

DRAFT

DORSET POLICE AUTHORITY

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 26 April 2010

A meeting of the Independent Custody Visiting Panel was held in Boardrooms 1, 2 & 3, Headquarters on Monday, 26 April 2010 at 7pm

PRESENT:

Mrs K E Emery (Chairman),
Mr J Baylem, Mrs C Bishop, Mr G Brown, Mrs A Cray, Mr J Drayson,
Miss C Freestone, Mr K Gooding, Ms G Gregg-Smith, Mr F Jabbari (Police Authority),
Mr R Kerr, Mr H Masters, Mr M Payne, Mrs S Porter, Mr D Sandever,
Mr R Shore, Mr C Slee, Miss L Wilson (Police Authority), Mrs K Wright

Also Present:

Mr M J Goscomb, Chief Executive
Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) M Glanville, Dorset Police
Superintendent Gary Smith, Operations Manager, Dorset Police
Chief Inspector T Lumley, Criminal Justice Division
Mr K Edwards, Criminal Justice Division
Mrs Y Fenwick, Police Authority

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

26. Apologies were received from Col G Brierley, Mrs C Bueno, Mr P Crabtree, Mrs V Grier, Mr E Holloway and Mrs S Merritt.

MINUTES

27. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2010 were approved and signed as a true record, subject to an amendment at minute no. 20.9.

CUSTODY VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

- 28.1 The report to the Panel showed that of 205 detainees held, 145 (71%) had been offered a visit, of which 140 (97%) had accepted. It was noted that very few visits were made on a Sunday, but generally the spread and timing of the visits was good, although a majority of the visits to Weymouth occurred between 10am and 1pm. It was pleasing to note that two visits were made between 1am and 7am, one visit between 7am and 10am and a further two visits were made between 10pm and 1am. The Chairman thanked the visitors involved for conducting those visits. It was noted that there were a variety of reasons for visits not being offered and the Panel members confirmed that when visits were denied for visitor safety, detainees were observed through the cell hatch. The Chairman highlighted the additional information included in the Scheme Administrator's report and asked the visitors to ensure they record these details on the report form. The Force was thanked in relation to waiting times, as visitors gained access to the suite within five minutes in 91% of the visits that took place.
- 28.2 The Chief Executive advised the Panel that future reports from the Scheme Administrator would detail all visits made where issues were raised to ensure visitors had the opportunity to discuss any visits that had taken place should they wish.

Weymouth

- 28.3** Whilst visiting Weymouth on 25 January 2010, the visitors requested clarification on the term 'addressed' on the custody log which was used by the reviewing inspector in relation to offered meals, drinks, washes, etc. Following the visit, an explanation was provided to the Scheme Administrator who had disseminated it to all the visitors. Chief Inspector Lumley advised that changes had also been made to the IT system and reminders had been circulated on standing instructions to custody staff which advised that indicators must be put on the custody log to show that refreshments were due to be offered to detainees who missed out on the meal or drink 'rounds'.
- 28.4** During a further visit to Weymouth on 7 February 2010, the visitors reported that a detainee had used the buzzer but had no indication as to whether the custody staff had heard it. Chief Inspector Lumley advised that a possible amendment to the bell call sheet would be explored to indicate that the bell would be responded to. However, at some suites it would be possible for the detainee to hear the bell call.
- 28.5** During the same visit to Weymouth, visitors were left by the escorting officer during the course of a visit taking place. The officer apologised at the time and a reminder had since been sent to all custody staff which reiterated that ICVs must not be left unescorted during visits. The visitors remained concerned about the seriousness of this issue and Chief Inspector Lumley advised the Panel that further enquiries would be made and the results would be brought back to the next meeting.

Blandford

- 28.6** On 18 January, a visit was made during which only one clean blanket could be found in the suite. Mr Edwards confirmed that this had now been resolved.

Sherborne

- 28.7** During a visit to Sherborne, the visitors experienced problems with a toilet flush which appeared to be inoperable. Mr Edwards advised that building services had attended the custody suite and resolved the toilet flush problems. Visitors also reported that the medical supplies cupboard was unlocked. Chief Inspector Lumley informed the Panel that anything of danger would be locked away as a matter of course.

Swanage

- 28.8** Chief Inspector Lumley advised the Panel that the Swanage custody facilities would remain closed on a permanent basis.

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME

- 29.1** The Chief Executive presented a report which detailed the circulation of the documented Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. The Scheme would be issued to visitors in hard copy initially and the Chief Executive asked visitors to be vigilant in ensuring that updates and revisions were incorporated into their own personal copies of the Scheme, with outdated pages suitably removed and destroyed.
- 29.2** Visitors were made aware that during the course of compilation of the Scheme the Memorandum of Understanding had also been updated. Two copies of the revised Memorandum of Understanding had been enclosed with the covering letter issued with each copy of the Scheme and visitors were asked to sign and date both copies and return one to the Scheme Administrator.
- 29.3** A copy would be made available on the Authority website at a future date and hard

copies would be made available at each of the 24 hour suites.

- 29.4** Chief Inspector Lumley referred to Section 2, paragraph 1.47 'Detainees considered by the Custody Officer to Represent a Risk to Visitors' Safety'. He asked visitors to consider their personal safety when visits were conducted through cell hatches. It would be important to stand back at least an arms' length from the hatch.
- 29.5** In response to a question from the Panel, Chief Inspector Lumley advised that the Force would not object to visitors speaking to the nurse on duty at the suite to confirm that visiting a detainee with mental health problems posed a risk to visitor safety.
- 29.6** The Chairman provided an update to the Panel on the decision surrounding the training of visitors to conduct visits to suspected terrorism detainees.
- 29.7** The Chairman passed on her thanks to the Chief Executive for the commitment he had shown in getting the Scheme published, as well as the Scheme Administrator and the visitors involved in the working party that assisted in the development of the Scheme.

UNANNOUNCED JOINT CUSTODY INSPECTION

- 30.1** The Chief Executive presented a report on the Joint Unannounced Custody Inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons which took place in November 2009, the results of which were published on 26 March 2010. He advised that although the inspection focused on the Force, the Chairman of the Panel, Mr Jabbari and the Chief Executive were all interviewed as part of the process. The reference in the report to the poor facilities at Poole and Bournemouth, endorsed the decision of the Authority to replace them.
- 30.2** The report contained much positive news as the inspectors were complimentary about the health care provided, the impressive staff culture and the relationship between the Force, the Authority and the ICVs.
- 30.3** The Chief Executive informed the Panel that the Force had taken early action in response to the report and had formulated an action plan of both long and short term remedial work. This included the establishment of the Strategic Custody Board to strengthen arrangements and improve communication. This board would have Authority representation supported by the Chief Executive. The Custody Users' Group would be re-established and attended by the Chairman of the Panel supported by the Scheme Administrator. Any changes to the guidance followed by visitors would be provided at a future training event.

ESTATES AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE ON CUSTODY RELATED PROJECTS/WORKS

- 31.1** The Panel noted the report from the Chief Constable outlining the current position in relation to custody provision in the County.
- 31.2** A discussion was held regarding the difficulties experienced with parking provision at Poole. The Chairman suggested that visitors might wish to arrange to meet somewhere else and attend Poole in one car. Chief Inspector Lumley advised the Panel that the Force were very happy with the new facility at Poole and were looking forward to the new build at Bournemouth being online in the Autumn.

ICV RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN UPDATE

- 32.1** The Scheme Administrator provided a verbal update on the current recruitment campaign which started at the end of February. To encourage applications from the diverse population of Dorset, over 700 posters were sent to a wide variety of places including community groups, post offices, GP and dental surgeries. Adverts were also placed in local newspapers. Two information events had been held which provided the opportunity for those considering applying to find out more about the Scheme. Over eighty application packs were sent out and twenty nine applications were received. Interviews would be conducted in May and induction training would be taking place in July. It was anticipated that some successful applicants would be placed on a waiting list to join the Scheme in the course of the next 12 to 18 months.

OTHER MATTERS

ICVA National Conference

- 33.1** The Chairman advised the Panel that the ICVA National Conference would take place in November in Leeds, but after discussion with the Chief Executive places would be limited to two visitors plus the Chair of the Panel. Those visitors who wished to be considered should be advised the Scheme Administrator.

Training

- 33.2** The Panel were advised that the induction training for new visitors would take place on 17 July and refresher training for all visitors would be conducted in November.

Punctuality

- 33.3** The Chairman highlighted concerns raised by various Panel members with regard to late arrival for visits. Visitors were requested to telephone their partner if they anticipated late arrival.

Reports

- 33.4** Mr Edwards asked that on occasions when officers were not available to accept the blue copy of the report form, would visitors please send the blue copy to the Scheme Administrator who would forward it to him.

Reviews

- 33.5** In response to a question from a member of the Panel, the Chairman advised that three yearly reviews for visitors would commence this year. These reviews would be conducted with a member of the Police Authority.

Meeting ended at 2030 hrs