



**MPA**

**Metropolitan Police Authority**

**BROMLEY  
INDEPENDENT  
CUSTODY VISITORS  
PANEL**

**INTERIM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
APRIL-DECEMBER 2007**



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# **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the annual report of the Bromley Independent Custody Visitors Panel.

This (interim) report covers the period from 01/04/07 to 31/12/07.

The purpose of this (interim) report is to give a general overview of the work of the Bromley ICV Panel and:

- Evaluate the panel's performance
- Provide the local community and the MPA with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held including the treatment of those held in custody
- Set out issues and concerns that have arisen
- Set out the objectives for 2008.

The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) is an independent statutory body, which exists to make sure that London's police are accountable for the services they provide to people in the capital. The MPA has 23 Members who scrutinise and support the work of the police. The MPA promotes equality and diversity within the police service and is working in partnership to ensure all those who live and work in the capital are treated fairly and with respect.

The MPA has a legal obligation under the Police Reform Act 2002 for a custody visiting scheme to operate in its area. In April 2007 the MPA brought together the custody visiting arrangements managed by the boroughs into one London scheme. The scheme has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Borough Commander for Bromley, but is independent of the police. The MPA holds overall responsibility for the scheme's management and administration; a member of MPA staff is responsible for supporting the panel.

Prospective custody visitors are volunteers from within the community. The MPA is responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing all custody visitors and tries to ensure a balance of age, gender and ethnicity. Successful applicants to the scheme are given training in all aspects of a custody visitor's role and responsibilities. Custody visiting is governed by a range of legislation and guidance including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 as well as Home Office Codes of Practice and National Standards.

# **AIMS & ACHIEVEMENTS**

The Bromley panel currently makes 1 scheduled visit per week to Bromley Police Station, which is the minimum requirement the MPA sets panels as a target. Around 90% of scheduled visits have taken place, which is excellent.

Bromley Panel meetings have been held every 2 months at Bromley Civic Centre, and are well attended by members and the police. The venue continues to be the most satisfactory, and the panel wish to thank the Borough Council for making facilities available.

The panel's police liaison officer, Inspector Linda Fitzsimons, continues to assist the panel in its work, and thanks go to Insp Fitzsimons for her cooperation and help in investigating any concerns and observations, and in answering questions at panel meetings.

The Chair and Vice-Chair have continued to represent the panel at meetings of the Bromley Community and Police Consultative Committee (CPCC) and also at the London ICV Chairs meetings.

Many panel members have busy home and professional lives, and some also maintain other community roles as well as that as an ICV. Nevertheless, attendance at meetings and visit performance has been consistently good.

# CHAIR'S REPORT

The period covered by this report has been a busy and productive one for the Bromley Independent Custody Visitors Panel. As well as our weekly visits to Bromley police station we have additionally visited Orpington police station, which has been re-activated for use under Operation Safeguard. The Chair and the Vice Chair also undertook visits to our neighbouring panel of Bexley for nine months during a period when their panel had only three members.

As a Panel, it has been our experience that the custody suite in Bromley is run to a very high standard and our congratulations go to Inspector Linda Fitzsimons and the custody staff in this respect. However, we remain vigilant in ensuring that all detainees are treated fairly and receive their rights in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. I should also like to place on record the thanks of the Panel for the helpful, courteous and professional attitude of all the custody staff, even when the custody suite is exceptionally busy.

We have had major concerns over Orpington police station particularly over the standard of cleanliness and the inadequacy of facilities for Operation Safeguard prisoners. The premises are certainly not suitable to hold prisoners over a weekend and this has led to situations when the officers have had to deal with very unhappy prisoners. I am pleased to report that the cleanliness recently has much improved.

I congratulate and thank the Panel members for the diligence and enthusiasm with which they carry out their visits and attend Panel meetings. This is greatly assisted by a stable Panel.

Finally, I would like to place on record my thanks and appreciation of Kerry McClelland and her team at the MPA – they have certainly made my job a lot easier. Although we do not yet have a permanent Coordinator, Emma Nuttall has filled that role admirably on a temporary basis and my thanks go to her for all her assistance, patience and cheerfulness in carrying out her job. I look forward to our continuing good relations with the MPA.

Margaret Gubbins  
Bromley ICVP Chair 2008

# **RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP**

Since April 2007, panels have been asked to adhere to recruitment and interviewing guidance provided by the MPA. The MPA expects all panels to adhere to the MPA's equal opportunities policy, recruit new panel members from all sections of the community and actively foster good relations between people of different races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

In 2007 the Bromley panel had 8 accredited members.

Name	Appointed
Margaret Gubbins	1995
Brenda Rayson	1997
Geoffrey Hibbert	1999
James Lewis	2000
Margaret Walker	2004
Gillian Johnson	2006
Swarn Riat	2006
The Following Member(s) Joined	
Tim Griffin	2007

The panel comprised of 4 men and 4 women.

## **Recruitment**

There are currently 2 applicants who were recently successful at interview going through the vetting and accreditation process.

The panel operates well with the number of visitors it has and so further recruitment beyond what is already ongoing will be limited to filling any vacancies made by resignations.

# **VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS**

The panel have also made some visits to Orpington custody suite as this has been used in recent months for Operation Safeguard<sup>1</sup> and good standards of care have been noted, despite the pressures on police. Standards of cleaning at Orpington were a concern for some time but improvements have been noted, however the panel continue to raise issues about the suitability of Orpington as a place of detention.

There have been few other concerns this year. The relationship with the custody staff has continued to be positive at both stations, and the panel are happy with the way in which jailors have explained the ICV role to detainees.

It has been rare for there to be a delay in entering the custody suite, even though visits are often at busy times. It is a source of satisfaction to the panel that there have been few complaints, if any, from detainees on how they are treated at Bromley.

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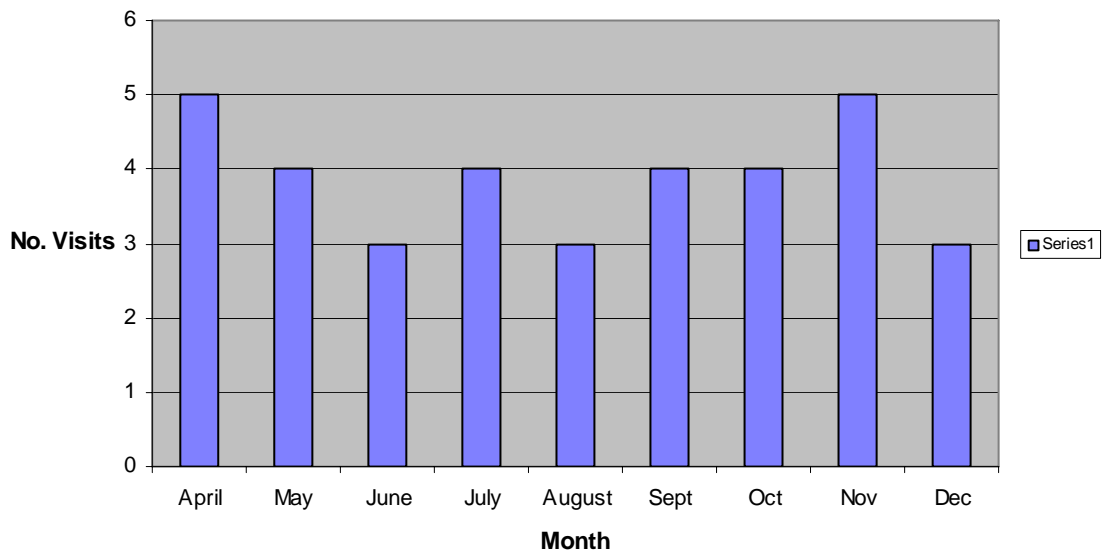
<sup>1</sup> Operation Safeguard is the way the Home Office are currently addressing the shortage of prison spaces, by housing prisoners in spare police cells. The Met currently provides up to 50 cells per night to the Home Office on a full cost recovery basis.

# DATA FROM PANEL VISITS

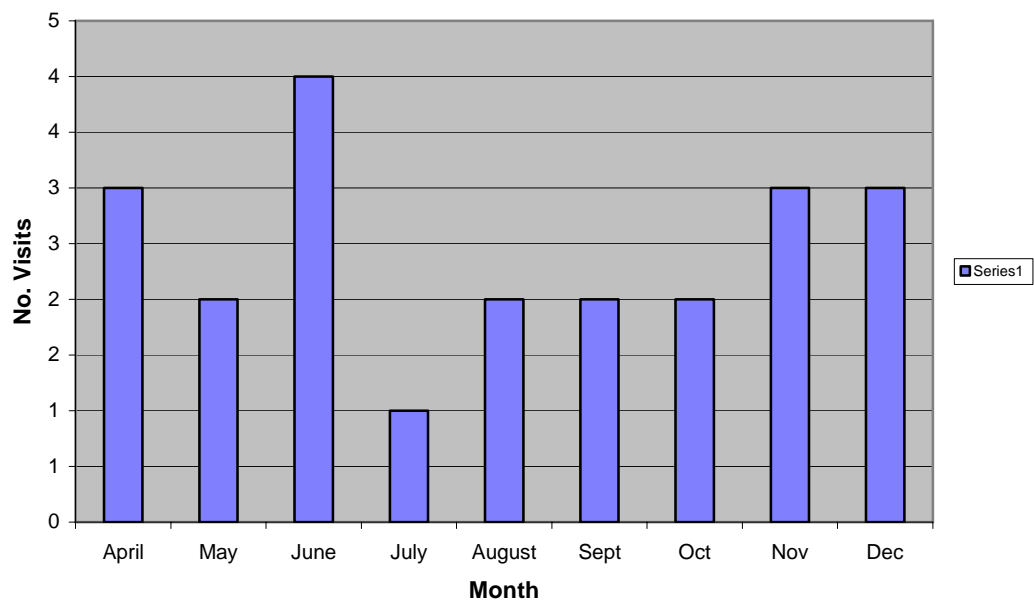
Visit Figures from 1 April to 31 December 2007

## 1. Number of Visits

Number of Visits to Bromley Station April to December 2007

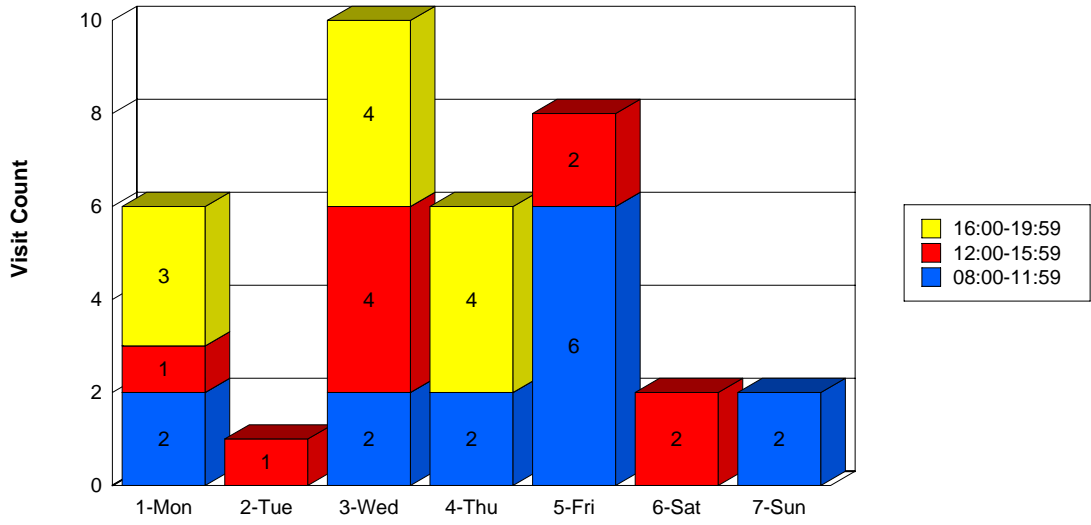


Number of Visits to Orpington Station April to December 2007

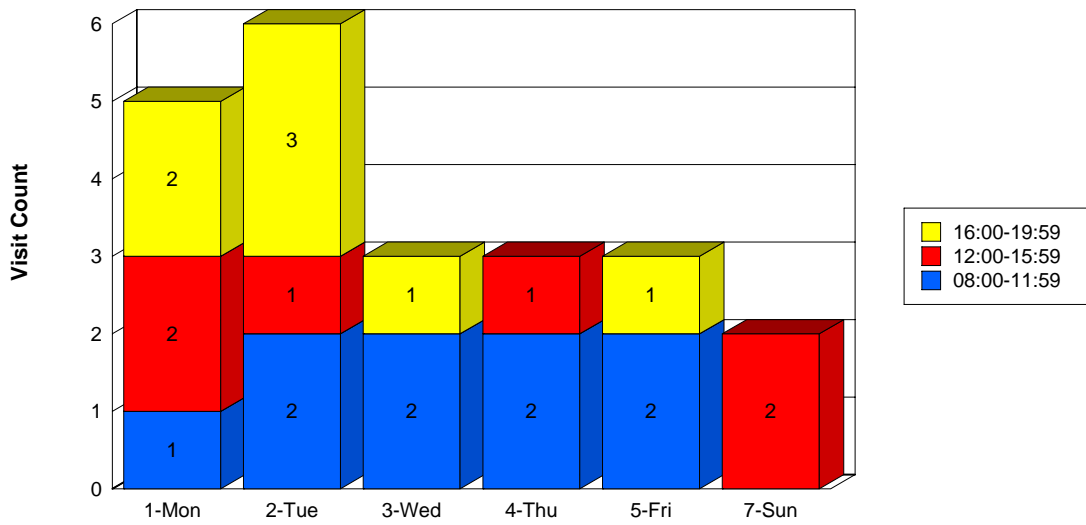




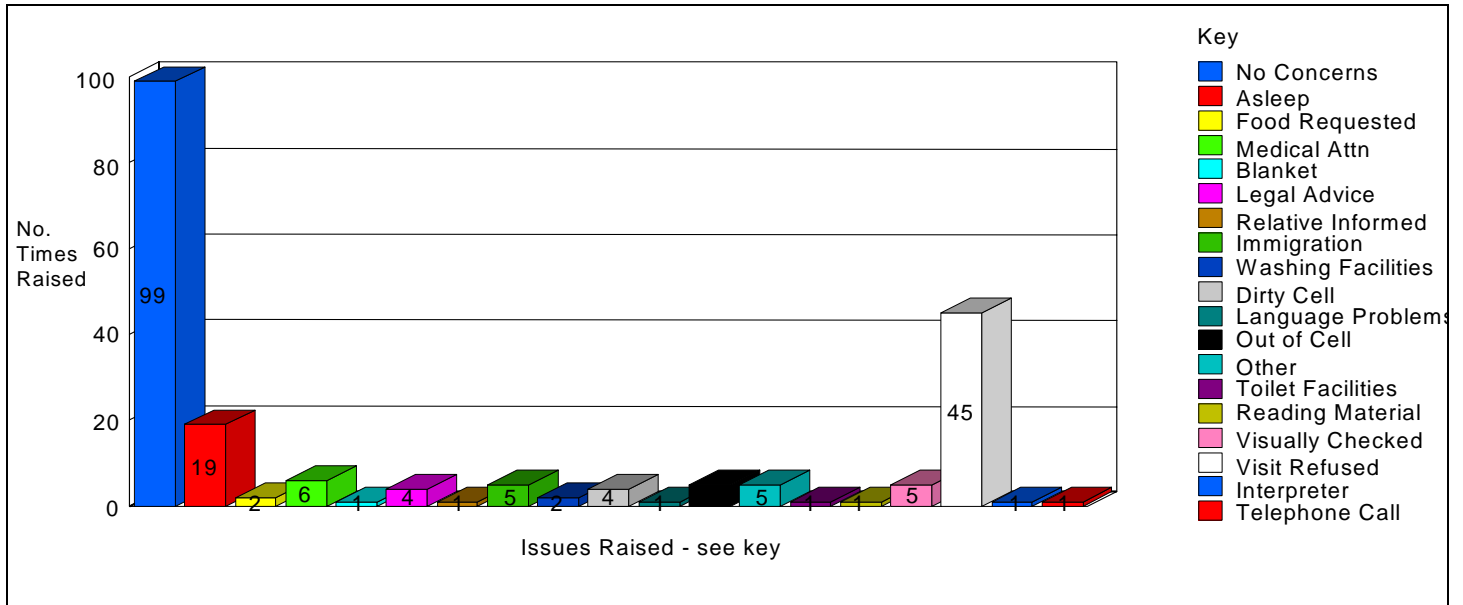
## 2. Days and Times of Visits Bromley Station



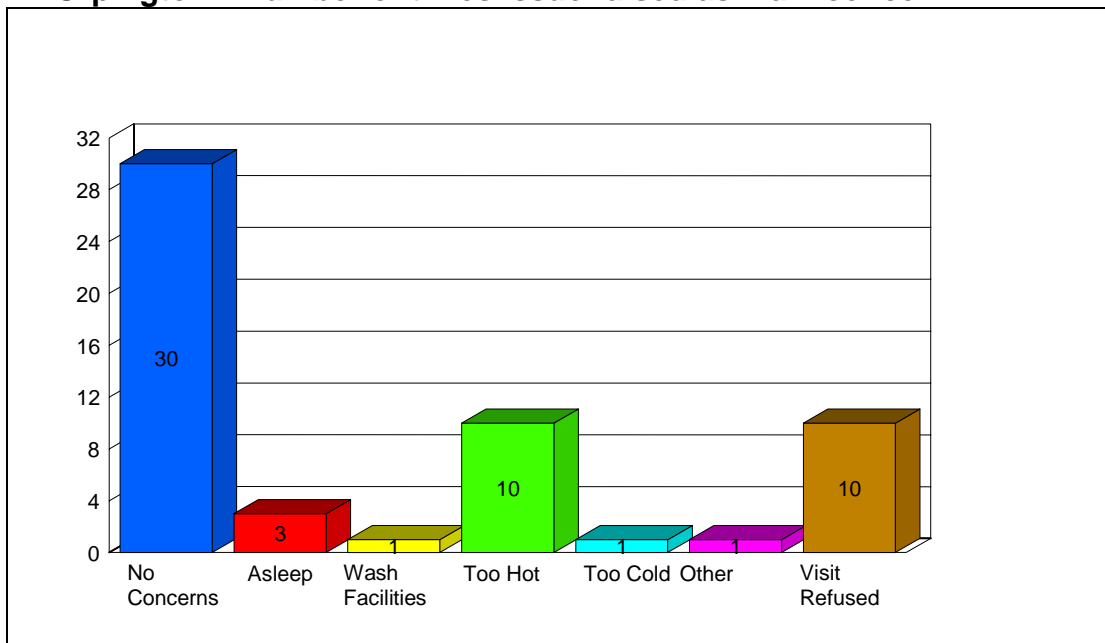
## Orpington Station



### 3. Details of Visits Bromley - number of times issue raised as main concern



### Orpington – number of times issue raised as main concern



# Plans for Forthcoming Year 2008

## Targets:

- A minimum of 1 visit per week to Bromley Police Station.
- A bi-monthly visit to Orpington Station whilst it is used for Operation Safeguard.
- To record the diversity of Bromley's panel membership in comparison with the make-up of the borough, and how the panel reflects or not the community it represents.
- To maintain panel membership at a minimum of 9 volunteers.