

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

<b>DATE</b>	19 November 2018
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Assurance and Policy Manager, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Appropriate Adult Scheme: Progress Report
<b>STATUS</b>	Open

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides the Police and Crime Panel with an update on an Appropriate Adult service for vulnerable adults detained in police custody at Clough Road Police Station. The scheme is being developed at the request of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Humberside, to fill a gap in provision. It forms part of the OPCC Delivery Plan 2018-19.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Police and Crime Panel note the progress made and the level of partnership work undertaken with Hull University Social Services Union (HUSSO) in establishing a scheme.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 When a detainee is identified as being vulnerable, the police are required by law to source an appropriate adult to accompany a detainee through the custody process. Appropriate adults provide such support through the custody identification process as well as during interviews. They may interject in interviews, request breaks for the detainee or ask that questions be clarified, should they feel that the detainee has not understood.
- 3.2 This is a vital role which supports vulnerable adults and ensures they understand dialogue and are coping with proceedings, and in doing so they may help to prevent miscarriages of justice.
- 3.3 At present there is no statutory legislation to determine which agency should hold responsibility and ownership of appropriate adult services for vulnerable adult detainees. The police are unable to commission or manage appropriate adult schemes, which must remain independent of the police. This lack of a proper statutory footing has resulted in an inconsistent level of provision within the Humberside Police area (as well as nationally), leaving custody sergeants spending many hours attempting to source appropriate adults for their most vulnerable detainees. Where no-one is available to assist, the custody process may be inhibited and vulnerable adults may be detained in police cells for unacceptable periods of time.

#### **4. DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL SCHEME**

- 4.1 The OPCC was increasingly aware of the need to consider an alternative provision. The PCC suggested trialling a model similar to that already in place in Northumbria, following collaboration between their OPCC and Sunderland University.
- 4.2 Following research into the Northumbria approach, the OPCC approached Hull University Social Services Organisation (HUSSO) who were very keen to establish a volunteer appropriate adult service to complement their range of volunteer opportunities for degree students.
- 4.3 The OPCC began a trial scheme, launched on 8 October 2018, with nine students who had attended a two-day training course and completed DBS checks.

#### **5. POSITIVE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 Several students have already attended and assisted vulnerable adults. One notable request involved a murder suspect with mental health issues, where the appropriate adult supported the suspect through the interview and identification process, as well as attending Magistrate and Crown court proceedings, and being present for the charging decision. Another volunteer assisted a vulnerable adult detainee who had been arrested for kidnap and human trafficking.
- 5.2 The volunteers have found the process to be invaluable experience for their future career, in addition to the provision of a quality service to vulnerable adults in custody.
- 5.3 The custody staff at Humberside Police have also been very grateful when the volunteers have arrived at the custody suite very quickly. The ease of contact has been appreciated, with Custody Sergeants having a single point of contact with the volunteer who is on call.

#### **6. FUTURE STEPS**

- 6.1 In order to meet the increasing demand for appropriate adults, the scheme requires further expansion on the North Bank, followed by a view of the provision on the South Bank.
- 6.2 The OPCC and HUSSO are currently interviewing further students, and more than fifty application forms were recently received, with thirty interviews in progress. This high level of interest demonstrates that the scheme is now viewed by lecturers as a key opportunity for students to gain invaluable experience for their future careers and employability, in addition to the provision of a quality service to vulnerable adults in custody.
- 6.3 Successful students attend a two-day training course run by the National Appropriate Adult Network (NAAN) and also adult safeguarding courses run by Hull City Council.

- 6.4 The aim is also to look at provision on the South Bank. This is a project that our new Assurance and Administration Apprentice will develop over the coming months.

## **7. OTHER ISSUES**

### **Performance Framework**

- 7.1 Once the appropriate adult scheme is fully functional, performance data will be collated from forms completed on each attendance. Detailed datasets will clearly show the demand for appropriate adults in the Humberside Police area. This information will be shared with Humberside Police, the National Appropriate Adult Network (NAAN) and national working groups.

### **National Issues and Inspection Findings**

- 7.2 The concern around lack of appropriate adults for vulnerable adults is not just a local issue, it is a problem for many police forces. Nationally, a working group has been looking into the issue following a letter sent several months ago to all PCCs from the Rt. Hon Nick Hurd, as Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, expressing his concerns nationally around provision for vulnerable adults in custody.
- 7.3 The issue was also raised as a cause for concern following the unannounced inspection visit to police custody in Humberside in October 2017 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – this report was published on 6 March 2018. The inspectorate revisited the Force on 30 October 2018, with the OPCC able to advise of the pilot appropriate adult scheme launch and that university students had already attended and supported vulnerable adults.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The appropriate adult scheme is proving to be a good example of partnership working to fill a 'gap' in service provision. It is providing a very effective and low-cost service, enabling the OPCC to retain some oversight of a crucial role within a high-risk area of police detention. The appropriate adult scheme gives vital support for vulnerable adults and can expedite their progress through custody, thereby assisting in the efficiency of a busy custody suite. It is also providing good partnership working with Hull University and experience for degree students.
- 8.2 Further progress reports will be provided to the Police and Crime Panel as agreed.