

OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on Monday 29 January 2018

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 1, 2 and 3 on Monday 29 January 2018 at 3.30pm

Present: Mrs C Brace, Ms J Bradbury, Mr P Cashmore, Ms A Cray, Mr C Ellis, Ms C Etienne, Mr A Fear, Miss C Hall, Mr R Hermans, Miss N Hill, Dr D James (Chair), Mr M Payne, Mr K Skerman, Mr T Walker, Mrs A White, Mrs I Why, Mr A Zakrzewski

Also Present:

Mr M Underhill, Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr A Harrold, Director of Operations, OPCC
Mrs Y Fenwick, Governance and Contact Manager, OPCC
Mrs A Giles, Governance Officer, OPCC
Mr K Edwards, Custody Support Officer, Dorset Police
Chief Inspector Claxton, Dorset Police
Sergeant A Forrest, Dorset Police

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Assistant Chief Constable Fielding, Mrs J Steadman, Mrs E Cross, Mrs T Farwell and Mrs N Reynolds.
- 1.2 The new custody visitors Mrs C Brace, Ms C Etienne, Mr K Skerman, Mrs A White and Mr A Zakrzewski were welcomed to the Panel. It was noted that Mrs D Bartlett had also been appointed but would be joining at a later date.
- 1.3 Chief Inspector Claxton was also welcomed to the Panel.
- 1.4 The Panel were informed that both Mr S D'Arrigo and Mrs B White had resigned from the Scheme. The Panel were also informed this was to be Mrs Cray's final meeting before stepping down. Thanks were given to all three for their commitment and hard work.
- 1.5 Mr Underhill updated the Panel on the ICVA sanitary protection campaign. He noted that the campaign has led to an amendment being considered to PACE Code C. This change would be as a direct result of the reports from ICVs from across the country.
- 1.6 Mr Underhill expressed his thanks to the Panel for the work they had done and expressed his thanks to Dorset Police with regard to responding to issues raised by the ICVs.

SAMARITANS IN CUSTODY PRESENTATION

- 2.1 Sergeant Forrest provided the Panel with a presentation on the new scheme for Samaritans within custody.
- 2.2 She provided an explanation of the aims of the pilot to provide the best care to detainees and support custody staff who had not been specifically trained to deal with the complex emotions of detainees held at a time of mental health crisis.

- 2.3 The provision of emotional support to detainees can help to lower stress levels, reduce self-harm, act as a positive intervention, provide them with future coping strategies and reduce reoffending.
- 2.4 The pilot had run initially in Bournemouth custody with two volunteers and had gone well. After minor adjustments had been made, Sergeant Forrest reported that the Samaritan volunteers had visited 350 individuals, and the team had increased from two to ten and looked to continue to increase.
- 2.5 Service users had been surveyed and 100% reported that they had found it useful and would use it again. There had also been occasions when detainees had requested a Samaritans visit as they entered custody. Detainees had also continued to use the service after their detention.
- 2.6 The Samaritans had been invited to attend the Dorset Police Health and Wellbeing Board. Front line officers had also started to suggest the Samaritans to the people they interact with. Following the success of the pilot, it had been reported that other police forces had considered using a similar service.
- 2.7 Sergeant Forrest added that the numbers of detainees who engaged with the service had been beyond expectations. Custody staff remained sensitive to the needs of detainees and mindful about how the suggestion to contact the Samaritans could be made. It had been recognised that some of the success of the pilot could be attributed to the way custody staff suggested the Scheme to detainees.
- 2.8 Visitors asked whether the Samaritans were able to fulfil the required number of volunteers required by custody. Sergeant Forrest acknowledged that demand had been high and there have been instances where demand outweighed resource but the numbers of volunteers had increased.

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017 were approved with a minor amendment and signed as a true record.

Action Log

- 3.2 ICVs Viewing Handover. Mr Edwards advised the Panel that custody staff had been reminded that ICVs were permitted to view the handover process. Any issues should be recorded. It had been noted that in the last quarter ICVs had viewed handovers and staff had been very helpful.

CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

- 4.1 It had been raised that the number of visits undertaken on a Saturday had decreased and visitors had been asked to be mindful of this.
- 4.2 It had also been noted unsocial hours visits undertaken had decreased this quarter. It had been acknowledged that the training of new visitors and the short days during the winter period had impacted on this. Visitors had been asked to consider making unsocial hours visits when making visit arrangements.
- 4.3 The Chair thanked the Force for the continued support in achieving immediate access for visitors.

- 4.4 Visit to Poole on 18/11/2017. It had been noted that one detainee had spent a significant amount of time waiting for a bed in a mental health facility. Once a wait exceeded 24 hours then the recent escalation process dictated that a Superintendent would make contact with the appropriate service provider. Mr Edwards highlighted the differences between those waiting for a bed and those waiting for assessment. It was noted that secure transfers had also caused delays in moving detainees out of custody. Visitors would continue to monitor and report back to the next panel.
- 4.5 It had been acknowledged that the significant demand on Social Services had resulted in delays to mental health assessments for detainees in custody. However, the length of time detainees had been held for whilst waiting on mental health reasons had decreased.
- 4.6 Visit to Bournemouth on 10/10/2017. During this visit, visitors had reported the detention of a young detainee. She appeared stressed, confused and unsure of what was going on. Staff had been very supportive of the detainee and provided extra support on request. It had also been noted that there had been issues in sourcing an appropriate adult for this detainee.
- 4.7 Visit to Bournemouth on 18/10/2017. On checking the log for a female detainee, visitors had noted that there had not been a female detention officer recorded. This had been rectified and had been a recording error. Visitors had been assured that a female detention officer had been dealing with this detainee.
- 4.8 Visit to Bournemouth on 01/12/2017. It had been noted by visitors that a detainee had access to a plastic blanket bag and had attempted to use it to self-harm. This had been reported as an adverse incident and it had been reiterated to detention staff that cells must be free of unused items. On this occasion the blanket had been provided by the arresting officer still in the plastic bag as they had been unaware of procedure. Custody staff had also been advised that arresting officers should not be acting in that capacity.
- 4.9 It had been noted that a detainee had been waiting for secure transport for some time. The delay had been caused by the transport travelling from the north of the country.
- 4.10 The poor quality of sanitary products provided to female detainees had been highlighted. However, improvements had been made more recently in the products and range available. Chief Inspector Claxton explained this had happened in an effort to improve provision of sanitary products.
- 4.11 Visit to Bournemouth on 19/12/2017. Visitors reported better provision of sanitary protection. The language sheets had been used and worked well.
- 4.12 Visit to Weymouth on 05/11/2017. Visitors recorded issues regarding provision of an appropriate adult for a detainee. It was explained there can be difficulties finding a family member who was willing to act as an appropriate adult and the appropriate adult service could not always provide someone straight away. This continued to be an issue, and whilst it would be outside of custody control, visitors had been asked to continue reporting.
- 4.13 Visit to Weymouth on 25/11/2017. During this visit a detention officer reported that it could be difficult for female detainees to use sanitary protection whilst wearing rip proof clothing. Chief Inspector Claxton acknowledged this but the use of rip proof

clothing would be based on a risk assessment. It would remain important to prioritise the safety of the detainee and would be considered on a case by case basis.

- 4.14 A visitor noted that a detainee had a pencil, Mr Edwards confirmed that writing material could be provided unless risk assessed otherwise.
- 4.15 Visit to Weymouth on 18/12/2017. Visitors reported an issue with the temperature of the suite and questioned whether the corridor temperature and the cell temperature could differ significantly. Mr Edwards agreed and advised the Panel that they had been aware of issues and would be looking to resolve them as soon as possible. Visitors noted they had seen officers taking temperatures and had been reassured by this. A meeting had been due to take place with building services to consider what improvement could be made. An update would be provided to the Panel.
Action – Chief Inspector Claxton/ Mr Edwards
- 4.16 Visitors recorded that despite a number of detainees complaining of the cold, blankets appeared to be rationed. Mr Edwards informed the Panel that officers had been asked to ensure the blankets had been issued wisely. Visitors had reported concerns regarding the unavailability of blankets in a custody suite. Mr Edwards explained that this had been due to the bank holiday and more blankets had now been ordered. The panel would receive an update at the next meeting.
Action – Chief Inspector Claxton/ Mr Edwards
- 4.17 Visitors had also reported that a review had been missed, but there had been some confusion around whether the detainee had required 6 or 9 hourly reviews.
- 4.18 Visit to Weymouth on 29/12/2017. On arrival staff stated that they believed a detainee had been younger than they claimed and were in fact a child. Custody staff had asked the visitors to question his age, however the detainee continued to insist they were over 19.
- 4.20 Visit to Poole on 08/12/2017. Visitors reported that a member of staff had been exceptionally helpful and aided with a training visit. Chief Inspector Claxton agreed to pass on the compliment to the officer.
- 4.21 Visitors acknowledged that staffing levels would only be reported when there had been a direct impact on the level of care received by detainees. Chief Inspector Claxton explained the process for determining staffing levels and informed the Panel that illness or unexpected absences could lead to staff being moved to another custody suite. Predicting staffing levels could be difficult as requirements would fluctuate dependent on the level and demand of detainees.

ICVA UPDATE

- 5.1 The Panel were provided with an update on the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) by Mrs Fenwick. It was explained that the management board had responsibility for the strategic planning and finance of the organisation, with the National Expert Forum (NEF) dealing with day to day business and Mrs Fenwick represented the South West at the forum.
- 5.2 ICVA had changed considerably in recent years and significant improvements had been made, which included the introduction of Bitesize Training.

- 5.3 She explained that ICVA supported ICV Schemes, but would not have the resource to support individual ICVs, Scheme Managers would act as the lynch pin between ICVA and ICVs.
- 5.4 With the input of the NEF, ICVA had devised a national report form. However, Schemes would not be obliged to use the form and there would be flexibility within it for local amendments to be made by individual schemes.
- 5.5 Provision of sanitary protection in custody had been a key area for ICVA and although some ICVs had been concerned that the issue had not portrayed custody in a positive way, the focus had been on the health and wellbeing of detainees. The issue had been discussed at Home Secretary level and changes to PACE Code C would be considered.
- 5.6 Mrs Fenwick informed the Panel that ICVA would release a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) which would allow schemes to assess their performance. There would be four levels to achieve, bronze (self-assessment), silver (regional assessment), gold (national assessment) and platinum (assessment by ICVA). Participation in the QAF would not be mandatory, but would provide assurance of quality and drive improvements.
- 5.7 An update and further information would be provided to the Panel on the QAF.
Action – Mrs Fenwick/ Mrs Giles

CHANGING THE CULTURE OF POLICE CUSTODY CONFERENCE

- 6.1 Mrs Fenwick introduced her report on the Culture of Police Custody Conference which highlighted the key areas of interest for visitors.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 7.1 Following a question from Mr Hermans, Mr Edwards confirmed that magazines and books for detainees needed to be staple free before being taken into custody.

Meeting ended at 5.00pm