

OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 17 October 2016

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 2 and 3 on Monday 17 October 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Dr D James (Chairman),
Mrs C Bishop, Mrs A Cray, Mrs T Farwell, Mrs L Hayward, Mr R Hermans,
Miss E Kochanovskyte, Mr M Payne, Mrs S Porter, Mr T Walker, Mrs I Why

Also Present:

Mr C Pipe, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
Mrs J Steadman, Head of Criminal Justice
Sergeant A De'Ath, Custody Support Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mr S D'Arrigo and Mrs B White. The Deputy PCC gave apologies on behalf of the PCC, Martyn Underhill, who was unable to attend the meeting as his wife had been taken seriously ill. The Panel passed on their best wishes for her recovery.
- 1.2 The Chairman introduced Mrs J Steadman, Head of Criminal Justice, attending on behalf of Chief Inspector Shimmons, and Sergeant A De'Ath, attending for Mr K Edwards.
- 1.3 The Chairman advised that Mrs Celia McCormack had resigned and the Panel recorded their thanks for her input to the scheme.
- 1.4 It was noted that Miss E Kochanovskyte was commencing maternity leave but would continue to attend panel meetings.

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2016 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 2.2 Sgt De'Ath confirmed that the pipes had been rerouted at Weymouth and the water was now potable.

Action Log

- 2.3 Mrs Steadman provided a brief outline on some of the key points from the positive HMIC/P Custody Inspection Report.
 - Overall Dorset Police managed custodial services well.
 - Detainees were generally treated well and conditions they were held in good.
 - Force used performance data and managed staffing and resources well.
 - Physical conditions detainees held in very good and treatment received appropriate and met basic needs.
- 2.4 There was only one recommendation for Dorset Police to engage more with partners to

instigate an immediate review of Local Authority accommodation for children that was safe, secure and appropriate. This was an ongoing piece of work with all agencies signed up to a national concordat.

2.5 Mrs Steadman highlighted a number of areas for improvement, including:

- Dip sampling of custody records insufficient (Force has now doubled this from 15 to 30).
- Custody staff conducting constant observations should not necessarily engage in other activities (Chief Inspector has circulated instructions to all staff on what activities can or cannot be undertaken).
- Detainees should have access to AA on point of booking in to custody.
- Up to date versions of PACE codes of practice should be available.
- Clinical environment at Weymouth should meet the required infection, prevention and control standards.
- Clarity around medication for detainees going to court.
- Pre-release risk planning to reflect risks arising during custody and on release.

2.6 Inspector Shimmons would provide an update on progress in January.

Recruitment

2.7 The Deputy PCC advised that the recent recruitment drive had been a great success, with over 200 expressions of interest and more than 100 attending the open days. Thirty-six applications had been received, the majority of which were of a high quality. Interviews would take place in November, with a phased start for those who were successful. Each new visitor would be allocated a personal mentor. but paired with a mix of visitors to carry out station visits.

Scheme Manager

2.8 The Chairman confirmed that Mrs Fenwick had been seconded to Dorset Police for six months and the Deputy Chief Executive, Adam Harrold, would act as Scheme Manager during that period.

Volunteer Group of the Year Nomination

2.7 ICVs had been nominated for Volunteer Group of the Year and the Chairman, together with other visitors, was attending an event in Dorchester on 27 October.

CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

3.1 The report to the Panel showed that of 169 detainees held, 118 (70%) had been offered a visit, of which 97 (97%) had accepted. Waiting times were good, with 96% of visits commencing within five minutes. The spread and timing of the visits had been generally good with visits every day of the week. However, no visits had been undertaken between 1 am and 7 am and visitors were asked to consider making a visit within this timeframe during the next quarter.

3.2 During a visit to Bournemouth on 26 September, visitors noted that an old teapot was being used to deliver hot drinks as the flasks were broken. Sgt De'Ath advised that the unstable trolley had been fixed and two new flasks provided. It was further noted that a number of detainees had volunteered positive comments about the staff and their treatment.

3.3 On 30 August, one detainee held at Weymouth had waited three hours to see a doctor as they required medication and the nurse was unable to deal. Sgt De'Ath advised that detainees could be taken to hospital or an ambulance called if the nurse felt it was necessary. Overall, the service in Dorset was very good, however, there had been delays on three occasions this quarter and Mrs Steadman agreed to provide breakdown figures for the last six months to the January Panel meeting.

ACTION: Mrs J Steadman

3.4 During a visit to Weymouth on 5 September, visitors had noted that the ventilators were clogged with dirt and dust and they had taken photographs. Sgt De'Ath advised that this would form part of the deep clean. Visitors were reminded that photographs were not allowed to be taken within the custody suites. Lockers were available for personal belongings but visitors could keep mobile phones in their possession as long as they were not visible and remained switched off.

3.5 On arrival at Weymouth on 22 September, visitors were asked to sit in the back room whilst a violent detainee was booked in meaning that they were unable to view the booking in procedure. Visitors would normally be given access to the back of the bridge where they could view from a safe distance. Sgt De'Ath advised that this had been raised with all staff to confirm that custody visitors should have access as they are there to observe. Further concern was raised about the booking in procedure and the possibility that on some occasions identities could be disclosed. It was agreed that this would be referred to ICVA for clarity and guidance.

ACTION: OPCC

3.6 The Chairman highlighted that the "first time in custody" leaflet had not been provided to detainees on three occasions this quarter and Sgt De'Ath agreed to check on the reasons for this.

ACTION: Sgt De'Ath

3.7 Visitors noted that there were no phone chargers during a visit to Bournemouth on 3 August. Sgt De'Ath confirmed that two multi-chargers were now available for detainees.

3.8 In a later visit to Bournemouth, visitors noted the very good care given to a young person detained during the evening who, within a very short period of time, had seen the mental health team, social services and solicitor.

3.9 On 23 August, visitors noted that detainees at Bournemouth had not been offered time in the yard even though it was a very hot day. Sgt De'Ath agreed to check the logs and confirm why.

ACTION: Sgt De'Ath

3.10 During a visit to Weymouth on 1 July, visitors were concerned about the delay for an interpreter. Sgt De'Ath explained that an interpreter may not be local and could be up to a four hours drive away. The log would be checked to determine whether there was an issue with Language Line at that time and to ensure it was routinely offered.

ACTION: Sgt De'Ath

3.11 Visitors reported a positive response to the introduction of the language questionnaire but voiced concerns that not all custody staff were aware of its existence and location to pass to ICVs upon request. Sgt De'Ath would ensure that all staff were updated.

ACTION: Sgt De'Ath

3.12 During a visit to Weymouth on 6 August, visitors had noted that a detainee with mental health issues had been waiting a long time for medication as there was no health care professional on site. It was also unclear whether the detention should be held under PACE or S136. Sgt De'Ath confirmed that there was an ongoing issue with mental health provision. An acute pathway review was ongoing with the likelihood that additional beds would be available at St Anne's Hospital in the New Year. Sgt De'Ath was asked to provide an update at the next meeting.

ACTION: Sgt De'Ath

3.13 A detainee held at Weymouth on 16 August had damaged a cell door with a coin and visitors queried how this had slipped through. Sgt De'Ath confirmed that it would have been recorded as an adverse incident.

3.14 Visitors expressed concern that they had experienced longer waiting times in the custody suite before commencing visits. On arrival at Weymouth on 13 September, there was a 45 minutes delay as the suite was very busy with one detainee being booked in with a large volume of property. Mrs Steadman advised that booking in had to be a priority and visitors should wait where they could observe activity if there was no one available to escort them. It was agreed that visitors would continue to record delays on the report and raise it for further discussion at the Panel meetings if necessary.

3.15 Visitors expressed concern following an evening visit to Weymouth on 27 September that a detainee had a 14 years old who had been at home alone since that morning. Sgt De'Ath confirmed that the detainee had spoken with their child on the phone on arrival and had been released two hours after the ICVs had visited. He went on to reassure ICVs that safeguarding of children was a top priority for the Force and, if the detention had continued overnight, a relative or social services could have taken over.

ICVA UPDATE

4.1 The Panel noted the update from the last meeting of the ICVA Management Board held on 28 September 2016.

4.2 ICVA was seeking a wider definition of incapability to include all detainees who were unable or unavailable to give consent, such as those who were asleep or at interview. This was now with the Home Office.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 The 2017 meeting dates would be circulated very shortly.

5.2 The appointment of a Chairman and Vice-Chairmen would be confirmed at the next meeting. Those currently holding those positions had indicated their willingness to continue in the role. Any visitors wishing to put themselves forward were asked to contact the OPCC, with the names of two proposers, before the next Panel meeting.

Meeting ended at 8.20 pm