

Cambridgeshire Independent Custody Visitors' Group Meeting

Date: Monday 5th December 2016

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

Location: Conference Room 3, Police HQ

Minutes

Attendees

ICVs	Others
AW	Jason Ablewhite – Police and Crime Commissioner (JA)
PR	Chief Insp Ian Simmons (IS)
FC	Insp Alex Wood-Davis – North Custody Manager (AWD)
GW	Insp Iain Moor – South Custody Manager (IM)
JL	Nicky Phillipson – OPCC (NP)
AL	Catherine Kimberley – OPCC (CK)
PH	Carla Walker – OPCC (note taking)
JB	Craig Rothwell – Personal Safety
JT	
AL	
GB	
JM	

Welcome, introductions and apologies

AW chaired the meeting and welcomed the ICVs who introduced themselves.

Apologies were received from:

- CM
- ME
- GR
- LS
- BE
- JC

Minutes and actions of previous Cambridgeshire ICV Meeting on 9th September 2016

There was only one action from the last meeting which is carried over:

- CK to establish progress on a digital version of the form – CK updated the group that development is being completed by Hertfordshire with Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to use across the 3 forces. No substantial update as yet.

The minutes of the 9th September 2016 were agreed and signed off.

The Police and Crime Commissioner welcomed the ICVs and thanked them for their continued support. He provided an update on plans for Parkside: with management of custody part of the strategic alliance with Bedfordshire Police, and Hertfordshire Constabulary, a project is underway to find a suitable site in the Cambridge area to construct a new investigation centre. This will eventually replace the Parkside Police Station allowing redevelopment of the site.

Current performance & matters arising from visits

Summary of visits (from Sept - Nov 2016)

- Following a question about medical issue disclosure, IM confirmed that disclosures will be passed to the ICVs only on a risk assessment basis otherwise ICVs will not be notified.
- AW mentioned about the air pressure in the cells and how when the cell hatch is opened air blows in to the face. AWD responded that this shouldn't be happening - they will look into this. AW reported that some custody officers are uncomfortable with this potential health risk.
- PR asked when the new shift patterns will start. IM confirmed that following an assessment of staffing levels, the new shift patterns have been agreed to start in March. Most of the time there will be one sergeant and one detention officer but with an available uplift to one sergeant and 2 Detention Officers.

- JL asked how this compares to 5 years ago.
- IS confirmed that over the last five years, Cambridgeshire has sought to reduce numbers of arrests which has had an impact on lowering custody numbers. Over this period (during reductions of detainees) March and Huntingdon were not opened as frequently. However 2016 has seen an increase from 12,000 to 14,000. The force is in the middle of a recruitment drive and it takes up to two months to train staff. Custody Sergeants will increase from 22 to 25 from the 13th March. There are no plans as yet to fully open Huntingdon. At present the Huntingdon facility is only open from Monday – Friday between 7am and 7pm.
- AW - Parkside is more of a concern around problematic detainees. A change in emphasis over the last six to nine months with drugs and alcohol becoming more of a problem has been noted. Some ICVs have witnessed an increase in the length of time detainees are being held which causes general unease although this is generally caused by wait time for other services such as access to health care professionals. There are concerns about detainee access to

the exercise area and also some Detention Officers are missing meal breaks. IS confirmed that this should change from the 13th March.

- IS reported a welcome drop in children being detained following the Children's Concordat. There has been a decrease in section 136 detainees. Some custody staff have now left but recruitment is ongoing.
- IS also reported ongoing issues with the G4S contract (gaps in service) and this is included in the Force Risk Register.
- IM also confirmed that for vulnerable detainees additional staff can be bought in.
- AW agreed that ICVs have seen this however there is still a concern about low staff morale.
- JA recognised there are pressures in other areas which put the Force under strain.
- Recently there was a vulnerable person in custody for over 24hrs as there was nowhere for them to go.
- IM thanked the ICVs for bringing these issues to the attention of the force – the evidence they provide allows the Force to hold other partners to account.

Update from the OPCC

CK updated the panel with current performance: there have been 29 visits between September and November. Access to health care professionals remains an issue. Mid tenure letters were sent out to all ICVs at the beginning of November as a thank you from the Commissioner and a reminder of volunteer obligations. CK asked all ICVs to remember if they are unable to make a rota visit to let their Coordinator know so someone else can be found.

Autism training - AW and others attended a useful course. CK will look at another training course for this.

JA said would be good for ICVs to have a look at the Police & Crime Plan and give their views.

CK asked if there was is still a requirement for AA training. AW said that there could be a possibility for ICVs to observe a training session with the YMCA when they have an AA meeting. CK to investigate.

CK has spoken to two potential ICVs and is awaiting application forms. The solicitor's phone in Parkside custody is still broken.

A new member of staff, Alasdair Baker will be joining the Police Commissioner's team in January as Partnerships and Communities Officer – Alasdair will take over the role of ICV Scheme Manager. CK thanked the ICVs for their continued support.

CK provided forthcoming training dates:

- ICV Seminar: *Making a difference to detainees: interpersonal relationships, treatment and the use of authority in police custody suites in England*, Layla Skinns
Tuesday 24th January, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge
- ICV training session: **Saturday 18th February**, Police HQ, Huntingdon
- ICV quarterly meeting: **Monday 6th March**, Police Headquarters, Huntingdon
- ICV Regional Conference: **Saturday 4th March**, Police Headquarters, Welwyn Garden City
- ICVA National Conference: **Saturday 11th March**, Birmingham – venue TBC

Update from Cambridgeshire Constabulary

IM reported that the Appropriate Adult scheme will now be provided 24 hours a day in Parkside following three-month pilot funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner – this will be provided by the YMCA and will be reviewed in January 2017. (The previous scheme used to end at 10pm).

IM said there is currently a recruitment drive for virtual court staff. He added that they won't be able to provide assistance to custody staff however this is being looked at. St Neots custody suite is in use again to hold those being detained for Terrorist related offences, therefore ICV visits will need to resume.

IM confirmed that custody staff will be offering female detainees Feminine Hygiene packs - there is a drop down box on the system for this and staff are being asked to make sure they check this. The Solicitors phone has been smashed three times in the last two months. This is being raised as an issue with ICT but detainees using the phone are being supervised.

AW queried whether confidentiality is still respected for detainees when using the solicitor phone. IM confirmed that this is risk assessed.

IM said following issues with the G4S contract and long waits to see mental health support staff, there will be a meeting with G4S in the New Year. IS said that custody staff have to request medical support through call centres but it is not necessarily the call centre staff holding calls up. Staff are being shared between custody suites in some instances.

JA asked if ICVs could continue to notify him about gaps with Mental Health Access. The G4S contract is across seven forces and evidence will help the Police and Crime Commissioner hold G4S to account. G4S have reported an ongoing recruitment problem.

AWD updated on the ventilation system in Thorpe Wood – the temperature of the cells is still an issue but staff are monitoring this and are in discussions with Estates Management to try to resolve these issues.

AWD said that in the short term, cells will be taken out of action if necessary, and extra clothing provided if needed. A programme of works will begin in January 2017 starting with the Virtual Courts with two cells provided for this. Also whilst the block is closed decoration will take place.

AWD confirmed plans for deep cleaning cells: Thorpe Wood's deep clean will take place in February. During this time, Huntingdon and March re-open. Parkside will have a deep clean in September 2017. ICVs should also note there will be a further programme of works being carried out over the next year in Thorpe Wood.

AWD reported that March is monitored, locked down clean and ready to use.

AW reported major IT system outages lately which add pressure to custody staff.

IS said advance notice is given if an outage is about to take place (where possible).

AW asked at what stage is a decision taken to use paper forms as this can create a problem for staff when inputting data.

AW also asked how often the taps and showers are operated at March and Huntingdon. AWD confirmed that due to the risk of legionnaire's disease this is done regularly.

AWD has some up-to-date advice on communicable disease for CK to pass on to the ICVs.

AD asked about the current audit organisation in custody, e.g. when an issue is raised, how do ICVs know the issues has been dealt with? The OneNote record is not being updated. CK confirmed that resolutions are passed on to the Coordinators however other solutions will be looked at. AWD suggested that the introduction of Athena may provide a solution.

The meeting ended with a training session from PC Craig Rothwell on Personal Safety.

Any other business

Date for next meeting: 6th March 2017 Location: Cambridgeshire Constabulary HQ, Huntingdon.