

## **Independent Custody Visitors South Panel Meeting**

**Date:** Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**Time:** 6.30pm

**Location:** Lecture room, 2nd Floor, Parkside Police Station

### **Minutes**

#### **Attendees – Panel Members**

(ME)

(MF)

(PK)

(GR)

(RS)

(WT)

#### **Attendees – other**

Chief Inspector Iain Clarke – Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Insp Paul Street – Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Hannah Watson (HW) – Volunteer Co-ordinator, OPCC

### **1. Welcome & introductions**

PK opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Insp Paul Street was welcomed to the meeting – it was his first ICV Panel meeting since taking over the role from Insp Marcia Nichols.

### **2. Apologies received**

Apologies were received from CI Andy Gratrix, PH, JL, CM, and JT.

### **3. Minutes of previous South Panel meeting held 11 September 2014**

- HW to find out more about procedure of rousing detainees – PS explained that a magnetic “R” placed on door. The Custody record is detailed in a

different colour for detainees who need rousing, and also automatically updates Custody Staff when it is due, or overdue

- HW to find out about fire custody procedure – PS explained that if there is a fire, there is a fire evacuation procedure. Ultimately, the priority is getting all detainees out. It is done in a logical way, and “random” testing is carried out to ensure everyone is ok with the policy
- HW to clarify signing in procedures – PS confirmed that ICVs should sign in on arrival at Custody.
- HW to share HMIC/P presentation with Panel Members – completed. Sent with previous minutes.
- HW to investigate HMIC/P inspection criteria – see <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/joint-inspections/joint-inspection-of-police-custody-facilities/> for more details. South Yorkshire were the last force to be inspected and a copy of their report can be read - <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publication/south-yorkshire-joint-inspection-of-police-custody/>
- HW to find out more about the Custody training and share details with panel members – completed. Future training is scheduled for February 2015 and ICVs are welcome to attend any session. IC will circulate programme once agreed.
- HW to share the Community Remedy Report on the survey once completed – see <http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/14-10-02-BCB-Agenda-Item-004.1-Community-Remedy-consultation-analysis-Appendix-1.pdf> and <http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/14-10-02-BCB-Agenda-Item-004-Community-Remedy.pdf>

#### **4. Current performance & matters arising from visits**

Summary was shared which will be attached to minutes. **Action: HW to share summary when agenda sent out so people have an opportunity to look at it before the meeting.**

HW's reflections - another good quarter so thanks to everyone involved. Following the previous meeting, visits to St Neots were scheduled every 2 months, but to be reinstated to monthly. No visits to Parkside have taken place on a Thursday in the last 6 months.

#### **5. Update: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

HW informed the panel that the OPCC has been re-writing the policy and procedures for Independent Custody Visiting. This is to ensure compliance with the Home Office Codes of Practice, but also reflect good practice in both Cambridgeshire and elsewhere. HW will circulate for a 4 week consultation and encouraged everyone to respond.

HW reminded ICVs of the event on 27<sup>th</sup> January – formal invites will follow. Hoping this will be an annual event – an opportunity for us to thank you for your contribution, celebrate your achievements and plan for the future. The programme is still be drafted so if you'd like any particular input (about Independent Custody Visiting or the wider OPCC / Constabulary work) then please let HW know.

HW is now the Eastern Region representative on the ICVA Management board.

#### **6. Update: Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

PK read a letter from ACC Mark Hopkins (attached to the minutes) explaining that Parkside Custody is due to close for 3 weeks from 19<sup>th</sup> January while a programme of remedial work is carried out. When it re-opens it will have a reduced capacity of 10 cells.

IC explained that following an HMIC/P inspection in Bedfordshire, they made the decision to close the custody facility in Bedford. As a result, the constabulary has been looking at the estate in Cambridgeshire. This has

highlighted a number of issues. The Home Office Technical Director also carried out an inspection with highlighted some issues. As a result, Parkside will be closed for 3 weeks, while the following can be carried out:

- Screening up around the entrance to Custody
- Increase the size of the Charge desk area
- New lockers for detainee's belongings
- Floor hatchings to be added to encourage privacy
- Access to fingerprint room will be changed so detainees don't have to go behind the charge desk
- Detainee kitchen will go into the room next to the Doctors Room – spring loaded sealing door
- B5 – out of commission and will become a private visiting room. Currently it's a breach of PACE as there is no area for juveniles to consult with Appropriate Adults.
- D block – light tubes(natural daylight) will be added into the roof of the cells to make them useable
- C3 & C4 – will no longer in use
- Exercise yard cage will be added
- Replace panic buttons so they're uniform strips all along the wall.

While Parkside is closed, Huntingdon will be open full-time. They are also hoping to make some innovative changes to prisoner transportation, allowing officers to book detainees in en-route to reduce the time spent in custody.

**Action: ICVs to be invited for a visit and briefing before it re-opens. PS to notify HW when about to re-open so HW can arrange with ICVs.**

IC explained that the Constabulary are looking at establishing a long term plan for custody accommodation in Cambridgeshire.

The South Panel are happy for the North Panel to visit Huntingdon while it is open to take Parkside detainees.

PS reminded ICVs to challenge inappropriate behaviour by custody staff – if ICVs feel unable to mention on the report form, then please email HW directly.

## **7. ICVA Conference update**

JL attended the Conference on behalf of the South Panel. The focus was on protection of vulnerable people –

*“They started out by reminding us that it is 40 years since the Birmingham bombings and the emergence of news of severely bruised detainees at that time. We were shown photographs of other out-of-date police stations in the West Midlands, putting into perspective the squashed inadequate space issues at Parkside. We were also shown plans of a new state-of-the-art station being built, with all the facilities carefully thought out.*

*The switch to “Self-Introduction” by Visitors resulted in a much higher take-up of detainees. The figure has risen to 90% saying ‘yes’ where this is the case. There are plans to increase the budget for more training for Custody Visitors, with DVD’s and brochures.*

*The main theme of the conference was dealing with vulnerable people and the impact on anyone in mental crisis being detained in a cell, which is now regarded as totally inappropriate.*

*Some forces have developed a Triage response team with mental health workers also present. They aim to transfer a vulnerable person in mental health crisis, to a place of care without having to detain them in a police cell.*

*If the custody staff recommends that Visitors do not interview a vulnerable person as it may upset them even more, this advice should be followed, however it is possible to ask to see the risk assessment of that person.*

*One speaker highlighted the risk of suicide of adults with mental health issues. These might be whilst in custody, in prison, in a mental hospital or very soon after release. Northern Ireland has the highest rate of suicides in these circumstances.*

*There was a strong message of Thanks for the Volunteers for giving up their time and carrying out such an important task.”*

Documents and presentations can be viewed at

<http://icva.org.uk/news/article/annual-conference-presentations>

## **8. Any other business**

Dates of future meetings were agreed:

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, 6.30pm, Parkside

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June, 6.30pm, Parkside

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September, 6.30pm, Parkside

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 6.30pm, Parkside

**Date of next meeting – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015**