

Report of the Voluntary Services Lead

Summary

This report provides an update for Members on the progress of the Independent Custody Visiting & Animal Welfare Scheme, and the Special Constabulary.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

1. Independent Custody Visiting & Animal Welfare Scheme

(1) Recruitment

There are 16 Custody Visitors with 7 on the Northern Panel, visiting Nuneaton and Rugby Custody suites and 9 on the Southern Panel, visiting Leamington Custody suite. In addition, there are 2 countywide Animal Welfare Visitors based with the Southern Panel, who provide support to the Custody Visiting scheme in the southern area when required.

A recruitment process is taking place for the Northern Panel, due to a decline in the number of Visitors.

(2) Training and Development

In the last report to the Authority, consideration was being given to asking the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) to provide a training session about codes of practice and national standards. This training will take place once the recruitment process has been completed for the Northern Panel. The session will be part of the induction process for new Visitors and a refresher session for existing Visitors.

Training for the self-introduction trial will be taking place for the Northern Panel shortly.

(3) ICVA National Conference

The ICVA National Conference took place on 1 November 2008 at the Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon. 6 Warwickshire Visitors and Debbie Mullis from the Authority attended the conference, which included speakers from the Home Office, HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). I was invited to give the conference introduction, which provided an opportunity for me to meet some of the Visitors.

The West Midlands ICVA representative produced a conference report, which has been circulated to all Visitors.

(4) Custody Visiting and Animal Welfare Annual Meeting

A survey was sent to all Visitors seeking their opinions and suggestions for the Custody Visiting and Animal Welfare Annual Meeting, due to low attendance in previous years. 11 Visitors responded to the survey providing ideas of how the meeting could be structured to encourage more Visitors to attend. Recommendations based on how the majority of Visitors responded were shared with the Panel Chairs and agreed. The next meeting will take place in the summer of 2009.

(5) Visit to Leamington Custody Suite

On 14 January, I will visit Leamington Custody Suite with Debbie Mullis. We will meet with Custody Officers to discuss their role and will view the custody area.

(6) Self-introduction

A health and safety risk assessment for the practice is being arranged to ensure that any risks associated with self-introduction are identified and appropriately managed.

Visitors taking part in the trial will have the opportunity to practice using self-introduction in a role-play situation at the cells in Nuneaton. The training will provide an opportunity for any issues or concerns to be raised and changes made if necessary before the trial commences.

The trial will then be introduced with a review taking place after 6 months. The results of the review will be submitted to the Full Police Authority with recommendations.

2. Special Constabulary

(1) Recruitment

The National Policing Improvement Agency would like to see a national increase of 6,000 Specials before the 2012 Olympic Games. Warwickshire aims to increase the number of Specials from 204 to 300 by the end of 2010. Glyn Gardner, the Chief Officer of Warwickshire Special Constabulary and Angela Dumper, the Force Specials Recruitment Officer, are considering what needs to be done to achieve this. There are funds available for some advertising to assist.

An article about the Special Constabulary was published in the January issue of the Stratford Living Magazine, which is also available in Warwick and Leamington.

(2) Shop Watch

A Tesco store in Rugby has signed up to the Shop Watch scheme. There are 4 members of staff taking part in the recruiting procedure at present. If they are successful, it is hoped this will encourage other stores to participate and further increase numbers.

(3) Training

In 2008 the Specials' training was changed to a modular system, inline with the organisation of training for regular officers. This is beneficial as recruitment can take place more frequently, with recruits slotting into the training at any time. This should help to increase numbers.

(4) Safer Neighbourhood Teams

It is proposed that the Specials in Kenilworth, who are attached to the Kenilworth Safer Neighbourhood Teams, will run a pilot scheme where they will be trained and equipped to use cycles. If this is successful it will be rolled out to all Specials attached to Safer Neighbourhood teams across the County.

(5) Nationally

Glyn Gardner will be working closely with colleagues around the country, to assess what is required to implement any parts of the National Strategy that would be useful to the Warwickshire Special Constabulary.

Phillip Morris-Jones
Lead Member