



Metropolitan Police Authority

**HAVING
AND
REDBRIDGE
INDEPENDENT
CUSTODY VISITING
PANEL**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2008**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the annual report of the Havering and Redbridge Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) Panel.

This annual report covers the period from 01/01/08 to 31/12/08.

The purpose of this report is to give a general overview of the work of the Havering and Redbridge ICV Panel and:

- Evaluate the panel's performance in 2008
- Provide the local community and the Metropolitan Police Authority (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 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 for Havering and Redbridge, 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.

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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Havering and Redbridge panel currently makes one scheduled visit per week to both Romford (Havering) and Ilford (Redbridge) police stations. This meets the minimum requirement of one visit per week per 24/7 custody suite, that the MPA sets panels as a target. The panel has maintained a good visiting level of 88.5% to Ilford station and 94.2% to Romford station over 2008.

Havering and Redbridge Panel meetings have been held every two months, alternating between Ilford (Redbridge) Police Station and Havering Town Hall in Romford. These meetings are well attended by both panel members and the police and the venues continue to be most satisfactory. The panel wishes to extend its thanks to Borough Commander of Redbridge, for allowing it to meet at Ilford Police Station.

The panel's police liaison officers in Ilford have changed over the course of 2008, with custody Sergeant Sarah White leaving at the end of the year. She will be replaced by Sergeant Eunice Ridout, in the early part of 2009; however PC Clive Yeoman has been available to the panel during periods of transition, and provided feedback at meetings. The Havering borough liaison has remained the duty of Sergeant Ian Lowe.

The police liaison officers continue to assist the panel in its work, and the panel wishes to thank them for their cooperation and help in investigating any concerns and observations, and also in answering questions at panel meetings.

The Chair and Vice-Chair have represented the panel at meetings of the London ICV Chairs and at Cluster meetings.

The MPA also carried out a diversity monitoring exercise in 2008 and is currently processing this data to assist panels and the scheme as a whole.

The MPA deems that panels with two police stations to visit weekly require a membership of 17 ICVs, as this allows for ICVs to maintain a visiting level of one visit per month, as laid out in the scheme handbook and memorandum of understanding. Therefore the panel's membership in Havering and Redbridge has done extremely well to manage such visiting levels on the numbers it had especially towards the end of 2008. Recruitment at the end of the year resulted in three new volunteers for the panel for the start of 2009 and it is hoped that this recruitment will continue until numbers are at the required level.

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 good.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Since the beginnings of custody visiting in London panels have worked hard in their role, in order to secure the accountability of the police to the local communities they serve, bringing police and communities closer together and enhancing public perception of police procedures and practices. It is hoped that this annual report will aid in this task, by providing the community with information about the work the panel has carried out on its behalf in 2008.

ICVs very often address needs such as the provision of clean cells, clean bedding, appropriate food and washing facilities - and reassuring the public that this is so. We have found that on the whole the police welcome our input as independent members of the public observing and recording what is happening in the custody suite at any time, as well as sometimes raising issues and/or oversights reported by detainees, in order to get problems sorted out. For their part the detainees are often only too pleased that somebody has taken the trouble to check that they are being treated properly. Generally during its visits the panel has found that detainees held in custody are being treated correctly, in accordance with their rights and entitlements, and that the police in this part of London continue to demonstrate high standards of professionalism and commitment in their work.

The Havering and Redbridge panel meets regularly to discuss visits made and representatives attend these meetings from the MPS stations in its area. Police representatives are present in order to respond to any queries the panel members may have raised in connection with their visits to stations. We have had some issues to deal with around health and safety, mainly in the replacement of broken or hazardous equipment in the custody area, but eventually these matters were dealt with to a satisfactory conclusion.

The panel suffered from a number of resignations in 2008, due to changes in people's personal circumstances but it endeavoured to recruit new members in order to maintain visiting levels, and now has 14 members on the panel. Some further work in this area is required in 2009 and it is hoped we will reach our target of 17 by late spring.

I would like to thank all the officers we come in to contact with, in Havering and Redbridge boroughs. Overall the police work very hard to facilitate our visits and any requirements we have during these times, despite often being under pressure from the increasing demands of the custody suite.

Thanks must also go to the panel members for all their hard work and commitment to their visits and the meetings over the past year. Roy Pursey became my Vice-Chair in October 2008.

Stephen Phillips
Havering and Redbridge ICVP Chair
February 2009

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 2008 the Havering and Redbridge panel was made up of the following accredited members:

Name	Appointed
Amarjit Phull	2002
Frederick (George) Ford	2004
Joyce Ragbir	2004
Roy Pursey	2002
Stephen Philips	2000
Roger Dixon	2006
Philip Feldman	2006
Alison Maybin	2007
Victor Omoyinmi	2007

The following member(s) joined

Linda Powell	2008
Manisha Kumar	2008

The following members resigned/de-accredited

Amanda-Rose McKimmie	2003
Bernice Alexander	2003
Deborah Regal	2007
Leena Chotai	2007
Norma Williams	2003
Robert Lee	2001

The panel comprises of seven men and four women with varying diversity in age and ethnicity.

Recruitment

Three applicants were recently successful at interview and are awaiting the completion of the vetting and accreditation process.

Should these stages be successful the diversity of its members and the gender balance would be improved.

It is hoped that by the spring of 2009 the panel will have recruited another three or four members to meet the recommended membership level of 17 for a two station panel.

VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

Good standards of care have been noted at all stations however, despite the pressures on police.

There have been few major concerns this year. The relationship with the custody staff has continued to be positive and the panel is happy with the way in which custody staff have explained the ICV role to detainees, and answered any queries they might have during visits. 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 Ilford and Romford stations.

ICVs have noted issues around health and safety in both stations. They have brought to the attention of staff, matters such as the FME rooms being left unlocked/open with sharps boxes and other medical items being left out. Faulty DNA fridges have been reported and subsequently replaced, and they have written to the Borough Commander in Havering about issues that affect the health and safety of staff in the custody areas too.

At over 90% of visits being completed, the panel is doing well at maintaining high levels of visiting overall. Visit performance dipped slightly (by less than 1%) but this can be linked with a fall in membership and the availability of ICVs over the summer period. Only three visits were missed to Romford over the year, but six were missed to Ilford, of a target of 52 per year to each station.

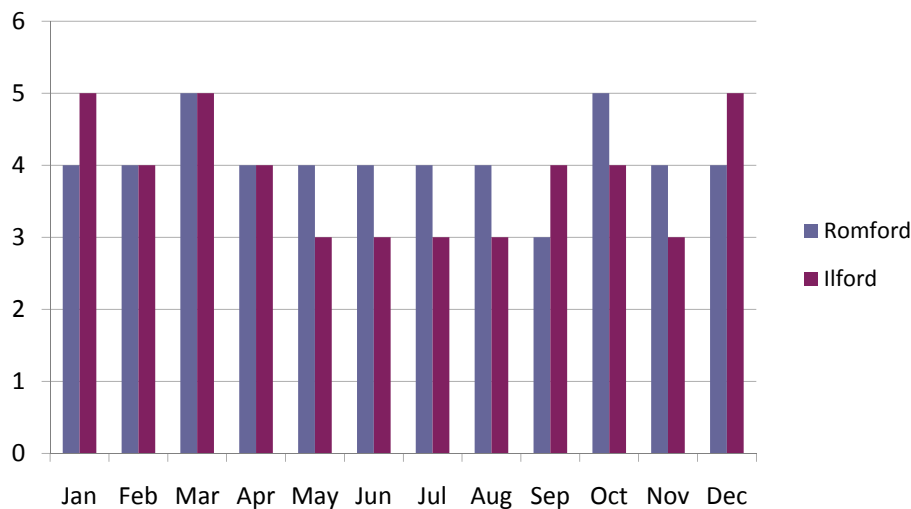
DATA FROM PANEL VISITS

Visit Figures from 1 April to 31 December 2008

1. Number of Visits

Station	Annual no. of visit	% Annual Target
Romford (Havering)	49	94.2%
Ilford (Redbridge)	46	88.5%
Total	95	91.35%

*MPA Annual Target is 52 visits per 24/7-custody suite – pro rata where applicable.

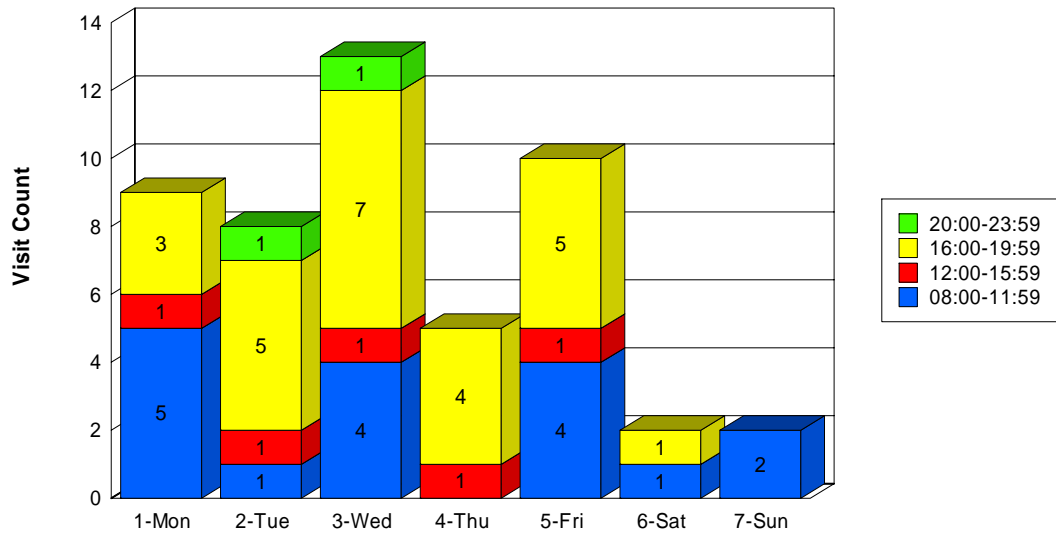


2. Time and day of visits – All stations

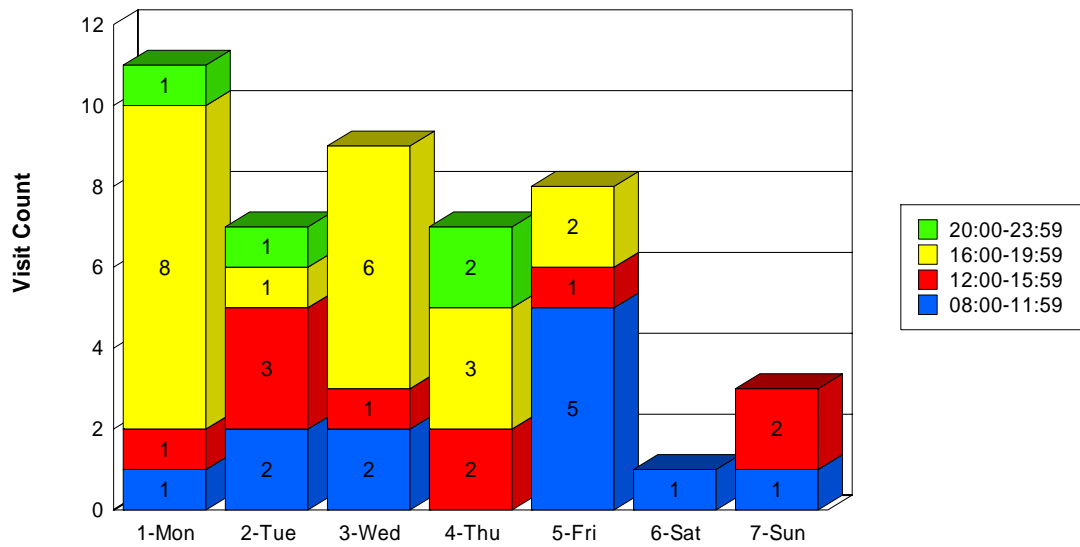
Time period	Annual no.	% of all visits
0000 – 0359 hrs	0	0
0400 – 0759 hrs	0	0
0800 – 1159 hrs	29	30.5
1200 – 1559 hrs	15	16.5
1600 – 1959 hrs	45	47
2000 – 2359 hrs	6	6
Total	95	100

Time period	Annual no.	% of all visits
Monday	20	21
Tuesday	15	16.5
Wednesday	22	23
Thursday	12	12.5
Friday	18	19
Saturday	3	3
Sunday	5	5
Total	95	100

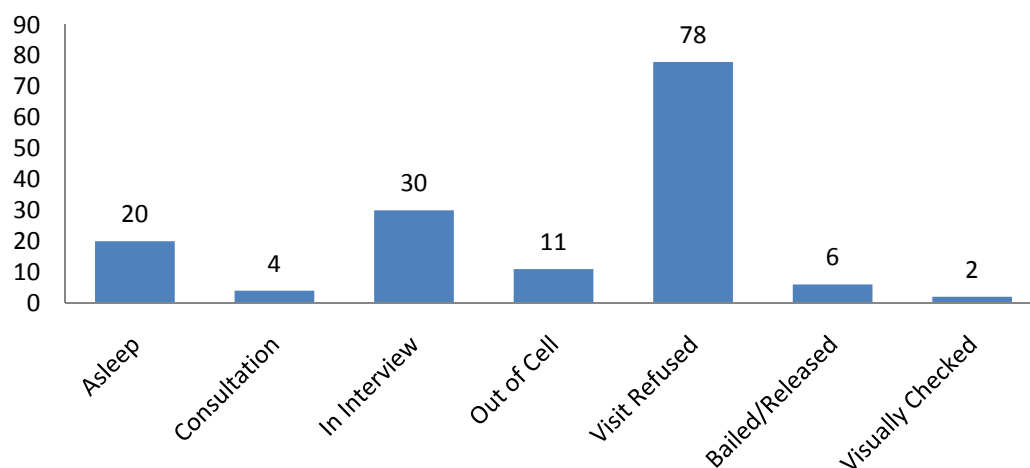
Havering station time and day of visits



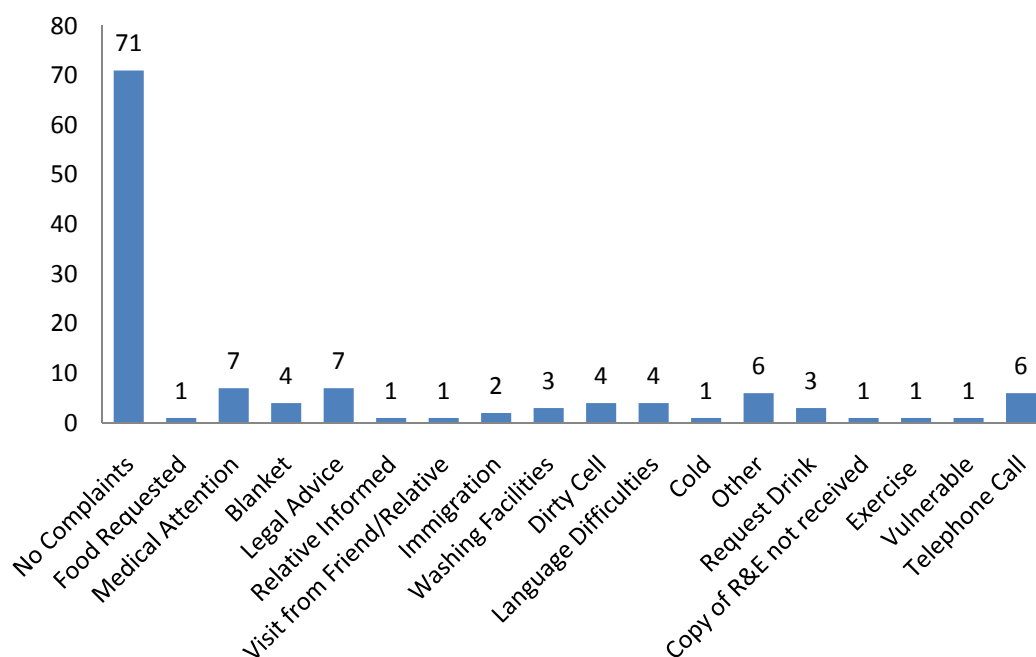
Redbridge station time and day of visits



3. Reasons detainees not seen - Havering



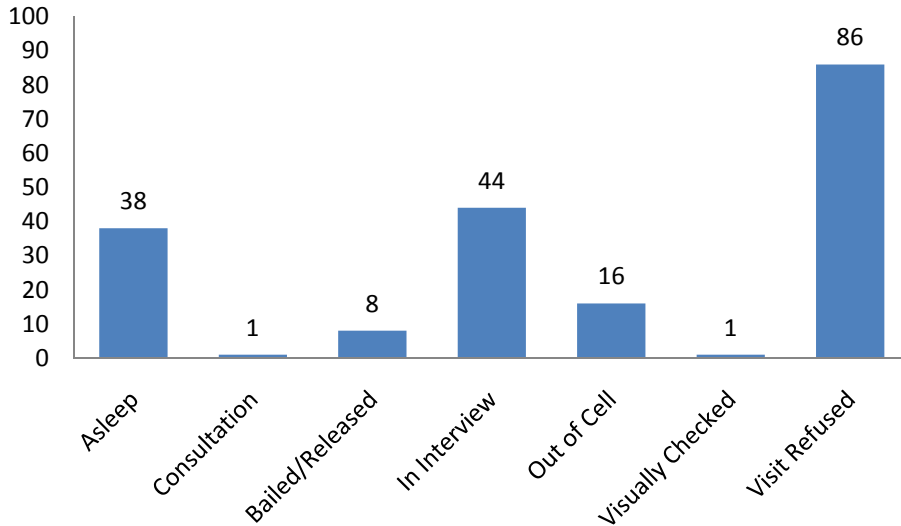
Primary issue/concern raised by detainees seen - Havering



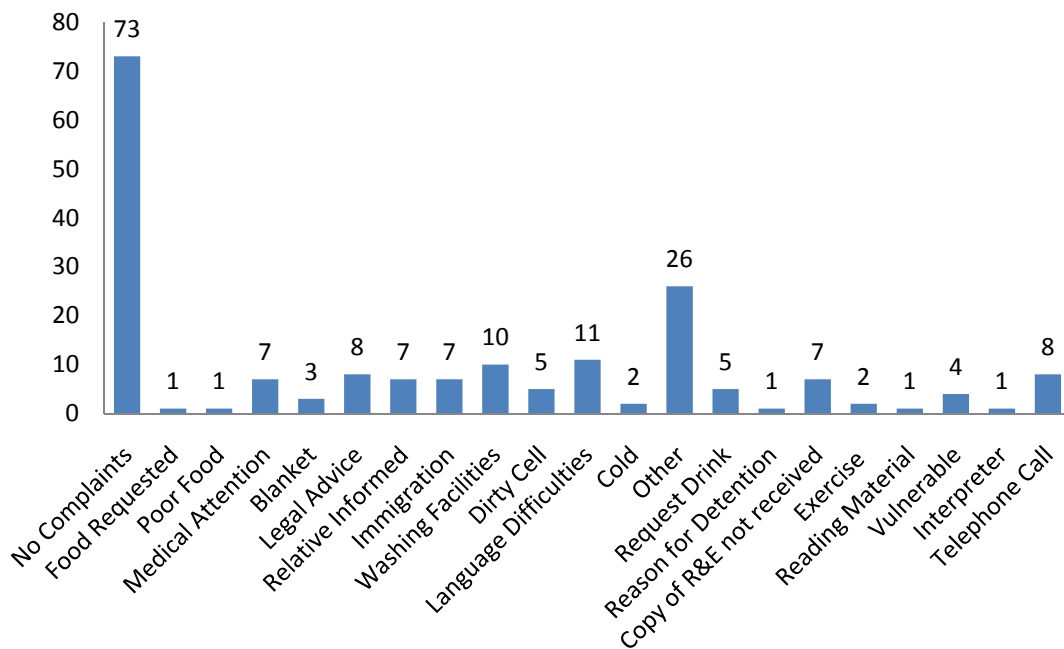
Havering

Reason detainee was seen or not	Annual no.	% of all DPs*
Detainees seen	124	45%
Detainees who refused to be seen	78	28.5%
Detainees not seen for other reasons	73	26.5%
Total	275	100%

Reasons detainees not seen – Redbridge



Primary issue/concern raised by detainees seen – Redbridge



Redbridge

Reason detainee was seen or not	Annual no.	% of all DPs*
Detainees seen	190	49.5%
Detainees who refused to be seen	86	22.5%
Detainees not seen for other reasons	108	28%
Total	384	100%

4. Overall detainee total held in police custody in Havering

No. held January – December 2008 in Havering	6521
No. held in custody during independent custody visits - 2008	275
% of total custody figure in detention during ICV visits - 2008	4.2%

Overall detainee total held in police custody in Redbridge

No. held January – December 2008 in Redbridge	8489
No. held in custody during independent custody visits - 2008	384
% of total custody figure in detention during ICV visits - 2008	4.5%

Combined overall detainee figures for those held in police custody in Havering and Redbridge

No. held January – December 2008 in Havering & Redbridge	15010
No. held in custody during independent custody visits - 2008	659
% of total custody figure in detention during ICV visits - 2008	4.4%

PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING **YEAR 2009**

Targets:

- To visit once per week to Ilford and Romford Police Stations.
- A monthly visit to Barkingside Station when it is in use.
- To ensure the minimum panel membership of 17 volunteers (as stipulated by the MPA) is achieved and maintained.
- To improve links and feedback between the panel and the local Community and Police Consultative Committees in each borough.
- To raise the profile of the panel and scheme across the borough through wider circulation of the annual report and publicity materials.