

Committee(s)	Date:
Police Authority Board – for information Independent Custody Visitor Panel – for information	25 October 2023 17 January 2024
Subject: Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Annual Report 2022/23	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Discussion
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Summary

This report completes the requirement to update Members on the progress of the City of London's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, presenting the Panel's Annual Report and informing Members of some of the recent issues raised by the ICV Panel in relation to custody provision in the City. Issues raised at the Panel meetings over the past year include reference to challenges presented to the custody environment post-pandemic recovery; and following the implementation of the Secure City Programme.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Independent Custody Visiting scheme is well established and has been functioning in its current capacity since November 2007. Members of the Police Committee agreed in May 2009, that a regular report would be presented to the Committee on an annual basis.
2. Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) conduct unannounced visits in pairs to custody suites to monitor and report upon the treatment and conditions of persons held in custody. They check that the rights and entitlements, wellbeing and dignity of detained persons are being observed; and monitor this on an entirely independent and confidential basis. ICVs undertake visits to custody in a voluntary capacity; and are there to look, listen and report on the conditions in custody at the time of their visit. They report their observations to City of London Police (COLP) and to the ICV Panel, which is made up of all the visitors. Meetings of the ICV Panel take place on a quarterly basis and are attended by all Custody Visitors, alongside the City of London Police (usually the custody manager). Issues of serious concern raised by visitors during visits were escalated to the Lead Member for Safeguarding and Public Protection via the ICV Scheme Manger.

3. The visits take place weekly, with visits occurring once a week (from April 2022 to March 2023).

Current position

4. The ICV Annual report provides a summary of key issues identified and any remedial action undertaken, along with examples of good work within custody. It also sets out the ICV Scheme objectives for the current financial year.

Legal Implications

5. In accordance with Section 51 of the Police Reform Act (2002), the City Corporation is required to have in place an Independent Visitors Scheme.

Conclusion

6. The City of London ICV Scheme provides an independent assessment across the treatment of detained persons. The commitment and dedication of volunteer visitors ensures a continued and appropriate level of scrutiny of the Force is maintained.
7. The Panel records their thanks to all ICVs. All should be commended for their steadfast commitment to independent custody during the continued recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic.
8. Further updates on this Scheme will continue to be provided to Members on an annual basis.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – ICV Annual Report 2022/23

Background Papers

Annual Custody Report – November 2019 Police Committee
ICV Guidelines – January 2017 Police Committee

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