

Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner for Surrey

**INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING
SCHEME
ANNUAL REPORT
2013**



Introduction

Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Schemes exist to provide assurance to local communities that they can have confidence in the way in which the police treat people who are held in their custody.

The ICV Scheme is a statutory responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Kevin Hurley was elected by the public in November 2012 to be Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey.

The PCC is independent of the police and his main responsibility is to hold the Chief Constable to account for the decisions and actions the police take.

The ICV visiting process and procedure is governed by a Code of Practice which is issued by the Home Office. The protocols for how this will take place in Surrey are agreed between the PCC's Office (OPCC) and Surrey Police.

The OPCC recruits volunteer ICVs to undertake the role and provides them with support and on-going training to ensure that they can discharge their role effectively.

The Scheme plays an important part in maintaining police accountability to the local community and the aim of this Annual Report is to ensure that this information is available in the public domain.

How the Scheme works

ICVs are volunteers who visit police stations, in pairs, and speak to detainees who are being held in police custody. Visits are random and unannounced so that the police do not know when they will take place. ICVs arrive at the custody suite and are given immediate access to the suite on production of their ID card. They enter police cells and speak to individuals being held. Conversations with detainees focus on welfare needs and rights and entitlements. ICVs also review a detainee's custody record with their permission to ensure the detainee has been treated appropriately. ICVs are not concerned with the identity of the detainee nor with the reason for their detention. Any issues raised are discussed as appropriate with custody staff. ICVs also inspect and comment on the general condition and facilities of the custody suite including the kitchen, medical room and showers. ICVs look, listen, observe and report back to the OPCC on their findings.

ICVs come from a variety of backgrounds and sections of the community. They must be over the age of 18 and live or work within the Surrey policing borders. At the end of 2013, the

Surrey ICV Scheme had 41 volunteers undertaking this role.

Comment from the PCC, Kevin Hurley



The public of Surrey tell me that they expect an uncompromising view on the standards we expect from our police. As their elected Police and Crime Commissioner, it is my responsibility to make sure that the public's wish is reflected in the service they receive from Surrey Police.

I could not do that job without the support of our Independent Custody Visitors, dedicated to monitoring standards and conditions in police custody and ensuring that all police detainees are treated with dignity and respect.

I am proud to be able to introduce the Annual Report for the Surrey ICV Scheme, which has provided another year of excellent service to the county. The report illustrates the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of our volunteer Custody Visitors. Their efforts ensure that we can provide genuinely independent, local community oversight of police custody arrangements. The role itself can be a challenging one - police custody suites are not the kind of place most would choose to spend their time; but it is nonetheless important. Our county is a better place for the hard work and public spiritedness of our Independent Custody Visitors. On behalf of all Surrey residents, I thank them for their continued service.

How the Scheme is organised

Until November 2013, Surrey Police operated four custody suites in Guildford, Reigate, Staines and Woking. On 4 November 2013, the Woking and Reigate Suites closed and a new suite was opened in Salfords on the East of the county. The custody provision in 2013 was as follows:-

Guildford (24 cells)
Reigate (11 cells) – decommissioned Nov 2013
Salfords (24 cells) – opened Nov 2013
Staines (19 cells)
Woking (15 cells) – closed Nov 2013 and now only opened to cover operational need on an ad hoc basis

Each custody suite has its own panel of ICVs. The panel is responsible for organising the visiting rota. Each panel meets on a quarterly basis with the custody inspector responsible for the suite and the ICV Scheme Manager to discuss the visits made and any issues raised.

During a custody visit, a member of the custody staff escorts the visitors around the suite to ensure their safety. All conversations with detainees are conducted out of hearing of the escorting officer.

At the end of the visit, the ICVs complete a short report form which is forwarded to the OPCC. All issues raised by ICVs are reported and taken forwards by the OPCC.



Visiting Statistics for 2013

During the period January to December 2013, a total of 236 custody visits were undertaken.

In 2013 a total of 20184 people were held in Surrey custody centres. Of these, 1360 detainees (6.73%) were in custody at the time the ICVs visited. This sample size is slightly higher than in 2012 but broadly consistent with that of the previous 4 years.

Summary	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total number of detainees	19016	19804	19085	20184
Total in custody at time of ICV visit	1000	1167	1236	1360
Total accepting a visit	594	667	610	715
Total not possible to visit*	382	464	604	618
Total refusing a visit	24	36	22	27

715 detainees (3.54% of the overall total number of detainees) accepted an ICV visit, a further 618 detainees were not available to the ICVs for viable reasons - *in the main because they were sleeping or in police interview (full details held by Scheme Manager)

96.36% of all the detainees who were asked by ICVs if they were willing to discuss their treatment in police custody agreed to do so. This is felt to be a good result when benchmarked nationally with other custody visiting schemes and is largely due to the policy of ICVs introducing themselves and the Scheme to detainees as opposed to this introduction being custody staff led.

Visits provide a snapshot of what is going on in custody at the time of the visit and are undertaken across all days of the week and on a 24 hour basis. Each ICV Panel aims to complete one weekly visit between the hours of 6am and 11pm and one monthly 'out of hours' visit (between 11pm and 6am). This is crucial to ensure that visits do not become predictable and do not occur at set times.

Issues Reported

ICVs are encouraged to resolve minor welfare concerns raised by detainees with staff at the time of their visit. They debrief with a custody sergeant at the end of each visit wherever possible enabling clarification of issues where necessary on both sides. Any issues which cannot be resolved in custody will be taken forward by the ICV Scheme Manager as appropriate.

Concerns reported to the Scheme Manager are logged and followed up with the Force. The outcomes are notified to all ICVs to enable discussion at panel meetings and cross-panel learning.

In 2013, ICVs raised concerns around issues such as:-

- . Some incidences of out of date food in the store cupboards
- . Several detainees who were held in custody for a prolonged period eg. over a weekend awaiting a court appearance, experiencing nicotine withdrawal symptoms
- . Showers not being routinely facilitated for detainees who were held in custody overnight
- . Adequate supplies of blankets
- . Custody staff being very pressured given high number of detainees in custody and/or detainees with complex issues
- . Access arrangements to the Salfords Custody Suite when it first opened
- . Detainees being held in the hold awaiting booking in for over 30 minutes



Training and Other Events

The best custody visiting schemes have the best trained custody visitors and we take our responsibility in keeping our ICVs up-dated on changes in the custody environment relevant to their role very seriously.

Our Annual Training Day was held on Saturday 30 November 2013 and this included topics such as the booking in process, a mental health awareness update and an overview of NICHE – the new information system to be introduced into custody in February 2014.

In addition to this, some ICV representatives of the Scheme attended a training seminar in Hampshire and the ICVA National Conference in Brighton. Reports were compiled by those attending and circulated to all to share the learning.

The Annual Thank You Event was again held at G Live in Guildford in November 2013, with the purpose of thanking the volunteers for their continued commitment. The guest speaker for the evening was Ian Bickers, Governor of HMP

High Down who gave a very interesting insight into the challenges of his role.

Regional Collaboration and ICVA

The South East Regional ICV Scheme Managers (Hampshire, Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Thames Valley) exchange information and meet on a six-monthly basis in order to benchmark the Schemes and share information and best practice.

The Surrey ICV Scheme continues to be a member of the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA). ICVA provides access to training for ICVs at all levels as well as support and reference for the Scheme Manager.

Recruitment

We recruited 7 new ICVs in 2013 and there was some re-organisation of the ICV Panels following the closure of Reigate and Woking custody suites and the opening of Salfords. From November 2013 onwards, the Scheme has three ICV Panels attached to the three custody centres and panel numbers will ideally be maintained at 12-14 members per panel.

These numbers afford the Scheme some resilience in case of resignation or sickness.

The ICV role is permanently advertised on the PCC website and with all Surrey volunteer bureaux. We also promote the role with further education establishments and with partner agencies.

There are no vacancies on any of the ICV Panels at the time of writing and it is anticipated that the Scheme will continue to recruit on an annual basis.

Equality and Diversity

To ensure that the public has confidence in the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, it is important that the volunteers who undertake this role are representative of the local community. At the end of 2013, we had 41 independent custody visitors, 18 of whom were male and 23 of whom were female. The age range of these visitors was as follows:-

	2011	2012	2013
18-29	3	2	1
30-39	2	3	3
40-49	9	9	7
50-59	12	9	5
60-69	24	21	18
70+	9	6	7

Investing in Volunteers

The Surrey ICV Scheme achieved the nationally recognised Investing in Volunteers accreditation in October 2012 and this is valid until October 2015. This process involved a comprehensive self-audit of the Scheme as well as a review by an external assessor who spoke to volunteers, staff and police officers before making her recommendations. The Surrey ICV Scheme was one of the first in England and Wales to receive this award.

Volunteer and Make a Difference

If you are interested in finding out more about Independent Custody Visiting, please contact us. We would like to hear from you if you:-

- Are over 18
- Live or work within the Surrey Police borders
- Are able to communicate well with a diverse range of people
- Are able to work as part of a team
- Are flexible and reliable
- Are a good listener
- Are objective and non-judgemental
- Are able to maintain confidentiality
- Have lived in the UK for the past three years

An application pack can be downloaded from our website at

<http://www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/vacancies/>

A hard copy of the application pack can be requested from this office.

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