



London ICV Newsletter

February 2009

Changes to FME Contracts

You will already be aware that the Met is moving forward with the roll out of Project Herald, which will provide nurses in custody suites across London. As part of the new arrangements the Met has changed the contract that it has with FMEs and you may have seen recent reports in the media concerning changes to the provision of medical care in custody in London.

The Met's aim in making these changes

is to improve the provision of medical care to detainees and to ensure that the service delivers value for money. Changes to the FME contracts will mean that FMEs are no longer operating on a 'call out' basis, but will be 'on duty'.

The Met believes that this will deliver improvements in the timeliness of medical care to detainees, and experiences of other forces support this view point.

FMEs and their representatives (from the Society of Forensic

Physicians) have been consulted about the changes. A substantial number of FMEs have now signed the new contract.

The Met has contingency arrangements in place with other FME service providers to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the provision of the FME service in London, and a 24/7 helpdesk has been established to assist and advise custody staff through this transitional period.

Borough Commanders are fully aware of the changes and have been

advised of arrangements for cover.

Should ICVs observe any problems with the provision of medical care to detainees during this transition period, we would expect you to raise this locally at the time of your visit, and note your concerns on the visit report form.

Any issues relating to this, on ICV report forms are being forwarded, by the MPA, directly to staff at the Custody Directorate, in order to give a fuller picture of the issues across London from an ICV perspective.

Borough based custody centres: update

News from the custody directorate on borough based custody centres: although a review of the estate strategy is underway, work is continuing on the Barking & Dagenham and Leyton projects due to the relatively advanced

stage that these builds have reached.

In the current economic climate budgets will become increasingly tight and this will impact on development plans. Long-term projects will therefore need to be reviewed. The MPA is revisiting plans in order

to provide some clarity between strategy and delivery of the estate modernisation programme. It will present its findings to the Authority in spring 2009.

To date no decisions about the police estate in London have been taken.

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A refreshing evening in Hammersmith

A cold wet Wednesday in January saw 23 ICVs gather in Hammersmith's Irish Cultural Centre for the second refresher training evening. The ICVs were all from the west and northwest cluster of nine panels brought together by George and James who were running the event.

The attendees gathered in the dance hall at the centre, normally the venue for live music performances and ceilidhs. The evening was no less entertaining, according to attendees, and began with the consideration of a fictional report of a visit in which the ICVs were asked to find areas of

concern. This led to discussions on a variety of important visiting issues.

Following a quick break it was back to basics with an exercise on 'Rights and Entitlements' followed by a short quiz on detainee categories. Next was 'The Clock' where ICVs, amongst other things, were expected to fill in the review times for a fictional detainee.

The session was rounded off with a short review and attendees were asked to say what they thought of the evening. Comments included: "great, exceeded expectations" and "nice to have reminders."

ICVs were reminded that the exercises could be repeated in panel meetings during the year as part of the policy of providing ongoing training to ICVs in London; they were asked to take care not to spoil the fun for others!

Training modules now include: Visit report form exercises 1 & 2, Myth Busting, Rights and Entitlements, Access, The Clock, Walk Through a Custody Visit, and Categories of Detainee.

Please contact your panel Coordinator if you think your panel would be interested in this training.

Initial and further training

Initial training: For new ICVs to be held on **Saturday 14 March 2009**, 10am-5pm, at the MPA.

Chairs training: The second training session on chairing meetings will take place at the MPA on **Wednesday 18 February 2009** from 6.30-9pm. This is for existing Chairs and Vice Chairs who did not attend the session in late 2008. Refreshments will be served from 6pm.

Diversity training: The second session of this new training module is scheduled to take place on **Monday 16 March 2009** at the MPA from 6.30-9pm. This is for Chairs and Vice Chairs who did not attend the first course which took place in late 2008. Refreshments will be served from 6pm.

Please contact your coordinator if you wish to attend one of these courses.

Dates for your diary

***Chairs meeting:** Tuesday 28 April 2009
6.30 - 9pm at the MPA.

***Cluster meetings:**
South/Southeast panels, Thursday 5 March at the MPA, from 7pm.

West/Northwest panels, Thursday 12 March (venue and times TBC).

***ICV Summer social:** Thursday 4 June (venue and times TBC) to coincide with Volunteer Week.

Handbook review

The closing date for the ICV handbook review has now passed.

Only a few responses were received, and over the next few weeks all comments that were submitted will be reviewed for practicality and appropriateness, as part of the review process.

It is hoped that any new inserts/updates will be ready for publication in April 2009.

ICV Christmas social event: December 2008

More than one hundred ICVs enjoyed the festivities at the ICV Christmas social event in December.

ICVs from all over London attended along with MPA members, staff and MPS colleagues.

Member Cindy Butts, Chief Executive Catherine Crawford and ICV scheme manager Kerry McClelland welcomed everyone and spoke of their appreciation for the work of ICVs across London and its positive effect on custody.

Although head of the Home Office's policing powers unit, Alan Brown, offered Minister Vernon Coaker's apologies at the start of the evening, due to unforeseen government business, Mr Coaker surprised everyone by

attending towards the end of the evening.

Mr Coaker (pictured below) spoke about the importance of independent custody visiting and thanked all the volunteers in London for their work.

This year's event was slightly more informal than in previous years, and included a general knowledge quiz.



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Contract expansion with British Transport Police

The MPA has been asked by the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) to arrange visits to their facility in Hammersmith. Visits to the small three cell suite will be monthly and the Hammersmith and Fulham panel will commence visits in March. This is in addition to visits currently taking place on behalf of BTPA at Ebury Bridge in Westminster, Tottenham Court Road in Camden and West Ham in Newham.

Unlike the MPA, the BTPA is not required under PACE to have an ICV scheme, however they are keen to extend custody visiting to more of their facilities throughout the UK and have recently appointed a custody manager who is responsible for overseeing their custody arrangements on a national level.

A further extension of the arrangements in London is anticipated later in the year.

Watch and listen!

From early March the MPA's website is changing, with new look pages and updated information, on all aspects of the Authority's work. To coincide with this, the ICV scheme will be running a radio advert on Choice FM (107.1 or 96.9fm) to increase awareness of the London ICV scheme. More details to follow.

MPS community messaging service

The MPS has recently launched a new community messaging service called Neighbourhood Link. Anyone who signs up to this service will receive free text and e-mail messages from the MPS providing you with information regarding incidents and issues that may affect you locally or as a member of the wider pan-London community.

You can find out more about neighbourhood link and sign up to the service at: www.neighbourhoodlink.met.police.uk

By ensuring that the details you enter are current and accurate, the MPS can ensure that the messages you received are applicable to you. A postcode is essential, as they can ensure that you receive messages relevant to the area in which you live or work.

If you were a subscriber to a similar service that has recently been withdrawn you need do nothing if you do not wish to subscribe to neighbourhood link, as all details transferred from the previous system will be removed in 14 days.

In the next edition:

A report on the pilot scheme for self-introduction.