

# National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Healthcare Professionals Working in Police Custody Settings

## Case Study

### The Metropolitan Police - Charing Cross Police Station

*The draft NOS were used to review the healthcare services currently delivered at Charing Cross Police Station. In particular, the current roles of FMEs and nurses were defined, leading to the identification of functions where, with further training, the role of nurses might be expanded. Although conducted at Charing Cross, this could provide a pilot for the development of healthcare services across the Met.*

#### The Situation

The Metropolitan Police currently has a total of 76 custody suites, many of which are open 24 hours a day. Healthcare in police custody is typically provided by FMEs; there are currently 159 FMEs providing healthcare services, compared with just 6 nurses.

The one exception to this FME led service is Charing Cross custody suite, where a team of nurses are employed. The origin of this “Custody Nurse Project” was the need for continuous health care provision (including a high proportion of non-forensic services) due largely to the high concentration of homeless people in the Charing Cross area.

The long term aim in the Met is to reduce the number of custody suites, with a move towards a smaller number of larger, purpose built custody suites. This will have implications for the delivery of healthcare in custody suites, and provides an opportune time to review the model of healthcare services. The custody nurse project at Charing Cross therefore provides a useful pilot site for the expansion of the role of nurses within healthcare services.

#### The Aim

The aim was to develop a profile of the healthcare service provision at Charing Cross to identify those competences carried out by nurses, FMEs or both. The service profile would then provide an overview of the service to identify any areas of overlap in roles, and to highlight any aspects of service delivery which might be delivered by nurses in the future.

#### The Action

The Nurse Manager and FMEs working at Charing Cross reviewed the Functional Map for Healthcare Professionals Working in Police Custody Settings to identify the NOS which were required for service delivery at Charing Cross. For each of the selected NOS, it was then recorded whether the NOS was currently carried out by FMEs, nurses or both.

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## The Results

The service profile clarified the current roles of FMEs and nurses at Charing Cross. The majority of NOS describing generic healthcare functions were relevant to both FMEs and nurses.

Some aspects of service delivery were particularly relevant to nurses e.g.

- Screen individual's mental and physical health and well being on reception into a custodial setting
- Undertake treatments and dressings related to the care of lesions and wounds

However, the draft NOS specific to Healthcare Professionals Working in Police Custody Settings describe functions as currently only carried out by FMEs.

## The Future

Although the service profile recognises that many NOS are only carried out by FMEs, it does also highlight areas where nurses might be given further training and experience to widen the scope of their practice. For example, this includes:

- Advise on the fitness of individuals to be detained in police custody
- Advise on the fitness of individuals for police interview
- Advise on the fitness of individuals for travel, transfer or release from police custody.

It is anticipated that with further specialist training the number of nurses and their roles could be expanded across the Met.

## Contact Details

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