



NORFOLK INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



INTRODUCTION



Welcome to my annual report for Norfolk's Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme. This report provides an overview of the scheme details and what our volunteers have been doing between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.

This has been a year of change within the Scheme and, as with all change, there have been challenges to be met.

Early in the year, it was identified that the Scheme required a dedicated administrator to ensure that the volunteers, who are vital to the Scheme, were being supported. Recruitment took place and an ICV Scheme Administrator was appointed at the end of September 2015. The introduction of this post has ensured that the Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are well supported administratively and it has ensured that their training needs are being met.

There has also been a change to the Information Technology (IT) landscape within Norfolk Constabulary with the introduction of the ATHENA IT system in October 2015. This has seen changes across the Constabulary including within the Custody environment. Custody staff and ICVs have had to adapt to this new IT system which has brought changes in the way custody records are produced and visits are recorded. The ICVs have responded positively to these changes.

The Norfolk ICV Scheme continues to work collaboratively with the Suffolk ICV Scheme and has made the most of sharing training opportunities. The Scheme also works with colleagues from across the Eastern Region, sharing best practice and supporting one another.

I was particularly pleased to be able to present Long Service Awards to two members of the Scheme this year, Rick Parry and Eric Langford, with a combined total of 27 years of volunteering between them. I continue to value the enthusiasm and commitment of these volunteers; the Scheme could not operate without them selflessly giving their time week after week.

I hope that this report provides you with an informative and enjoyable read. ICVs in Norfolk continue to give reassurance that the treatment of detained persons is fair and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (referred to as PACE) and safer detention guidelines.

Stephen Bett - Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk



CUSTODY VISITING

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have a statutory responsibility to run an Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme. Custody Visiting originated from the Scarman Report following the Brixton riots in 1981, as a means to deliver oversight and public reassurance. ICVs provide a valuable safeguard for detainees, for police forces and for PCCs. Custody Visiting is underpinned by a Home Office Code of Practice, agreed by Parliament.

Custody Visiting can have small and large impacts on improving custody, from monitoring and influencing staffing levels to ensuring that custody is safe. Custody Visiting influences and reports on healthcare in custody to help ensure that detainees have appropriate access to medical care and also provides community reassurance of the proper treatment of detainees.

The Norfolk ICV Scheme is a member of the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA). This is a national organisation that leads, supports and represents custody visiting schemes. Members of ICVA are provided with:

- National standards to ensure high quality, effective schemes
- Policy advice and guidance on national changes to police custody
- Training and professional development for volunteers, staff and PCCs
- Sharing of good practice and new resources
- Representation at national groups including Home Office strategic partnerships, the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) and ministerial boards.

OPCCN has renewed their membership of ICVA for 2016/2017 in order to continue to have access to the valuable resources provided by them.

AS PCC, I MUST ENSURE:

1. There is a robust and effective ICV scheme running in Norfolk with appropriate resources and a nominated member of staff responsible for running the scheme
2. Regular visits take place in all areas of police custody
3. Volunteers are well-trained and managed
4. I am briefed by the scheme manager on issues within custody so that trends are identified and concerns addressed
5. Regular and formal opportunities exist to raise concerns with the police and deal with ICVs' concerns.

THE SCHEME

Under the terms of a joint custody command collaborative agreement, the Norfolk and Suffolk forces have an established fully-shared custody function, delivered through six new Police Investigation Centres (PICs).

Norfolk has four PICs where detained persons are held. These are located in Aylsham, Great Yarmouth, King’s Lynn and Wymondham. The PICs are purpose-built facilities that were opened in 2011. Across the four PICs, there is a total detainee capacity of 92.

The King’s Lynn PIC also serves the Cambridgeshire Constabulary area, and Cambridgeshire officers are included in its staff group.

As of 31 March 2016, there were 20 ICVs participating in the Scheme across the county.

The ICVs are split into four panel groups, each one serving one of the PICs. Each panel nominates a ‘co-ordinator’ who is responsible for creating a rota of visits. This ensures that only our ICVs know what day and time a visit will take place, so enabling the Scheme to remain independent and credible.

Each panel group meets with the ICV Scheme Administrator three times per year and the panel co-ordinators meet a further two times per year with the Administrator. The panel meetings are also attended by the PIC Inspector to allow the panel to discuss any issues that they have and for the Inspector to update the panel with regard to any pertinent issues within their area of responsibility. The panel meetings are an opportunity to discuss topical issues and provide a training opportunity for the ICVs.

The Scheme aims to be representative of the community, taking account of different ethnic origins, genders and age ranges. As volunteers are recruited, consideration is given to preserving and enhancing this representation.

Training for ICVs is provided using subject matter experts from Norfolk Constabulary and utilising the training given by the Independent Custody Visiting Association. ICVs’ opinions are sought as to areas in which they feel further training is needed and these are included in the training programme for the year.

NORFOLK ICV DATA

| Gender: | | Age: | | Ethnic group: | | *Population ethnicity: |
|---------|-----|-------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| Male | 40% | 18-30 | 0% | White British | 93% | 92.4% |
| Female | 60% | 31-45 | 0% | White Other | 7% | 3.5% |
| | | 46-60 | 40% | Asian: Indian | 0% | 0.5% |
| | | 61-75 | 55% | Black:African | 0% | 0.4% |
| | | 75+ | 5% | Other: Any other ethnic group | 0% | 0.1% |

* Ethnic breakdown of total population based on ONS data 2011. There are 18 definitions of ethnicity within the 2011 census –the above data provides an overview of those represented currently on our scheme.



Each PIC is visited approximately once a week. The visit is conducted by pairs of ICVs who arrive unannounced at the PIC and should be granted immediate access to the custody suite unless immediate access may place the ICVs or another individual within the custody area in danger.

ICVs establish with the custody staff the number of detainees being held and will then select a number of them to visit. Custody staff will advise ICVs about any detainees who may pose a health and safety risk if they are selected for a visit. Other detainees may be unavailable for a visit for other reasons, for example if they are in an interview, being seen by a healthcare professional, asleep, with a solicitor, etc.

A custody officer or a member of custody staff must accompany ICVs during their visit. Within Norfolk, ICVs carry out a self-introduction process to detainees; ICVs introduce themselves and seek permission to speak to the detainee. At this point, if the detainee refuses to speak to the ICVs they will ask the detainee's permission to view their custody record.

Discussions between detainees and ICVs must, wherever practicable, take place in the sight, but out of hearing, of the escorting member of staff. The discussions must focus on checking whether detainees have been offered their rights and entitlements under PACE, their health and wellbeing and confirming whether the conditions of detention are adequate.

Subject to obtaining the detainee's consent to examine their custody record, the ICVs should check its content against what they have been told by the detainee. This provides the ICVs with an overview of how the detention has been carried out. ICVs may also have access to other relevant documentation which relates to the detainee, e.g. a risk assessment.

If a detainee is incapable of deciding whether to allow access to their custody record (for example, they are intoxicated through alcohol or other substances, or suffering from mental health issues) then the presumption must be in favour of allowing the ICVs to examine it.

Time allowing, ICVs will also conduct a visual check of the PIC facilities, ensuring that areas are clean and fit for use. They will also check that the CCTV is operational.

At the end of the visit, prior to leaving the PIC, the ICVs produce a written report of their findings to include conditions and facilities, rights and entitlements and health and wellbeing. One copy of the report remains at the PIC and a copy is sent to the PCC Office where it is reviewed and assessed.

VISITS BREAKDOWN: 1 APRIL 2015 - 31 MARCH 2016

| PIC visited | Visits | Detainees held | Detainees available to visit | Detainees visited | % detainees visited (of available) | Detained persons not visited* |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aylsham | 53 | 135 | 108 | 91 | 84% | 44 |
| Great Yarmouth | 52 | 315 | 179 | 151 | 84% | 164 |
| King's Lynn | 46 | 377 | 159 | 125 | 79% | 252 |
| Wymondham | 54 | 494 | 298 | 236 | 79% | 258 |
| Overall total | 205 | 1321 | 744 | 603 | 81% | 718 |

* There are a number of reasons why detained persons are not visited, for example the police may advise not to for health & safety reasons. Those who were "not available" were either in interview, asleep, or the individual was providing fingerprint/DNA evidence.

ISSUES REPORTED FROM CUSTODY VISITS

No issues of serious harm or threat have been reported in the last year.

There have been 46 positive comments recorded on visit reports relating to the fact that a detained person felt satisfied with their treatment whilst in police custody.

As a result of the conversations that ICVs have had with detainees, the following requests were raised and subsequently dealt with by custody staff:

- 27 requests to have someone informed that they are in custody
- 11 requests for legal advice
- 7 requests for reading material
- 13 requests for a blanket
- 7 requests for a food
- 11 requests for a drink
- 2 requests for a nicotine replacement
- 6 requests for a shower
- 1 detained person wishing to make a complaint
- 9 requests to see a Health Care Professional
- 5 requests for a feminine hygiene pack
- 2 requests to use the exercise yard
- 4 requests to see a female officer
- 1 request for a pain killers
- 1 request to see the Code of Practice
- 1 request for toilet roll
- 2 requests for a telephone call



REGIONAL WORKING & NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Very close working relationships are maintained with the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk and the ICV schemes in both counties mirror each other in the use of the same reporting forms and statistical reports. Norfolk and Suffolk also share training opportunities for ICVs.

In addition to Suffolk, Norfolk also works alongside regional colleagues from the East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Hertfordshire). The scheme administrators from these regions meet on a quarterly basis to share experience and best practice. The region is currently represented by Cambridgeshire at ICVA national level.

The ICVA ran two national conferences this year, both held at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham. One was aimed at scheme administrators and managers, and the other at ICVs. These events were attended by personnel from Norfolk who found the conferences to be extremely informative, well organised and of great value to those who attended.

ROLE OF THE ICV SCHEME ADMINISTRATOR

The ICV Scheme Administrator is a 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) post. The hours are worked over three days a week giving ample opportunity for ICVs and other stakeholders to make contact and gain a response from the administrator.

The ICV reports received by the PCC are looked at by the ICV Scheme Administrator who compiles statistics from the reports and draws to the attention of the PCC any concerns and issues. The Scheme Administrator will also clarify any issues with custody staff and ICVs as necessary to ensure that the data being gathered is accurate.

RECRUITMENT & RECONSTITUTION

During the latter part of this financial year several ICVs decided to leave the scheme. This has meant that it has been necessary to recruit new volunteers. The following methods were used to 'advertise' that the scheme was seeking volunteers:

- Use of the 'Police Connect' service – where subscribers are sent text messages and emails giving weekly updates on police matters. A message was sent to all subscribers about the ICV Scheme
- Use of the 'Voluntary Norfolk' website to advertise for volunteers
- Press releases about two ICVs who received long service awards from the PCC for more than 10 years' service to the Scheme
- Article in the 'Your Norfolk' magazine produced by Norfolk County Council highlighting the work that the ICVs do and asking for volunteers (delivered to households in late March 2016, impact not yet known).

The first three methods gave 45 enquiries from those interested in the role and subsequently 17 applications were received from these initial enquiries.

As stipulated in the Home Office Code of Practice for Custody Visiting, PCCs must ensure that they

have in place robust and effective procedures for establishing and maintaining an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

PCCs must also seek to ensure that the overall Panel of ICVs is representative of the local community and provides a suitable balance in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. This is particularly important to ensure that our broad range of volunteers can help identify whether the organisation has any hidden barriers in its service provision.

Following good principles of succession planning and to ensure that a rolling plan of recruitment can be implemented (therefore ensuring that any gaps in representation can be addressed) it was agreed in 2013 that ICVs would serve a maximum of two terms (six years), however they are welcome to reapply following a three-year break.

The PCC reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to extend a period of appointment (with the individual's agreement) beyond the six-year term. This may be done to retain particular skills within the Scheme or to provide continuity.

The Scheme's reconstitution is due at the end of August 2016.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Custody Visiting continues to be essential in providing independent scrutiny of the treatment of detained persons and the conditions in which they are held.

If you are interested in becoming an Independent Custody Visitor please contact:

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Administrator

Post: OPCCN, Building 8, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, NR18 0WW

Telephone: 01953 423851

Email: ICVAdministrator@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

For more information on the role of ICVs or the PCC, please visit www.norfolk-pcc.gov.uk or find us on Twitter @NorfolkPCC or Facebook at www.facebook.com/norfolkpcc

For more information regarding the work of the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) please visit their website: www.icva.org.uk or on Twitter @CustodyVisiting