



INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL – 27 JANUARY 2014

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING ASSOCIATION (ICVA) NATIONAL CONFERENCE

REPORT BY THE SCHEME MANAGER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Panel members about the ICVA National Conference which took place in Birmingham on 22 November 2014.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The annual conference of the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) was held at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on 22 November 2014. The conference was attended by delegates consisting of independent custody visitors, scheme administrators and officers.
- 1.2 Attendance at the conference this year was open to all visitors and attended by the Chairman of the ICV Panel, three independent custody visitors and the Scheme Manager. Martyn Underhill also attended as Chair of ICVA.

2. CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

2.1 The conference speakers were:

- Chief Inspector Eddy Johnston, Head of Custody for West Midlands Police
- Martyn Underhill, PCC and ICVA Chair
- Heather Hurford, HMIC
- Catherine May, Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Stan Sadler, Dorset Police
- Professor Siobhan O'Neill, Professor of Mental Health Sciences

**2.2 Custody Visiting in the West Midlands
Chief Inspector Eddy Johnston, Head of Custody**

- West Midlands are looking to reduce their custody estate from 10 units to 6
- Two units will be new and have 60 cells
- One custody unit they currently have and use is in a listed building so they are not able to make any modifications to it – English Heritage say it is an example of custody in the 1800's
- In this custody unit the doors are made from bamboo, the standard issue mattress is too long for the bench in the cells, and the call bells are located in holes in the wall where candles were placed before the days of electricity

2.3 **The Tides of Change** **PCC Martyn Underhill, ICVA Chairman**

- Training materials have been updated and will be circulated over the coming weeks to Scheme Administrators
- ICVA have been working on the development of their website
- ICVA is to become a registered charity
- Home Secretary has announced a review of the National Appropriate Adult Network (NAAN)
- Continued funding for ICVA has been approved by the Home Office
- Examples where the ICVA Executive Committee have been involved in national discussions are:
 - ACPO have been looking at the feasibility of whether ICVs could carry out unescorted visits in custody – the Committee have said this should not be allowed mainly due to health and safety issues
 - Move to single visits – the Committee have been working with the Home Office to discuss this (it is only a discussion)
 - HMIC / HMIP Inspections – the Committee recognise that ICVs have a role to play with regard to the monitoring of Force action plans following an inspection but have concern over scripted interviews between ICVs and custody staff
 - One PCC has outsourced the running of their ICV scheme and the Committee are watching this with interest

2.4 **Protecting Vulnerable People in Police Custody** **Heather Hurford, HMIC**

- Inspection commissioned in January 2014
- There is some evidence that number of suicides following police contact is increasing but the number of deaths in custody is falling
- Background to thematic review is:
 - National reviews (Bradley 2009, IPCC 2010, Howard League 2013, ICMHP identified risk factors in police custody 2013)
 - 2011 to present date – 66 deaths in police custody or following police contact
 - HMIC reports (Who's Looking out for the Children 2011, A Criminal Use of Police Cells? 2013, A joint inspection of the Treatment of Offenders with Learning Disabilities within the Criminal Justice System 2014)
 - Academic research
 - Recurring concerns (including over representation of certain groups in the CJS, treatment of children in custody, use of force, risk assessments, intoxication and mental vulnerability)
- There is no national collation of police custody data – eg. throughput, demographics
- What do 'vulnerability' and 'custody' mean – how are they to be defined?
- For the purpose of this review custody was defined as from the moment of arrest to the moment of release

- Question asked was ‘how effective Forces were at identifying and responding to vulnerability and associated risks to welfare of detainee whilst in police custody’
- Four out of six inspections have so far been completed
- Final report is due end of March 2015 – before Purdah
- Related national work has also been looked at including Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat, Home Secretary announcements, Mental Health and Policing Summit October 2013, All Parliamentary Policing Group report on Young People and Interactions with the Police, and piloting the use of care home for Section 136 detainees

2.5 Ministerial Address
Rt Hon Lynne Featherstone MP

- Address was given via video

2.6 Inquiry into Non-Natural Deaths in Detention of Adults with Mental Health Conditions
Catherine May, Equality and HR Commission

- Previous inquiries have included;
 - Fair financial decision-making
 - Home care of older people
 - Disability-related harassment
 - Discrimination in the finance sector inquiry
 - Human Trafficking in Scotland
 - Recruitment and employment in the meat and poultry processing sector
- Report to be produced in Spring 2015 and will include a framework
- Public authorities will have a duty to respond to the recommendations made within the report

2.7 Dorset Mental Health Triage Service
Stan Sadler, Team Leader and Mental Health Practitioner

- It has been established that over 20% of police time is spent on dealing with individuals with mental health problems
- There were 22,000 mental health detentions in 2012-13 – a third were detained in police cells as NHS did not respond quickly enough
- Street Triage is being piloted in 10 areas including Dorset and commenced in June 2014 operating on a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night
- It provides police officers with direct access to a mental health professional who is able to conduct a rapid assessment
- A key aim is to improve access to healthcare and support for vulnerable people

2.8 Applying Psychological Theories of Suicide to Suicide Prevention
Professor Siobhan O’Neill, Professor of Mental Health Sciences

- Suicide linked to mental illness is a goal orientated behaviour – the individual wants to end the pain rather than they want to die
- Hopelessness is a key emotional state that indicates suicide
- Talking about reasons to live can be very important
- When individuals with suicidal thoughts begin taking medication or medication is amended and they start to feel more energetic they are then likely to make plans for their death – this is when they are most at risk, when they begin to have more energy

2.9 Copies of the presentations are available on request from the Scheme Manager or be downloaded from the ICVA website (www.icva.org.uk).

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Panel members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Yvonne Fenwick
Scheme Manager