

Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner for Surrey

**INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING
SCHEME
ANNUAL REPORT
2014**



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.

Ensuring effective management and oversight of 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 with their permission. Conversations with detainees focus on welfare needs and the provision of rights and entitlements under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE). ICVs also review a detainee's custody record with their permission to ensure that the detainee has been treated appropriately. ICVs are not concerned with the identity of the detainee or 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. The OPCC takes these issues forwards with Surrey Police in the appropriate way, keeping ICVs informed of feedback and actions agreed.

ICVs come from a variety of backgrounds and sections of the community. They must be over the age of 18 and live, study or work within the Surrey policing borders. At the end of 2014, the Surrey ICV Scheme had 36 volunteers undertaking this role.

Comment from the PCC, Kevin Hurley



One of my most important roles as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey is to ensure that everyone in the county gets the uncompromisingly high standard of service they have come to expect from our police. That applies wherever they are: at home, out in the streets or in custody.

My eyes and ears watching out for the rights of those in detention are in the form of our entirely voluntary Independent Custody Visitors, dedicated to monitoring standards and conditions in police cells and making sure that all police detainees are treated with dignity and respect.

Once again 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. I rely on the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of our volunteer Custody Visitors. They provide genuinely independent, local community oversight of police custody arrangements. It's not easy; people they meet, often late at night, can be very angry or extremely distressed. Our county is a more civilised place thanks to the unselfish contribution made by our Independent Custody Visitors. On behalf of us all, I thank them for their continued service.

How the Scheme is organised

Surrey Police operates from three custody suites at Guildford, Staines and Salfords (Reigate area). The Woking suite was closed for 24/7 operation in November 2013, but is kept in a state of readiness so that it can be used on a planned basis when extra capacity is required, for example if there is a special operation likely to result in a planned large number of arrests or is a suite is closed for regular maintenance/cleaning. The custody provision in 2014 was as follows:-

Guildford (24 cells)
 Salfords (24 cells)
 Staines (19 cells)
 Woking (15 cells) –only opened to cover operational need on an ad hoc basis

Each of the three 24/7 custody suites 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 recorded and taken forwards by the OPCC.



Answers to concerns raised and actions agreed are reported back to the ICVs on a timely basis and discussed as appropriate at the quarterly panel meetings.

Visiting Statistics for 2014

During the period January to December 2014, a total of 192 custody visits were undertaken.

In 2014, a total of 18395 people were held in Surrey custody centres. Of these, 1477 detainees (8.02%) were in custody at the time the ICVs visited. This sample size is larger

than in 2013 but broadly consistent with that of the previous 4 years.

Summary	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total number of detainees	19804	19085	20184	18395
Total in custody at time of ICV visit	1167	1236	1360	1477
Total accepting a visit	667	610	715	697
Total not possible to visit*	464	604	618	743
Total refusing a visit	36	22	27	37

697 detainees (3.78% of the overall total number of detainees) accepted an ICV visit, a further 743 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)

94.96% 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.

ICVs assume access to the custody records of detainees who are not available to them in order to have some kind of overview of the welfare and treatment of as many detainees as possible.

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.

The Surrey Scheme also operates a system of six cross panel visits per year. This is where one of the ICVs involved in the visit belongs to a panel which visits another suite. This ensures good practice is shared across all ICV panels and all custody suites.

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 2014, ICVs raised concerns around issues such as:-

- . Some incidences of out of date food in the store cupboards
- . Showers not being routinely facilitated for detainees who were held in custody overnight
- . Custody staff being very pressured given high number of detainees in custody and/or detainees with complex issues
- . Detainees being held in the hold awaiting booking in for over 30 minutes
- . The fact that PACE reviews conducted when the detainee was asleep were not always being advised to them on waking and recorded in the custody record.
- . The latest copies of PACE being available for consultation by detainees
- . Shortage of general reading material, korans and prayer mats

Additionally, the introduction of electronic custody records in Surrey in February 2014 produced some challenges. ICVs worked with Scheme Manager and custody staff to overcome these and develop new working practices.



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. In November 2014, 20

ICVs visited HMP High Down to learn more about long-term custodial detention.

We hold an Annual Training Day each year inviting speakers on topics relevant to custody. We also offer our ICVs the opportunity to attend local and regional training events and the ICVA National Conference which was held in Birmingham in November 2014. 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 2014, with the purpose of thanking the volunteers for their continued commitment. The guest speaker for the evening was Ben Byrne, Head of Youth Support, Surrey County Council 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. The Surrey ICV Scheme Manager is a Director on the ICVA Board and represents the SE Region at a national level.

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.

Following a recruitment drive in late 2014/early 2015, 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	2014
18-29	3	2	1	0
30-39	2	3	3	2
40-49	9	9	7	4
50-59	12	9	5	6
60-69	24	21	18	17
70+	9	6	7	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's volunteer practices and procedures 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, work or study 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>

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

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