

**ORIGINATOR: INDEPENDENT CUSTODY
VISITING SCHEME MANAGER**

DECISION NUMBER: 21 – 2024

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

**SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME – ANNUAL REPORT
2023/24**

SUMMARY:

1. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is required to operate an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme to ensure independent checks are made on the welfare of detainees in police custody and produce an Annual Report on the work of the scheme in line with the Home Office Code of Practice Guidelines.
2. The Annual Report attached to this decision paper summarises the work undertaken by the OPCC for Suffolk to support the operation of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Suffolk between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 and will be published following consideration and approval by the PCC.


RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the PCC:

1. considers the activity and findings of Independent Custody Visitors during 2023/24 as detailed in the report;
2. approves the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Annual Report attached for publication.

APPROVAL BY: PCC

The recommendations set out above are agreed.

Signature: 

Date: 18 July 2024

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is required to operate an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme to ensure independent checks are made on the welfare of detainees in police custody and produce an Annual Report on the work of the scheme in line with the Home Office Code of Practice Guidelines. The Annual Report attached to this decision paper summarises the work undertaken by the OPCC for Suffolk to support the operation of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Suffolk between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 and will be published following consideration and approval by the PCC.
- 1.2 Throughout the year the OPCC Scheme Manager has worked closely with custody colleagues locally, regionally across OPCCs and nationally with the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) to keep abreast of developments to support Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) in the safe delivery of their role.
- 1.3 The Annual Report outlines the organisation of the Scheme in Suffolk, details of visits, detained person statistics, findings of ICVs, developments during 2023/24 and plans looking forward.

2. BUDGET POSITION AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The budget spend for 2023/24 was £2,492. This represents an underspend of £1,908 against the budget of £4,400.
- 2.2 Costs are broken down as follows:
- | | |
|---|--------|
| Mileage claims | £1,015 |
| Annual subscription to ICVA | £1,000 |
| Printing, postal costs and other incidentals | £104 |
| Catering and refreshments at meetings and training | £248 |
| Conference and Training Speaker Hotel and Subsistence | £125 |
- 2.3 The budget will remain at £4,400 for 2024/25.
- 2.4 The financial implications in respect of the production and design of the ICV Annual Report is expected to be minimal given that the design has been undertaken in-house and the document will be made available electronically.

3. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 3.1 There are no risks on the PCC's Risk Register that are engaged, and no further risks need to be added as a consequence of this report.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	NO
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	NO
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?	YES
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	YES

In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

Acting 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 PCC.



Signature:

Date: 18 July 2024



Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Annual Report 2023-24

Police Investigation
Centre



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Background

In 1981 several outbreaks of unrest occurred in major cities throughout the country. The most significant of these disorders took place in Brixton when hundreds of young people attacked property and the police. After days of unrest, these serious incidents led to the government ordering an urgent inquiry and appointing Lord Scarman to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the events.

As part of the recommendations arising from the investigation and following report, Lord Scarman advocated a system for members of the public from local communities to inspect the way the police detained people in their custody. Originally referred to as lay visiting, independent custody visiting is the system that has been developed to meet this recommendation.

The Police and Crime Act 2002 made custody visiting statutory with the Home Office introducing the [Codes of Practice for Independent Custody Visiting](#). The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced Police and Crime Commissioners and gave them the responsibility for operating and overseeing the scheme in their police area.

Introduction by Tim Passmore Police & Crime Commissioner for Suffolk

This report provides an overview of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Suffolk and details what the custody visitors have delivered between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) provide an important public service visiting the two Suffolk based Police Investigation Centres (PICs) to check on the welfare of detained persons and the conditions in which they are held. All ICVs are volunteers. They help me to fulfil my responsibility to ensure policing in Suffolk is carried out fairly, in accordance with relevant legislation and Home Office guidance, and with respect for the human rights of all those coming into contact with the police in the PICs.

I am very grateful to the ICVs in Suffolk for their dedication and commitment in undertaking this important role. I would also thank the Constabulary for their co-operation and facilitating the successful operation of the Scheme.



ICVs continue to give me reassurance that, in Suffolk, the treatment of detained persons is fair and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (referred to as PACE) and the Safer Detention Guidelines.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Passmore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner

Comment from Rachel Kearton Suffolk's Chief Constable

ICVs provide the Suffolk Constabulary with a voice that helps us understand this critical area of our business ensuring we are continually learning and improving the service we provide.

Visitors to our PICs help us to identify areas for development at an early stage, assisting us in continually evaluating and refining the way we interact with those brought into custody in order to maintain our high standards.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel Kearton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Kearton, Chief Constable



Comment from Chief Inspector Rob Wicks Head of Custody for Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies

Within my role of Head of Custody for Norfolk and Suffolk, I remain extremely impressed by the way that detained persons across the six PICs have been cared for and managed. In the last 12 months, I have overseen several improvements in the provision of detainee care and management. Reflecting upon information obtained at last year's ICV conference, we have introduced provision for menopausal women. Our 'in cell technology' has been installed and I am currently working with Sheffield University to generate some videos which will support detainees in custody. Norfolk and Suffolk remain at the forefront of innovation and are seen as an exemplar collaboration for managing detained persons with dignity, decency and respect. My command will be subject of an inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) this year and whilst I am sure developmental areas will be highlighted, I truly believe that the work of the Police and partners will lead to a positive inspection.



Throughout my time as the Head of Custody I have had a very healthy relationship with the PCC's office, especially evidenced by the close working relationship I have with the excellent cohort of ICVs. The ICVs provide me with direct feedback relating to detainee management and care which is used to ensure that custody continues to develop and improve. I am constantly impressed with the considered, pragmatic and friendly way in which the ICVs provide appropriate feedback to me and my wider command. This year has seen growth within this project with all overnight remands of children being subject to scrutiny. I am truly grateful for the time given to ensure that my team are able to provide the best possible custody provision to all users.

My quarterly meetings with the ICV Scheme Managers enable me to share information relating to custody development and gain a real insight into the lived experiences of detained persons. Information of this nature is so invaluable when looking to continually learn and develop custody, which remains an essential area of business for policing.



The ICVs are a critical part in the independent scrutiny panel which is used to review the use of rip proof clothing, strip search and a variety of other custody functions. The independent scrutiny panel remains one of very few such groups nationally and has been identified as best practice. The fantastic work in Suffolk and Norfolk has meant that all constabularies nationwide have been advised to follow our example. As a command we are currently advising a number of other Custody managers as to how to set up a scrutiny panel.

I am very much looking forward to attending this year's ICV training day where I will get the opportunity to meet even more members of the team. Suffolk is lucky to have such a committed team of ICVs, and it has been a pleasure to work with them.

Organisation of the ICV Scheme in Suffolk

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme in Suffolk comprises two designated Panels to ensure that visits are undertaken at the Constabulary's operational custody Police Investigation Centres (PICs) at Bury St Edmunds and Martlesham. There are 30 cells at the Martlesham PIC and 24 at Bury St Edmunds. There are six PICs located across Norfolk and Suffolk and they operate under a joint custody function.

ICVs are volunteers who work in pairs and make unannounced visits on a weekly basis to the two PICs located in Suffolk.

As at 31 March 2024, there were 19 ICVs participating in the Scheme across the county, 11 on the Bury St Edmunds Panel and 8 on the Martlesham Panel.

Panel	Number of ICVs in post	Optimum Number of ICVs
Bury St Edmunds	11	8-10
Martlesham	8	8-10

The following table provides a summary of the custody visitors by gender, age and ethnicity:

Suffolk ICVs		Bury St Edmunds	Martlesham	Total
Gender	Male	4	6	10
	Female	7	2	9
Age	18-29	0	0	0
	30-39	0	0	0
	40-49	0	0	0
	50-59	2	1	3
	60-69	3	2	5
	70+	6	3	9
Ethnicity	White British			17
	White Irish			1
	Asian - Indian			1

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 five new volunteers were recruited (three for the Bury St Edmunds Panel and two for the Martlesham Panel). In that period there was one resignation from the Bury St Edmunds Panel for personal reasons.

Details of Visits

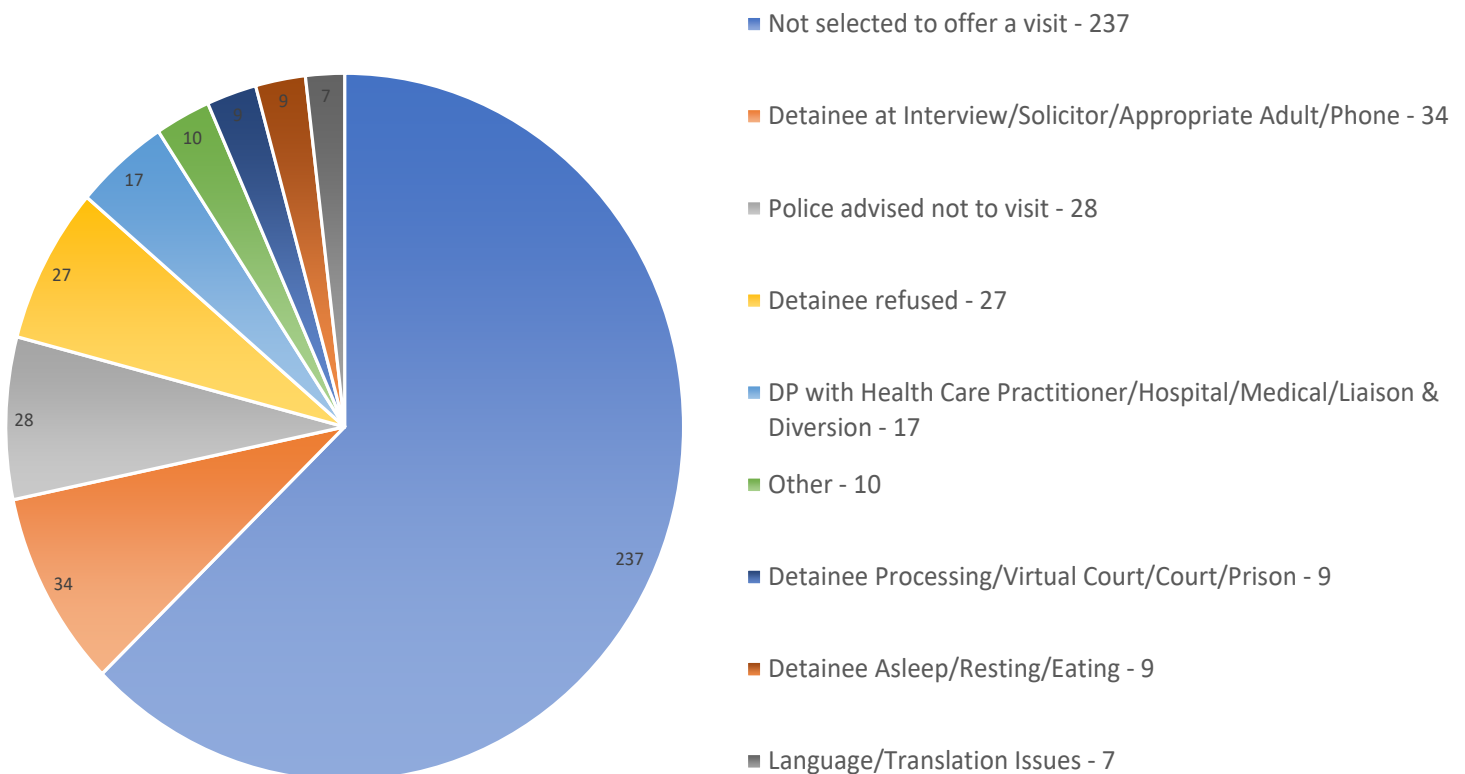
Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, a total of 100 visits were made by ICVs to the PICs. 636 persons were detained in custody at the time visits were conducted and 258 of the detainees were visited. The overall throughput for the PICs located in Suffolk for the year was 9,691 (an decrease when compared to 9,802 the previous year). Whilst detainees may be offered a visit, there is no obligation for them to speak with ICVs.

More detail in respect of visits to the Bury St Edmunds and Martlesham PICs is provided below:

Panel	No. of visits	No. of detainees held	No. of detainees available to visit	No. of detainees visited	Percentage of detainees seen of those available	No. of detainees not visited*
Bury St Edmunds	50	298	150	122	81%	176
Martlesham	50	338	161	136	84%	202
Total	100	636	311	258	83%	378

**Note: There are a number of reasons why detained persons are not visited. For example, the detainee might refuse the visit or the police may advise against it for health and safety reasons. The category 'not visited' is broken down in the chart below to show the reasons detained persons were not visited during the period. 66% of the detainees not seen were 'not selected by ICVs' themselves as they will have focused their time in custody on more in-depth interviews with fewer detainees and scrutiny of their custody records, rather than brief interviews with all detainees held at the time of the visit.*

The chart below provides a breakdown of the reasons detainees were not visited – Total 378 not seen:



Breakdown of visit by days and times:

Day of the Week		Time	
Monday	20		
Tuesday	16	0700 - 1000	12
Wednesday	21	1000 - 1300	22
Thursday	15	1300 - 1600	18
Friday	16	1600 - 1900	31
Saturday	7	1900 - 2200	17
Sunday	8	2200 - 0700	3

ICVs are encouraged to vary the times and days of their visits as much as possible.

Detained Persons Statistics-1 April 2023-31 March 2024

Overall Number of Detainees

Bury St Edmunds PIC	4442
Martlesham PIC	5249
Total	9691

Detainee Numbers

Ethnicity of Detainees

White - North European	7723
Black	799
White - South European	544
Asian	182
Middle Eastern	76
Chinese, Japanese or South East Asian	24
Unknown	343

Detainee Numbers

Ethnicity of Detainees (captured at the time of visits)

	Detainee Numbers	Number visited by ICVs
White - North European	491	214
Black	59	18
White - South European	44	17
Asian	14	6
Middle Eastern	3	3
Chinese, Japanese or South East Asian	0	0
Unknown	25	0

Gender of Detainees

	Detainee Numbers	Number visited by ICVs
Male	7895	198
Female	1783	60
Unspecified/blank	13	

Age Range of Detainees

	Detainee Numbers
10-17	780
18-29	2877
20-39	2884
40-49	1823
50-59	922
60-69	274
70-79	106
80-89	23
90-92	2

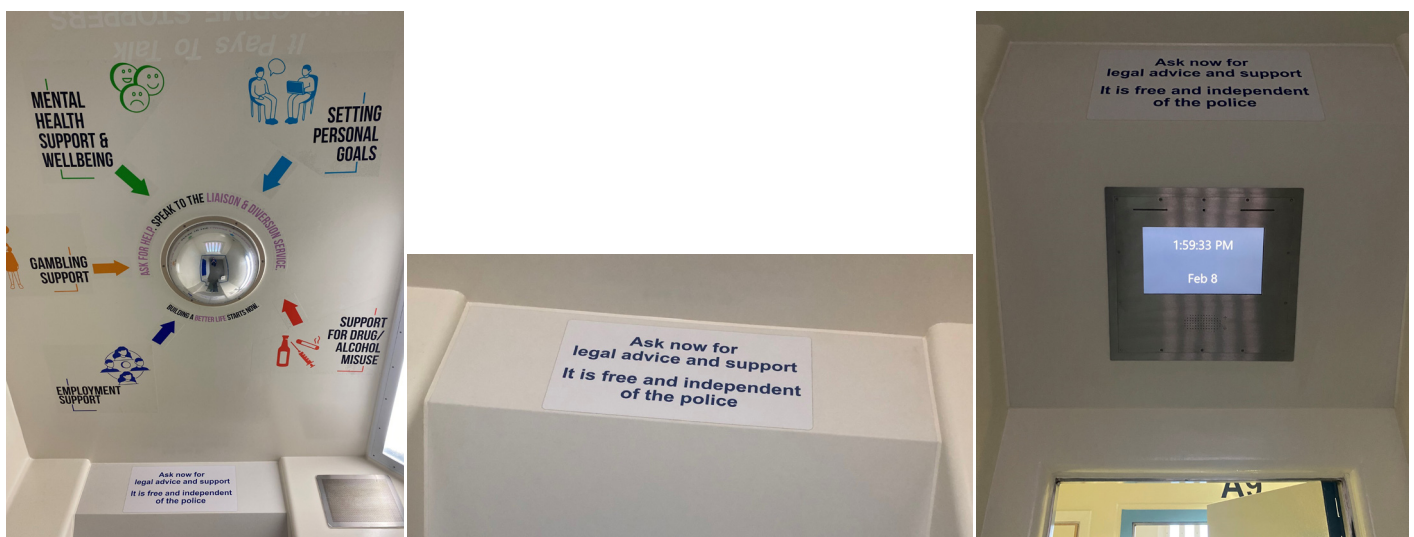
Findings of Independent Custody Visitors

For each of the visits carried out throughout the year a report was provided to the OPCC detailing what the ICVs had observed, or discussed with detainees and custody staff, at the time of the visit. ICVs also report back on what they have learned from the custody records where this is appropriate. These reports provide a useful insight into the position in custody and detainee care and enable the Scheme Manager to follow-up any queries or request more information from the relevant PIC Inspector or the Head of Custody. ICVs have been well assisted and supported by custody staff in checking on the rights and entitlements of detainees.

Regular ICVs panel meetings were held throughout the year. These panel meetings enable ICVs to meet to share experiences with other panel members, meet with the PIC Inspectors to discuss their reports. The meetings enable the Constabulary to advise of action taken in respect of any queries they raised, as well as provide key updates on the local custody position and developments.

ICVs focus on the rights and entitlements of detainees, particularly checking how well detainees are made aware of these and whether they are proactively offered by the police. Overall findings are positive, but it is recognised that detainees may not always understand, take on board, or remember, what they can ask for and therefore reminders are helpful. It is also recognised that staffing levels also impact on what entitlements, such as showers or exercise, can be offered and the timing of this. In 2022/23 leaflets were introduced, posters displayed and signage added above the doors in the cells which had a positive impact in encouraging detainees to access legal advice.

In September 2023 additional signage was also added to the ceiling of some of the cells to help detainees understand the services available from Liaison and Diversion, this has also had a positive impact on take-up of the service. In the past year several points were picked up from ICVs on visits whereby detainees shared information they had not told the custody staff, such as the need for assistance with reading because of dyslexia or concerns about childcare arrangements. These were passed on to custody staff at the time of the visit for appropriate action and highlighted to custody management. The points raised are being considered alongside plans for additional signage in cells to remind detainees of their rights, entitlements and encourage them to let staff know if they have any concerns. The introduction of in-cell technology screens will also be used to re-enforce these messages. ICVs have also recently been consulted on a 'Detainee Custody Information Sheet' and provided their feedback. A stock of basic reading glasses has also been made available for detainees who need them, and coloured overlays continue to be offered as appropriate for any detainees that require them for reading.



Detainee dignity is a key focus for ICVs in ensuring that the detainees are receiving appropriate care. In the past year ICVs have continued to ask questions relating to stocks of underwear, socks, size of clothing and supply of feminine hygiene items. Following an input at the ICV training in July 2023 regarding Menopause Awareness ICVs have been monitoring and reporting on what is available for detainees in relation to this. In December 2023 a menopause care pathway was introduced and training shared with relevant staff, as well as included in ongoing development training. This means that detainees, particularly females (but considerations also made for males), entering custody who are over 40 years old are advised that they meet the criteria for a health screening with a healthcare professional, which includes questions around perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause. Detainees are encouraged to accept this opportunity. Female detainees would also be assigned a female officer or member of staff to ascertain if they require any sanitary or menopause products from a female comfort box/relief kit available at all PICs. Items available/offered, in addition to the existing range of sanitary products, now include; fans, body cream, lip balm, body wash and perspiration absorbers. Any additional needs would be considered on an individual basis. Consideration would also be given as to whether an Appropriate Adult might be beneficial and a detainee care and dignity leaflet provided.

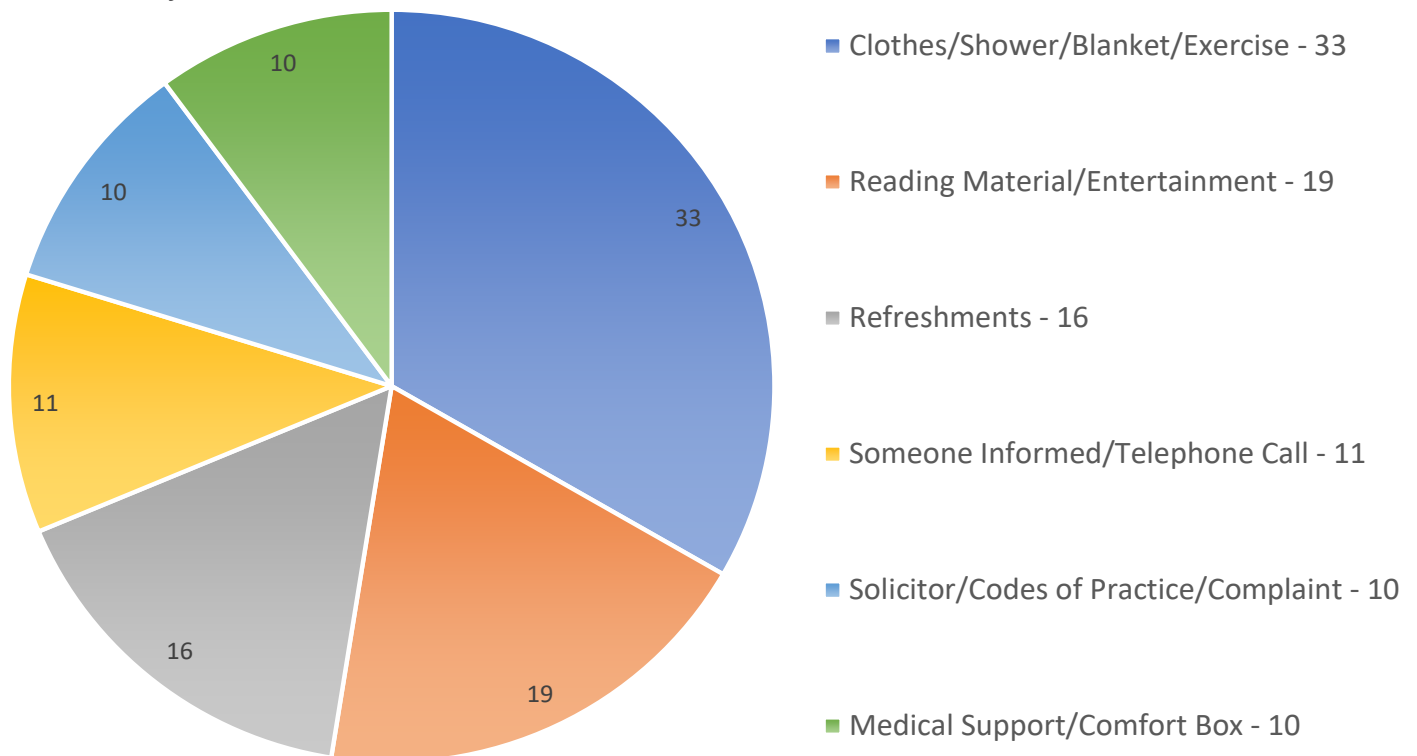


ICVs continue to seek further information on the provisions in place for deaf, deafblind, and visually impaired detainees and around access to relevant faith leaders. Discussions are ongoing with the custody team in respect of both topics. In early 2024 Language Line tablets were introduced at the PICs. There have been several issues with the connectivity and internet service which are being addressed. Additional soundproofing to some of the interview rooms is also being explored to enable private remote consultations to take place. In the longer term it is hoped that the ICVs will also be able to utilise the Language Line tablets to engage with detainees but further work would be needed to offer appropriate training and establish guidance for ICVs.

The lack of availability and provision of hospital beds for those held under the Mental Health Act and delays in moving people on from Custody to the correct care remains a concern. The PCC met with the Head of Custody in July 2023 to discuss key custody updates and continues to discuss both Custody Healthcare and the Mental Health arrangements with the Constabulary at Chief Officer level as well as with appropriate partners. There was a change to the healthcare and medical services provider within the PICs in early 2024 so ICVs have been providing feedback on those services and detainee experiences as part of their visiting. The Scheme Manager has also been kept up to date on progress and performance with the service. ICVs will continue to review and report their observations on these key issues.

Throughout the year ICVs have regularly commented on the professionalism of staff in dealing with detainees and ICVs. There have also been several very positive comments, particularly about the care of vulnerable detainees, young people, and detainees in custody for the first time. The OPCC is satisfied that any issues raised by ICVs from their visits were considered and addressed.

As a result of their conversations with detainees matters relating to the following areas were raised with custody staff to address.



Part of the role of ICVs is also to check on the conditions of the facilities in which detainees are held. Given the custody facilities in Norfolk and Suffolk were built in 2011 there have been few issues reported by ICVs regarding the facilities. Where issues have been identified either by ICVs or custody staff, such as matters relating to cleaning or issues with the doors in the exercise yards for example, these have been raised with the contractors and action taken to address them, as necessary across all six PICs. The Head of Custody highlighted the fact that the fire doors at the end of the cell blocks were not routinely being closed off and urged ICVs to help check and report on this to ensure greater compliance which has been effective. ICVs are regularly updated on any changes or developments in terms of the custody estate and technology.

There are technological systems in place to enable remote monitoring of detainees and 'in cell' video facilities have been introduced at all six PICs during the 2023/24 period. Plans for how those systems will be used, and what information will be made available for detainees, are being considered. Careful consideration will need to be given as to individual needs in terms of the video messaging. Comments were made to ICVs initially about the time on display in the cell and it is recognised that whilst for some that information is positive, it could have a negative impact for others. ICVs have been assured that this element of what is displayed can be carefully managed by custody staff. Improvements to the custody handover process are also imminent and efforts to obtain detainee satisfaction feedback continue.

In June 2023 some key changes were made in relation to the detention of children and young persons in custody to ensure that children were booked into custody in a discrete booking in area and where possible held in cells designated for children, away from adult detainees. From late 2023 some specific cells at each PIC were identified to be used for children and young people and in early 2024 those cell doors were painted green. Work is also ongoing to identify some appropriate decoration for the inside of those cells, ensuring that they will remain suitable for any detainee as needed. Consideration is also being given to some additional painting that could be done in the cells or exercise yards, such as ball targets and hopscotch, which would provide additional options for distraction and entertainment of detainees. Most recently a curtain has also been added to the internal entrance to the discrete booking in area to ensure additional privacy for any persons utilising that space.



The virtual court system is no longer utilised, so detainees are taken to court in person. ICVs continue to receive updates on the position with court transfers, noting where issues have arisen regarding the transfer of detainees both in terms of timings for collections, court cell capacity and detainee demographics in terms of transfer.

Developments During 2023/24

Some of the key developments in custody in 2023/24 were:

Custody Updates

The Scheme Managers for Norfolk and Suffolk have worked closely throughout the year given the joint custody function and have met with the Head of Custody, Custody Development Officer, and Lead Custody Trainer on a quarterly basis. These meetings are essential for sharing key issues arising from visits, two-way feedback, custody developments, performance and learning from safer detention, adverse incident reporting or complaints. Alongside this ICV visiting statistics and findings are also shared with the Chief Inspector on a regular basis so that significant or strategic issues can be addressed.

Custody Inspections

In June 2022 the fourth version of Joint Justice Inspectorate's Expectations for Police Custody report was published. It set out the inspection criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for detainees in police custody. The Head of Custody and Custody Development Officer continue to review the local position against the inspection criteria and outcomes from other forces to check compliance, drive improvements and internal scrutiny arrangements. This information is periodically shared with the Scheme Managers. ICVA also continue to share Custody Inspection outcomes nationally. It is anticipated that an inspection of Norfolk and Suffolk custody will take place in the next year.

Operation Safeguard

Operation Safeguard is a national operation involving police cells being used to temporarily house people remanded by the courts, short term (overnight or over a weekend) due to prisons reaching or exceeding capacity. The operation for the Eastern Region was initially activated in March 2023. Arrangements were made for cells and staffing at the Wymondham PIC in Norfolk. Norfolk and Suffolk ICVs were briefed directly on the Constabularies' plans. No persons were held in Norfolk and it was deactivated from 12 May 2023. On 28 July 2023 Operation Safeguard was reactivated and the

necessary arrangements were made at the Wymondham PIC to hold such detainees with the service utilised in early October 2023. There was a further pause in the operation for several months until nationally this went live again in May 2024, albeit the Eastern Region counties were not activated and remained on standby. The position will continue to be monitored and ICVs updated accordingly.

Training Inputs

In March 2023 ICVs were involved in developing an ICV Scheme video for the purposes of custody training.

In July 2023 ICVs from Suffolk and Norfolk were invited to an in-person training and information session, held in Suffolk. They were also joined by several Appropriate Adult Volunteers from Anglia Care Trust. The session included; a welcome and introduction from Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, Personal Safety Training and Use of Force in Custody, Menopause Care in Custody from Claire Taylor, Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Manager, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex, an update on custody in Norfolk and Suffolk and a presentation on the Liaison and Diversion Service, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

In October 2023 ICVs from Suffolk and Norfolk were invited to a virtual training and information session supported by the Head of Custody, Chief Inspector Rob Wicks. The session included: an introduction and update on custody, Children in Custody, Remand, Operation Harbinger and Police Complaints & Investigations - Behaviour, Conduct & Culture, Custody Specifics and Learning the Lessons.

In March 2024 ICVs from Suffolk and Norfolk were invited to a virtual training and information session supported by the Head of Custody, Chief Inspector Rob Wicks. The session included: an update on custody in Norfolk and Suffolk, Language Line and Custody Developments, Managing Offenders - Bail Management, Out of Court Disposals & Restorative Justice and a presentation from the Julian Support service on Support and Signposting Post Custody.

In June 2024 ICVs from Suffolk and Norfolk attended an in-person training and information session, held in Norfolk. This included sessions on Policing as a Trans Police Officer and issues for Trans Detainees in custody, Operation Nova, Military Veterans in Custody and an update on Police Custody in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA)

Throughout 2023/24 the OPCC has utilised the ICVA updates and training to keep volunteers engaged and updated. ICVA continues to work proactively with schemes nationally to drive improvements and offer suggestions for key areas of focus, as well as listening to what schemes need from them to support their continued scrutiny work.

In July 2023 Dame Anne Owers became the Chair of the ICVA and in September 2023 she accompanied two Suffolk ICVs on a visit to the Martlesham PIC. In November 2023 the PCC and Head of Custody met with Dame Owers to introduce themselves, discuss the local visit, custody in Norfolk and Suffolk and Independent Scrutiny arrangements.

An ICVA online Scheme Managers conference took place on 15 November 2023. The event was opened with an update from ICVA. There were three informative sessions on the topics of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and policing, Immigration Detention monitoring and an interactive session on scrutiny panels and the ICVA Business Plan consultation.

ICVA Quality Assurance Framework

In 2019 ICVA introduced the ICVA Quality Assurance Framework to help schemes to reflect on how they comply with the Code of Practice, celebrate areas of strength, promote custody visiting and the achievements schemes have made and drive performance and increase sharing of good practice.

Suffolk achieved the 'Code Compliant' award in 2019 which demonstrated that the scheme met the statutory requirements and necessary volunteer standards. 'QAF2' was launched in April 2022 and the Suffolk Scheme was once again awarded with 'Code Compliant' status in November 2023.

Independent Scrutiny Panel for Custody

Since 2018 ICVs from Norfolk and Suffolk have been involved in the independent scrutiny of Strip Search to review the written justifications for use of the powers, alongside any disproportionality issues. Significant improvements in the quality of the information have been achieved over the period. The role of the panel was expanded in 2020 to include the review of the issue of rip-proof clothing and use of force in custody. Subsequently there was a change to the recording of use of force data, so this element of scrutiny panel work was suspended temporarily.

In April 2023 the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) issued a joint guide they had developed, with input from Ministry of Justice, Independent Custody Visiting Association and Home Office for the Introduction of Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels (CDSPs). In October 2023 that guidance was considered by the ICV Scheme Managers with the Head of Custody and Police Custody Inspector Scrutiny Lead to review the existing Scrutiny Panel arrangements and consider any changes needed to the current model. Discussions regarding Panel ownership, chairing arrangements, and the remit of the Panel, such as introducing, Custody Record Reviews, are ongoing. Since that time several observers from other forces/OPCCs have been interested in the Norfolk and Suffolk model and attended meetings to find out more about it. In March 2024 Panel members received some additional training to enable them to consider overnight detention of children under 18 and in April 2024 considered the first set of such data. Quarterly scrutiny meetings will continue throughout 2024, with the next meeting to be held on 16 July 2024.

Appropriate Adults and Safeguarding Children in Police Custody

The OPCC continues to work with the Constabulary and Suffolk Youth Justice Service in terms of the oversight of the Appropriate Adult (AA) provision as per the Appropriate Adult PCC-Local Authority Partnership Agreement (2018). The Scheme Manager receives Appropriate Adult Service performance data and all papers from the Appropriate Adult Contract Review meetings. Following a change to personnel at the AA service, the Scheme Manager attended review meeting in October 2023 to explain the OPCC role and involvement. Following this meeting the Scheme Manager was also invited to attend the November meeting of the Safeguarding Children in Police Custody group, led by the Head of Suffolk Youth Justice, which includes a wider range of partners. This was a good opportunity to understand the extent to which individual remands of children are reviewed by the relevant partners, including the police and how this is managed. Given the development of the Independent Scrutiny Panel for Custody mentioned above, and request for the Panel to consider overnight detention of children, this provided useful insight into the wider monitoring arrangements. ICVs continue to observe and report on Appropriate Adult provisions as part of their visiting process.

Criminal Justice Alliance Report - Just Visiting

In December 2021 the Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA) issued its 'Just Visiting' report which explores the effectiveness of independent custody visitors at monitoring race and gender equality in police custody. There were 30 recommendations contained in the report aimed at the Home Office, PCCs, ICVA and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary. One of the recommendations for PCCs was to 'ensure custody visitors are routinely collecting data on detainees' race and gender on their visiting report forms'. The Independent Custody visiting Report Form was updated in April 2022 to better reflect the requirements and further updated in April 2024 to capture detainee self-defined ethnicity. There have been some initial issues with the capture of this data which we are

working through with the Constabularies. Detainee demographic data has been included in the ICV Annual Report at Appendix A, alongside some of the ICV visit data. The OPCC will continue to consider how best to utilise the data collected and keep the other recommendations under review.

The Terrorism Act and National Security Act

Anyone arrested under the Terrorism Act (TACT) may be detained for up to 14 days and there are provisions within the PIC estate for anyone arrested locally. An Eastern Region pool of ICVs for visiting TACT detainees is in place. ICVs are selected by the local area, undergo additional vetting and are trained on a regional basis. All ICVs visiting TACT detainees report nationally to the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL). These arrangements were extended in 2024 to include National Security Act 2023 detentions and it is anticipated that the Home Office Codes of Practice for Independent Custody Visiting will be updated in due course to formally reflect this.

Covid Considerations and other Communicable Diseases

In November 2023 ICVs attended a visit and were advised that there were two detainees held that that were being handled in line with the custody Covid 19 guidance. ICVs aborted the visit and subsequently all ICVs were reminded that they should check upon arrival if there were any Covid considerations prior to visiting. Following this the Scheme Manager worked with the Constabularies' Health and Safety Team and Custody to update the Risk Assessment and Guidance for ICVs in respect of Covid Considerations and extend this to other Communicable Diseases. In February 2024 the updated Risk Assessment and guidance was issued which allowed more flexibility for individual ICV decision making in their relevant pairings. The position will continue to be reviewed periodically.

Looking Forward

Recruitment

The OPCC recognises the need to recruit some additional volunteers in the 2024/25 period and to improve the diversity of the panels to better reflect the community of Suffolk. Efforts to recruit and promote the Scheme via the PCC website, local press, local volunteering and higher education organisations will continue.

Training

The Scheme Manager will continue to utilise the ICVA training materials as well as provide local training inputs and monthly newsletters. Plans for an online session in October 2024 are also in progress.

Working Together

The OPCC will continue to work with the Constabulary over the coming year in response to visit findings and developments in custody. The OPCC will also continue to monitor and support improvements in terms of mental health care (including any progress in respect of the draft Mental Health Bill 2022), local healthcare and medical provisions.

Regional Collaboration

The OPCC will continue to meet quarterly with regional colleagues, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, who joined the regional group in March 2024, to share developments, learning and best practice. Key areas of focus for the group include Custody Healthcare provisions, Regional Custody Visiting arrangements for detainees held under Terrorism and the National Security Act (2023) legislation and electronic reporting which is being progressed at different stages amongst the group. The Norfolk and Suffolk Schemes are yet to consider a

move to electronic reporting but will consider the possibilities for the future utilising the shared learning from the regional group. The next ICVA Regional Meeting will take place on 24 September 2024 and a Regional Conference, hosted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, will take place in 2025.

Conclusion

Custody Visiting continues to be essential in providing independent scrutiny of the treatment of detained persons and the conditions in which they are held. As well as the mutual level of assurance it offers, the Scheme helps to build partnerships between the police and the communities they serve, and raise public confidence generally.

The OPCC wishes to thank the custody management team for being receptive of ICV feedback and making positive changes in response to ICV concerns.

The OPCC wishes to thank the wider custody team for accommodating ICVs on their visits, being receptive to feedback and taking immediate action at any matters that need resolution during a visit.

The OPCC wishes to thank all volunteers on the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme for their dedication to the role and providing a vital service for the care of detained persons.

If you are interested in becoming an Independent Custody Visitor or would like more information please contact: **The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Manager, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, Police Headquarters, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich IP5 3QS**
Telephone: **(01473) 782774** or E-mail: **SPCC@suffolk.police.uk**

For more information on the [role of Independent Custody Visitors](#) and that of the [Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk](#) visit www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk.

If you require the information in this Annual Report in any other format, please contact us.

Additional Information

The Independent Custody Visiting Association

The [Independent Custody Visiting Association](#) is a Home Office, Policing Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) funded membership organisation set up to lead, support and represent PCC and Policing Authority led schemes.

Who are the NPM and what is OPCAT?

The [UK National Preventive Mechanism](#) (UKNPM) was established in 2009 to strengthen the protection of people in detention through independent monitoring. In co-ordination across the four nations of the UK, the NPM focuses attention on practices in detention that could amount to ill-treatment and works to ensure its own approaches are consistent with international standards for independent detention monitoring.

The [Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#) (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen the protection of people deprived of their liberty. Its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002 reflected a consensus among the international community that people deprived of their liberty are particularly vulnerable to ill-treatment and that greater efforts were needed to prevent such ill-treatment from happening. OPCAT entered into force in June 2006.



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