

File note from SPA Policing Performance Committee discussion – 13 May 2020, 13.00 (teleconference)

Participants: Martyn Evans, Michelle Miller, Bob Hayes, Lynn Brown, Tom Halpin, John McCroskie, Kirsty Scott, Mike Callaghan, Deborah Christie

1. Welcome and Apologies

Martyn Evans welcomed all participants. Apologies were received from Barry Sillers and Eleanor Gaw.

2. Independent Custody Visiting – COVID19

During discussion the group explored ways in which the SPA could;

- Be assured that proportionate and effective scrutiny and oversight of Police Scotland Custody operations is in place and that the arrangements will allow the Authority to fully discharge its duties.
- Be assured that the temporary procedures put in place for remote monitoring by ICVS are suitable given the obvious gaps between this approach and face-to-face visits.
- Be assured that those who find themselves in custody during the current epidemic are provided with the right level of care and their rights are respected with specific focus on children and young people in custody.
- Ensure the SPA can provide robust answers should questions be asked of the approach taken to governance of custody both as BAU and during Op Talla.
- Be appraised of improvements that have been driven by both Police Scotland and the governance and oversight arrangements that are already in place.
- Be assured that processes are in place to escalate any issues that the committee are made aware of with the opportunity for any recommendations made by the ICVS function to be considered by the Authority.
- Explore ways in which benchmarking of other independent custody visiting services (e.g. with Scotland's prison and or other police services) could be included in future reports to the committee/Authority.
- Be assured that guidance from the World Health Organisation/NHS and the Scottish Human Rights Commission was included in the approaches taken by both the ICVS and Police Scotland.

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The group agreed that increased reporting of relevant custody related data was necessary and arrangements for this to feature in the weekly Op Talla reporting to The Authority should be made. It was agreed that The ICVS team and Police Scotland colleagues should seek to refine available data to produce a set of data that will allow oversight of trends and which would highlight any emerging issues which may then require additional scrutiny.

The group agreed that this was an area that attracted significant stakeholder and public interest and with this in mind agreed it should be added to the agenda of the Policing Performance Committee agenda on the 28th May 2020. The group welcomed this opportunity for public oversight and discussion of the matter and the ICVS team welcomed the opportunity for ongoing enhanced oversight.

3. SPA's role in relation to engagement with civil society groups in respect of COVID-19

The group discussed the ways in which the Policing Performance Committee could address the request for the SPA Vice Chair to discuss this issue.

The group will add an agenda item for the next Committee meeting and ask Police Scotland for a short assurance report on engagement activity with key stakeholders over this period of crisis. This would allow evidence of how Police Scotland was carrying out the necessary engagement to be reviewed.

The CEO reported the openness and transparency of SPA governance meetings over this crisis period compared favourably with other organisations however there was always opportunity to refine and enhance the current approach. The Committee asked SPA and COSLA colleagues to explore ways that partnership working can identify emerging key issue how these can be addressed and brought to the Committee is required.

The Chair thanked all those on the call for their contributions and ended the meeting.