

**DRAFT**

**DORSET POLICE AUTHORITY**

**INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 26 October 2009**

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 1, 2 & 3, Headquarters on Monday, 26 October 2009 at 3.30pm

**PRESENT:**

Mrs K E Emery (Chairman),  
Mr J Baylem, Mrs C Bishop, Col G Brierley OBE (Police Authority),  
Mrs C Bueno, Mr G Brown, Mr P Crabtree, Mrs A Cray, Mr J Drayson,  
Miss C Freestone, Mr K Gooding, Ms G Gregg-Smith, Mrs V Grier,  
Mr E Holloway, Mr R Kerr, Mr H Masters, Mr M Payne, Mr D Sandever,  
Mr R Shore, Mr C Slee, Miss L Wilson (Police Authority), Mrs K Wright

**Also Present:**

Chief Superintendent G Donnell, Criminal Justice Division  
Inspector L Pope, Criminal Justice Division  
Inspector S Whitley, Section Commander, North Dorset  
Sergeant D Thompson, Criminal Justice Division  
Mr K Edwards, Criminal Justice Division  
Mrs Y Fenwick, Police Authority

**CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

10. The Chairman welcomed Inspector S Whitley, Section Commander from North Dorset as a representative from Custody for the County Division and Inspector L Pope and Sergeant D Thompson from the Criminal Justice Division.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

11. Apologies were received from Mr M Glanville, Assistant Chief Constable (Operations), Chief Inspector T Lumley, Mr F Jabbari (Police Authority), Mr A Holland, Miss A McAlpine, Mrs S Merritt, Mrs S Porter and Mr I Smith.

**MINUTES**

- 12.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2009 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 12.2 The Chairman raised four issues under matters arising from the minutes. The first referred to minute numbered 5.2 which related to the toilets at Blandford Custody Suite. Mr Edwards confirmed the problem with the condition of the toilet seat in one of the cells had been fully rectified. The Chairman asked those Panel members next attending Blandford to ensure the result was satisfactory.
- 12.3 The second issue under minute numbered 6.2 related to late night visits to Poole Custody Suite. The Chairman confirmed that ICVs should continue to gain access out of hours via the back entrance at Poole but should remain vigilant as police cars would be entering and exiting the yard and not expecting to come across people in the area.
- 12.4 The third issue under minute numbered 6.8 related to a detainee who claimed he had been assaulted. Chief Inspector Lumley had fully investigated the claim which included contacting the detainee who had confirmed that he did not wish to make a complaint. There would be no further action regarding this incident.

- 12.5** The fourth issue under minute numbered 6.21 related to a stained toilet bowl at Poole. The Chairman asked Chief Superintendent Donnell to pass on thanks to the caretaker at Poole who had worked hard to resolve this issue.

## **CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS**

- 13.1** The report to the Panel showed that of 258 detainees held, 180 (70%) had been offered a visit, of which 166 (92%) had accepted, with a diverse number of reasons for visits not made. The spread and timing of the visits was good and it was pleasing to note that two visits were made between 10pm and 1am. The Chairman thanked the visitors involved for conducting those visits. The Panel noted that 91% of the visits made commenced within 5 minutes of arrival. The Chairman passed the Panel's appreciation to the Force.
- 13.2** Mr Edwards advised the Panel that the electronic log had been further developed with a new delegated action facility for use following an inspector's review of a detainee. This would allow the inspector to enter the requested action as free text. The requested action would be shown in red until marked as completed by a detention officer. This facility would become live during December.

## **Bournemouth**

- 13.3** Whilst visiting Bournemouth on 14 September 2009 the visitors noted that the information regarding a juvenile detainee's medication differed on the P40B Risk Assessment compared to the log entries. The detainee was well known to custody staff and appropriate contact had been made with the residential school he attended to clarify his medical needs. Mr Edwards acknowledged that the entries could have been more comprehensive.
- 13.4** During the same visit to Bournemouth, the visitors recorded that there was a computer system shutdown during the early hours. Further clarification was requested regarding the procedure for system shutdowns. Mr Edwards advised that under circumstances where the shutdown was planned, custody staff would print each detainee's custody log prior to the shutdown and revert to written detention logs. On restoration of the system, the electronic logs would be updated with an entry which stated the down time. If visitors became aware of a gap on the electronic log due to computer down time, it would be acceptable for them to ask to see the written detention log. In the event of an unplanned shutdown, the custody staff would again revert to paper logs. Such a failure in the computer system was extremely rare and custody was a key priority for restoration by the Information Systems Department.

## **Poole**

- 13.5** On 19 July, visitors made a request to custody staff asking if a detainee could be offered a shower as he had been detained for 2 days and had not showered. Mr Edwards confirmed that the detainee had been offered a shower but had declined.
- 13.6** On 14 August, visitors noted there was only one detention officer on duty. Chief Superintendent Donnell informed the Panel that other staff were expected to be on duty at that time and custody staff were aware of the action they could take during busy periods, which included requesting additional staff and the closure of the cell block.
- 13.7** Whilst carrying out a visit on 19 August, the visitors were mistakenly locked in the exercise yard with a detainee. The detention officer apologised for the error and Mr Edwards confirmed that a reminder had gone out to all custody staff regarding ICV security and safety.
- 13.8** During a visit on 11 September, visitors were asked by the custody staff to raise their concerns regarding staffing. Chief Superintendent Donnell informed the Panel that the

custody sergeant on duty at the time had not made any effort to bring any additional staff in and that staff had been reminded that they could ask for support when required.

**13.9** In the course of a visit on 30 September, visitors observed that a few cells were untidy from previous detainees and that the escorting officer advised that the cleaner was due in the morning. Mr Edwards informed the Panel that an e-mail had been sent to all custody staff outlining their responsibility to keep cells clear of debris and in a hygienic and habitable state.

**13.10** A visit made on 22 October, although falling in the current quarter, was brought up for discussion. The visitors involved made a visit to a detainee who became agitated during their visit and the escorting officer felt it was necessary to bring the visit to an end. The visitors asked for clarification on whether he was correct in taking this action. Chief Superintendent Donnell advised the Panel that the detainee involved was in the process of a mental health assessment and confirmed that if custody staff felt the detainee presented a threat to the visitors then it would be appropriate for them to stop the visit. The Chairman stated that although the escorting officer should not have been near enough to hear the conversation, they should have been close enough to be aware when voices became raised and act accordingly.

[16.15pm Ms Gregg-Smith arrived]

### **Weymouth**

**13.11** During a visit to Weymouth on 18 September, visitors noted that the cell buzzer light was not working, although when tested by the custody officer it did. Mr Edwards would check to ensure this had been rectified.

### **Blandford**

**13.12** During visits to Blandford on 14 July and 5 September the visitors noted that there were out of date meals on both occasions. Inspector Whitley advised the Panel that the custody sergeant had responsibility for ensuring the meals were kept and stored correctly. Inspector Whitley would be personally monitoring the situation. Mr Edwards confirmed that a specialist contractor had been brought in to resolve the issue regarding the toilet seat that felt rough. The Chairman asked those next visiting Blandford to ensure the result was satisfactory.

## **SAFER DETENTION IN CUSTODY**

**14.1** Sergeant Thompson gave an informative presentation on Safer Detention in Custody. The Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody Guidance was published in 2006. The Guidance set out both the legal framework within which the police must operate to tackle crime and the protections and safeguards for the public. Sergeant Thompson explained that the Force continually assessed detention procedures and made improvements as necessary to make custody as safe as possible. Such changes were driven by many factors, including reports from independent custody visitors, near misses, successful interventions, adverse incidents, developing legislation and new custody builds.

**14.2** The Force had a number of procedures in place focusing on safer detention such as observation levels of detainees, continual training for custody staff, working with partner agencies and the implementation of the new electronic logs.

**14.3** The Panel thanked Sergeant Thompson for the presentation.

## **ESTATES & BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE ON CUSTODY RELATED PROJECTS/WORKS**

- 15.1** The Panel noted the report from the Chief Constable outlining the current position in relation to custody provision in the County.
- 15.2** Inspector Pope gave a verbal update to the Panel on the final layout for the Joint Emergency Services Building at Poole and details of the improved facilities. Visitors would be invited to attend orientation visits in early December via the Scheme Administrator. The Panel was advised that the Chairman would be visiting both the new build at Poole and the new build at Bournemouth early in November.
- 15.3** Due to the limited parking available, visitors were advised that it could be easier for them if they parked in the Poole Stadium or Dolphin Centre car parks. Miss Wilson offered to make enquiries regarding visitor parking, outside of normal office hours, in the car park of the nearby Poole Housing Partnership building. The Panel agreed this would be helpful.

## **MEDICAL, WELFARE AND SECURITY RISK ASSESSMENT (P40B)**

- 16.1** The Panel noted the report from the Scheme Administrator informing visitors about the necessity of viewing the Dorset Police Medical, Welfare and Security Risk Assessment form known as the P40B. A copy of the form had been passed to the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) who had verified that the viewing of information recorded on the form should continue as good practice.
- 16.2** In response to a question from a member of the Panel, Chief Superintendent Donnell advised that visitors need to satisfy themselves that the form has been completed correctly.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **Mrs Jillian Goldbart**

- 17.1** The Chairman advised the Panel that Mrs Goldbart had decided to resign from the Panel for personal reasons. This resignation would be with immediate effect.

### **Mr Harry Masters**

- 17.2** The Panel passed its congratulations to Mr Masters who was recently recognised for his voluntary work as a mentor helping to rehabilitate young men released from prison. Mr Masters was the runner up in the Heart of Gold Award, which formed part of the Unsung Heroes Awards.

## **Safety Reminder**

- 17.3** The Chairman reiterated to the Panel the necessity of remaining aware of their own safety during visits. If a detainee showed signs of volatility during a visit then ICVs should withdraw from the visit to avoid making themselves and others vulnerable.

## **Training**

- 17.4** The Chairman reminded the Panel that training would be taking place on Saturday 7 November at Force Headquarters. Registration would be from 9 am, finishing at approximately 12 noon.

### **Sample Electronic Logs**

- 17.5 The Chairman thanked Mr Edwards for supplying a sample of the new electronic logs for ICVs to study. Copies would be available at the training day on Saturday 7 November.

### **ICVA Conference**

- 17.6 The Chairman informed the Panel that Mrs V Grier, Mrs C Bishop, Miss C Freestone, Mrs Y Fenwick as well as herself would be attending the ICVA National Conference on Saturday 14 November 2009 at the Ramada Hotel in Leicester.

### **ICV Handbook**

- 17.7 The Chairman notified the Panel that the draft ICV Scheme document would be reviewed by a working party formed of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel and a representative from each large recruitment intake. It was planned that the final document would be considered by the Police Authority later in the year and presented to the Panel at the January 2010 meeting.

*Meeting ended at 1725 hrs*