

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE – 4 MARCH 2010

UNANNOUNCED JOINT CUSTODY INSPECTION UNDERTAKEN BY HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY (HMIC) AND HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTOR OF PRISONS (HMIP) - UPDATE

REPORT BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update members in relation to the unannounced custody inspection carried out in Dorset between 9-13 November 2009 and the Force's response to the HMIC/HMIP draft report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In November 2009 HMIC and HMIP undertook an unannounced joint custody inspection. The inspection encompassed both the physical estate and the management and policies relating to the care of detainees.
- 1.2 The review clearly identified the poor state of the 24 hour custody facilities in Bournemouth and Poole, in effect providing a very clear endorsement to the Authority's decision to replace both of those facilities.
- 1.3 The review was highly complimentary regarding the provision of health care, the relationship between the Force, the Authority and the ICVs and the relationship between staff and detainees and an impressive staff culture that underpins much good work being done.
- 1.4 The draft report did, however, identify a number of detailed recommendations, a significant proportion of which will automatically be resolved through the provision of the new facilities.
- 1.5 The main recommendations of the draft report identify the need for urgent remedial action at the Bournemouth site and the need for all cells and detainee areas to be safe and fit for purpose. A review of the provision of substance use arrest referral workers is referred to as well as an opportunity for Dorset Police and the UK Border Agency, working together, to reduce the time that detainees spend in police custody. Levels of staffing and attendance at accredited custody training courses are also referred to in the draft report.
- 1.6 The report is currently only a draft version provided by HMIC/HMIP for comment by the Force. The response to the report was submitted to HMIC/HMIP on 24 February 2010 focusing on matters of factual accuracy.

- 1.7 It is anticipated that the final report will be published in the week beginning Monday, 29 March 2010.
- 1.8 The Force has established a Gold Group under the Chair of the Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) who is co-ordinating the Force response to the recommendations.
- 1.9 The Gold Group commissioned a comprehensive review of the custody estates following the inspection and significant remedial work has already been undertaken to mitigate the potential risk(s) identified. An action plan is now in place to deal with the recommendations arising from the inspection.
- 1.10 A dialogue is ongoing between the Force and the Police Authority to establish where specific learning points identified by the inspection team can now usefully be applied to the work of the team of Independent Custody Visitors and this is viewed as a positive outcome of the inspection.
- 1.11 Once the final report has been received, I will, in common with all HMIC reports, provide the full report and detailed response to the final recommendations to the Audit, Resources and Continuous Improvement Committee. A full update will also be provided to the Independent Custody Visiting Panel at its next meeting in April.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

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