

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL – 28 JULY 2016

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING ASSOCIATION (ICVA) – UPDATE

REPORT BY THE SCHEME MANAGER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide visitors with an update regarding ICVA.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) is a Home Office funded organisation set up to promote and support the effective provision of custody visiting nationally. ICVA works closely with government and criminal justice organisations to raise public awareness on the rights, entitlements, health and wellbeing of people held in police custody. They also advise on best practice for independent custody visiting schemes nationally, and provide training, publicity and support to Police and Crime Commissioners and ICVs.
- 1.2 The Association has a management board comprised regional representatives from across the country. These representatives, who are the directors of the Association, are a mixture of Independent Custody Visitors and Scheme Managers. The Directors are responsible for setting the direction of the company and assist ICVA in looking at the strategic priorities and development of the company.
- 1.3 The Association is led by the Chief Executive, Katie Kempen, assisted by a Project Officer, Sherry Ralph. The Chair of the Board is Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Chair is Natasha Plummer from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.
- 1.4 The Management Board meet on a quarterly basis to discuss governance, receive regional updates, consider management issues and receive updates from the Chief Executive.

2. QUARTERLY UPDATE

- 2.1 The last meeting of the Board happened on 22 June 2016. At that meeting, Directors agreed the minutes of the previous meeting and welcomed the new Project Officer, Sherry Ralph and she outlined her objectives for the coming 6 months.
- 2.2 The Board had been considering its governance structure and questioning whether a move to become a charity would be beneficial. After discussion the board agreed to delay any decision for 12 months. However, there had been agreement to separate the current Management Board into two groups with two different functions:

1. A Board of Directors who fulfil the core requirements of a Management Board including setting strategy, fiscal oversight, compliance with legislation and Articles of Association, fulfilment of statutory duties and management of the Chief Executive.
 2. An ICVA National Expert Forum comprising representatives from each region. The group would bring regional representatives together to share practice, learning and work together on shared projects. It would also represent schemes as a consultative body to the Board, helping the Board to set the strategic direction and make key decisions. The National Export Forum should invite ICVA's members who are not currently included in governance arrangements such as the City of London and SSAFA.
- 2.3 It is envisioned that there is overlap in the membership of the two groups with the membership of the Board of Directors comprising a majority of members from the ICVA National Expert Forum.
- 2.4 It is hoped that the new structure would offer the following benefits to the organisation:
- a) It will enable the Board of Directors to fulfil the functions and duties of a Management Board,
 - b) It will continue and develop ICVA's engagement with its members,
 - c) It will empower and enable bottom up engagement and a Board structure to define a clear three-year strategy,
 - d) Improved benefits to members via partnership working and joint projects.
- 2.5 It may take a while to implement these changes but the Board has approved the new governance structure.

3. REGIONAL REPORTING

- 3.1 Each regional representative submits a quarterly report to the Management Board providing data on visits and to share issues found within custody. This allows the Board to attain a national perspective on issues in custody and an overall view on the volume of reporting.
- 3.2 The regional reports showed that there were over 1800 ICVs across the country, and in the last financial year at least 10,737 visits were conducted and ICVs had spoken to at least 31,785 detainees. In Dorset 271 visits occurred and 678 detainees had been engaged with. The total number of detainees for Dorset Police during that period had been 25,323. Each region reported on the main issues raised, the most common of which ranged from staffing, cleanliness and maintenance, self-introduction and ICVs being made to feel unwelcome.

4. NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM

- 4.1 The National Preventive Mechanism is a group of statutory organisations that visit places of detention across the United Kingdom, working under the UN Treaty, OPCAT. The NPM Coordinator seeks to ensure that the UK meets its international requirements. The NPM has recently developed its relationship with ICVA as follows:
- The NPM Coordinator had attended a custody visit, providing feedback on the strengths and areas for development. These had been shared with all schemes via ICVA's weekly newsletter
 - The NPM recruited a new independent Chair, John Wadham, who would meet ICVA's Chief Executive and attend a custody visit as part of his induction

- The Chief Executive had completed a self-assessment and the NPM has developed guidance on solitary confinement, with actions to be shared with all schemes in due course.

4.2 The NPM had been impressed with ICVA and custody visiting and are seeking to develop ways to review and support custody visiting in 2016/17.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Visitors are asked to note the report and expect further updates following the ICVA quarterly meeting on 28 September 2016.

Yvonne Fenwick
Scheme Manager