

Consideration	
Public/Non Public*	Public
Report to:	Audit & Scrutiny Panel
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 8th May 2018
Report of:	Female Dignity and Privacy in Police Custody
Report Author:	Jackie Nash
E-mail:	Jackie.nash@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk
Agenda Item:	10

*If Non Public, please state under which category number from the guidance in the space provided.

Female Detainees in Police Custody

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with a report on the dignity and privacy of female detainees in Police Custody.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to consider this report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 This complies with good governance.

4. Summary of Key Points

- 4.1 The attached report details research into females in custody in response to a letter sent out to all PCC's from the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA).

5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6. Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 None.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 None.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1 None.

9. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 None.

10. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

10.1 None.

11. Details of outcome of consultation

11.1 None.

12. Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 - Female Detainees in Police Custody.

FEMALE DETAINEES IN POLICE CUSTODY

During the Independent Custody Visiting Team Meeting on 30/01/19, the Chief Inspector and Inspector (Nottinghamshire Custody Inspectors) were asked specific questions pertaining to female detainees in police custody in Mansfield and Bridewell custody suites.

The Inspectors were asked if their booking in systems prompted the question about female menstruation and they said no, female detainees are only asked if they are pregnant at the booking in stage. Due to the current layout of the 2 custody suites there is limited privacy, however, screens are in place at the Bridewell for this purpose although they still only offer a small amount of shielding from others in the booking in area. The main booking in area is on the ground floor which has no privacy screens and relies on staff recognising a vulnerable detainee to ensure privacy. A leaflet for all female detainees around additional support on female dignity, drafted in various different languages, is currently being developed for introduction into Nottinghamshire suites and will be in place within the next few weeks.

When asked if female detainees are proactively offered a female officer point of contact and given the opportunity to speak to them, the Inspectors assured that all female detainees are offered a female DO at the booking in stage and that this process is audited. A female DO will see the female detainee within 30 minutes of booking in to speak privately. The Inspector said that he will ensure that this process is also recorded for audit purposes. When asked if they had sufficient diversity of staff to enable this the Inspectors said there is a good balance between male and female staff.

If the detainee is non-English speaking this conversation will be organised via the telephone interpreter until an interpreter arrives at the custody suite and the conversation will then be repeated in private.

During the private conversation with a female DO, the detainee will then be offered a feminine hygiene pack. The Inspectors were asked if the custody suites stock a decent range of sanitary products they said yes. They provided samples in a pack of one sanitary towel for heavy flow and 3 tampons with a range of flows. Vagisil feminine wipes will routinely be provided with the hygiene pack. Detainees are asked to place used sanitary protection in the pack and seal for collection for disposal.

When asked if a fresh hygiene pack is proactively offered every 6 hours so that a detainee does not have to request it the Inspectors said that they were not automatically offered. However, on the initial visit by the allocated female staff member, detainees are told that they can have access to packs when they wish and this is not time restrictive, and that they can have them at any time.

When a designated female DO goes off shift, another designated female DO will be allocated to the detainee. Staff have been asked to record this on the detention log and the Insp will incorporate this into the detention log handover.

The Inspectors were asked whether the toilet facilities are private/sufficiently pixelated on CCTV. They said yes. However the ICV's mentioned that when CCTV cameras are cleaned they get 'knocked off centre'. The Insp said there was a problem accessing some of the CCTV cameras from the ceiling space and a separate contractor was called in to rectify this. The Inspector has been informed that the pixelation is now working correctly. The camera itself is encased in a perspex dome which can be rotated (with some effort) however the camera itself does not move. Nevertheless, actions that cause vibrations on the camera could jolt it and cause the lens to move

(eg throwing a shoe at it). A clear direction has gone out to all staff around checking that the camera is pixelated in the right place prior to placing a detainee into the cell. Where a fault is seen the cell will have a service request raised and the cell will be put out of use. Although ICV's are not allowed to view CCTV footage, they will ask the DO to check on the pixelation on the monitors.

When asked whether the female detainees are informed by the designated DO that the toilet area is pixelated, the Inspectors said yes and that the cells have adequate washing facilities. The Inspector has agreed that ICV's can ask female detainees if they are aware that the toilet area is pixelated and private. In Mansfield custody suite, if preferred, female detainees are offered swift access to washing facilities outside the cells in the sluice room (unless the room is required for drugs searches) which has a toilet and a sink and is suitable for female detainees to use to change sanitary protection and to have a wash in privacy. There is no CCTV in this room. When asked whether the sluice room is hygienic enough for female detainees to use the Insp said that as the sluice rooms are also used for drugs searches he is unable to put additional hygienic facilities in there. Apart from the cells, there is no private facility currently available at the Bridewell, other than a general toilet that is used by both male and female detainees waiting to be booked in. This will be rectified in the plans for the new Bridewell custody building.

Paper suits are not often given to high risk female detainees, who were likely to be handcuffed and reviewed every 30 minutes and Healthcare Professionals would be brought down to attend to the detainee. Regardless of risk, they are afforded the same level of care and respect they deserve. If they are at high risk, then the Custody Sgt will have to dynamically manage this but it would not result in sanitary protection not being provided. The Inspectors were asked if they had thought about providing disposable sanitary pants as these can be worn under paper suits. These pants are now on order.

Lastly the Inspectors were asked if the sanitary products are stored appropriately and hygienically and they said they are stored in a cupboard in the receptacles they arrive in and not taken out until the pack is made up for use.

The Inspectors will ensure that all aspects of sanitary protection and female dignity in custody are part of initial and refresher training for all custody staff.

ICV's always ask female detainees if they have been offered a feminine hygiene pack and they will now also ask them if they have been allocated a designated female DO and whether they have been informed that the toilet area is private. They will also ask the DO to check that the toilet area in the cells is pixelated correctly.

The current Bridewell structure offers little in the way of privacy for detainees, however the plans for the building of the new Bridewell custody suite will address all concerns regarding dignity, confidentiality when booking in and discussions with vulnerable detainees. Focusing on these concerns is the driving factor behind the structure for the new suite. We are hopeful that input from the ICV's will be included in the planning of the new building.