



Creating a safer  
**Cambridgeshire**

**To:** Business Coordination Board

**From:** Chief Constable

**Date:** 01 March 2018

**A update on the publication by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services of a report on police custody arrangements in Cambridgeshire.**

## **1. Purpose**

1.1 To update the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on the publication of the report produced following the unannounced joint inspection of Custody by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

## **2. Background**

2.1 The Board was provided with a report in September 2017 detailing the purpose of the joint inspection program and methodology used. The formal report following the inspection was published on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## **3. Content**

3.1 An extract from the introduction to the report is provided below as an appendix as it provides a useful summary of the findings. A link to the full report is provide below in the bibliography.

3.2 The style and content of the report is different from those produced by HMICFRS as part of the regular PEEL inspections including the use of different terminology when making recommendations.

3.3 The report identifies one “Area of Concern” with an associated Recommendation:

*Area of concern:* The collaboration arrangements with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire had resulted in a lack of accountability and scrutiny for custody services at senior officer level in Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

*Recommendation:* The force should take clear accountability for the delivery of custody services to Cambridgeshire detainees, with effective scrutiny and oversight to ensure safe and respectful outcomes for detainees.

3.4 There are 27 “Areas for Improvement” across a wide range of operational activity in custody.

3.5 There is one “Example of Good Practice”:

The use of force broadly reflected our expectations, with accurate records maintained, individual use of force forms submitted, managerial oversight and analysis, a strong emphasis on de-escalating situations, and good attention to maintaining detainees’ dignity when required.

#### **4. Progress**

4.1 The Constabulary is required to update HMIP/HMICFRS on progress against the Area of Concern” and “Areas for Improvement” three months after their publication (in May 2018). The Inspectorates will revisit the Force approximately 12months after the original inspection to check on progress (in approximately August 2018).

4.2 Although the report was only finalised and published on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2018, the Constabulary has been addressing the issues identified based on the early feedback and drafts provided and will be well placed to provide a comprehensive update on progress by the May deadline.

4.3 The action plan is owned by the collaborated Custody management team, co-ordinating activity with other departments through the Organisational Improvement Group. The Assistant Chief Constable, Operational Support in Hertfordshire (as Strategic Lead for Custody across the Alliance) is progressing the Area for Concern. The Cambridgeshire Assistant Chief Constable provides leadership and support through the Operational Support Delivery Board. Oversight is provided by the Deputy Chief Constable through the HMICFRS Gold Group.

#### **5. Recommendation**

The Board is invited to note the contents of the report.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

<b>Source Documents</b>	<a href="https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/cambridgeshire-joint-inspection-of-police-custody/">https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/cambridgeshire-joint-inspection-of-police-custody/</a>
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	Chief Inspector Chris Savage, HMICFRS Liaison Officer

## APPENDIX

An extract from the Introduction to the report:

“Importantly, at this inspection we found that detainees in custody were held in reasonably good physical conditions. It was clear that the staff culture remained healthy and we were generally impressed with the care and attention that staff showed towards detainees.

The overall management arrangements for custody within the force were complex. Cambridgeshire Constabulary had entered into a formal collaboration with two other forces, under section 22A of the Police Act 1996, which meant that it did not have direct strategic responsibility for its own custody provision. The intention behind this collaboration was eventually to have a fully integrated and interoperable custody service across the three forces. The position in Cambridgeshire was further complicated because it had also entered into a separate agreement with the Norfolk force, to use facilities outside Cambridgeshire for some of its detainees. At the time of the inspection, it was difficult to see if any real benefit had yet been gained through any of these arrangements. Given the complicated governance structure, and because procedures were in a state of transition, we did not believe that Cambridgeshire had sufficient governance and control over its day-to-day custody function.

We were also concerned to find that minimum staffing levels within custody suites were not always complied with. Staff cover was sometimes not sufficient to ensure safe detention, and this could have had an adverse impact on detainees.

We were pleased to discover that data used within the force were generally managed well. Recently introduced quality assurance arrangements worked effectively and it was reassuring to find that the force was able to demonstrate that use of force was proportionate. Overall, the picture surrounding the use of force in custody was positive and, while it reflected what we expect to see, we do not often find this.

Since the previous inspection, improvements had been made in relation to mental health. There was effective partnership engagement in this area, and few detainees were held in custody under section 136 of the Mental Health Act as a place of safety. The liaison and diversion service also provided good support for vulnerable detainees, and worked well in partnership with custody and health care staff, providing a particularly effective link with wider mental health services in the community.

Overall, during the course of this inspection we found many positive features in the way that custody services operated, delivering good frontline outcomes for detainees in a number of key areas.

However, at a strategic level we had concerns that the weaknesses identified in our 2011 inspection remained, and that, in practice, the collaborative arrangements for custody services did not provide sufficient accountability at senior officer level in Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Until this is addressed, we believe that this will remain a block to the custodial function in Cambridgeshire becoming even better”.

*Extracted from “Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in Cambridgeshire Constabulary by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services” February 2018.*