



**OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY**

**Report for Information:
Level 1 meeting on 25th July 2019**

Title: INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR SCHEME (ICVS)

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of the ICVS from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. The analysis provides a clear picture of the scheme running effectively with all issues highlighted having been resolved.

Currently the scheme is well placed to continue its aim of reassurance to the local community of the rights and treatment of detainees in custody together with the conditions of the facilities.

Recommendation

The report be endorsed as a true record of activities for the reported period.

Police and Crime Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. H. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Date 25.07.19

PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL

1 Introduction and background

The Independent Custody Visitors Scheme (the scheme) is a statutory scheme borne of section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002 whereby volunteers of local communities attend custody suites to check on the treatment of detained persons (DPs), the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The scheme offers protection and confidentiality to DPs and the police, and provides reassurance to the wider community.

The Thames Valley PCC is a member of the Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA), paying an annual membership fee. ICVA support scheme administrators/managers to operate an effective scheme in their respective police force area. The support ICVA provide includes an induction day training package for new volunteers to the scheme, bitesize training for panel meetings, two annual conferences, weekly updates and a member's forum to share information.

2 Volunteer numbers and recruitment

At the start of the reporting period the scheme had a total of 68 visitors visiting eight designated stations across the Thames Valley (locations below). During the reporting period eight visitors left the scheme. The OPCC held two induction days, following recruitment, in April 2018 and November 2018 and this added 10 new visitors to the scheme. This resulted in a net increase of two scheme members with volunteer visitor numbers therefore standing at 70 at the end of the reporting period. 21 of the 70 have completed 10 or more years volunteering service.

I wish to place on record a thank you for the enthusiasm and work of the current visitors and to those who left the scheme during the reporting period.

Recruitment of new volunteers continued to be challenging during the year. One of the portals for advertising is the national volunteering website 'Do-it'. Other avenues used are social media (Twitter & Facebook), local parish council newsletters and Thames Valley Alert. Of 42 enquiries received during the year, via the Do-it website, only seven proceeded in returning completed application forms. The number of enquiries was up from the 36 received last year.

The eight custody suites in the Thames Valley area are located at follows:

| Custody cells | Cell capacity |
|--|----------------------|
| Abingdon | 30 |
| Aylesbury (currently closed for refurbishment) | 24 |
| Banbury | 12 |
| High Wycombe (HW) | 12 |
| Loddon Valley (LV) | 28 |
| Maidenhead | 26 |
| Milton Keynes (MK) | 24 |
| Newbury | 13 |

We have 6 coordinators looking after these eight suites with a panel of visitors. There are two coordinators each looking after 2 suites which are Abingdon with Banbury and LV with High Wycombe. The coordinators produce a rota and the visitors agree a date and time to conduct each visit always in pairs.

3 Scheme training

Training is provided in three main ways: a quarterly bulletin, a training day and panel meetings.

Four panels held one meeting during the reporting period, Aylesbury, Banbury, Maidenhead and LV. Of the 4 others, in 2, Newbury and Wycombe the coordinators hold quarterly rota meetings where issues can be discussed. Abingdon and MK both held 2 meetings during the year. Further meetings are to be arranged for the autumn 2019 to ensure all suites have a formal meeting to raise and discuss issues.

The annual training morning was held on Saturday 10th November 2018 at Police HQ in Kidlington. It was attended by 27 visitors, (the same number as last year) and included presentations on the HMICFRS inspection in February 2018, Work of the National Preventative Mechanism, Female DP care and the work of the Healthcare Professionals in custody. Training is also available once a year via the ICVA National Conference. The conference this year was held in London on Saturday 23rd March 2019 and was attended by six visitors.

ICVA held their annual Scheme Administrator's conference on 7th November 2018. This was attended by the OPCC scheme administrator.

4 Visit frequency

The agreed number of visits to achieve is 52 per year, per custody suite. A written report, produced by the visitors at the end of each visit, records findings and actions taken and matters for further investigation. The chart below shows the actual number of visits achieved during the reporting period which totals 393 against the desired target of 403. On average 3 detainees were seen on each visit.

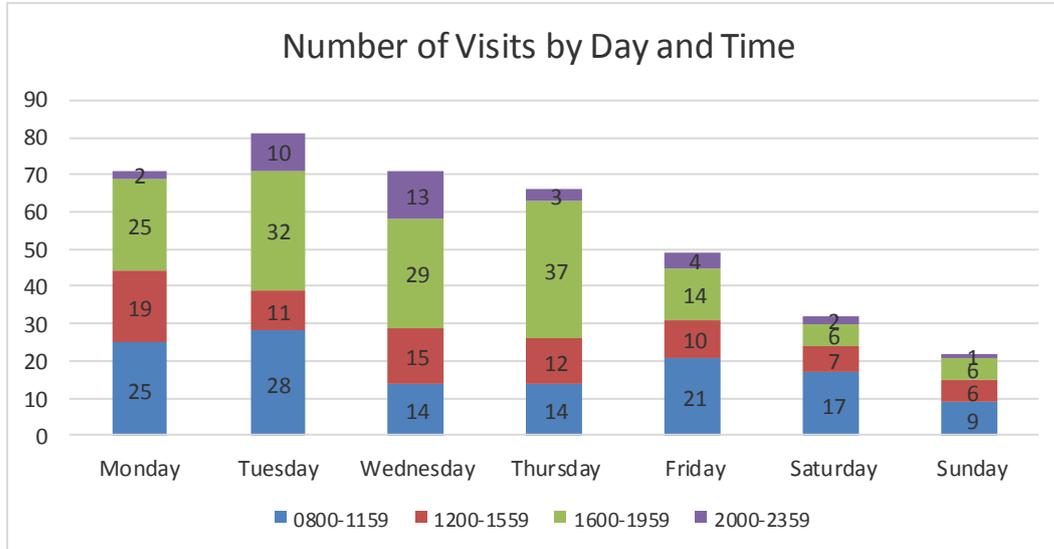
| April 2018 to March 2019 | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Custody Suite | Expected visits | Actual visits | Variance |
| Abingdon | 52 | 46 | -6 |
| Aylesbury | 47 | 44 | -3 |
| Banbury | 52 | 53 | 1 |
| High Wycombe | 44 | 43 | -1 |
| Loddon Valley | 52 | 50 | -2 |
| Maidenhead | 52 | 47 | -5 |
| Milton Keynes | 52 | 53 | 1 |
| Newbury | 52 | 57 | 5 |

The reduced number of expected visits in Aylesbury was due to its temporary closure on 25/2/19 for roof replacement work. High Wycombe's reduced number was due to its temporary closure on 9/7/18, for 8 weeks, because of a serious water leak. Aylesbury had 1 reported missed visit. Abingdon and Maidenhead had 2 reported missed visits and LV had 3 reported missed visits.

Custody visits can take place at anytime of the day or night, seven days a week. The graph below shows what time of day visits took place during the reporting period. Only 13% of visits took place at weekends (a 2% increase on last year); the scheme administrator is encouraging visitors to undertake more weekend visits. The total figures are:

| Time of day | Number of visits |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 0800hrs - 1159hrs | 128 (33%) |
| 1200hrs – 1559hrs | 80 (20%) |
| 1600hrs – 1959hrs | 149 (38%) |
| 2000hrs – 2359hrs | 35 (9%) |

There was one earlier visit at 07.45. However within the range above the earliest was at 08.00hrs and the latest at 21.33hrs.

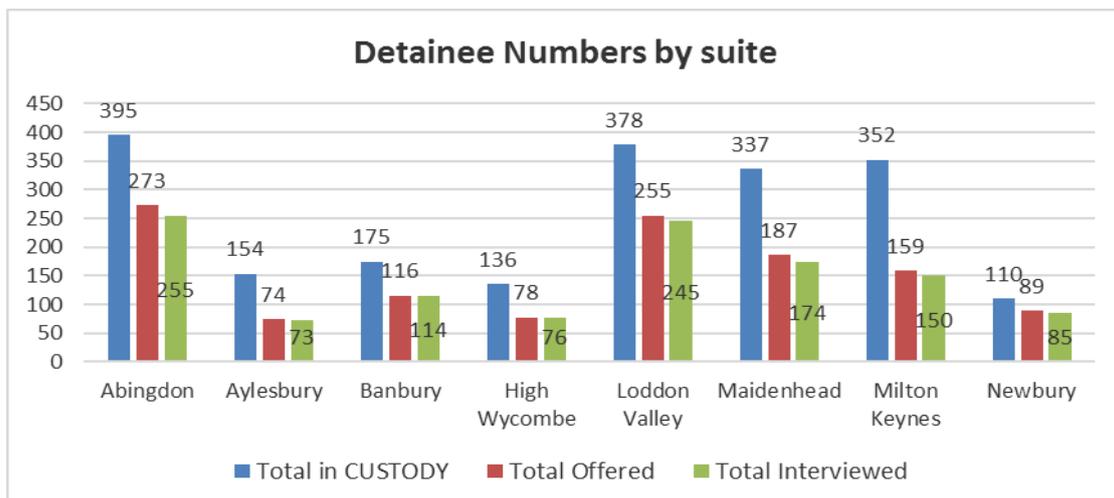


The average time each visit took was 46 minutes with the shortest being 14 minutes and the longest 2 hours 26 minutes. The average delay to entering all custody suites upon arrival at the front desk was 4 minutes with the longest wait being 30 minutes. Dependent on DP numbers custody visitors will prioritise visits to children and vulnerable DPs.

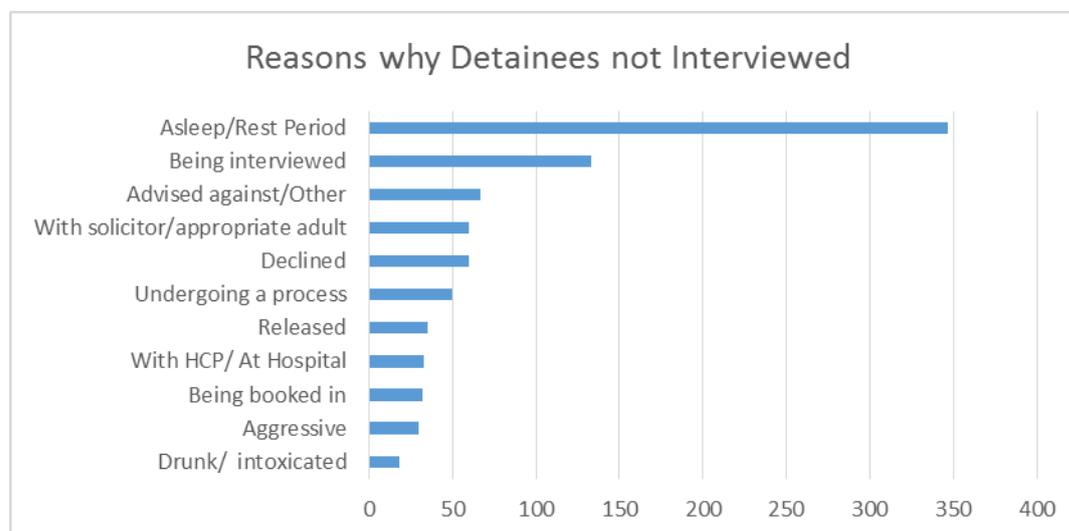
5 Detainee response

The following statistics show the total number of DPs in custody at the time of the visits, over the reporting period and the breakdown by each custody suite.

| Total in suite | DPs offered to visit | DPs visited | % take up visited to offered |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 2,037 | 1,232 | 1,172 | 95.1% |



During the reporting period a recorded total of 32,081 were booked into custody. Therefore the total number of DPs visited represented 3.7% of all DPs. There are 11 recorded reasons why 865 DPs were unavailable to be spoken to, with the largest number being 347 (40%) who were either asleep or in their eight hour rest period, and 133 (15%) who were being interviewed by the police/solicitor. Custody Visitors introduce themselves to the DP and the number of DPs who declined to talk with them was only 60 (6.9%). The full details are shown in the chart below.



6 Issues identified by visitors

During their visits the ICVs will look at the following to check that:

- the DP is satisfied with their treatment in custody
- cells and toilets have been maintained
- CCTV is present and working
- reasonable temperatures are maintained within the cells and centre
- any medical attention or medication required has been provided
- any visible injuries have been explained
- female detainee hygiene concerns are addressed
- washing facilities and access to fresh clothing have been provided
- the food preparation areas and bedding are in a clean, tidy and hygienic condition
- a reasonable period of time to rest has been given, if detained overnight
- with the consent of the detainee, ICVs check the custody log to confirm the detainee's account of their detention

The majority of issues identified by visitors are dealt with during the visitor's time in the suite, directly with the custody staff, or immediately afterwards; examples being additional blankets, a DP needing a drink, a DP requiring a phone call, a medication need and a solicitor requirement. Those issues highlighted as requiring further investigation are recorded separately, and totalled 13. All these have been resolved by the Scheme Administrator in conjunction with the Inspector of the relevant custody suite and/or the Force Head of Custody.

Examples of issues identified from the reporting period are:
(DP = Detained Person, HCP = Health Care Professional, AA = Appropriate Adult)

High Wycombe (Jan 2019)

Report – Library books are inappropriately located, untidy and relatively inaccessible

Response – All sorted. To be fair the ICVs had a point. They were completely inaccessible. I've re-boxed them into clear crates so they are stored more smartly, and have moved them to the cupboard where the religious items are stored.

Loddon Valley (Jul 2018)

Report – DP was in a cell containing his own vomit, on the wall, floor and bedding. We asked that he be moved to a clean cell if he were to be in for any length of time.

Response – DP remained in this cell and was released within 1 hour of the ICV visit

Aylesbury (May 2018)

Report – Old Mecca arrow in cell 6, following repainting, still visible

Response – The old arrow should be painted over within 7 days

Abingdon (Aug 2018)

Report – DP claimed he did not understand why he was there

Response – The detainee was part of a group that had allegedly threatened a male with a knife and then when he was stopped by the police he was found in possession of cannabis. The reason for his detention was given at the desk and he later went on to be given a caution having admitted to the offence. His detention was authorised and the reasons given for him being here. The detainee was Ethiopian however he was interviewed without an interpreter which clearly suggests that language wasn't a problem.

Abingdon (Dec 2018)

Report – HCP requested DP go to hospital for an X-Ray at 14.45. At 19.30 still in the custody suite.

Response – DP was seen by HCP putting weight on both feet and kicking out at cell door. Doctor saw HCP and requested DP be taken for X-Ray at 15.07. This would not be classed as a medical emergency whereby an Ambulance would be called and therefore the delay was due to having no resources to take the DP to Hospital. At 20.39 DP transferred to Hospital with Officers.

Milton Keynes (Mar 2019)

Report – Shower was out of use due to a dirty protest and a cleaner was called on the Saturday evening but by 11:00 on Sunday morning there was no ETA for a cleaner.

Response – Managed and cleaned Monday morning. This was part of scene preservation as a result of Critical Incident. This was exceptional circumstances.

Banbury (May 2018)

Report – Female DP however there was no female DO to facilitate a request for a shower. The ICVs have asked at what time did this DP receive a shower.

Response – The DP was given a towel, soap and a toothbrush that evening but there is no mention of whether she had a shower before she went to Court on remand. If it isn't documented then this did not happen.

I have re-iterated the need via email to both Banbury and Abingdon Custody Suites to ensure that any DP who is due to go to Court and who has been in Custody for a lengthy period be offered a shower etc. prior to their release.

Banbury (July 2018)

Report – 3 children in custody. 1 awaiting AA from London and reportedly only 1 AA available for the other 2. What time did the AA arrive and were any children kept in o/night?

Response – 1 AA arrived at 11pm and the other 2 in the early hours of the next day. All 3 children were released into AA care at 03:50am.

7 Quality Assurance Framework.

2 years ago ICVA introduced a framework called the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) because it is important to articulate what a good scheme looks like in order to achieve high standards whilst maintaining local flexibility.

After consulting with schemes across the country ICVA defined standards at four different levels of achievement:

- Code Compliant (i.e. meets your statutory duties),
- Silver
- Gold
- Platinum

The framework enables all schemes to discharge their legal responsibilities. Importantly, it greatly helps to embed standards that deliver continuous improvement to police custody. The QAF has seven priority areas:

1. Recruitment and training,
2. Managing volunteers,
3. Communications,
4. Holding the force to account,
5. Transparency and public reassurance,
6. Detainee welfare, and
7. Invests in / supports scheme managers.

Whilst the Thames Valley scheme already had a number of the requirements under each heading in place, all the requirements needed to be met and the scheme administrator took the decision to attain the Code Compliant level for the inaugural year which required completion by 31st March 2019. This was followed up by an awards and recognition event at the House of Lords in May 2019.

The next step is to work towards attaining silver or gold.

8 Financial comments

The scheme budget for 2018/19 of £10,933 was underspent by £3,287. This relatively large variation is explained by the timing of claim forms and more of the new visitors are choosing not to claim compared to those who have left the scheme. The budget covers the cost of mileage claims, honorarium payments for coordinators and costs associated with induction training, the annual training day and the ICVA national conference. The number and frequency of claims varies from year to year. The budget for 2019/20 is £11,130.

9 Legal comments

As summarised above, under section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002, Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales are required to organise and oversee the delivery of an independent custody visiting scheme in their force area. The contents of this report would indicate that the PCC is meeting his statutory obligations under the 2002 Act.

10 Equality comments

The gender split at the start of the period was 29 male (43%) to 39 female (57%).
The gender split at the end of the period was 32 male (46%) to 38 female (54%).
The age demographic as at 31 March 2019 is as follows:

| 18-25yrs | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | 56-65 | Over 65 |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 21 | 27 |

The demographic has changed a little from last year with a 3% increase to 68% aged 56 or over. Those visitors aged 56 and over generally have greater flexibility to conduct visits and are able to offer enhanced life experience to the scheme.

Ethnicity and disability information of scheme visitors is provided below.

| White | | | Black | Asian | | Mixed | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|
| British | Irish | Other | African | Caribbean | Indian | Bangladeshi | Caribbean |
| 61 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

There are 4 visitors who are disabled within the meaning given by the Equality Act 2010.

Public access to information

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the website within 1 working day of approval. Any facts and advice that should not be automatically available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead on a separate Part 2 form. Deferment of publication is only applicable where release before that date would compromise the implementation of the decision being approved.

Is the publication of this form to be deferred? No

Is there a Part 2 form? No

| Name & Role | Officer |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Head of Unit | Chief Executive |
| Legal Advice | Governance manager |
| Financial Advice | PCC Chief Finance Officer |
| Equalities and Diversity | Chief Executive |

PCC CHIEF OFFICERS' APPROVAL

We have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial and legal advice have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

We are satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Chief Executive

Date 19 July 2019

Chief Finance Officer

Date 19 July 2019