

## How to plan for a suspect interview....

### **FIRSTLY CONSIDER...**

Does the suspect want a solicitor? Do they require an appropriate adult?

Ensure you have this arranged as soon as possible! The custody sergeant can then contact these people and keep them updated on when you are ready to interview. The time left on the custody clock is key!

### **Personal Details**

Ensure you have all the details of the suspect including:

- Name
- DOB
- PNC ID
- Custody Number
- Solicitor/ Appropriate Adult contact details

### **PEACE approach**

When conducting investigative interviews police forces uses the PEACE model as a guideline-

#### **P- Planning and Preparation**

This is the initial stage to prepare your questions but also the practical elements of the interview such as officers present and tape recording equipment.

#### **E- Engage and Explain.**

Whilst in contact with the suspect you should build a rapport, ensure they understand the caution and explain the process of the interview to them. Research has suggested that there is a positive correlation between constructive interpersonal relationships between the suspect and police officer and a higher level of information given.

#### **A- Account, Clarification and Challenge**

This is the main part of the interview to gain the suspect's explanation of what has happened in relation to the offence they are being questioned on. This should begin with an open question. Following the free recall of the suspect it is your chance to get a greater level of detail and seeking explanation for anything that hasn't made sense. Although you should always try and use open questions you may have to be more specific and use closed questions to get this level of detail.

#### **C-Closure**

Before the conclusion of an interview you should recap on what the suspect has said and ensure they do not want to change, clarify or add anything.

#### **E- Evaluation**

This phase is used to assess what has been said in accordance with the points to prove and any possible defences they have given but also to assess whether you have met your objectives for the interview.

### **Custody**

Always make sure you keep in touch with custody suite and give them plenty of warning to arrange for a solicitor/ appropriate adult.

**Disks-** Disks should be unwrapped in front of the defendant. You should have three disks in total- one master, one working and one spare. The master copy should be sealed in front of the suspect. This is to ensure if the case goes to court they can see it hasn't been tampered with. You will exhibit these disks as your own and record this in your pocket notebook or statement.

### **Post interview**

Write up the notes of your interview on the crime report. Ensure you include start and finish times, your exhibit number and the main account given. Note down the questions you have asked especially when the suspect has given a no comment interview. Also record the solicitor and any appropriate adult details. If the case goes to court interview notes will be included in the file.

### **Disclosure**

\*Only applicable if detained person has a solicitor\*

\*Can be written or verbal\*

Disclosure occurs before the interview and is the opportunity to outline the case to the solicitor so he can advise the suspect accordingly.

You need to outline the basic details of the incident however you can choose to withhold or disclose certain items of evidence if you believe this would be beneficial in your interview.

### **Interview Questions**

**Significant statements-** If the defendant has made a significant statement upon arrest this should always be put to them prior to the interview questions.

**Points to prove-** Use a system such as Police National Legal Database (PNLD) to obtain the points to prove for the offence. It is essential to cover all of these details in the interview so when obtaining a charging decision you can outline these points to a sergeant or the Crown Prosecution Service.

**Defences-** When researching your points to prove also look up accepted defences so you can cover the possibility of these being given by the suspect in your interview questions.

**Exhibits-** Ensure that any items you plan to ask about are exhibited. When showing the exhibits to the defendant in the interview make reference to the exhibit verbally. For example "I am now showing Mr Smith Exhibit RS/01- A screenshot of texts sent to Mrs Smith on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012."

**CCTV-** If using CCTV in an interview it is a good idea to know the exact timings of the footage you want to show to the defendant and ensure you have checked that your technology works! Similarly with the exhibits, explain on the tape the CCTV exhibit you are now showing the suspect.