody cover has established that during 2023 a total of £224,850.18 was paid out, to ensure an adequate level of cover provided within the units.

This can be broken down further into 6920 hours claimed and 9203 hours paid during this time period. Whilst the volume of overtime has been established the specific cause each month is unclear, although there is a clear spike in volume during the springtime where the unit had high abstraction rates, which resulted in the closure of one unit as a mitigation measure.



Claim Date - Year	Claim Date - Month	Sum of Hours Claimed	Sum of Hours Paid
2023	January	531.65	659.98
2023	February	391.30	558.05
2023	March	547.05	796.82
2023	April	572.70	672.58
2023	May	766.50	810.91
2023	June	603.35	887.87
2023	July	486.85	707.48
2023	August	648.05	798.41
2023	September	667.30	963.22
2023	October	586.80	854.61
2023	November	487.25	703.37
2023	December	631.40	789.93
		6920.20	9203.23

Claim Date - Year	Claim Date - Month	Sum of Calculated Claim Cost
2023	January	£17,486.83
2023	February	£11,970.70
2023	March	£17,259.80
2023	April	£19,719.42
2023	May	£26,180.98
2023	June	£19,010.73
2023	July	£14,984.16
2023	August	£20,858.71
2023	September	£21,658.75
2023	October	£18,663.57
2023	November	£15,874.93
2023	December	£21,181.60
		£224,850.18

During the first quarter of 2024 £57,721.48 has been paid as Police Officer overtime based upon 2143.75 hours claimed.

Claim Date - Year	Claim Date - Month	Sum of Hours Claimed	Sum of Hours Paid	Sum of Calculated Claim Cost
2024	January	305.5	348.8	£11,458.83
2024	February	457.15	674.82	£15,621.97
2024	March	877.6	1120.13	£30,640.68
		1640.25	2143.75	£57,721.48

Police Staff Overtime – Custody Cover

Similar to the above an analysis Police Staff overtime to provide custody cover has established that during 2023 a total of £105,150.52 was paid out to ensure a sufficient level to cover.

This can be broken down further into 4811 hours claimed and 5588 hours paid during this time period.



During the first quarter of 2024 £23,994.48 has been paid as Police Staff overtime based upon 1135.17 hours claimed.

Custody Rota

Over the last few months, the custody rota has been analysed to identify if during peak demand resourcing was sufficient.

Prior to the change in the operating model, custody operated with a minimum staffing of 3 Custody Sergeants and 6 CDOs during the week, this was then increased on weekends to 4 Custody Sergeants and 7 CDOs, this was done specifically to address weekend demand.

With the new operating model embedding in custody as of the 1st March 2024, custody now runs with 4 Custody Sergeants and 7 CDOs at all times. As stated, this has been done with the express purpose of supporting the operating model, therefore reducing waiting times and improving the flow and feel of the unit.

This change has resulted in an increase in overtime during March 2024 and this has been evidenced in overtime expenditure.

In addition, there are a significant number of new Sergeants within custody. Many are being tutored so are not counted as viable resources until sufficiently trained, others have legacy leave which again has impacted on increased overtime. Sickness and other restrictions have also impacted on custody ability to operate as effectively as possible.

This is also repeated for Custody Detention Officers (CDOs), at this moment in time there are only 3 vacancies out of the total 40. Coupled with sickness and restrictions there are only 33 deployable CDOs operating across 4 shifts. This equates to just over 8 per shift with minimum staffing set to 7, this does not consider annual leave and courses. To support custody there are now more resilience Sergeants across the force, there is also a planned Gaoler course, this coupled with resources management with RMU should result in decreases in the necessity for overtime within the custody unit going forward.

Custody Staff Survey results

A survey was created and shared with Custody staff asking them the following questions:

1. How do you find the Acoustics/Noise levels in

	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good
Ystrad	7	4	20	9	5
Newport	14	14	14	2	0

2. How do you find the cleanliness / Infection Control of the Custody Unit

	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good
Ystrad	5	10	20	8	2
Newport	5	10	19	8	2

3. If you stated Very Poor or Poor to the last question, please provide reasons why and reference to the appropriate custody suite.

- **Poor cleaning standards in custody units:** There were several complaints from staff about the dirty and unhygienic conditions of the custody units in Newport and Ystrad Mynach. The cleaners do not come around enough in the Ystrad Mynach custody unit, and that some of them are not doing their job properly. The staff report that the cells, bins, and kitchen are often filthy and overflowing
- **Lack of privacy and noise in Newport custody unit:** Some staff also express dissatisfaction with the layout of the Newport custody unit, which makes it difficult to hear and communicate with the detainees at the desk and does not provide enough privacy for them.

4. On a scale of 1-10 how do you find the facilities i.e. canteen, rest area at Ystrad

Scale	Count of On a scale of 1-10 how do you find the facilities i.e. canteen, rest area at Ystrad
0	3
1	3
2	4
3	9
4	5
5	6
6	2
7	6
8	3
10	4
Grand Total	45

5. On a scale of 1-10 how do you find the facilities i.e. canteen, rest area at Newport

Scale	Count of On a scale of 1-10 how do you find the facilities i.e. canteen, rest area at Newport
0	3
1	2
2	1
3	7
4	3
5	11
6	3
7	6
8	7
10	2
Grand Total	45

6. On a scale of 1-10 how does working at Ystrad affect your daily commute

Scale	Count of On a scale of 1-10 how does working at Ystrad affect your daily commute
0	23
1	1
4	2
5	2
6	1
7	1
8	5
9	2
10	8
Grand Total	45

7. On a scale of 1-10 how does working at Newport affect your daily commute

Row Labels	Count of On a scale of 1-10 how does working at Newport affect your daily commute
0	13
1	5
2	3
3	4
4	1
5	3
6	3
7	1
9	2
10	10
Grand Total	45

8. Which of the two units do you consider to be better equipped to facilitate visitors

	Count of Which of the two units do you consider to be better equipped to facilitate visitors
Newport Central	13
Ystrad Mynach	32
Grand Total	45

9. Should there be a future consideration to move to an intermediate single custody provision, which one would you consider to be the better option

Scale	Count of Should there be a future consideration to move to an intermediate single custody provision, which one would you consider to be the better option
Newport Central	18
Ystrad Mynach	27
Grand Total	45

10. Lastly, what have I not asked you that you feel is relevant in relation to the working environment (please state which custody suite you are referring to when answering this question).

The staff compare the two units on various aspects, such as the equipment, the space, the layout, the security, the facilities, and the location. The Newport unit is generally seen as better equipped for dealing with the detainees' needs, as it has intercoms, cameras, and life signs in every cell, which facilitate risk management and communication. However, the Newport unit is also criticized for being cramped, noisy, insecure, having small cells, poor interview rooms, inadequate storage facilities, and no canteen.

The Ystrad Mynach unit is preferred for having more space, a better layout, a bigger property area, a better medical room, a bigger kitchen, a canteen, a search room, and two exercise yards. However, the Ystrad Mynach unit is disliked for having no intercoms, no CCTV or life signs in most cells, a poor alarm system, a small desk area, and a sewer smell in some cells. Some staff suggest that having both units open and staffed effectively would benefit everyone and reduce the workload, stress, and wait times.

A copy of the survey can be found in **Appendix A**

Frontline Officers - Survey results

A survey was sent out to frontline officers to obtain their views on the current custody model.

A summary of the questions and responses are as follows:

Who Responded

There were 165 replies to the survey with approximately 57% of the responders from the East and 43% from the West.

Gwent are currently trialing a one-unit custody model. Please can you provide your thoughts and experience on this model.

Feedback on one unit custody model:

The majority of the feedback is negative, citing issues such as long travel times, delays in booking in and releasing prisoners, impact on PACE clock and investigations, lack of suitable working space, and reduced arrest rates. Some of the respondents also express frustration, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with the model and its effect on their well-being and performance. For example, one respondent states that the commute each way is over an hour with traffic, resulting in wasted time and a reduced custody clock. Another respondent mentions that the distance away from the East of the force makes it timelier for officers to travel, taking them off the front line for longer periods of time and putting a higher risk on prisoners who are conveyed in a vehicle who may be under the influence.

Positive aspects of one unit custody model:

A few respondents mention some positive aspects of the one-unit custody model, such as saving the force money, having more space and better layout, having more custody staff available, having quicker processing time, and having more robust and sensible decisions. They also acknowledge that the location and staffing of the unit are key factors for its success. For example, one respondent states that one site is fine for their geographical size and demand, with location and staffing being the key to success. Another respondent mentions that the unit saves the force money, but also acknowledges the lengthy transportation times due to the unit not being central to the force.

Comparison with other custody units:

Some respondents compare the one-unit custody model with other custody units they have experienced, such as Newport, Gloucester, Cardiff, and Merthyr. They highlight the advantages and disadvantages of each unit, such as the size, the location, the facilities, the staffing, and the procedures. For example, one respondent compares the layout of Ystrad Mynach custody unit to Newport, stating that Ystrad Mynach is a nicer layout and is more spacious, while Newport is always very cramped, especially in the waiting room. Another respondent mentions that they have taken prisoners to Cardiff Bay custody, which they believe is fit for purpose due to the size of the suite and the individual holding cells, with CDOs taking over once circumstances have been given to the custody Sergeant.

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Suggestions for improvement:

Some of the respondents suggest possible ways to improve the custody model, such as having a more centralised location, having dedicated staffing and response teams, having more life sign cells and dry cells, having more custody sergeants and CDOs, having a handover system for prisoners, and having both units open with the staff split. They also mention the need for more suitable space to conduct investigations, more screens, and laptops, better WIFI and phone signal, and more facilities for refreshments and breaks. For example, one respondent suggests having a more centralised location and dedicated staffing who can deal with the appropriate demand. Another respondent suggests having both units open with the staff split, depending on staff numbers.

What has been the positives from using Ystrad as a single custody provision?

The most common positive comments about using Ystrad Mynach as the only custody unit in Gwent are:

Parking: Many officers mentioned that parking is easier and more accessible at Ystrad Mynach compared to Newport.

Layout: Several officers mentioned that Ystrad Mynach has a better layout, with more space and a more modern design.

Location: Many officers mentioned that Ystrad Mynach is closer to their working area, which reduces travel time and makes it more convenient for them to attend.

Interview rooms: Some officers mentioned that Ystrad Mynach has more interview rooms, which makes the custody process more efficient.

Although the question relates to the positives of Ystrad Mynach there are also a number of negatives relating to this provision:

Longer travel time: Some officers mentioned that they have to travel longer distances to reach Ystrad Mynach, which increases their travel time and reduces their efficiency.

Longer waiting time: Some officers mentioned that they have to wait longer to book in their prisoners at Ystrad Mynach due to the increased demand.

Reduced custody clock: Some officers mentioned that the longer travel and waiting times reduce the 24-hour custody clock, which affects their ability to conduct investigations.

Lower staff morale: Some officers mentioned that the change has lowered the morale of the staff, which affects their performance.

Safety issues: Some officers mentioned that there are safety issues at Ystrad Mynach, such as inadequate holding cells and lack of space for vehicles.

What had been the positives of using Newport as a single custody provision?

The most common positive comments about using Newport as the only custody unit in Gwent are:

- Location - convenient for the East LPA, with shorter travel times for officers and solicitors.
- It has a larger waiting area with more holding cells.
- It is closer to the nighttime economy.
- It has a front counter service.
- It is easier for handovers and 1-2-1s.
- It is easier to liaise directly with custody staff.

Some potential negatives of using Newport as a single custody provision could include:

- Increased travel time for officers and solicitors from the West LPA.
- Increased demand on the custody unit, leading to longer waiting times and reduced efficiency.
- Reduced staff morale due to the increased workload and pressure.
- Safety concerns due to the increased number of detainees in the custody unit.
- Reduced custody clock for detainees due to the increased travel and waiting times.

Several suggestions for improvement were incorporated which include:

- Reopening Newport Central as a custody unit.
- Building a new custody unit at the old HQ site.
- Visiting and copying the models of other forces.
- Having more holding cells to improve the custody provision in Gwent.

What is your preferred custody model?

When asked about their preferred custody model the vast majority of respondents opted for both units to be open.

Row Labels	Count of What is your preferred custody model?
Both Units Open	141
Newport Central	10
Ystrad Mynach	14
Grand Total	165

A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B

Current model within Ystrad and Newport

Ystrad Mynach

Ystrad custody unit is the larger of the two units with 31 cells and 6 interviews rooms. It is part of a larger station but due to the size and layout of the building there is little need for custody staff to venture outside of the custody area. Ystrad has a designated waiting area for visitors, these include solicitors, translators, AAs and ICVs. Access to this area is controlled by CDOs from within the unit with security checks completed via CCTV. There are also toilets, and a seating area with staff collecting visitors when required.

Access to the station is via a barrier, then large gates which are warrant card operated. When cleared there is an intercom system for access to the enclosed custody bay. Here officers are able to park and transfer detainees into the holding area, this is an open area, but it is secure. This also allows safe transfer of detainees to GEOAmy when they come to collect persons for court or prison.

Outside of this area is a large car park where officers / staff park their personal vehicles in addition to other police vehicles. Once inside the custody unit, the holding area for detainees is cramped with one secure holding area for violent detainees which can be closed off. Access to the custody desk is via a secure door which is card operated, when Sergeants are ready for the next detainee they must shout "NEXT" to tell officers to come through. Whilst not always used there is a secondary access door from the enclosed bay which leads directly into the custody unit. This can be used to segregate juvenile or vulnerable detainees from others. The route leads directly to desk 4, which is located just off the main custody area, currently this desk is little more than a cubby hole and will require work to bring it up to the necessary specifications.

Ystrad is the more spacious unit and has better facilities for officers and detainees than Newport, this is highlighted in the NPEG compliance rates. There is a rest area for staff above the unit which means they do not have to leave the unit. There are also lockers, toilets, and shower facilities. There are several issues though, these include, the spacious settling has led to delays in responding to officers/staff who have activated panic alarms when attacked by detainees. The desk area for Custody Sergeants is cramped with little room to move, this is also the same for CDOs in the back-office area. Camera coverage within the cells is extremely limited with only 8 cameras covering the 31 cells. This is currently being address with plan to expand CCTV coverage to all cells. There are also no high beds impacting detainees with medical requirements or disabilities and there is also limited life sign and no intercom systems in any cells. The lack of CCTV, life sign and no detainee intercoms is concerning, this does means that detainees must be brought to phones if allowed a telephone call and this process is repeated for the purposes of reviews if there is no Inspector in the station. This in turn means custody sergeants are more prone to use level 4 observations if they run out of camera cells for detainees who raised concerns around their safety in a cell. This in turn impacts on the number of deployable officers. It should be noted that the lack of CCTV is also an officer safety issue as most attacks on Custody staff/officers occur in cells, without cameras it can be difficult to raise an alarm.

Newport

Newport custody unit is the smaller of the two units with 28 cells and 5 interview rooms. It is part of an active station with several other departments working within the wider station. There are three car parks, one underground, one open-air and the last is very small and found at the top of a ramp which leads to the entrance of the custody unit. With the number of people working in the station this has led to issues around parking. There have been occasions when access to the top car park has been blocked due to the number of police vehicles waiting with detainees for custody and this in turn has affected response vehicles leaving the station to answer emergency calls. In addition, when GEOAmy attend the station to collect detainees due to the size of their transport they must park in the bottom car park and walk detainees down the ramp, this is not ideal or secure.

Vehicle access to the main station is via a large sliding gate at the rear of the station, this is warrant card operated and there is an intercom operated by SEOs in hours and custody staff out of hours. Access to the ramp leading to the top car park is via a barrier, this is controlled from within the custody unit but is often left up due to the number of vehicles back and forth. There have been security issues in Newport with persons walking into the main parking area when cars have left the station leaving the sliding gates open as they are slow to close. On one such occasion a person accessed the main car park as the sliding gates were open and then the ramp area due to the barrier being left up before buzzing the custody holding area bell, they were then being allowed entry into the holding area of the custody unit.

The top car park is also not secure, and there have been occasions of detainees escaping lawful custody by scaling the station walls in the bottom car park having run down the ramp away from officers.

There is no waiting area for visitors with persons using the front foyer to sit and wait, communication with the unit is done via a telephone which connects to the back office within custody. Access to the foyer is only allowed when the wider station itself is open otherwise visitors must wait outside the station and await collection.

Once inside the unit the waiting area is cramped with one large holding cell for violent detainees and several small holding pods where detainees can be placed whilst waiting to be called into the custody desk area. Access to the custody area is via warrant card or switch operated by the Sergeants who can control the flow of detainees. Once called through there is no privacy of any kind for detainees, when busy it can be very difficult to hear people providing answers to risk assessment or rights questions. The unit can best be described as an echo chamber where loud/disruptive detainees can be heard all around the unit unless dividing doors are closed.

There are four desks in Newport, each providing sufficient room for the Sergeants to work. There is a desk directly behind the Sergeants where CDOs can sit and a larger area again just off the main desk area which houses CCTV monitoring and other admin functions completed by CDOs. There are no toilets or restrooms within custody and staff must leave the unit to access the wider station.

There is no dedicated juvenile and vulnerable person entrance to custody, there could be consideration for detainees to be brought into the unit via the visitor's entrance, but this would mean them being brought into the main station which is not ideal. For booking in normally the desk area is cleared for juveniles as the alternative is to log off and go into the search room where which has a standalone PC and book them in there, this process can take some time which means often Sergeants will just clear the unit. This is then repeated whenever the juvenile comes up the desk area for their privacy.

Custody Options

1. Use both Newport and Ystrad Custody Units
 2. Use a single unit, Newport
 3. Use a single unit, Ystrad
 4. Use Newport as the single unit and add additional 10 cells
 5. Use Ystrad as the single unit and add additional 10 cells
- The use of both units is the norm, both require work to improve NPEG compliance rates but this is much more difficult to achieve in Newport due to how the unit is embedded in the wider station. The compliance rate in Newport is only going to go down with changes in Home Office requirements for custody provisions. As a Force we are in danger of being advised to close Newport as a custody provision in the future due to health and safety concerns.
It should be noted that the new operating model within Custody could not be operated across both units due to the staffing required to support this.
 - Newport Custody as a single unit provision has a number of issues which have been highlighted in this report. The main areas being NPEG compliance as well as security issues. That being said Approx. 65% of arrests are closer to Newport custody and 35% closer to Ystrad Mynach. From a purely operational perspective quite clearly Newport supports the majority of Force arrests and is in a better location in this regard than Ystrad. With only 28 cells in Newport, Ystrad would be required to be left in standby mode to offer additional cell capacity for times of high demand with us paying maintenance and utility costs and offering little savings.
 - Ystrad Custody as a single provision has an increased NPEG compliance rate compared to Newport. It is more secure and provides a better working environment than Newport for custody staff and officers. That being said Approx. 35% of arrests are closer to Ystrad than Newport. This has led to increased travelling times, for Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen officers. This in turn impacts on the number of deployable officers to answer calls. Whilst there are slightly more cells in Ystrad (31 cells) this does mean that Newport Custody would be required to be left in standby mode to offer additional cell capacity for times of high demand with us paying maintenance and utility costs and offering little savings.
 - Newport Custody as a single unit with an additional 10 cells would support the majority of officers as Approx. 65% of arrests are closer to Newport custody. Unfortunately, the additional cells would only improve our NPEG compliance rate by 9%, meaning we are still in danger of being left behind as Home Office Custody requirements change. The highlighted security issues would also remain, the top car park area would be used to place the additional cells resulting in a loss of the top car parking area impacting on the already strained provisions. Gwent cell capacity in this option would be pushed up to 38 cells and could lead to the closure of Ystrad as a secondary Custody site resulting in reduced maintenance and utility costs.
 - Ystrad Custody as a single unit with an additional 10 cells would result in our NPEG compliance rising to 82%. This would address some of our Areas For Improvements (AFIs) from previous HMICFRS reports. Cell capacity would rise to 41 cells and could lead to the closure of Newport as a secondary Custody site resulting in reduced maintenance and utility costs. Again only Approx. 35% of arrests are closer to Ystrad than Newport. This has led to increased travelling times, for Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen officers. This in turn impacts on the number of deployable officers to answer calls.

It should be noted that an additional 10 cells in either location would mean that Gwent (based on current cell utilisation) would have sufficient cell capacity to manage demand. For this reason, an additional site kept in standby mode would only be required in the event of a major failure of the primary unit. That being said considering GPOF is approved in the future there would be no necessity for a secondary unit supporting it in the event of a major failure.

Overall assessment

Neither custody unit is in the ideal location to match arrest demand. Approx. 65% of arrests are closer to Newport Central and 35% closer to Ystrad Mynach meaning that neither is a suitable location for a single unit model.

Feedback from front line officers across the East and West has been consistent with the vast majority wanting both units open. This feeling relates mainly to travelling times as well as officer safety. Having two units open reduces travel time for officers and alleviates space pressures, on the other hand custody becomes heavily reliant on LPAs to support them through Sergeant and officer cover. Conversely only having one unit open mitigates staff abstraction to an extent, due to ratios of staff to prisoners being easier to accommodate.

Without significant investment to remodel one of the units it is unlikely a single unit model will achieve a suitable NPEG compliance. NPEG compliance rates have been documented earlier in the paper with the highest rate achievable being in Ystrad Mynach. This work would include an addition of 10 cells plus CCTV in all cells and a rework of the charge desk/Juvenile area.

Consideration for utilising an additional 10 cells is not a realistic option in Newport, there are already significant shortcomings in parking provisions and security which have been highlighted in this report. The use of an additional 10 cells would also only increase NPEG compliance by 9% which is not a significant return on investment.

Finally, Custody SMT have put in place measures to address waiting times and processes within the custody unit. In a one-unit model these can be achieved due to the number of staff available. With a two-unit model these processes cannot be utilised and ultimately, we will find ourselves in the same position as we were in this time last year.

Medium Term Proposal

Working on the assumption that GPOF will be signed off it is recommended that Ystrad Mynach becomes the primary custody unit and the force consider the purchase of temporary cells to be located in the secure yard within the custody unit.

This would bring the overall cell capacity up to 41 which would be adequate to meet anticipated demand. Work would need to be done to reconfigure the booking in desk area to develop greater space behind the desk to create 4 booking in points, as well as some minor work to bring the unit nearer to NPEG compliance. The introduction of 10 additional cells as well as additional work could be completed together. This would take approximately 19 weeks to complete, so if sign off was done immediately this would still not see completion until October 2024.

During this time additional work such as improvements within Custody would be completed i.e for Ystrad rework of the custody area and CCTV in all cells. The additional cell area would come with an 18-month warranty and have a 25-year guarantee.

To illustrate estimated costings within Ystrad additional 10 cells would be:
£750K

CCTV in all cells
£51K

Work to create a specific Juvenile/Vulnerable adult area
£75K

Work to improve the custody desk area including desk 4
£110K





Total Approx. cost
£986K

In the event this option is approved serious consideration must be given regards to the time scales involved. With a lead time of 19 weeks, if approved on 12th July 2024 this would take us up to the first week of December 2024. If a decision was made later then this would push into the Christmas period which is obviously high demand.

Whilst Ystrad was being worked on all demand would have to go to Newport Custody unit. During this time, we would have no resilience if detainee numbers outstripped cell capacity. To address this, we would need to put in place contingency planning with South Wales and Avon and Somerset Police to support us during this time. The timing issue will become even more important because during the Christmas period their capacity to assist us with our overflow demand would drop significantly.

There has also been consideration of the impact on Ystrad front desk should it become the primary unit. During the trial period it has been clear that persons were comfortable locating the custody visitor's area thus negating the need to open the front desk at any point.

Appendices

Appendix A - Custody Staff Survey	 Custody Staff Suite Survey(1-46).xlsx
Appendix B - Frontline Officer – Survey Results	 Custody Review - Frontline Survey 202
Appendix C - Custody AFI Audit Report	 Custody Audit Report-2 (1).pdf
NPEG - RAID	 Custody Suite RAID-Compliance.xl:

