

OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 25 January 2016

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 1, 2 and 3 on Monday 25 January 2016 at 3.30 pm

PRESENT:

Dr D James (Chairman),
Mrs A Cray, Mrs H Downton,
Mrs L Hayward, Mr R Hermans, Mr R Kerr,
Miss E Kochanovskyte, Mrs C McCormack, Mr M Payne,
Mrs S Porter, Mr R Shore, Mr T Walker, Mrs B White, Mrs I Why

Also Present:

Mr M Underhill Police & Crime Commissioner
Mr D Steadman, Chief Executive, OPCC
Chief Inspector G Shimmons, Crime and Criminal Justice
Mr K Edwards, Custody Support Officer
Mrs Y Fenwick ICV Scheme Manager
Ms L Wyman Administrative Support Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Mrs C Bishop, Mr S D'Arrigo, Mrs T Farwell, Mrs L Hayward, Assistant Chief Constable D Lewis, Mr R Shore, Mrs J Steadman.

MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2015 were approved and signed as a true record. No matters arose from the minutes.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRS 2016

3. It was agreed that Mr Mark Payne and Mrs Isobel Why would be elected as Joint Deputy Chairs for the year 2016.

CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

- 4.1 The report to the Panel showed that of 173 detainees held, 98 (57%) had been offered a visit, of which 90 (92%) had accepted. Of those not seen 20% were asleep. The spread and timing of the visits had been good with visits made on every day of the week. A number of visits had been completed between 10.00 pm and 7.00 am and special thanks were given to Russell, Christine, Isobel and Lolly for facilitating these. The Chair thanked visitors and welcomed further visits during unsocial hours. The Chair also thanked the Force for allowing ICVs prompt access to detainees with 100% access within 5 minutes and asked Chief Inspector Shimmons to pass on our thanks to the custody staff.
- 4.2 There were no reports highlighted for discussion but the visits would be reviewed to ensure all points are covered.
- 4.3 Mr Edwards referred to concerns about the exercise yard at Poole station being a slip

hazard in poor weather conditions. The Sergeant would continue to dynamically risk assess the issue on a day-to-day basis. Mr Underhill confirmed that this would need to continue as the costs to rectify the issue would be significant.

4.4 The panel was advised that while visiting Weymouth on 5 November 2015, ICVs were advised that there was a shortage of supplies especially blankets, underwear and general items and staff asked to report this back to the panel.

4.5 Mr Edwards informed the panel he had discussed the issue with officers and had been trying to ascertain whether there had been a genuine shortage of supplies or if the problem had occurred due to poor housekeeping. He would feedback to the panel.

ACTION: Mr Edwards

4.6 Visitors continued to report about confusion by custody staff on the provision of printed reports on arrival. Mr Edwards asked all ICVs to report back to him should this occur again. Chief Inspector Shimmons explained that Weymouth had several new staff and they may not yet be clear about the procedure.

ACTION: ICVs

4.8 It had been reported that staff at Weymouth had raised issues around poor lighting at night which had made it difficult for detention officers to observe detainees without entering the cells which woke them. Chief Inspector Shimmons confirmed that officers should always lower the hatch or enter cells to check on the welfare of the detainees, rather than use the spy hole even if this meant disturbing the sleep of the detainee. He also confirmed that he would have the lighting checked.

ACTION: Chief Inspector Shimmons

4.9 Mr Underhill expressed concern that for the third meeting there were reports that detainees at Weymouth had not been supplied basic items such as toilet paper and that visitors had been reporting detainees had been thirsty and cold. Chief Inspector Shimmons agreed to address the reported concerns and report back.

ACTION: Chief Inspector Shimmons

4.10 The Chair reported that there had been ten reports with positive feedback recorded by ICVs on the custody visits and this had been worth noting.

4.11 The condition of Blandford custody suite was discussed and visitors expressed their frustration that the condition had not improved between visits. Chief Inspector Shimmons explained that Blandford had no dedicated custody team and that during the period October to December 2015 only two detainees had been placed in the cells. Mr Edwards added that in general the cell is used for finger printing and most detainees remain with the officer. Chief Inspector Shimmons agreed to discuss cleaning issues with the Sergeant responsible.

ACTION: Chief Inspector Shimmons

4.12 The Scheme Manager reported that as Poole Custody suite is non-operational, it would no longer be subject to viewing visits. Poole would only be used primarily for detention of persons held under the Terrorism Act, although it would be made operational if required.

4.13 The PCC does not have ICVs trained to visit TACT detainees and no TACT detainees have been held in Dorset in the last five years. Should the need arise to visit it would be down to the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC.

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING ANNUAL REPORT 2015

- 5.1 The Scheme Manager presented the 2015 edition of the ICV Annual Report. Over the last year there have been 120 visits carried out with an average of four detainees per visit being offered time with ICVs. There was a 93% uptake of visits and 67% of detainees were offered a visit.
- 5.2 The Scheme Manager thanked the Independent Custody Visitors for their commitment and enthusiasm and the Force and Mr Underhill for the continuing commitment to the scheme.
- 5.3 Chief Inspector Shimmons informed the panel that an HMIC/P visit was now overdue and expected to happen shortly.

ICVA SCHEME MANAGERS' CONFERENCE

- 6. The Scheme Manager reported back to the panel on the ICVA Scheme Managers' conference that took place on 30 November – 1 December 2015 in Birmingham. The conference was well attended and introduced the new IVCA Chief Executive, Katie Kempen. As a result of her appointment, changes are being implemented to ICVA. A summary report was provided and copies of the presentations would be available on request.

PANEL MEETING TIMES

- 7.1 The Chair explained that to facilitate the attendance of ICVs who are working during the day, it has been decided to move most of the ICV meetings to evenings (which only affects the meeting in October). This was agreed by the panel.
- 7.2 The Chief Executive expressed his view that it would be up to the panel how best to use the meetings and whether they wanted to change the format. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next training day.

ACTION: ICVs and Scheme Manager

UPDATE ON SOUTH WEST ICV COLLABORATION

- 8.1 The Scheme Manager reported that the establishment of a South West Independent Custody Scheme (SWICV) is now back on track due to delays caused by staff absence and conflicting work commitments. The next meeting is due on **16 March 2016** to review progress.
- 8.2 Dorset has piloted the regional ICV report form and the manager asked ICVs for their written feedback covering positive and negative aspects of the form.
- 8.3 The Chief Executive suggested that uniformity with reporting demonstrates good practice and benefits the detainees. This should be fed back to the SW ICV Managers to encourage them to record more data on custody visits.

RECRUITMENT

9. The Scheme Manager informed the panel of the next round of recruitment. In the interests of diversity it has been decided to try and recruit half of the new visitors from Bournemouth University. It was agreed by the panel that this would encourage the cultural and age-range diversity of the ICVs.

TRAINING

- 10.1 The Chair introduced the training plan for 2016, which includes diversity training in September. The first training session is on **12 March**; as requested this will include a general refresher. The panel were asked to note the forthcoming training dates and highlight any training needs with the Scheme Manager.
- 10.2 The panel suggested that refresher training in relation to mental health issues would be useful.

OTHER MATTERS

11. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 25 April 2016.

Meeting ended at 5.15 pm