



APPENDIX A

City of London

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Annual Report

June 2012

Foreword

The year 2011/12 continued to be a productive and successful one for the City ICV Panel. There were some changes to the make-up of the panel with one visitor leaving and another re-joining.

I took over as Chairman of the Panel in July 2011 following the resignation of Max Jack, who had been Chair for the past three years and indeed was the first Chairman of the Panel. I must thank Max, along with Clare Chadwick and Gregory Moore for their hard work in establishing the way the Panel is set up and functions. I am delighted that Deputy Joyce Nash will continue as our Police Committee liaison member for the coming period.

Visits to Bishopsgate Police Station have continued on a weekly basis. Snow Hill Custody Suite is used only in an overflow capacity and as a permanent Bail Return facility. The Police Committee is keen that the ICV Panel visits once a quarter; it has proved difficult to visit when the custody facility is in use as an overflow but has been managed on two occasions in the past year.

In March 2012 I was invited to attend the City Police Custody Users Forum, which is held once a quarter. As I was present the ICV scheme was on the agenda; however, this is mainly an internal police meeting as to how other police officers use custody and, as such, it would not be appropriate for Visitors to attend on a regular basis. I have though asked that we be invited once a year to keep the forum apprised of developments with regard to custody visiting.

I look forward to continuing to work with my fellow visitors in the coming year and thank them for their support and hard work.

Peter Tihanyi
Chairman
ICV Panel

Welcome to the 2012-13 annual report of the City of London Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

The Court of Common Council, as the police authority for the Square Mile, has a responsibility for securing an efficient and effective police service in the City of London and holding the Commissioner of the City of London Police to account. Under paragraph 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002, the City of London is required to have in place an Independent Visitors Scheme.

Independent custody visiting schemes have been around since the 1980s following the Lord Scarman Report and became mandatory in 2003. The Scarman Report recommended a system of independent unannounced inspection of detention arrangements in police stations by local community members. Custody Visiting Panels remain a vital important means

of securing police accountability for the local communities they serve.

City Visitors are volunteers who give up their free time to provide independent scrutiny of the treatment of those held in police detention and the conditions in which they are held. They play a vital role in bringing together police and communities closer together and enhancing public perception of police procedures and practice in relation to custody.

We would like to thank all the City's Visitors for their commitment to the Scheme. The Police Committee fully appreciates their hard work and dedication to the Scheme and the contribution this makes to the overall confidence the community has in the City of London Police.

Henry Pollard
Chairman
Police Committee

Deputy Joyce Nash, OBE
ICV Panel Member
Police Committee

Introduction

THE CITY OF LONDON INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME (ICV SCHEME)

The purpose of this report is to give an account of the work of the City of London ICV Scheme in the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. It aims to:

- report on the Panel's performance;
- provide the local community and the Police Committee with information about the visits made and what they have revealed about the treatment of detainees;
- set out issues and concerns that the visits have raised; and,
- set out the objectives for the 2012/13.

The City of London Corporation, in its role as the police authority for the City of London, has a statutory duty to have in place an independent custody visiting scheme. The operation of the Scheme is the responsibility of the Police Committee.

Independent custody visiting is governed by a range of legislation and guidance including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and Home Office Codes of Practice and National Standards.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the local residential and business community who volunteer to visit police stations unannounced to check on the treatment and welfare of people held in police custody. They must:

- be over 18;
- be independent from the police force and the police authority; and,
- have no direct involvement in the criminal justice system.

The City of London ICV Panel currently consists of 10 visitors who visit the custody suites at Bishopsgate Police station once a week and at Snow Hill, where the custody suite is only used for 'bailbacks' or as an overflow for Bishopsgate, at least 4 times a year. A member of the Police Committee attends the quarterly Panel meetings and, in addition, representatives of the Force attend for part of the Panel meetings so that any queries or problems that have arisen out of custody visits can be addressed. The meetings are supported by staff from the Town Clerk's department in Guildhall.

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS

Visits are always made in pairs, and are unannounced. The objective of all visitors is to monitor and report on the treatment and conditions of individual detainees and to check that their rights and entitlements have been upheld.

During their visit, ICVs are escorted by a custody officer or gaoler at all times. Every detainee being held is offered the opportunity to speak with the custody visitors, but may choose not to. Visit interviews are carried out within sight, but out of hearing, of the escorting officer. Strict rules of confidentiality apply so that detainees are identified by their custody numbers only, and the details of what visitors see and hear are treated as confidential. ICVs are not concerned with any alleged offence and maintain their independence and impartiality at all times. They do not provide advice to detainees; they are there to look, listen and report on conditions in custody at the time of their visit.

After every visit, custody visitors fill out a report form recording details of the visit. The information about the visit in the form includes details of problems that were resolved immediately and those that required further action. Copies of the reports are provided for the Commander, the Territorial Policing Chief Superintendent, and the Scheme Administrator on behalf of the Police Committee. The ICV Panel will follow up and discuss at the next review meeting any concerns that cannot be resolved during visits. If necessary, more serious issues can be highlighted directly to the Police Committee.

PANEL MEETINGS

The quarterly Panel meetings allow Visitors to discuss each visit and any issues that have arisen. In addition, short update or information sessions are often included on each agenda so that Visitors are kept up to date with any national developments concerning the custody environment. Topics discussed this year included:

Self-Introduction – The Panel had previously looked at this issue and on balance decided not to introduce an automatic system of self-introduction. Elsewhere in London, the results of the pilot schemes did not show a greater increase in the number of detainees taking up the offer of an interview. The Panel asked the Force to ensure that custody staff introduce visitors in an agreed standardised format instead and a significant improvement in the quality has since been noticed, with the level of take-up by those in custody increasing as a result. But the Panel has reserved the right for individual Visitors, with the agreement of the Custody Sergeant of the day, as and when the need is perceived, to self-introduce.

Healthcare Provision in the Custody Suite – with the change to a new service provider for healthcare provision in custody suites, the Panel took a particular interest in this issue,

being keen to ensure that there was no deterioration in service level. Visitors monitored the issue closely throughout the year, feeding their concerns back to officers at Panel meetings, with their assessment taken in to account leading up to the decision to revert to the previous service provider.

Snow Hill Police Station Custody Suite – Since 2009 the Snow Hill custody suite has only been used for ‘bail back’ and occasionally as an overspill facility for Bishopsgate, resulting in a large number of unproductive visits. As a result it was agreed by the Police Committee at its meeting in May 2010 that scheduled visits to Snow Hill that a mechanism be introduced in place of scheduled visits to attempt to match visits to when the custody suite was in use. Whilst not as efficient as was hoped in ensuring regular visits to the suite over the past year, the mechanism continues to be used alongside the scheduled quarterly visits.

New Custody Forms – with the Panel keen to ensure that completing paperwork associated with visits was as easy as possible for the Visitors and that the appropriate information was easily available for the Administrator, the reporting Forms were redesigned throughout 2011. Taking into account best practice elsewhere and Visitors’ feedback, these forms were introduced and have now replaced the older format of report form in both Custody Suites. However, the Panel has agreed to review their working in practice as an ongoing procedure.

Training – the Panel is keen to ensure that it receives regular training and keeps up-to-date with custody issues and undertook a variety of training and learning exercises over the year, including learning about the role of the Independent Advisory Group and its relationship with the City of London Police. With some Visitors expressing an interest in exploring alternative methods of training, an element of self-learning was also introduced to

enhance the training process, with a number of refresher module tests and learning documents utilised by the Panel to renew their knowledge of various elements of the custody process. Further training and learning sessions are being arranged for the ensuing year, beginning with a session on explaining the role of the Substance Misuse Team in the Custody process.

Custody Usage – with the Panel keen to ensure the spread of visits to Custody Suites was appropriate to the volume of usage at particular times, action was taken to ensure that Visitors were provided with times of all visits made alongside the level of usage of the Custody Suites which has been provided by the Force. A comparative analysis showed that the timing of visits currently reflects quite well the level of the Custody Usage, with this monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure this continues to be the case.

Access to the Custody Suite - entrance to the Suite has been an issue for the ICV Visitors, who would prefer direct access to allow for more efficient unannounced visits. Visitors' passes currently allow them to pass the front desk at Bishopsgate Police Station but, once they enter the Custody Suite, they have to wait until access is given to them by the custody officers. This issue was debated at some length over the course of the year with the Force making the point that this delayed access was standard for all people awaiting entrance to the Custody Suite, even most Police officers, the only exception being those who worked within the Suite on a daily basis. Investigation showed that this was also the case elsewhere in the country, in order to ensure that the safety of all Visitors is paramount and that the Custody Suite is safe before they are able to enter.

In addition to the points above the Panel have raised a number of other issues with the Custody Manager

- 1) **Use of Handcuffs** - The Panel asked for more information as to the appropriate use of handcuffs and the way in which this should be recorded in custody logs.

Outcome – the Acting Chief Inspector for Territorial Policing talked Visitors through the procedure and was able to respond to their concerns.

- 2) **Olympics Period** - With the forthcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games expected to lead to a substantially greater volume of people in the London area, the merit of altering the Panel's scheduled rota of visits over the Games period was debated.

Outcome – It was agreed that a greater number of visits would be undertaken during the period, and the wider discussion sparked by the debate culminated in this principle being extended to cover other events as appropriate in future.

- 3) **Custody User Group** – Following discussion, the Panel expressed interest in the work of the Force's custody user group, a body comprised of representatives from various interested parties including the Police Federation, substance misuse professionals, custody sergeants, health and safety and so on, which sought to ensure that the minimum national standards were adhered to and surpassed where possible.

Outcome – the Chair of the Panel attended a meeting of the Force's Custody User Group and was well received. He felt that its operational nature did not mean that a representative of the Panel needed to regularly attend.

Visit Statistics

During 2011/12 a total of 52 visits were undertaken. The following tables look at the nature of these visits in greater detail.

NO OF VISITS

Station	Target No of Visits	Achieved	% of Target
Bishopsgate	52	50	96
Snow Hill	4	2	50
Total	56	52	93

DAYS OF VISITS

	No of Visits	%
Monday	10	19
Tuesday	10	19
Wednesday	10	19
Thursday	13	25
Friday	6	12
Saturday	3	6
Sunday	0	0
Total	52	100

TIME OF VISITS

	Bishopsgate	Snow Hill
00.01 – 06.00	0	0
06.00 - 12.00	29	1
12.01 – 18.00	13	1
18.01 – 00.00	8	0

DAYS OF VISITS / TIMES – COMBINED

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
00.01 – 06.00							
06.00 -12.00	3	4	9	9	2	3	
12.01 – 18.00	5	3		3	3		
18.01 – 00.00	2	3	1	1	1		

NO OF DETAINEES VISITED

	Total number of detainees in Suite at time of visit	No of detainees offered visit	No. of detainees accepted visit
Bishopsgate Q1	45	34	24
Bishopsgate Q2	72	53	46
Bishopsgate Q3	54	44	39
Bishopsgate Q4	47	37	32
Snow Hill Q1	0	0	0
Snow Hill Q2	0	0	0
Snow Hill Q3	0	0	0
Snow Hill Q4	5	3	0
Total	218	171	141

ISSUES AND CONCERNS ARISING FROM VISITS

This list of issues and concerns reflects the range of issues that have been raised by detainees in the City of London in the last year and, in addition, other issues which have been reported by ICV Panels elsewhere for which there has been a nil return in the City of London.

	Bishopsgate	Snow Hill
No of Total Visits	50	2
Report Form with no matters requiring a police response	29	1
Comments individual officers - Positive	9	0
Comments individual officers – negative	1	0
Infrastructure / furnishings / fittings	3	0
Cleaning, tidiness and general hygiene - positive	3	0
Cleaning, tidiness and general hygiene - negative	2	0
FME Service and FME room	4	0
Perceived risk to detainees?	3	0
Procedures not followed	0	0
Rights and entitlements seemingly delayed	3 (satisfactory explanation in each case)	0
Periodic checks (15, 30 minutes) not maintained	0	0
Personal hygiene requests– (showers, washing etc)	1	0
Requests for food and drink	1	0
Temperature and availability of blankets	3	0
Requests for literature	4	0
Requests for phonecalls	3	0
Other	5	1

2012/13

The City of London ICV Panel wants to ensure that it meets its objectives in ensuring that custody in the City of London. It has set itself the following targets for 2012/13:

- to increase the number of visits to at least 95% of target;
- to continue to promote and raise awareness of the work of the ICV Panel;
- to continue with refresher training as well as specific issues such as detainees held under Code H and Mental Health;

- Greater involvement with the national Independent Custody Visit Association;
- To provide an enhanced number of visits during the Olympics period; and,
- To monitor the introduction of self-introduction elsewhere.

Conclusion

The City of London ICV Scheme provides an independent check on the treatment of detained persons. Through the dedication of the volunteer visitors, an appropriate level of scrutiny of the Force is achieved on which the Police Committee and the community can rely.