

To: Cambridgeshire Police Authority

From: Chief Constable

Date: 29th June 2010

**UPDATE POST HMIC/HMIP INSPECTION OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE
CONSTABULARY CUSTODY FACILITIES**

1. Introduction

1.1 To update the Police Authority on the areas of work that have been completed since the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection of Cambridgeshire Constabulary's custody suites, conducted in November 2008.

2. Background

2.1 In November 2008, HMIC/HMIP conducted a joint inspection of all (then) 8 custody suites within Cambridgeshire. These were at Thorpewood, Bridge Street, Wisbech, March, Huntingdon, St Neots, Ely and Parkside. However, since the inspection, Wisbech closed on 27th September 2009; and March opened 24/7, following extensive redevelopment, on 9th October 2009.

2.2 The resulting report following this inspection highlighted areas within the custody environment that required attention.

2.3 In September 2009, the NPIA conducted a final (second) peer review of Cambridgeshire Constabulary in relation to the implementation of the ACPO (2006) Guidance on the Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody. The report subsequently received showed that the Force had made vast improvements since the HMIC/HMIP inspection.

2.4 The report identified only two primary risk clusters. The first concerned establishing suitable multiagency arrangements, as required by the Safer Detention Guidance, and the second focused on differences in the current devolved approach towards staffing structures and the appropriate use of custody resources at Divisional level.

3. Summary of the key operational changes since the HMIC/P inspection

3.1 A large number of custody policies and procedures have been re-written and subsequently published on the Force Intranet, which are accessible by all staff.

3.2 Nationally suggested protocols with local healthcare agencies have been agreed. It should be noted that Cambridgeshire is the only Force in the region to have achieved this to date.

- 3.3 Local protocols have been agreed with healthcare agencies so that persons detained under the Mental Health Act are taken to a suitable first choice place of safety for assessment which, as nationally agreed, is not police custody.
- 3.4 Improved training, for all staff undertaking custody duties, has been implemented. In particular, the training course delivered to custody staff has been re-written in line with the NPIA training package and recommendations from the HMIC/P inspection. All staff working in Custody are required to be suitably trained. The Force holds bi-annual custody conferences which are aimed solely at custody staff where refresher training on several custody related topics is delivered and it is anticipated that these will be developed further.
- 3.5 Formal pre-release risk assessments are completed on all persons leaving police custody; and they are given a list of useful contact numbers e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Victim Support, Shelter, Samaritans etc.
- 3.6 There has been upgraded provision of personal issue ligature cutters and staff are now checked that for awareness of how to access an assortment of other cutters within the custody suites.
- 3.7 Two Thematic Custody Action Plans were developed using a web based programme for tracking action plans – one addressing the management issues previously identified by the NPIA relating to the Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody, the second addressing the issues highlighted by the HMIC/P inspection.
- 3.8 Both of these Action Plans were closed on 31st December 2009 and both showed 96% compliance. The remaining actions from these two plans were carried forward to Thematic Custody Action Plan 3, which were designed to capture all elements of work necessary to deliver compliance with the Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody by 2011. Steady progress continues to be made against the actions, which fall under the following four areas, Policies and Protocols; Procedures; Training; and Staffing issues. To date, this is 51% compliant and we on target to be compliant with this guide.
- 3.9 Recently, a document entitled “Expectations for Police Custody – Criteria for assessing the treatment and conditions for detainees in police custody” has been distributed by HMIC/P; and contains all areas that they will inspect in future. Necessary actions from this document have been captured as Thematic Custody Action Plan 4.
- 3.10 Progress against Action Plans 3 and 4 is being monitored by the Deputy Chief Constable and reported in to the Force Executive Board.

4. Estates Update

- 4.1 All seven custody facilities have now been refurbished, including the removal of potential ligature points. In addition, as Members will already be aware, agreement has been given to the development of custody facilities within Cambridge both for the short and medium term.
- 4.2 In April 2011 the new Police Investigation Centre (PIC) will open at King's Lynn and, through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Norfolk, will take detainees from the Fenland area of Cambridgeshire.

5. Conclusion and Matters to Note

- 5.1 The Constabulary has made significant progress towards compliance with Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody, particularly in relation to day to day operational and tactical performance; and considerable organisational learning has been achieved. It is hoped that the Authority can be assured of increased confidence and satisfaction levels in relation to the management of custody.
- 5.2 At the time of writing this report, the reports from the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) in respect of the two deaths in police custody within the Force have yet to be published and will, therefore, be the subject of separate reports to the Authority in due course.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Authority is invited to note this report; which the Constabulary considers gives reassurance as to the controls in place to manage effective provision of custody on a 'business as usual' basis. The specific actions within the HMIC/P report have all been dealt with.
- 6.2 The Authority is invited to consider whether its current monitoring arrangements are still appropriate in respect of the significant improvement made in this area over the past two years.

Given the previous conclusion in this crucial area of business, it is proposed that a future report should be brought forward in advance of the April 2011 milestone, to indicate progress against the most recent guidance in effect and update on Action Plans 3 and 4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document (s)	Contact Officer	Location
Custody Action Plans	DCC John Feavour (01480) 422532	Cambridgeshire Constabulary Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 6NP.

Originating OfficerDCC.....

Is it considered that this report contains 'exempt information' and should be considered in private? No

If the answer is "YES", please state the nature of the exempt information **and the relevant clause** in Part 1 of revised Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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The attached report has been cleared with the undermentioned Officers: (delete as appropriate)

Chief Constable and Chief Executive

Others

Submitted on 16th June 2010.....

A report will not be sent to the Authority unless this box has been satisfactorily completed and all necessary consultation carried out - the responsibility for which rests with the originator (except for consultation with the Chairman and this will be undertaken by the Chief Executive).