

**ORIGINATOR:
BUSINESS CO-ORDINATOR,
OFFICE OF THE PCC FOR SUFFOLK**

DECISION NUMBER: 44-2013

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

**SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS –
SELF-INTRODUCTION TO DETAINEES**

SUMMARY:

1. Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteers from our local community who visit the two Police Investigation Centres (PICs) in the county, unannounced and in pairs, to check on the welfare of detained persons and the conditions in which they are held.
2. In respect of access to detainees, the Home Office Code of Practice for Custody Visiting states:

“53. Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 55, ICVs must be allowed access to any person detained at the police station. However, only ICVs who have undergone the appropriate security vetting and training will be permitted access to TACT detainees, irrespective of where they are being held. Detainees may only be interviewed with their consent which will be established either by:

 - i) self-introduction – the ICVs will introduce themselves and their purpose and seek permission to speak to the detainee
 - ii) the escorting officer explaining the purpose of the ICV visit and asking the detainee whether they are willing to speak with the visitors.”
3. It is the responsibility of the Police & Crime Commissioner, in consultation with its Custody Visitors, to determine the most appropriate format for consent to be obtained and it was agreed by former Members of the Police Authorities in Norfolk & Suffolk to trial the ‘self-introduction’ process across both Counties from January 2013.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the PCC endorse the proposal to continue with consent to ICV visits being obtained through 'self-introduction'

APPROVAL BY: PCC

The recommendation set out is agreed.

Signature

Tina Parnore

Date 30/10/2013

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Home Office Code of Practice for Independent Custody Visiting provides guidance in respect PCC duties in discharging the independent custody visiting function.

1.2 In respect of access to detainees, the Home Office provides the following national guidance:

"53. Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 55, ICVs must be allowed access to any person detained at the police station. However, only ICVs who have undergone the appropriate security vetting and training will be permitted access to TACT detainees, irrespective of where they are being held. Detainees may only be interviewed with their consent which will be established either by:

i) self-introduction – the ICVs will introduce themselves and their purpose and seek permission to speak to the detainee

ii) the escorting officer explaining the purpose of the ICV visit and asking the detainee whether they are willing to speak with the visitors."

1.3 It is the responsibility of the Police & Crime Commissioner, in consultation with its Custody Visitors, to determine the most appropriate format for consent to be obtained. It was agreed by former Members of the Police Authorities in Norfolk & Suffolk before their abolition to trial the 'self-introduction' process across both Counties from January 2013.

2. WHAT IS SELF INTRODUCTION AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

2.1 Self-introduction involves ICVs introducing themselves directly to detainees and enquiring whether or not the detainee wishes to see them. ICVs also directly ask the detainee if they can look at their custody record.

2.2 The process works by ICVs entering the custody suite and receiving information about those in detention (i.e. is there anything I need to know?) The escorting officer then accompanies ICVs to the cell, checks all is in order before opening the door for ICVs. The escorting officer is then required to remain with ICVs whilst they 'introduce' themselves directly to the detainee.

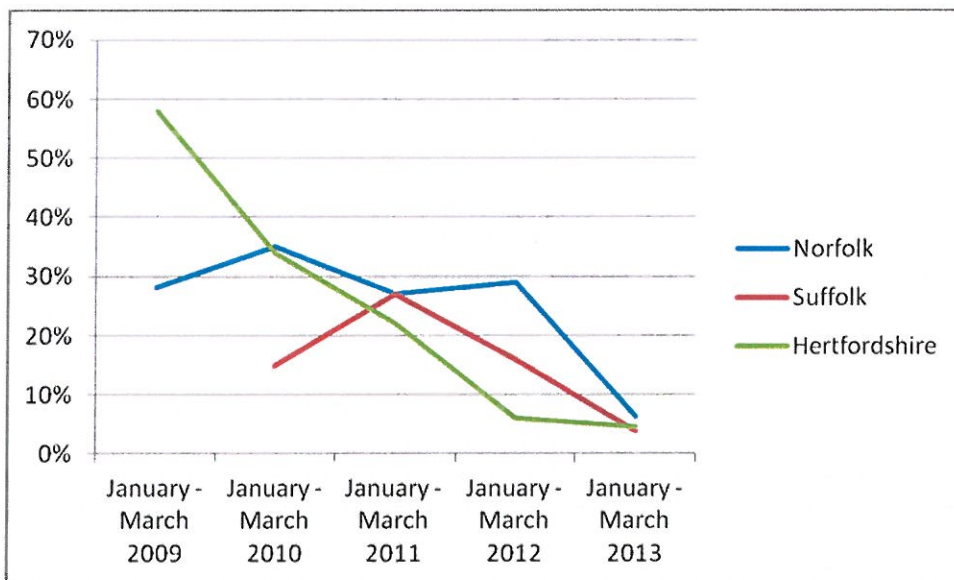
2.3 If the detainee consents to a visit, the escorting officer would then move to a position keeping ICVs in sight, but remaining "out of hearing" as is outlined in the Home Office Code of Practice. If the detainee does not consent to a visit, the supplementary question relating to permission to view the detainees custody record can be asked before the ICVs withdraw and the escorting officer can lock the door.

2.4 Self-Introduction was trialled in Portsmouth, Hampshire in 2005 as a means of increasing the take up rate of detainees consenting to visits and therefore increasing the number of individuals receiving an independent check on their environment and welfare. Since this time a number of other Local Policing Bodies have started using 'self-introduction'. Norfolk and Suffolk were in the minority when it came to the escorting officers only obtaining consent.

3. **ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

Baseline Statistics:

- 3.1 The 'refusal rate' is calculated based on the number of detainees "available" to visit (i.e. excluding those in interview or fingerprints for example) divided by the number that "refused".
- 3.2 The graph below demonstrates Norfolk and Suffolk's 'refusal rate' for the same 3 month period since 2009, along with a comparison against Hertfordshire who commenced self-introduction in March 2010. As you will see that in Hertfordshire the refusal rates dropped from nearly 60% in 2009 to under 10% in 2012.
- 3.3 In 2012, the average refusal rate for Norfolk was approximately 30% and in Suffolk approximately 20%.
- 3.4 Since commencing this pilot, the refusal rate for Norfolk has dropped significantly to 6% and 4% in Suffolk.



Note: No data re: 'available' detainees held by Suffolk for 2009

Survey of ICVs:

- 3.5 A survey was circulated to all ICVS across Norfolk & Suffolk in June 2013 to obtain their views on self-introduction, the results of which are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The Custody Management Team for Norfolk & Suffolk Constabularies has also been consulted in respect of their staff's view of the change in procedure, and it was highlighted that staff are happy to obtain consent either through self-introduction or by an officer conducting this on behalf of ICVs.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 In the event self-introduction is considered the most appropriate form of obtaining consent to ICV visits. The flash cards provided to all volunteers to assist in conversing with Non-English speaking detainees will require updating to take into consideration the self-introduction form of words.

- 4.2 This product was developed in conjunction with our regional colleagues and therefore any costs would be shared across 6 Counties and therefore can be absorbed within the day-to-day budget allocated to Independent Custody Visiting.

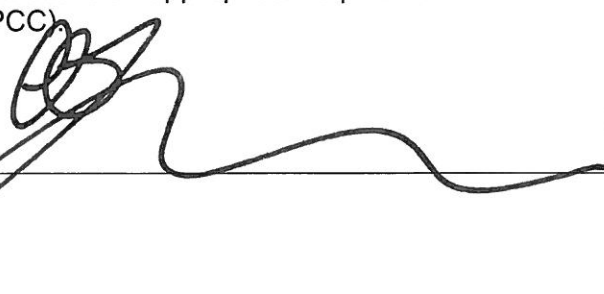
ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	Not Required
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Not Required
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	YES
Have human resource implications been considered?	YES
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	YES
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	YES
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	NO
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	YES

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER (this approval is required only for submissions to the PCC).

Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the (add decision-maker's title e.g. the PCC)

Signature:



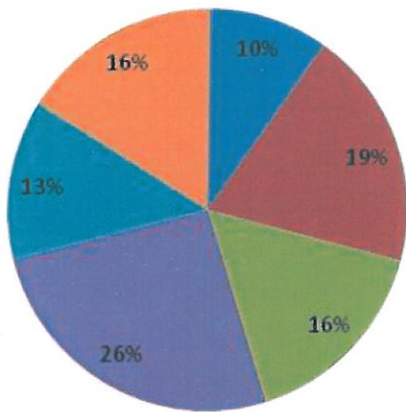
Date 30 October 2013

Self Introduction Survey

31 responses

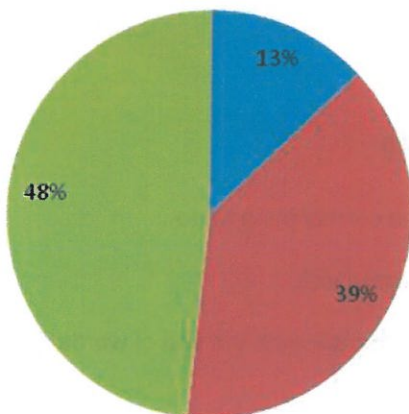
Summary

Which ICV Panel do you belong to?



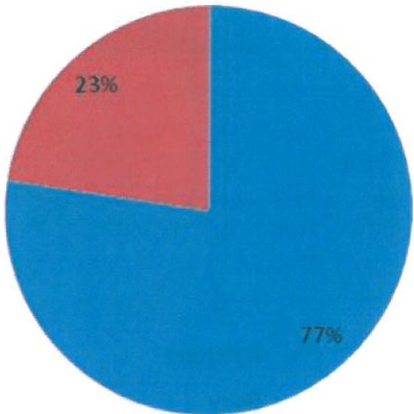
■ Aylsham	Aylsham	3	10%
■ Bury	Bury	6	19%
■ Great Yarmouth	Great Yarmouth	5	16%
■ Ipswich	Ipswich	8	26%
■ Kings Lynn	Kings Lynn	4	13%
■ Wymondham	Wymondham	5	16%

How long have you been an ICV?



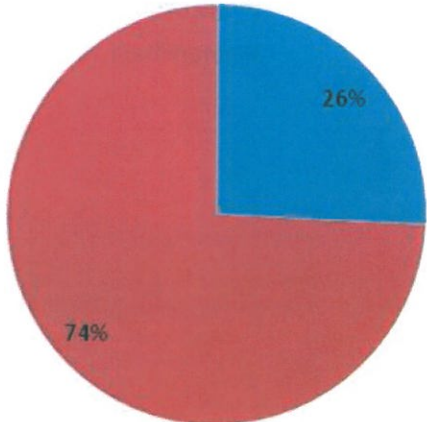
■ Less than 2 years	Less than 2 years	4	13%
■ Between 2 & 5 years	Between 2 & 5 years	12	39%
■ More than 5 years	More than 5 years	15	48%

At the start of the pilot, did you feel confident to introduce yourself to detainees?



■ Yes	Yes	24	77%
■ No	No	7	23%

Did this change at all during the pilot?



■ Yes	Yes	8	26%
■ No	No	23	74%

If so, when and why do you think this happened?

- This did not change.
- At first I was apprehensive but after a couple of times it felt the correct thing to do
- n/a
- Encompassing change it became 'second nature' after the second visit.
- NA
- Becoming more familiar with the process and being more comfortable with the use of words during the introduction.
- N/A
- N/A
- No further comment required!
- N/A
- NA
- NA
- n/a
- After a couple of visits I think most custody visitors felt more comfortable with self Introduction.
- n/a
- Please refer to my comments in the negative aspects section below.
- I have been comfortable throughout the pilot.

- Not applicable
- This change happened about 3 visits in. I had observed my colleagues using self introduction and once I had done this myself on several occasions
- I did not feel as negative about it compared to what I first had thought. I think the reason why was because I had received better rapport with the people who I was visiting.
- I personally feel more comfortable if the police carry on doing the introduction themselves....that is my view!
- The repeat process enabled easier remembrance of introduction key statements
- Knew I would have no issues
- No
- I always felt previously that the introduction by the custody officer was very formal and detainees viewed our visit like another interview, an officers tone could at times set up a barrier leading to a detainee being less willing to speak to visitors.
- Self introduction is much more informal and friendly and after the first couple of visits I noticed detainees were more relaxed and forthcoming.
- It didn't!
- I don't
- I was always confident to do self introduction.
- Only one visit in particular did I feel at all uncomfortable when we self-introduced. It happened towards the end of the visit when the last two DPs we had selected to see turned out to be not only extremely foul mouthed but also quite intimidating. My visiting partner and I were actually a little frightened when faced with the menacing behaviour of these DPs and were relieved when the cell doors were closed again. In fairness I must say that the escorting officer obviously had no idea that these two people would react in this way to our sudden appearance in their cells and had actually warned us not to visit two other detainees due to their attitude. I have found no other problem with the piloting of this new scheme.
- Although I felt confident, I did realise that at my first session, my partner and I neglected to ask if we could see the custody record

Did detainees respond more, or less, positively to self introduction that the previous method of introduction?

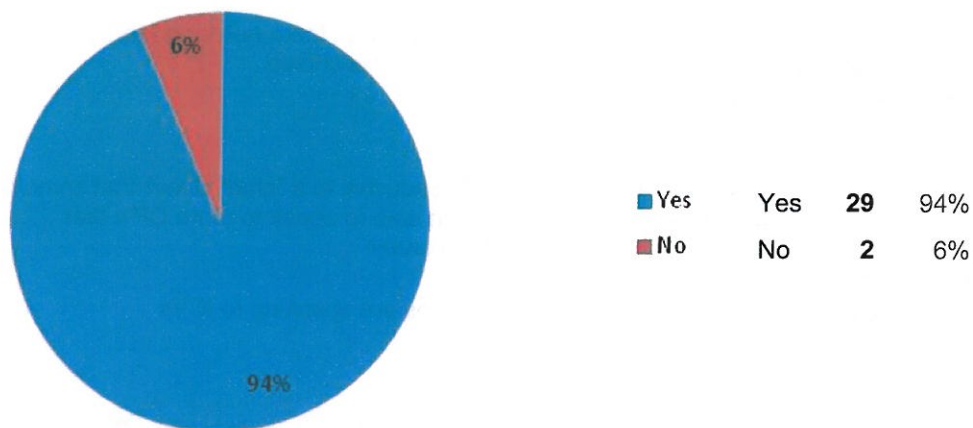


What do you think were the reasons for this?

- Simply because they could see us immediately, note that we were not in uniform so not police officers and the first thing we said was that we were members of the public. Before, when a detainee was told that someone wanted to speak to them and that person was out of sight often they invariably could not be bothered unless the accompanying officer had a particularly persuasive introduction technique.

- Seen as members of the public and not police officers
- The detainees were able to see us as ordinary people without being suspicious of our motives.
- Being in a face to face situation rather than not being introduced and not being seen.
- NA
- Face to face contact.
- Only know because of statistics
- I think they were intrigued to know who we were and the purpose of our visit.
- Our initial discussion with the detainee is more friendly and less formal than the previous method of introduction. As the detainee can see that we are just "ordinary members of the public" perhaps this too confirms to them that we are interested in their welfare.
- Some detainees react against authority / Police and appear to be relaxed when in the introduction we use the word - hi, volunteers, members of the public, short chat.
- The introduction and conversation flows more easily. Before, however well the DO introduced ICVs there was always an initial 'warm up' phase of the interview.
- Once we got to see detainees face to face, they seemed more willing to speak to us
- Probably curious to see who the visitors were
- More positive towards custody visitors give them a better understanding of the role, and were there to check on their welfare.
- Because it is less informal, instantly making them at ease.
- Although I have indicated a 'more positive' response, I'm inclined to suggest that they neither respond more positively nor less positively. I know that the statistics reveal that the number of refusals has decreased quite rapidly, I'm not so sure that this signifies a 'positive' response to self introduction or that the reduction in the number of refusals is as a result of the detainee feeling that he/she is under some pressure to comply with the request. (Please refer to my comments below in response to the negative aspects). I hope that this makes sense to you Sarah
- I think they have less time to consider and also they can see straight away who we are.
- They could see us straight away rather than being some people hidden behind the door. Plus we perhaps explain ourselves more carefully than some of the officer introductions.
- I think some people just like to see someone other than a police officer or member of policing staff.
- The detainees do not get the chance to refuse.
- Detainees were able to see and then listen to the ICV's introduction and I believe the positive body language displayed help set aside any suspicions or doubts the detainee may have previously gained from "flat voiced" custody staff.
- More informal approach; System eliminates variety of sergeants' deliveries; Makes ICVS look more independent from police system to the DPs; DPs have less time to think and refuse; I felt the introductions and questions flow better
- Has they are already talking to you they see any reason not to also as it was not a member of the Custody Staff I think they were less intimidated
- Detainees find it much more difficult to say no to us, particularly if we have already entered the cell. It might be argued that we are inadvertently over pressurising them to see us. I'm not sure there is a 'more' or 'less' positive response than before - I just feel some of them now think they have no choice but to see us simply because we are there.
- as above
- Harder to say no to someone face to face
- They can see you and as we appear casual and not official I think this helps.
- We were able to enter cells before accompanying officer had said anything - I believe this further reinforces our "independent" status, and therefore makes the DP more at ease with having a conversation with us.
- It's difficult to say other than perhaps the DPs see it as almost a fait accompli. Perhaps they reason that since we are standing in front of them then they may as well agree to our enquiries.
- I wonder if it was clearer that the people wanting to talk to them were nothing to do with the police. We were able to smile and not seem like nosey parkers (!). Easier to reassure them that whatever they said was helpful to ensure that good standards in PICs were maintained.
- They seem to realise more readily that it is in their own interests to respond to our questions. Seeing the visitors face to face puts them at ease quickly.

Do you think there are any overall benefits to self introduction?

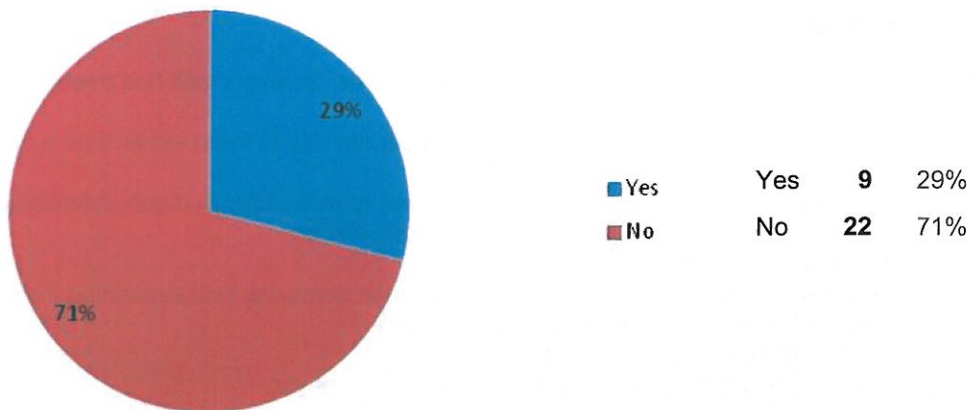


Please give further detail of your views

- In my experience to date no detainees have refused to speak to us. So every visit has been useful which must be a good thing.
- Detainees are more likely to agree to see us as we can explain our role to them rather than a police officer
- I believe I am getting to visit more detainees and we don't have to overcome as much defensiveness on the part of the detainee following introduction by the custody officer.
- The ability to actually meet more DP's
- Makes sense for us to explain the purpose of the visit rather than someone else explaining it and for us to introduce ourselves to broadly repeat what has been said
- More DP's willing to discuss welfare issues with ICV's.
- An opportunity to show yourself before a decision is made not to see you
- Perhaps a detainee had a dislike of the Police and sees us for what we are - independent - and someone they can offload onto. It can also give them a break in the tedium of incarceration.
- I believe more Visits have been agreed to. Whilst most previous introductions made by Custody staff were very good, occasionally some Custody staff did not fully explain the Visitors' role to the detainee, or their choice of words was slightly negative, hence some detainees refused a Visit.
- We see more detainees. The detainees are sometimes more relaxed and talk more rather than just answering our questions.
- I was not in favour of self introduction at first as I thought it limited the DP's opportunity to decline but I think the benefits far out way that reservation.
- More interviews are done
- Good start to a discussion with detainee
- We see more detainees with self Introduction. The role of Custody Visitor comes over more positive.
- It makes the detainees more confident and comfortable to talk.
- Although it may sound cynical, I think that the benefits relate more to the possible perceived importance (or kudos) of having statistical data which reveal a decreasing number of refusals.
- I think it speeds the whole process up which wastes less police time.
- See above. Plus we perhaps adjust the way we introduce ourselves according to the detainee rather more than some officers would. We are aware of the other pressures on the officers.
- More detainees are likely to agree
- I feel I am reading a test; also it is easy to forget to ask their permission to see their records. No
- It reduces the workload of the staff with ICV making a greater contribution to the process; It reduces the stress on detainees who have to try and understand why staff are asking about people they can not see and therefore will be unsure of. It shortens the time taken to take comments from detainees. It provides ICV's with reassurance that a consistent message is being given to detainees; Provides a

- feeling of greater involvement in the process and increased task satisfaction; More reassuring for detainees and greater number of visits agreed to
- See previous response
 - Get to speak to more detainees so gives a better feed back
 - I could feel quite sorry for the detainees - we are rather thrust upon them now and I think some of them say they will speak with us because they feel they have little choice.
 - Detainees are more comfortable talking to us.
 - Greater percentage of "yes" responses
 - You get to see more people.
 - Enhances our independence; Creates an "atmosphere" conducive to a "chat" rather than something controlled by police; On the whole, I believe we have been able to speak to more DP's that previously - this is my own opinion, and not a conducted survey!
 - See comments in previous box.
 - the results so far seem to show that a greater number of dps are speaking to ICVs
 - See above

Do you think there are any negative aspects to self introduction?

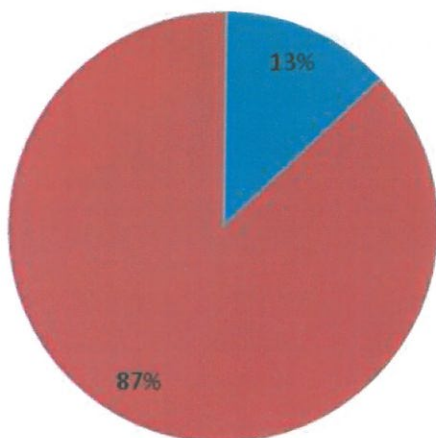


Please give further detail of your views

- Self introduction is much better.
- None at all.
- I think we must be even more aware of our safety in the cell. It now feels that the water is a little less tested before we jump in.
- It has become a more positive way of meeting DP's
- NA
- Unaware of any negative aspects to date
- N/A
- The Sergeant always advises us against seeing some detainees if they are violent or have other health and safety issues. I have never felt threatened and am happy to continue with self introduction.
- On entering the cell, self introduction feels more natural and conversational.
- The time a visit takes is reduced. I believe the custody sergeants welcome the change.
- NA
- NA
- none
- Foreign detainees are more difficult, could possible see less foreign nationals.
- n/a

- The CV enters the cell almost immediately following the announcement, by the accompanying officer, that there are 2 visitors. The CV then states their title, announces why they are there and then asks whether the detainee would be willing to answer a few questions. To my mind, I think that this may well make it more difficult for the detainee to say 'no'. I am aware, of course, that some detainees do refuse a visit! However, because the escorting officer is in the cell for a much shorter period (than would be normally) it is possible that he/ she may not 'pick up' any immediate signs of potential disruptive behaviour which may only present itself in the presence of the CV's. This could be problematic.
- I don't feel there are any negative aspects.
- I suppose if you knew the person you might feel more compromised.
- Some detainees may feel pressurised
- I feel that once you are in the cell, it is very difficult for the detainee to refuse to see you...whether being introduced by a custody officer they feel free to say no.
- Can be stressful to less confident / shy ICV's Needs reinforcement of good practice in self introductions for ICV's training
- More difficult for the DP in a way to refuse Decisions to be made by sergeants regarding safety of ICVs
- Very good idea
- I don't think detainees feel they can say no to our request to see them. I also think there remain issues of how we are able to engage with detainees who do not speak English and for whom we have no flash cards. Ironically these are probably the detainees we should be engaging with.
- no
- Can be difficult with DPs who do not speak English
- No views
- I believe that the Officers are, on the whole, not in favour of this arrangement, but am not sure why this is other than random comments from one officer. This may harm our good working relationship - built up over many years - to falter slightly.
- See comments in previous box.
- It could be suggested that dps could feel pressurised to say yes or that they would find it difficult to refuse when faced with 2 ICVs in their cell. However they do have the chance to say no they do not want to talk to members of the public who will explain what they want to know.
- I have only witnessed positive reactions.

Did you encounter any risks or significant problems whilst self introducing?

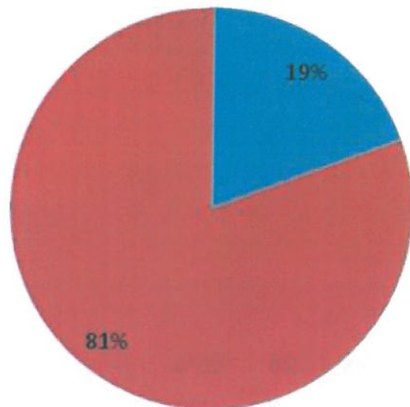


■ Yes	Yes	4	13%
■ No	No	27	87%

Please give examples

- No more risks or problems than before
- When we introduced ourselves to one detainee he stated that he did not wish to see us and that was fine. We withdrew from cell and no problems were encountered
- No
- specific risks encountered but see previous answer
- There should be no risks in SI as ICV's should be make aware prior to the visit.
- NA
- None encountered.
- N/A
- N/A
- On one occasion on entering the cell the detainee was standing. In hindsight, I feel we should have been informed of this before we entered the cell.
- N/A
- NA
- NA
- none
- No It was all positive feedback from detainees and staff.
- n/a
- Personally, I did not encounter any problems. I think that the potential for sudden, or a build up of, disruptive (or more violent) behaviour is the same. I know that some of my colleagues have experienced problems. Whether these problems would have occurred had it not been self introduction is, of course, difficult to say.
- No problems encountered.
- Not applicable
- When the person does not speak English. Language cards need to be updated (the issue however was worked around at the time)
- No problems as such....
- The expectation is that staff will make ICV's aware of difficult detainees who should be avoided and not visited reduces the risks. Equally it is essential that staff remain within visual contact to reduce any detainee / ICV risks.
- NA
- Need card for self introduction to non speaking detainees
- N/A
- NA
- How can there be an example if the answer is "no"?
- No
- None
- See comments in previous box concerning the obstreperous detainees.
- I did not encounter any risks etc

Did self introduction affect your working relationship with staff?



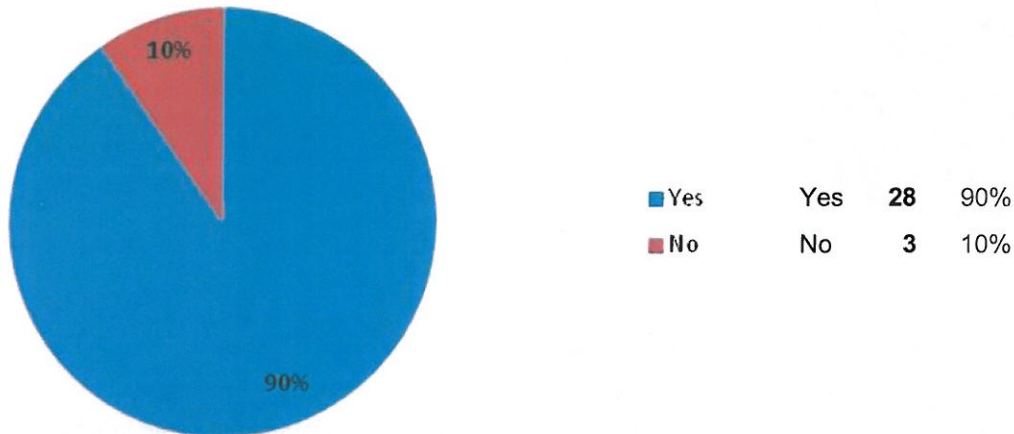
■ Yes	Yes	6
■ No	No	25

Please give further detail of your views

- Always a good professional relationship with staff.
- Staff happy with process. Obviously if a detainee was violent then we would not contemplate self introduction or a visit, just observe
- n/a
- It would appear to be less time consuming for the Custody Sgt the person conducting visit with ICV's
- NA
- Staff always helpful and informative.
- N/A
- N/A
- Good working relationship maintained
- Some new officers when they first gave introductions had to read the prepared text. They all must welcome the reduction in the use of their time but in the past, the time a visit takes, had never been an issue.
- NA
- NA
- No problems
- If anything It as Improved the relationship with custody staff.
- n/a
- None whatsoever.
- Staff seem to have been very willing to let us self-introduce.
- I think the officers should decide where they stand during an interview. Some wait outside others are in the cell. I think the former is preferable unless the detainee is dangerous in any way.
- No change, if we felt a detainee may be troublesome, we would ask the officer to introduce us like the old system
- No other views.
- Found it develops a closer bond between staff and ICV; Mutual respect that each is contributing equally to safeguarding of detainee entitlements
- Too soon to tell - Sometimes as sergeant introduced us, DP asked questions which the sergeant could answer/sort the problems out before DP asked us and we repeated those queries
- More positive
- N/A
- NA
- It's impossible to guess what the custody staff say about it when we are not there but when we are there they are cordial and helpful just as before.
- None
- Please see my comment above. On the whole I believe it did not affect our relationship though.
- Staff seemed to be fully informed of the pilot and there were no negative comments made to me.

- I actually think it improved as it meant that ICVs understood the difficulties of encouraging dps to speak to them
- A small minority of staff are clearly against self-introduction

Do you think self introduction should be continued?



Please summarise your experience of using self introduction

- The visits are always going to be useful as you are sure you are going to at least see any detainees you wish to, even if they refuse to speak to you.
- I have found the whole experience of self introduction to be a positive experience. We are seeing more detainees (which is only right). and I am happy for this to continue
- Overall better access to detainees but potential for riskier encounters.
- It has become second nature and seemingly a more relaxed way of meeting DP's rather than the long introduction by the Custody Sergeant
- It makes sense for us to introduce ourselves rather than someone else doing it and us then repeating what has been said. There is a good standard of introduction when we do it as sometimes it used to be a bit variable when custody staff introduced us, so taking of visits is seemingly increased.
- Satisfying and effective.
- Very positive once officers remembered and didn't need to be reminded.
- It has been easy, relaxed and natural.
- I feel our conversation is more friendly and sincere. Under the previous method, our initial conversation with the detainee was almost a duplicate of that said by the Custody staff.
- I wish it had been introduced some years ago when we could have been part of the pilot study.
- Nervous at first but now the introduction forms part of the interview in a seamless way which was missing before
- Our hit rate both personally and as a panel has improved. Working on the theory that the more interviews we do the better the system will work personal introduction must be the way forward. The system (process) had not really changed for us because even after the introduction by custody staff, we all then did a personal introduction to individual detainees.
- No issues with SI.
- Have a better understanding of the detainees they seem to talk more about how they feel and being treated. You still feel safe as the Inspector/ Custody staff are still nearby. If there is any risk Officers would advise against.
- Overall very good.
- I have now encountered both approaches. Whilst I have not experienced any difficulties as such, I would prefer not to use self introduction. This is because it removes the situation where the detainee may feel compelled to continue with the visit since it may be perceived as having already begun as a result of the opening discourse by the CV's.