

DORSET POLICE AUTHORITY

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 29 October 2012

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 1, 2 and 3 on Monday, 29 October 2012 at 3.30 pm

PRESENT:

Mrs K Emery (Chairman),
Mrs C Bishop, Col G Brierley (Police Authority), Miss R Coleman, Mrs A Cray,
Mrs T Farwell, Mr K Gooding, Mrs V Grier, Mr E Holloway, Mr F Jabbari (Police Authority),
Dr D James, Mr R Kerr, Mr H Masters, Mrs S Porter, Mr W Penzer,
Mr D Sandever, Mr R Shore, Mr T Walker, Mrs I Why

Also Present:

Assistant Chief Constable J Vaughan
Chief Inspector S Thorneycroft, Crime and Criminal Justice
Mr K Edwards, Crime and Criminal Justice
Mrs Y Fenwick, Police Authority

INTRODUCTION

11. The Chairman extended a welcome to Chief Inspector Simon Thorneycroft.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

12. Apologies were received from Mr J Baylem, Mrs C Bueno, Miss C Freestone, Mrs A Middleditch, Mr M Payne and Mrs B White.

MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

- 13.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2012 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 13.2 Following a question from the Panel Chief Inspector Thorneycroft confirmed that the 2 year pilot Appropriate Adult Scheme had 'gone live' on 26 July.
- 13.3 Mr Edwards provided an update on minute numbered 6.6 related to concerns around a female juvenile and confusion around which service would provide the appropriate adult. At the time visitors had been satisfied that custody staff had been taking good care of her. Mr Edwards advised that the Force had investigated the situation and were satisfied that there was nothing further to add.

CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

- 14.1 The report to the Panel showed that of 209 detainees held, 149 (71%) had been offered a visit, of which 134 (90%) had accepted. The spread and timing of the visits was good. It was pleasing to note that two visits had been made between 10pm and 1am and a further four made between 7am and 10am. The Chairman thanked the visitors involved for conducting those visits.
- 14.2 The Force was thanked in relation to waiting times, as visitors had gained access to suites within five minutes on all visits conducted for the second quarter running. It had also been noted that one report had been asterisked for discussion and 22 (65%) of the reports had no issues at all.

Issues Raised for Discussion

Bournemouth

- 14.3** On a visit to Bournemouth on 6 September, the visitors had reported that a detainee had been refused a second blanket. Mr Edwards confirmed that it had been reiterated to all custody staff that whilst provision of one blanket was a general rule, if a detainee requested a second blanket this should be provided subject to risk assessment.
- 14.4** During the same visit it had also been noted that a puddle of water had not been cleaned up. When the visitors queried with the custody officer, they had been told that the cell had not been cleaned due to risk of aggression from the detainee, but clearly it had been deemed safe enough for visitors to enter the cell. Mr Edwards advised that it was accepted that the staff had been wrong not to ensure the water was cleared up.

Issues Raised for Noting

- 14.5** It had been noted on a visit to Bournemouth on 11 July, that a detainee had requested medication but it had been unclear to the visitors whether she had informed custody staff and if the Health Care Professional (HCP) had been made aware. Mr Edwards confirmed that the detainee had seen the HCP regarding medication.
- 14.6** During a further visit to Bournemouth on 20 July, the visitors had been informed that the custody computer system had been down, consequently a full list of detainees had not been available. Visitors had made a decision to visit all available detainees. Chief Inspector Thorneycroft advised that in the event of the failure of the computer system, a move was made to revert to paper records. However, this report had highlighted issues regarding business continuity which would be looked into.
- 14.7** It had been noted on a visit to Bournemouth on 16 August that visitors had been unable to establish the ethnicity codes for detainees from the information they had been provided with. Visitors were reminded that as the new custody computer system does not currently show ethnicity codes on the summary sheet or on the copies of custody logs provided to them. The agreement is that, at the time of receiving the in-custody list, visitors may ask staff to indicate (by checking 'thumbnail' photos on the Custody Overview screen) which detainees are clearly from an ethnic minority. Whilst this was not an ideal solution, but working with other information shared with the visitors about vulnerable detainees it provided a solution in the short term. Mr Edwards advised that, unfortunately, although the request had been submitted for the necessary changes to the national system, at the current time he was unable to advise when it was likely to be resolved.

WEYMOUTH

- 14.8** Visitors had reported that on 3 July their names had been recorded on the custody logs. Mr Edwards confirmed that it had been reiterated to staff that ICV names should not be recorded on the logs.

CHRISTCHURCH

- 14.9** Following a visit to Christchurch, visitors had raised a number of housekeeping issues. Chief Inspector Thorneycroft advised the Panel that Christchurch had been closed until further notice.

ICVA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

15.1 The Scheme Administrator advised that the ICVA National Conference was held in Bristol on Saturday 20 October and had been attended by her, the Chairman and three Panel members. The delegates consisted of ICVs, Scheme Administrators, Authority members and officers. A brief summary of the presentations made on the day had been provided to the Panel previously.

OTHER MATTERS

Reductions in the Number of Young People in Custody

16.1 Assistant Chief Constable Vaughan informed that Panel that there had been a dramatic reduction in the number of young people detained in custody since 2007. He added that he would arrange for the data to be shared with visitors via the Scheme Administrator.

Farewells and Thank You

16.2 The Chairman offered her thanks to Police Authority Members for their support of the Panel, particularly Mr Jabbari who had been involved in the appointment and reappointment of visitors.

16.3 Mr Jabbari responded that he had felt privileged to be a part of the Scheme and expressed his admiration for the visitors for giving their time freely and willingly.

16.4 Col Brierley shared the Authority's wish to formally record their gratitude to all of the volunteers who had undertaken this important role during the life of the Authority.

Custody Report Fonts

16.5 Following a query from the Panel, Mr Edwards advised that he would make enquiries about increasing the font size of the reports issued to the visitors.

Meeting ended at 1600 hrs

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Chairman

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Date