



Otarah Byfield is the New PCOA Chief Executive Officer

POLICE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

THE PCOA MONITOR

Members of the Police Civilian Oversight Authority (PCOA) have appointed Ms. Otarah Byfield as the new PCOA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective June 1. Ms. Byfield, who previously served as Legal Counsel for 8 years, succeeded outgoing CEO, Dave McIntosh, who resigned in May. “I am honoured and grateful for this opportunity to lead this exceptional organization and its small hardworking team of professionals,” she told the *PCOA Monitor*. “We produce relevant work which impacts positively not only on the work of the Jamaica Constabulary Force but also the public,” she added. Ms. Byfield holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in International Relations from the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona. She also earned a Bachelor of

Law degree at UWI, Cavehill and subsequently attended the Norman Manley Law School in Jamaica, where she was award-



In her first outing as CEO, Ms. Byfield was the guestspeaker at the “School Leaving Exercise” at the Guanaboa Vale Primary School in St. Catherine on June 27. Here she is handing out an award for the “Most Literate” student.

ed her Legal Education Certificate. Meanwhile, the newly minted CEO is gung-ho about her plans for the Authority. “I am excited to execute a new direction for the organization. I believe there is an opportunity

to revisit and review our programs over the years, with a view to determine what aspects can be adjusted in order to stimulate further change in the JCF, and to raise the morale of our police officers,” she disclosed. This married mother of one daughter, believes that the entity will evolve into a fully established and recognized robust civilian oversight mechanism that is fully equipped, resourced and responsive to the changes needed to create a professional police service.



The “Most Numerate” student also received an award from the PCOA CEO, Otarah Byfield.

History Made in the St. Catherine North Division

It was a big deal for the PCOA Team when it recently inspected the St. Catherine North Division and four stations achieved perfection in records management. The stations were: Bog Walk, Guys Hill, Above Rocks and Sligoville.



Sligoville Station in St. Catherine North Division.

rector, Inspections and Monitoring, Andrew Beaumont said. He highlighted the Guys Hill Station for commendation as

“We were so encouraged by this development,” the Senior Di-



Guys Hill Station in St. Catherine North Division.

during the previous inspection, the station adhered to JCF policies in the maintenance of only one of the four records inspected. “The station’s 100 per cent compliance with JCF policies in terms of keeping its books indicate that our recommendations were implemented, especially as it pertained to, the maintenance of the Station Diary, which continues to be problematic at most stations,” he pointed out. Mr. Beaumont also said that the Sligoville Station deserved kudos for its consistency in keeping accurate records.

The PCOA Team previously inspected this division in 2010, 2011 and 2015. The division is comprised of 14 stations.

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PCOA Team Reviews Lock-ups and Detention Administration in Three SoPE Parishes

During the period, the PCOA Team undertook a review of the lock-ups and detention administration in JCF divisions in three parishes in the West.

This was in light of the fact that the Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness declared three parishes – St. James, Hanover and Westmoreland - under a State of Public Emergency (SoPE) on April 30 for initially two weeks. However, it was extended by the House of Representatives to August 12.



A police officer (left) at the Lucea Station in Hanover searching for information requested by the PCOA CEO, Otarah Byfield.

Under the SoPE, the security forces have been granted extraordinary powers and some rights of citizens have been suspended. For instance, the security forces have the power to search and detain persons without a warrant.



An Inspector (right) at the Freeport Station in St. James sharing information with PCOA CEO, Otarah Byfield during June inspection.

lock-ups, poor communication with families of detainees and unsatisfactory meal provisions.

Against this background, the PCOA Team sought to investigate the concerns raised. The team therefore visited the Freeport Station in St. James; Lucea Station in Hanover and Frome and Negril stations in Westmoreland, where detainees were being held. The inspection concentrated on five areas: review of records of persons in custody

Stemming from this occurrence, several stakeholders have been vocal in their concerns regarding the infringement of rights of detainees, unsanitary lock-up conditions, overcrowding in

(detention administration); lock-up conditions; diet administration for persons detained; process control and safety and family interaction.

The inspection format also included general observations, information gathered from interviews (survey) and documents made available to the team. This was done in order to determine the status of the concerns listed and also the extent to which the stations were complying with JCF guidelines and procedures.

Meanwhile, during a prior declaration of a SoPE in the parish of St. James, which commenced on January 18, 2018 and ended January 31 this year, the PCOA Team conducted a similar review. This inspection included all stations in the St. James Division designated as lock-up facilities. These stations were: Barrett Town, Barnett Street, Freeport and Cambridge. Eleven recommendations for improvement were outlined in the review.

Safety and Security Issues Persist at the Spanish Town Lock-up

While there is a concerted effort to improve the conditions of stations and workspaces for police personnel, serious attention is required to address safety and security issues as well as the general condition at the Spanish Town lock-up. This is despite renovations conducted in 2015.

The lock-up, which is the largest in the JCF St. Catherine North Division, was gazetted to accommodate 45 persons. However, during an inspection in 2019, this figure was reportedly increased to 67 persons, albeit no formal documentation of this adjustment was handed over to the PCOA Team.

During an inspection earlier this year among the issues reported by the PCOA Team was the overcrowding of cells and inadequate staff assignment to the cell area. There was ample evidence regarding this concern noted in the Cell Diary at the station. On the day of inspection, there were 93 persons in custody, which also highlighted an unacceptable prisoner to police ratio. This concern was further heightened given the observations of poor lighting, malfunctioning cell equipment as well as

defective toilets inside cells, the latter which required prisoners to use other facilities in the common area.



Spanish Town Station signage

As for the overall condition of the lock-up, the PCOA Team noted in a 2015 report that an area of the lock-up was being renovated to serve as a work area for the cell staff. However, it was pointed out that due to plumbing and sewage defects the area could not be used for its intended purpose. As such, the work area for the cell staff was reassigned to a cramped room that served also as a storage for property belonging to prisoners. This room was adjacent to a bathroom, which was in a unsanitary state. Further to the issue of unsanitary and defective toilets inside the cells, which incidentally

were repaired in 2015, they were malfunctioning due to poor plumbing and sewage defects. There were several cases where urine and water had no unimpeded exit channel, which caused an unpleasant odor inside the cell and the general area.

Another area targeted for improvement during the 2015 renovations was the ventilation inside of the lock-up, which included a heat extractor and suction fans in the ceilings. During the 2019 visit, it was noted that neither were working. Also due to an electrical fault, several lights along the passage of the cells were malfunctioning, making the area dark, hence concerns regarding safety for personnel. Additionally, a sewage system problem, which resulted in water settling in the cells and outer corridors of the cells, raised concern regarding health risks as well as sleeping conditions for prisoners, who lacked a concrete bunk bed.

There were also complaints from prisoners regarding pest infestation, which was corroborated in several entries in the Cell Diary.

Indeed, repairs to this lock-up requires urgency given its dire condition.

Station Inspections by the Divisional Command a Problem in Kingston Eastern Division

Only four of the nine stations, which comprise the Kingston Eastern Division, were inspected by the Divisional Command Team in accordance with JCF policy.

This was one of a few concerns raised by PCOA Senior Director, Inspections and Monitoring, Andrew Beaumont at a debriefing exercise with the newly appointed Kingston Eastern Divisional Commander, Supt. Stephanie Lindsay and two members of her team. She replaced Supt. Victor Hamilton, who was the Commanding Officer when the PCOA inspected the division.

“These inspections are very important in correcting many of the issues that we see at stations,” Mr. Beaumont stressed.

On the matter of records management, he said that for the most part, all the stations improved, attaining a 75 per cent compliance rate. However, he singled out the Mountain View Station for very poor records management, as the station maintained none of the four records inspected in accordance with the respective JCF polices.



Kingston Eastern Divisional Commander Supt. Stephanie Lindsay (left) taking notes while PCOA Senior Director, Andrew Beaumont (second from right) discuss findings from an inspection of the division with Deputy Oral Harrison (right) Looking on is: Inspector Courtney Coogle.

Mr. Beaumont also mentioned the Port Royal Station, the sole lock-up held prisoners in custody (PIC) in the division as the Mountain View and Bull Bay lock-ups were out of commission. He pointed out that none of the PIC records - the PIC Register, PIC Cards, Remand Book and Charge and Prisoners Property Book - were accurately maintained. However, the station was compliant with JCF polices pertaining to physical checks of the cells, which was applauded given that the lock-up held prisoners above its capacity.

While acknowledging some improvement in the security perimeter fencing/walls at two of the seven stations previously highlighted, he stressed the need for improvement at the remaining stations. In fact, this has been an ongoing concern of the PCOA since it first inspected the division in 2012. For her part, Supt. Lindsay, who was three days into her appointment, said the meeting was timely and that the findings presented were mostly in line with the findings of their internal inspections.

“It is not far off and it is good that we see some improvement but there is much more work to be done,” she stated.



Deputy Supt. Oral Harrison (right) peruses draft copy of inspection report while PCOA Senior Director, Andrew Beaumont looks on.

“We appreciate the feedback and we will use your report as a reference plan for persons who will be monitoring these records as well as all Station Commanders,” she added, noting her impending visits to all stations in the division.

Kingston Western Division Vigilant With PIC Records and Administration

It was no surprise that the PCOA Team would observe near perfection when inspecting Prisoners in Custody (PIC) records and general administration at the Denham Town Station, which is the sole lock-up in the Kingston Western Division.

This is in light of the fact that the station has been under close scrutiny given a slew of jailbreaks between 2014 to 2016. Indeed the last jailbreak

which occurred in 2016, where nine prisoners escaped from the lock-up, was the fourth since 2014. In addition, four members of the JCF were suspended as a result of the jailbreak.

The team examined the following records: the PIC Register, PIC Cards, Remand Book and Prisoners' Charge and Property Book. All except the



The Denham Town Station is the sole lock-up in the Kingston Western Division.

Remand Book was maintained in accordance with JCF policies. In the case of the Remand Book, the station failed to implement one

but instead, recorded remands in a Justice of the Peace Visiting Register. The columns in this register did not facilitate the recording of all the necessary information on detainees, who were remanded.

However, what was truly exceptional was that with the lock-up holding prisoners above its gazetted capacity, the number

of physical checks of the cells intensified. In fact, the physical checks conducted exceeded the requirement for the 30 day period examined by the team. These checks involved examining the security apparatus of the lock-up such as grills, bars and locks.

In addition, mandatory cell searches, which are spearheaded by the Divisional Headquarters and involves an outside team (excluding

cell staff at the station) inspecting inside cells, were conducted as mandated by JCF policy. Meanwhile, the team found that both the toilets and shower in the cell area were in a deplorable condition and required urgent attention.

The team last inspected this lock-up in 2013.

PCOA Now on Instagram



Instagram Logo

To further ramp up its presence on the social media landscape, the PCOA is now on Instagram

@policecivilianoversight.

“We are excited to use this platform as it increases the

opportunity to steer engagement with our various stakeholders,” an enthusiastic PCOA Communication Manager, Karen Cadien said.

Stakeholders are also invited to follow the activities of the Authority on www.facebook.com/pcoagov.

PCOA CEO, Dave McIntosh Demits Office

Dave McIntosh stepped down as PCOA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) effective May 31, after 10 years at the helm.

He succeeded the late Richard Black, the first CEO of the Authority, who served for 18 months.

PCOA Members expressed that the CEO was a credit to the Authority and during his tenure had made significant strides in the development of the organisation. The Authority also expressed regret about the CEO's decision to move on, but gave their blessings and indicated their confidence that he would be an asset to any institution with which he worked.

Under Mr. McIntosh's tenure, he spearheaded significant changes to improve and formalize operations of the Authority by: refocusing inspections according to geographical divisions; instituting a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with recommendations; employing exit interviews as an opportunity for the



PCOA Member, Jacqueline Hinkson (left) prepares to hand over gift to outgoing CEO Dave McIntosh.

changes to improve and formalize operations of the Authority by: refocusing inspections according to geographical divisions; instituting a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with recommendations; employing exit interviews as an opportunity for the



Outgoing CEO Dave McIntosh, whose mantra was "Strong Leadership and Management will lead to greater Accountability by extension, create Culture Change in the JCF".

JCF personnel to provide feedback on findings from inspections prior to the dissemination of inspection report; and, the creation of thematic inspections, which targeted specific police services, with a view for improvement. In addition, the outgoing CEO instituted the Accountability Framework Initiative, whereby Area and Divisional Commanders agree on commitments to hold leaders to account in the future. In the meantime, the CEO said that he felt that the competencies were fairly well

developed in the organization and he was confident that those who represented the nucleus of the organization were aware of the issues that needed to be represented as time progressed.

Prior to his time as PCOA CEO, Mr. McIntosh served some 15 years in the Jamaica Defence Force before retiring at the rank of Major in 2001. He is also a registered professional engineer with over 10 years practice in heavy industry in Jamaica. He also holds a Bachelor of Engineering degree from Cranfield University (UK) and a Master of Business Administration (UWI, Mona).



The former PCOA CEO, Dave McIntosh (right) posing for cameras with National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (third from right) and PCOA Members from left to right are: Mr. Gladstone Lewars, Professor Anthony Harriott, Mrs. Jacqueline Hinkson and Dr. the Hon. Marshall Hall.

PCOA FACTOID



Since the start of the year, the PCOA Inspection and Monitoring Unit has inspected 47 stations spanning five geographical

divisions. In addition, the unit has conducted two special inspections focusing on lock-ups and detention administration in jurisdictions under the State of Public Emergency.

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Compiled by the PCOA Communications Unit

PHOTO OP FOR THE QUARTER



PCOA Members striking a pose for an upcoming Annual Report. Standing from left to right are: Mr. Errol Strong (Chairman); Dr. the Hon. Marshall Hall; Mr. Gladstone Lewars; Pastor Glen Samuels; Professor Anthony Harriott and Mrs. Jacqueline Hinkson (seated). Currently, Mr. Lewars is the longest serving member of the Authority, having been appointed since 2006.