

Cambridgeshire Independent Custody Visitors' Group Meeting

Date: Monday 13th June 2016

Time: 7.00 pm – arrival from 6.15 for an informal network opportunity

Location: Conference Room 3, Police Headquarters

Minutes

Attendees

ICVs	Others
AD	Jason Ablewhite – PCC
AW	Insp Iain Moor – South Custody Manager
BE	Insp Alex Wood-Davis- North Custody Manager
FC	
GB	Hannah Watson – OPCC
GR	Nicky Phillipson - OPCC
GW	Carla Walker – OPCC (note taking)
JC	
JL	
JM	
JB	
PR	
RS	

Welcome, introductions and apologies

AW chaired the meeting. He welcomed everyone who introduced themselves.

Apologies were received from:

- AL
- JT
- CM
- ME
- CI Ian Simmons

Minutes and actions of previous Cambridgeshire ICV Meeting on 21st March

There was only one action from the last meeting -

- HW to establish a digital version of the new form – HW updated the group that this is now being completed with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire so the form will be used

across the 3 forces. Herts have developed a draft form, which JT and AW have commented on – awaiting an updated version to share wider.

Current performance & matters arising from visits

Summary of visits (from April 2016)

HW presented the summary visit report and thanked ICVs for letting the Office know when visits have taken place – this has made it much easier to chase outstanding forms from Custody. Really pleased to see that visits have taken place at the weekend. Please continue to vary the day and time of your future visits.

Issues about appropriate adult provision and (previously) access to healthcare have been raised by the Commissioner to the force. We are still awaiting a response.

- JL commented that the cleaning is getting better at Parkside.
- JL commented she felt staffing levels at Parkside are very low and means can't always give a true account of a visit as stress levels of the DOs is very high due to the shortages. IM stated that there are only ten cells at Parkside and the level of Staff reflects the staffing levels and the frame work, they will be developing new shift pattern which will include an increase in staff. JL said 3 or 4 incidents happening at one time can cause delays. Thorpewood even when very busy has no delays as more staff over there.
- AD asked about custody numbers for DPs and if they were kept by DOs as by the time they came to write reports some DPs had been released and DOs did not have their custody number. AWD responded that custody numbers are related to individuals and not cells. AW suggested getting all the relevant information at the beginning of the visit get cell numbers and record numbers.

Access to CCTV

ICVA have asked us to remind ICVs of the need to obtain DP's permission to view them on CCTV. The national standard states:

The introduction of CCTV into custody suites has raised the question of whether independent custody visitors should have access to footage. This is ultimately a matter for local discretion, but the Home Office view is that visitors should carry out their functions in person and not by viewing either live CCTV pictures or recorded footage. Their role is fundamentally interactive with both detainees and police staff and cannot be discharged remotely. There may also be issues about infringing the privacy of detainees who have not consented to visitors observing them using CCTV. However, where specific incidents or circumstances arise as issues and have been captured on CCTV, visitors might reasonably be allowed access where both the police and the detainee(s) concerned consent. Visitors should be able to ask the custody officer whether the CCTV is working and be given a demonstration if necessary.

Retention of notes

AW stated that we're looking to provide some consistency over what ICVs do with their notes. Some notes are being kept by ICVs for long periods of time, AW suggested it might be good to keep them for a period of time just not forever. HW waiting for a response from ICVA.

Feedback from recent training opportunities

HW recently sent email about resources / training including:

- International Committee of the Red Cross E-learning course on detention
- The Guardian 6x9 virtual experience of solitary confinement
- Mental Health First Aid Lite

JB attended the Mental Health First Aid Lite course he said it was extremely helpful and very interesting and would recommend that people attend if they can. HW said that there are 2 Mental Health First Aid courses coming up one on the 27th July and also the 16th September. HW will put all interested people forward for the courses. AD & JL thought would be good as will raise a lot of awareness.

Update from the OPCC

JA thanked ICVs for their role. He reflected on last few weeks in office and updated ICVs with his future plans.

Following the Eastern Region ICV Conference, HW has been strengthening links with the Appropriate Adult schemes in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. JC and FC attended the Peterborough AA meeting last week JC stayed until the end of the meeting and said there was one gentleman interested in the scheme, there was talk of collaborating with ICVs and how that might work. JC said that it might be difficult as there is a distinct difference between AA's and ICV's as AA's can be stuck in custody for some time. Preferred option would be to have a parent or a guardian present but this is not always appropriate. Mike Sampson who runs the AA's in Peterborough does do an unofficial out of hour's service. Cambridge City and the south have no out of hour's option this scheme is run by the Council. HW met with the people running the scheme in the south of the county and they are keen to run it for longer hours. JC confused about the distinction between Council and Mike and other AA's. JC said the meetings are interesting and informative and Cambridgeshire have invited ICVs to a Forum on 18th July. JL asked if there was maybe a possibility to tap into the Street Pastors. JL wouldn't want to combine and do both ICV and AA. Given the aims are very similar to custody visiting (protecting vulnerable people) I think there is lots to learn from the 2 schemes – are we happy to invite AA representatives to future meetings? No one had an issue with inviting AA's to future meetings.

HW also highlighted to ICVs, a recent IPCC investigation into the treatment of an 11 year old girl with a disability. You can read a news article at <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/08/ipcc-criticises-sussex-police-treatment-11-year-old-disabled-girl> and see the IPCC recommendations which ICVs may like to consider when visiting at <https://www.ipcc.gov.uk/recommendations/recommendation-sussex-police-february-2016>

Date for your diary – Saturday 10th September - Learning Disability and Autism Awareness Training for ICVs at Beds OPCC.

Update from Cambridgeshire Constabulary

IM started by saying that Kings Lynn now have a virtual court up and running. Parkside's is being installed and Thorpewood's will follow after but staffing will need to be look at. With the introduction of Virtual Courts it could mean that courts will run in to the evening up to 7pm and at weekends but this is sometime away. No Cells have been lost at Parkside. 3 Cells at Thorpewood with no natural light and 2 of these have been put aside as use for the virtual court, this will mean that there will be no impact on the running of the Custody suite whilst work is being carried out. Parkside is currently waiting on the software. Initially the virtual courts will be used for remand hearings and it is highly unlikely Juveniles will be included in this. The virtual court is successfully up and running in Herts. GR commented that he is concerned with things being computerised and doesn't feel it would work that well also concerned with privacy. AWD suggested that ICV's could go and look at the system over at Herts and see for themselves how it works.. AWD said that once DP's are charged and remanded they are then outside of PACE.

IM then spoke about YP's and AA's and that the Constabulary is scoping out the costs for overnight AA's but there will be further discussions surrounding this. Concordat going through about Children and YP in custody. They won't be in custody over night at all eventually. There are issues surrounding lack of beds for YP's within local authorities. HW stated that the concordat guidance is already in existence.

IM: Mental Health DP's will not be held in Custody, there has only been one incident of a DP with Mental Health Issues held in Custody in the last 3 months. AWD said this was due to a lack of availability of outside agencies. Can take time to get DP's with Mental Health issues seen in custody as not all G4 Doctors are trained to deal with them. ICV's agreed it was a relief to see a decline in DP's with Mental Health problems in custody. NP said that there are now 3 mental health nurses in the force control room and this has been a massive help in identifying the best help and course of action for officers having to make arrests. Might be a good idea to organise a visit to the force control room for the ICV's so they can listen to the mental health nurses working.

IM: Secret Garden party is taking place in July. Deep clean of custody suites over the next few months July/August time.

AW asked if the Thorpewood enquiry office was now running to its new longer opening hours as the website was still giving the old hours. AWD said she would check the website and get it changed.

AW: IPCC recommendations on swallowing drugs will there be changes to how these DP's are dealt with. AWD: Various meetings have taken place, protocol same as always has been but this is being looked at. Cambs is the only county with incept toilets. AW: Since the introduction of incept toilets has there been an increase in evidence collected? AWD: Yes there has been and incept toilets have been successful.

Any other business

GR: Microwaves are a concern especially those with a removable filter as they are disgusting and need regular cleaning. Not all DO's are aware of this, can cause food poisoning. Food that is heated should be probed to make sure it is the correct temperature and temperature should be recorded.

Close the formal part of the meeting

What does a good visit look like?

- Co-ordinators would like to have an annual review with each ICV. This is an opportunity for ICVs to reflect on what's gone well / less well over the year, share any hopes for the future and identify any training needs. This got us thinking about what a good visit looks like and we recognised that we hadn't documented what a good visit looks like. There's loads of experience in the room, so wanted to give you an opportunity to define it. We need this not only for existing ICVs but also new people joining the scheme.
- The group split into two. One group considered what a good ICV looks and the second group considered what a good visit looks like.

Date for next meeting: Monday 12th September

Was suggested that this meeting be held at Monks Wood and made slightly shorter to allow for a visit to the Police Museum. All in agreement and a time for an informal get together before the meeting will be included on the agenda.