



MPA

Metropolitan Police Authority

**Haringey
Independent Custody
Visiting Panel**

Annual Report 2008



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Introduction

Welcome to the annual report of the Haringey Independent Custody Visiting Panel.

The report covers the period from January 2008 to December 2008

The purpose of this report is to:

- Evaluate the panel's performance.
- Provide the local community and the MPA with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held in custody.
- Set out issues and concerns that have arisen.
- Set out the objectives for 2009.

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 Commanders, 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.

Chairperson's Report

This is Haringey Independent Custody Visitors Panel 21st annual report.

This report is produced to provide the community of Haringey, which we serve, and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) under whose authority we act, with an insight of how the panel performed over the year and to note the issues that have arisen. It is circulated within the community in order to increase the understanding and awareness of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and the service for the community that we perform.

In general, we found that detainees were treated satisfactorily within the provisions of the law. Most issues involving individual detainees were resolved either with the Custody Sergeant during the visit or with the Custody Manager at our six weekly panel meetings.

The past year has been both a challenging and rewarding time for our Panel and the ICV scheme as a whole. The restructuring of the ICV scheme by the MPA has now been operational for over 1 year. The clustering of panels with central administration has been working well, albeit a few, initial teething problems.

Haringey ranks as London's fourth most diverse borough, based on the Office for National Statistics's Diversity index, therefore, we also try hard to reflect in the panel the diversity within the borough and I am pleased to say that the ICV's represent a good cross-section of the borough's population. We have also been fortunate in recruiting new visitors who are young, and other visitors from other ethnic and religious backgrounds. There has been ongoing training and all new visitors have undergone training and followed procedures around probation periods, accreditation etc.

As always during the year we were sad to see some of our long-standing, established panel member's leave. Their departure was, for the most part, for personal reasons such as moving out of the area, changing jobs or being no longer able to make the time commitment to be an Independent Custody Visitor. We thank them all for their work whilst members of our panel.

Our coordinator Tony Hawker has played an important role within the panel and ensured that we are continuously recruiting panel members to ensure that the panel is running at full capacity.

As Chair, I would like to give my personal thanks to the previous Chair Dr Samuel Wynter for the overwhelming dedication, support, guidance and commitment he gave both to myself and the rest of the panel. I would also like to thank all the panel members who have given up their free time to ensure that all stations are visited on a weekly basis come rain or shine and especially to Natascha Franklin and Diane McCready who currently support me as Co-Vice chairs and have assisted in the interviewing and training of new volunteers. I would also like to thank the Custody managers who have been extremely supportive of the panel.

Sandra Gouveia, April 2009

Aims and Achievements

The aims and objectives of the panel are laid out in the Home Office Codes of Practice and the National Standards governing Independent Custody Visiting as well as the MPA ICV Handbook.

The primary objective of the panel is to make unannounced visits to police stations in the borough to check and report on the treatment of detainees in police cells to ensure their rights and entitlements are being observed. The panel makes visits to the two '24/7' stations: Tottenham, and Hornsey and also the overflow station at Wood Green.

In the previous annual report the following specific aims and objectives were set out for 2008:

- To restructure the format of its meetings.

The first part of the meeting has been closed to the MPS. This enables the panel to review the police responses, identify specific areas of concern or praise to be addressed at the full meeting. The MPS provide advance written responses to the concerns that the panel have raised. The panel meeting now commences 30 minutes earlier at 7pm

- Recruitment.

This has been a focal part of the panel's activity. Responsibility for training new recruits currently was for the most part shared between the Vice Chair and the Chair. However, other experienced panel members have been identified to assist with the delivery of the training during the new recruit's probationary period.

The panel worked to recruit new members with the aim of increasing the panel size to over 17 members. This included investigating new initiatives to target different types of people to match the diversity of the Borough and increase the take up of the ICV role in areas of ethnicity currently under represented. The panel endeavoured to ensure that all new recruits receive local and MPA training and that existing members of the panel undertake refresher training at least once during their three-year tenure.

- Dialogue with the Borough Commander

The panel Chair has had monthly meetings with the Borough Commander to discuss any outstanding matters or more serious issues. Additionally, the Chair and panel sought to maintain and improve upon the level of communication with Haringey police generally, the custody manager during panel meetings and custody staff during visits

- Joint panel engagement

This crucial mechanism has allowed panel members to share best practice, ideas and support across borough borders.

The panel continued to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees were upheld. To raise concerns promptly and effectively with the local police or the MPA as appropriate and to challenge where appropriate

The panel made a total of 123 visits throughout 2008 to Haringey police stations. Visits were reasonably well spread out through the week, only Mondays, Saturdays and Sundays receiving notably fewer visits than other days of the week.

Visits were spread out well throughout the day, although the majority were conducted between 16.00 and 20.00. Visits were even undertaken between 00.00 and 07:59, albeit very few. Whilst it was beneficial to carry out visits covering all 24 hours and visits at unsocial hours are encouraged, detainees are often taking advantage of their 8 hours of continuous rest during this time.

Monthly panel meetings were held at the Civic Centre and all members expected to try to attend. The panel wish to thank the Council for allowing it to meet there. Many panel members have busy home and professional lives, and some also maintain other community roles as well as that of an ICV. Despite this, attendance at panel meetings and visit performance has been consistently good throughout the year.

The Haringey Panel is represented at meetings of the Haringey Community & Police Consultative Group. The Chair, or a representative, also attends the MPA London ICV Chairs and Cluster meetings.

Recruitment and Retention

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, faiths, races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

The Haringey panel has always striven to reflect Haringey's diverse communities in its membership and has endeavoured to recruit accordingly. The MPA has conducted a diversity monitoring exercise but the Haringey panel is not fully covered, with statistics only available for two thirds of the members. This means that it is not possible to publish statistics on ethnicity.

The breakdown of men to women in the borough is approximately even with marginally more women 51% to 49% men. The panel did not reflect this during 2008. There were 5 male (36%) and 9 female (64%) ICVs – a disproportionately large number of women. *

In terms of age, the panel had a slightly larger number of young members (2) between the ages of 18-25 (14%) than the borough (9%). In the age group 26-45 (6 members) the panel had a slightly higher percentage (43%) than the borough (39%). The 46-65 age group the panel (5 members – 36%) was over double the borough average of 17%. In the over 65 age group the panel almost exactly matched the borough percentage with 7% against 8%. Overall the panel reflects the borough well in terms of age. The majority of the panel members in the age group 46-65 were at the younger end of the scale.*

This indicates that with future recruitment the emphasis should be on younger members 18 to 45 and those over 65. Also the panel will need more male applicants to match the borough profile. With diversity monitoring an integral feature of the application form, and most new applicants seemly content to provide this information, future reports should be able to give statistically detailed information on ethnicity. However, the panel currently has the appearance of being diverse.

The recruited and accredited members of the panel at the end of the year were:

Dr Samuel Wynter, Chair	Ms Georgina Samuels (Sabbatical from February)
Ms Sandra Gouveia, Vice Chair	Mr Harold Blackett
Ms Diane McCready	Ms Sybil Stair
Mr Noel Barrett	Ms Ihesha Blackman
Ms Natascha Franklin	Ms Rachel Williams
Mr Stephen Cooke	Ms Maxine Corr (Sabbatical)
Mr Kenneth Ossuala	
Ms Rose Bruce	

*based on projections derived from the 2001 census calculated by DMAG - the Data Management and Analysis Group - based at the Greater London Authority (GLA). These data comparisons are confined to apparent strands of diversity only.

Visits to Police Stations

There are three custody suites in the borough of Haringey, these are Tottenham and Hornsey which are fully operational and open 24 hours per day and also Wood Green which is only used when the other 2 stations are full or if there are any special operations taking place within the borough which may create a influx of detainees.

The majority of our reports have not raised many significant issues that required the attention of the MPA. It is a source of satisfaction to the panel that there have been few, if any, complaints from detainees on how they are treated at any station. However, there have been a few recurring issues that have been raised.

- The FME service generated most requests for a response, usually concern over the time taken between a call made for an FME to attend and his/her arrival. Also the FME facilities were criticised on occasions. The room was often found to be unlocked, or the cupboards within the room containing medical supplies, including medication and scissors, were found to be unlocked.
- Panel members continue to be concerned over detainees' access to showers and washing facilities. Whilst each custody suite has a shower and washing facilities, it is extremely rare that these are used.
- Problems around NSPIS custody recording were raised at meetings. The issues were usually to do with required actions either not being done or not being recorded. This included the recording of periodic checks (15 or 30 minute) on vulnerable detainees, the completion of Section 18 searches, detainees receiving rights and requests for FME attendance.
- Issues around the cleanliness and tidiness of the custody suites

Fortunately, no significant issues have been raised in 2008 that have required intervention and ICVs have been well received and accommodated by Custody Staff. Police staff were mentioned in 17 visit report forms. In all but four the comments were positive and resulted in emails of commendation to the officer's line manager. The relationship with custody staff has continued to be positive and professional and panel meetings are well attended by members of the Custody Management.

It is apparent that some officers are unaware of the existence of ICVs and this can occasionally cause delay and confusion. The problem is mainly restricted to constables who are drafted in to work in custody. Whilst instruction on the ICV role does form part of an officers training, at Haringey, ICVs are encouraged to contribute by explaining the work they do to new recruits. There are now some extremely good and experienced Designated Detention Officers (DDOs) working in our stations.

It has been relatively rare for there to be a delay in the granting of access to the custody suite, despite visits being carried out at busy times. It should be noted that only on the grounds of safety should ICVs be prevented from accessing the custody area.

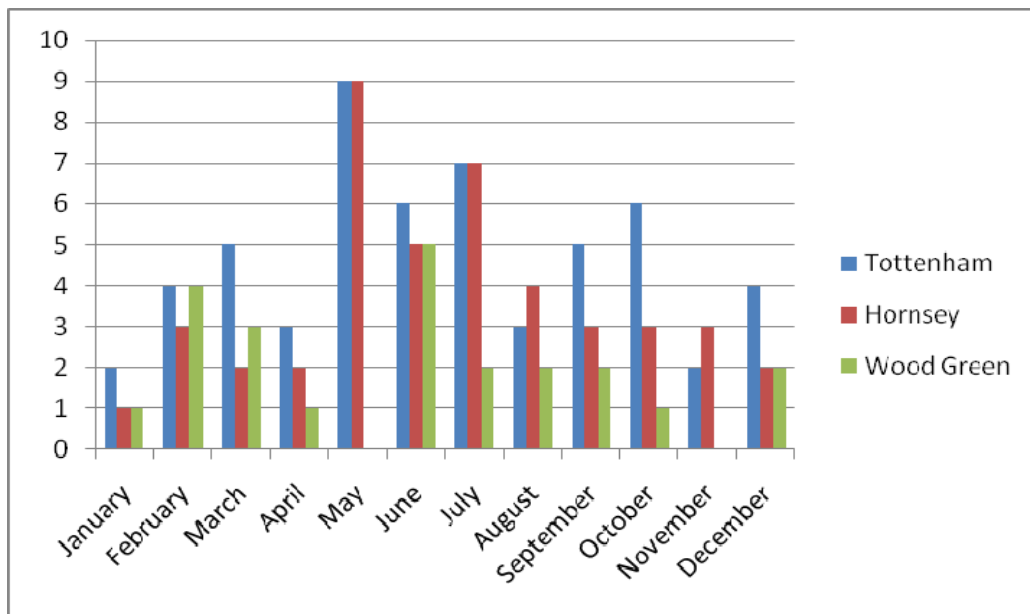
There were no significant concerns raised during the year that have not been addressed and dealt with either during a custody visit or through the monthly panel meetings.

Data from Panel Visits

1. Number of Visits

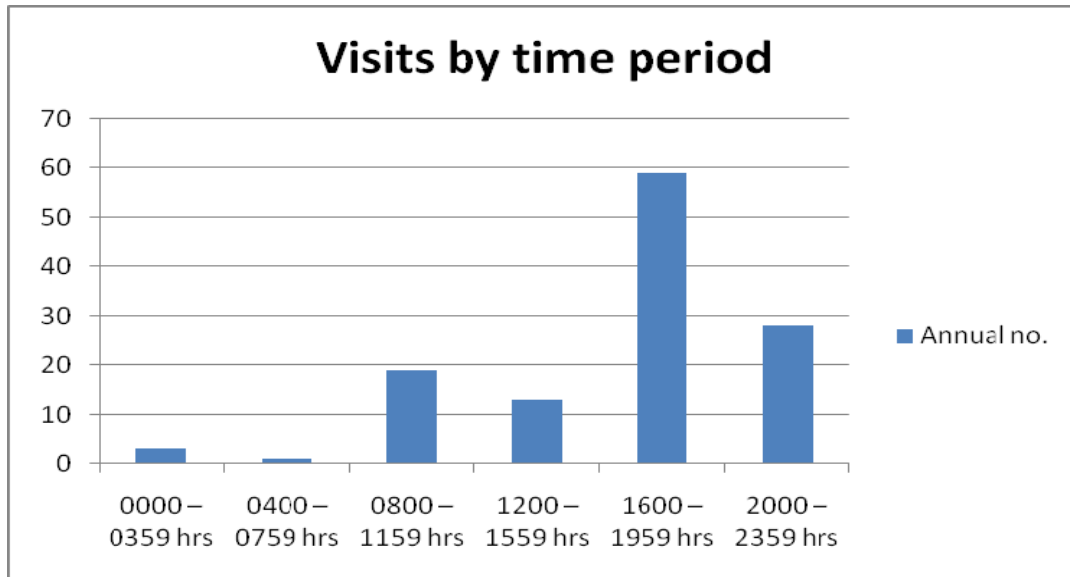
Station	Annual no. of visits	% of Annual Target*
Tottenham	56	107.6%
Hornsey	44	84.6%
Wood Green	23	N/A

*Annual Target is 52 visits per 24/7-custody suite.



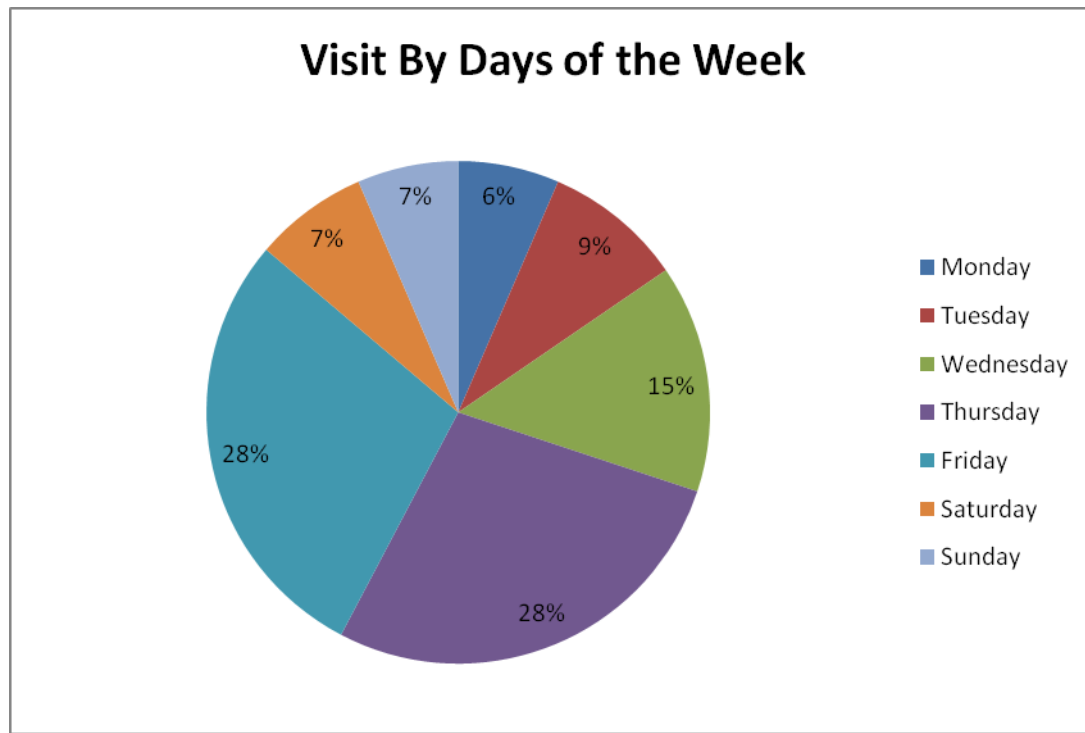
2. Time of Visits

Time Period	Annual no.	% of Total Visits
0000 – 0359 hrs	3	2.4%
0400 – 0759 hrs	1	0.8%
0800 – 1159 hrs	19	15.4%
1200 – 1559 hrs	13	10.6%
1600 – 1959 hrs	59	48%
2000 – 2359 hrs	28	22.8%



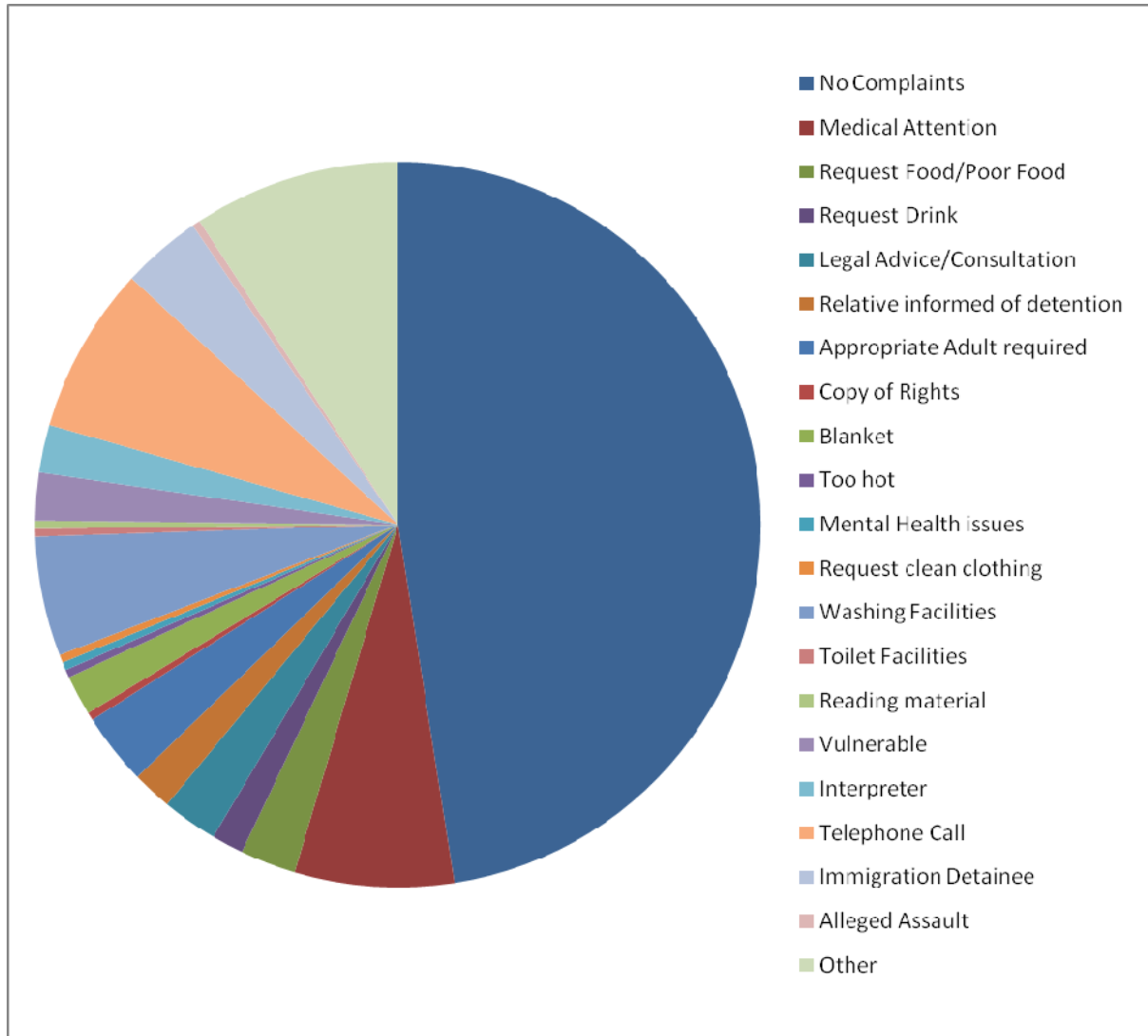
3. Days of Visits

Day	No. of visits	% of total visits
Monday	8	6.5%
Tuesday	11	8.9%
Wednesday	18	14.6%
Thursday	34	27.6%
Friday	35	28.5%
Saturday	9	7.3%
Sunday	8	6.5%
Total	123	



4. Details of detainees' concerns:

No Complaints	134	Request clean clothing	1
Medical Attention	20	Washing Facilities	15
Request Food/Poor Food	7	Toilet Facilities	1
Request Drink	4	Reading material	1
Legal Advice/Consultation	7	Vulnerable	6
Relative informed of detention	5	Interpreter	6
Appropriate Adult required	9	Telephone Call	21
Copy of Rights	1	Immigration Detainee	10
Blanket	5	Alleged Assault	1
Too hot	1	Other	26
Mental Health issues	1		



5. Details of issues raised during visits requiring a police response (matters listed on part 1 of the visit report forms).

The majority of the panel's visit reports did not raise major issues that were not resolved at the time of the visit. Those issues that were recorded as 'requiring a police response' fell into the following general categories.

- a. Problems reported concerned with the infrastructure and furnishings in the custody suites. These were wide ranging, including: damage to plaster in cells, faulty plumbing and non-operational entry phones etc
- b. General tidiness and cleanliness in the custody areas – cells and rooms.
- c. Matters relating to FME service. These included both the service provided by FMEs – their attendance times etc – and also the condition of FME facilities and equipment.
- d. Custody Officers mentioned both negative and positive reports
- e. NSPIS record keeping. The perception that either the custody record was not being properly maintained or that checks, reviews etc were being missed.
- f. Perceived risks to detainees including debris seen in the cells such as articles of clothing and old food containers
- g. Procedural issues such AAs not being used; periodic checks not being maintained and issues concerning detainee rights and entitlements such as notifying relative of detention, requests for food, drink and opportunities for washing.
- h. Temperature in the custody areas/cells and availability of blankets.

	No.
Report forms with no matters requiring a police response	43
Infrastructure/furnishings/fitings	9
Cleaning, tidiness and general hygiene	18
FME Service and FME room	21
All comments/ commendations about individual officers (4 negative)	17
NSPIS record keeping	12
Perceived risk to detainees such as debris in cells etc	13
Procedures not followed e.g. A/A not attending	10
Rights & Entitlements seemingly delayed	10
Periodic checks (15, 30 minute etc) not maintained	8
Personal hygiene – requests showers, washing facilities etc	8
Requests for food & drink	6
Temperature and availability of blankets	5
Other	5

Plans for Forthcoming Year 2009

Targets:

- To make a total of 52 visits over the year at a rate of one visit per week to both Tottenham and Hornsey stations and also conduct visits where necessary to Wood Green station
- To maintain the excellent distribution of visits across the week.
- To improve the distribution of the times of visits across the 24 hour period, to include visits between 00:00 and 15:59 hours.
- To maintain panel membership above a minimum of 17 volunteers.
- To maintain and improve upon the level of communication with Haringey police, the custody manager during panel meetings and custody staff during visits.
- To maintain and improve communications with other important organisations within the community such as the Haringey Community & Police Consultative Group
- To continue to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees are upheld. To raise concerns promptly and effectively with the local police or the MPA as appropriate and to challenge where appropriate.
- To ensure that all new recruits receive local and MPA training and that existing members of the panel undertake refresher training at least once during their three-year tenure.
- Together with the MPA, to continue to promote and raise awareness of the work of Independent Custody Visitors.
- To attempt, through the application of an equal opportunities recruitment policy, to ensure that the panel reflects the diversity of the London Borough of Haringey across all strands.
- To investigate new initiatives designed to target different types of people and increase the take up of the ICV role.

