

**OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 28 October 2013**

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 1, 2 and 3 on Monday, 28 October 2013 at 3.30 pm

**PRESENT:**

Mrs K Emery (Chairman),  
Mrs C Bishop, Mrs A Cray, Mrs T Farwell, Miss C Freestone, Mr K Gooding,  
Mrs V Grier, Mr R Hermans, Mr E Holloway, Dr D James, Mr R Kerr,  
Mr H Masters, Mr M Payne, Mr W Penzer, Mrs S Porter, Mr D Sandever,  
Mr R Shore, Mr T Walker, Mrs B White, Mrs I Why

**Also Present:**

Assistant Chief Constable D Lewis  
Chief Inspector S Thorneycroft, Crime and Criminal Justice  
Mr K Edwards, Custody Support Officer  
Mr S Sadler, Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust  
Mrs Y Fenwick, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

8.1 Apologies were received from Mrs A Middleditch and Mr M Underhill, PCC.

**DETAINEE MENTAL HEALTH LIAISON AND DIVERSION SERVICE**

- 9.1 The Panel received a presentation from Chief Inspector Thorneycroft regarding the Detainee Mental Health Liaison and Diversion Service.
- 9.2 He explained that since 1 October 2012 Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust had provided a Mental Health Liaison and Diversion Service at Bournemouth and Weymouth custody suites, meaning that Mental Health Practitioners had attended these suites from 8.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday. The Practitioners had seen anyone who had been arrested and had been suspected of having a mental health issue or a learning disability, subsequently providing custody staff with information assisting them with the care of the individual. In March 2013, this arrangement extended to magistrates court and had been very well received. Although there had been no weekend cover to date it was hoped that there would be an opportunity to extend the hours and provide an on call service at weekends.
- 9.3 He added that the team would assess anyone arrested for a substantive offence who claimed to have mental health issues or exhibited concerning behaviours. However, they were not authorised to assess any detainee held under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act and brought to the police station as a place of safety.
- 9.4 Chief Inspector Thorneycroft highlighted that the arrangement was now being considered as best practice.
- 9.5 The service had provided custody staff with an enhanced knowledge of the wider mental health network and assisted with the ability to divert detainees with mental health issues to appropriate services. Positive qualitative feedback had been

overwhelming. It had also provided staff with the confidence to ensure detainees without mental health issues continued through the Criminal Justice System. Between October 2012 and June 2013 a total of 258 assessments had taken place at Bournemouth, with a further 126 in Weymouth.

- 9.6 Although the service had been deemed a success, there remained a need to secure future funding to enable it to continue with a hope to increase cover, it was a service the Force did not want to lose.
- 9.7 After introducing Mr Stan Sadler from Chief Inspector Thorneycroft invited questions from the Panel, to which Mr Sadler would respond. Following a comment from a Panel Member, Mr Sadler accepted that the Force were in a difficult situation when intoxicated people with mental health issues were held in police custody because mental health facilities were not able to accept them and themselves had difficulty because of a lack of beds. He added that there were local arrangements in place to ensure the detainee would be transferred as soon as appropriate, always trying to promote quality of care.
- 9.8 ACC Lewis advised the Panel that at a national level the PCC and Chief Officer team were considering the options with regard to street triage meaning intervention occurred before the individual reaches custody. Meetings were taking place in an effort to move the whole process forward.
- 9.10 Following a question from the Panel, Mr Sadler confirmed that the report written by the Mental Health Practitioner identifying an individual with vulnerabilities would be shared with the magistrates court and would remain the 'property' of the Trust. With the consent of the individual it would be circulated to other appropriate agencies.
- 9.11 Following a further question from the Panel, Mr Sadler explained that the limits of the agreement did not allow Mental Health Practitioners to cover those detainees brought into custody as a place of safety under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act.
- 9.12 Chief Inspector Thorneycroft added that the Mental Health Practitioners had been treated as part of the custody team, but were separate from the Health Care Professionals provided by SERCO. The Force remained optimistic with regard to continued funding.
- 9.13 In response to a question from a member of the Panel, Mr Sadler confirmed that juveniles were included within the programme and that when appropriate information was shared with Children's Social Care.
- 9.14 The Chairman and the Panel thanked Chief Inspector Thorneycroft and Mr Sadler for an interesting presentation.

## **MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

- 10.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2013 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 10.2 With regard to paragraph 6.6 and the question about recording capabilities on Niche Chief Inspector Thorneycroft advised that Niche was a national product and it was not possible to readily amend the system in the way we had done on the old Force system.
- 10.3 He advised the Panel that as reported in paragraph 6.7, Dorset Advocacy had started their campaign and it had progressed well and had provided the Force with the ability to pre-book advocates.

- 10.4** He updated the Panel on mastic repairs at Sherborne, referred to at paragraph 6.9, and advised that the repairs had been carried out as cost effectively as possible.
- 10.5** The issues recorded as items 6.10 and 6.11 related to improvements in food provision. Chief Inspector Thorneycroft confirmed that the food at Bournemouth was provided as part of a regional contract but he would feed back to the procurement hub that a variety of food needs to be considered. The issue was not as prevalent at Weymouth as access was available to the canteen there. He added that a 'normal' breakfast should be offered to detainees held overnight irrespective of whether they had been intoxicated.
- 10.6** With regard to the provision of nicotine patches, he reiterated that if the detainee had come into custody with them then they could be provided with their own, however it remained policy not to prescribe them.
- 10.7** The Chairman asked the Force to confirm what provision had been made for those detainees requiring a Halal diet, as she had been informed that the current provision of egg sandwiches were deemed unsuitable because of the spread used within it. She added that she believed the range of sandwiches had been cut back and only cheaper fillings had been provided. Chief Inspector Thorneycroft advised that he would look into the issue.

## **CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS**

- 11.1** The report to the Panel showed that of 195 detainees held, 130 (67%) had been offered a visit, of which 119 (92%) had accepted. The spread and timing of the visits was good. The Chairman advised the Panel that the Chief Executive had asked visitors to consider carrying out one visit per year in the 10pm to 1am period.
- 11.2** It had been noted that entry had been gained to the custody suites within 5 minutes for 91% of the visits, with appropriate reasons having been recorded for the remaining 9%.

## **Issues Raised for Discussion**

### **Weymouth**

- 12.1** On a visit to Weymouth on 26 August, the visitors had been advised that the water supplied in the cells was not suitable as drinking water, subsequently detainees were being provided with drinking water by staff. Mr Edwards confirmed the water in the Weymouth cells was not suitable for consumption but Poole and Bournemouth water in cells was suitable.
- 12.2** During the same visit it had been noted that there had been no Health Care Professional available at the suite due to the change in provider. Chief Inspector Thorneycroft advised that there had been initial problems with staffing following the changeover due to a mixture of annual leave that had been approved prior to the changeover and some staff having chosen not to transfer to the new provider. However, the situation continued to improve and he asked visitors to report any further issues they found.

**Visits Raised for Noting**

**Bournemouth**

**12.3** During a visit to Bournemouth on 16 September, visitors had noted that the right to have someone informed that been withheld for a detainee. The Chairman asked whether there were any time limits on withholding this right and whether someone else could be nominated by the detainee. Chief Inspector Thorneycroft advised that there must be a rationale for withholding the right but there were no time limits and that withholding the right was for anyone to be informed rather than a specific person nominated by the detainee.

**Blandford**

**12.4** Whilst visiting Blandford visitors noted that the toilets required a good clean. The Chairman questioned whether the cleaning continued to be monitored by someone from North Dorset District Council. The Force had been unable to confirm this but advised that the Blandford inspector had stated that the issue had been resolved.

**OTHER MATTERS**

**Chief Inspector Thorneycroft**

**13.1** The Chairman advised the Panel that Chief Inspector Thorneycroft would be leaving the Criminal Justice Division for a new position on the Force and would be replaced by Inspector Sarah Derbyshire who would attend the January meeting. She thanked him for all his assistance which had been appreciated by the entire Panel.

**Reports**

**13.2** Mr Edwards stated that he had been encouraged to see more responses from custody officers being recorded on the reports at the time of the visit.

**Miss C Freestone**

**13.3** The Chairman advised the Panel that Miss Freestone would be leaving the Scheme at the end of the year, returning for her final Panel meeting in January. She offered her thanks to Miss Freestone and wished her all the very best for the future.

*Meeting ended at 16.50 hrs*

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*Chairman*

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*Date*