



METROPOLITAN POLICE AUTHORITY

# Bromley Independent Custody Visitors Panel

## Annual Report 2010

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# INTRODUCTION

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

This report covers the period from 01/01/2010 to 31/12/2010. The purpose of this report is to give a general overview of the panel's work and:

- Provide the local community and the MPA with information about the visits made, including the treatment of those held in custody
- Evaluate the panel's performance over the period
- Present any issues and concerns that have arisen
- Set out the objectives for 2011.

ICVs are volunteers from the local community who visit police stations to check on the treatment and conditions of people held in police custody. The MPA is responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing all custody visitors and tries to ensure that the panel is as diverse as the community it represents. 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.

The MPA has a legal obligation under the Police Reform Act 2002 to ensure that a custody visiting scheme operates in its area. 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 and a member of MPA staff is responsible for supporting the panel.

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 borough has one 24/7 operational custody suite at Bromley Police Station, which the panel visits once a week. Orpington station custody suite is used as an overflow and visited when in use.

# AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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.

In the panel's previous report the panel specified their aims for the coming year as being:

- to maintain their excellent visiting record of 100%.
- to ensure that their visits were more evenly spread across every day of the week and undertake a few visits at anti-social times.
- to continue to undertake more community engagement work to raise the profile of the scheme locally, including improving links with the local Community Engagement Group.
- To target recruitment at the male population of the borough aged between 18 and 45.

As the statistics in this report show, the panel's visiting record is excellent. A total of 52 visits were made to Bromley police station during 2010, which means they achieved 100% of their target.

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. They have also assisted with visits in other boroughs where panels have had a shortage of members, and this has been greatly appreciated by the MPA and the other panels.

The Chair has attended meetings of other local community groups and given presentations on the work of ICVs in order to raise the awareness of the scheme more widely.

There was a recruitment drive for ICVs across the whole of the MPA, however, in Bromley, the group that needed to be targeted were not the group that responded, however, there was successful recruitment for the panel in 2010 with on new member and we look to recruit another one in 2011.

# CHAIR'S REPORT

Once again, the past year has been a busy and productive one for the Bromley Independent Custody Visitors Panel. We have carried out our weekly visits to Bromley police station and I am delighted to report that, once again, we have achieved a 100% record in this respect. During the past year, Orpington police station has not been called into use but should this happen we would, of course, recommence our visits there.

Over the past 12 months, the Chair and Vice Chair were pleased to assist with visiting Bexleyheath police station while the Panel responsible recruited and trained new panel members. The Chair and the Vice Chair also regularly attend the meetings of the Bromley Community Engagement Forum of which we are members. Our Panel meeting in May was attended by James Cleverly who is the MPA Link Member for Bromley and Bexley and we were delighted that several members of the Bexley panel were able to join us. At a meeting later in the year we were given a fascinating insight into his work by John Best, from Bromley Community Drug Project. The same meeting was attended by Cathy Daniele, Bromley Criminal Justice Manager who explained her role to us.

During the past year, Inspector Linda Fitzsimons retired from the Metropolitan Police Service. During her tenure as Custody Inspector, she had been a great supporter of the Panel and of great assistance to us. Her role has been ably filled by Inspector Ian Johnson and we would like to place on record the thanks of the Panel to him and all the custody staff for the helpful, courteous and professional attitude shown to us during our visits. We are proud that the custody suite in Bromley is run to a very high standard. However, we as Custody Visitors do not allow ourselves to become complacent and remain vigilant in ensuring that all detainees are treated fairly and receive their rights in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. We are pleased to note that there appears to be an increase in the number of detainees making use of washing/showering facilities when held overnight. The introduction of the Virtual Court has also helped to reduce the time certain people are held in police detention.

I congratulate and thank the Panel members for the diligence and enthusiasm with which they carry out their visits, attend Panel meetings and MPA training sessions. The core of the Panel continues to remain stable although currently one Visitor has taken a sabbatical year and another longstanding member succumbed to a serious illness. He is much missed by us all. We were also delighted to welcome a new member to the Panel and were pleased that she was able to attend the ICVA Annual Conference very soon after her appointment. Three members attended the MPA Christmas Social which, as always, was a very enjoyable evening.

Finally, my thanks go to ICV Scheme Manager and the team at the MPA. Their help and assistance make the job of the Chair a pleasure to carry out. I look forward to continuing to work with both our ICV Coordinator and the MPA in harmony in the year to come.

**Margaret Gubbins - Bromley ICVP Chair 2010**

# 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.

**During 2010 the panel had the following members:**

Margaret Gubbins (Chair)  
Brenda Rayson (Vice-chair)  
Margaret Walker  
Swarn Riat  
Tim Griffin  
Lorna Prentice

**The following members joined:**

Joanne Rixom

**During the year the following members took a sabbatical from the panel:**

Gillian Johnson

**Sadly, a member of the panel passed away in 2010, James Lewis.**

The MPA conducted an optional diversity monitoring exercise during 2008 which has enabled the panel to consider how well it reflects the community it represents. According to data from the London Development Agency just over 11% of the borough of Bromley is of a non-white background. The panel just exceeds this percentage of non-white members in its makeup.

To be eligible to become an Independent Custody Visitor, volunteers must be at least 18. According to London Development Agency statistics approximately 9% of the borough is aged between 18 and 25 and 31% between 26 and 45. Unfortunately the panel does not reflect this breakdown as only one of the panel members is from these age groups. The panel again does not match the areas age make up as 75% of the panel are aged over 65, when only 15% of the borough is of that age group.

On gender the panel does not match local data by over 10%, as it comprises of five women and just two men. Within the borough nearly 52% of the population are women.

The panel is currently one member short of the required number of visitors and so efforts will be made during the year to raise awareness of the scheme amongst the 18-45 age ranges and target recruitment at these groups.

# STATION VISIT ISSUES

The borough has one 24/7 operational custody suite (Bromley Police Station). In line with the scheme in the rest of London, this station is visited once a week. The borough also occasionally uses Orpington Police Station as an overflow facility, and when open is visited at least once per month, however, this was not necessary in 2010.

Bromley station is a large modern police station with 26 cells and during 2010 8827 detainees passed through the station. The panel had an excellent working relationship with the police representative, Inspector Linda Fitzsimons however, she resigned during the year and the panel welcomed Inspector Ian Johnson, who ably took her place, attending panel meetings and providing prompt responses to the issues raised. Throughout the year the panel has noted the courteous and helpful attitude of custody staff at Bromley Police Station, and the excellent cleanliness of the facilities there.

The panel is pleased to report that there have been no major issues or concerns relating to police custody at Bromley Police Station and are happy to see more detainees making use of washing/showering facilities during 2010.

Overall the panel finds the conditions and treatment of detainees in Bromley to be very good and the standard of cleanliness to be very high and hopes to see this standard maintained in 2010.

# DATA FROM STATION VISITS

## 1. Number of visits

Station	Annual no. of visits	% of Annual Target*
Bromley	52	100%
Orpington	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

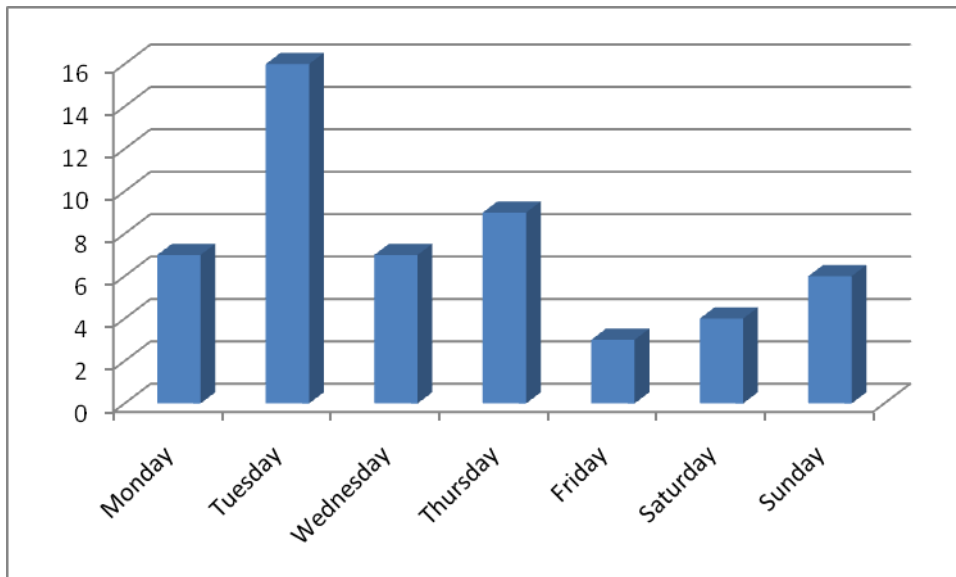
## 2. Visits by Day and Time

Independent Custody Visits are unannounced and the panel's intention is to avoid visiting in a predictable pattern.

The chart below displays the number of visits carried out at Bromley in 2010, by time period and day of the week.

### Days of visits

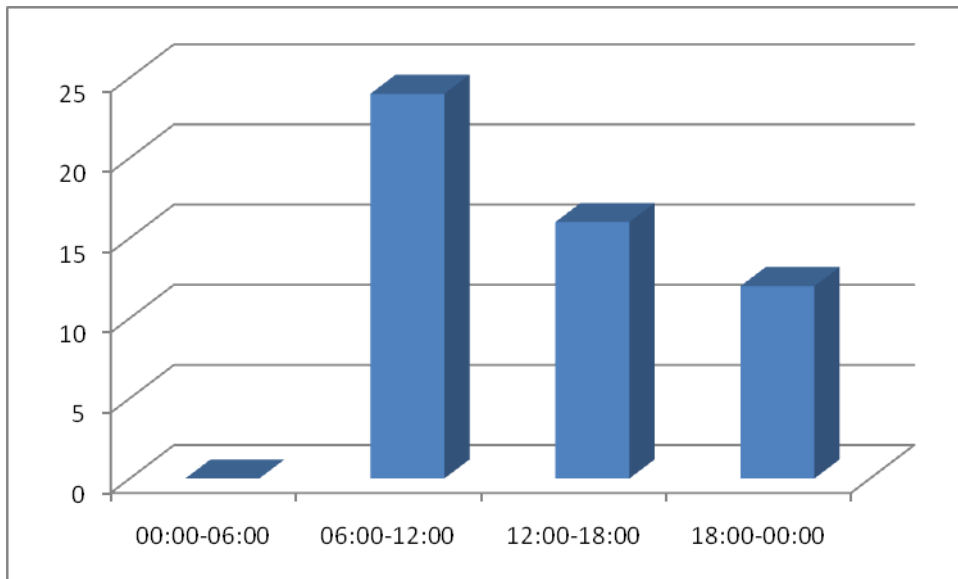
As can be seen from the graph below, the most popular day of the week for the panel to conduct visits was on Tuesdays, with visits being spread more evenly on other days of the week.





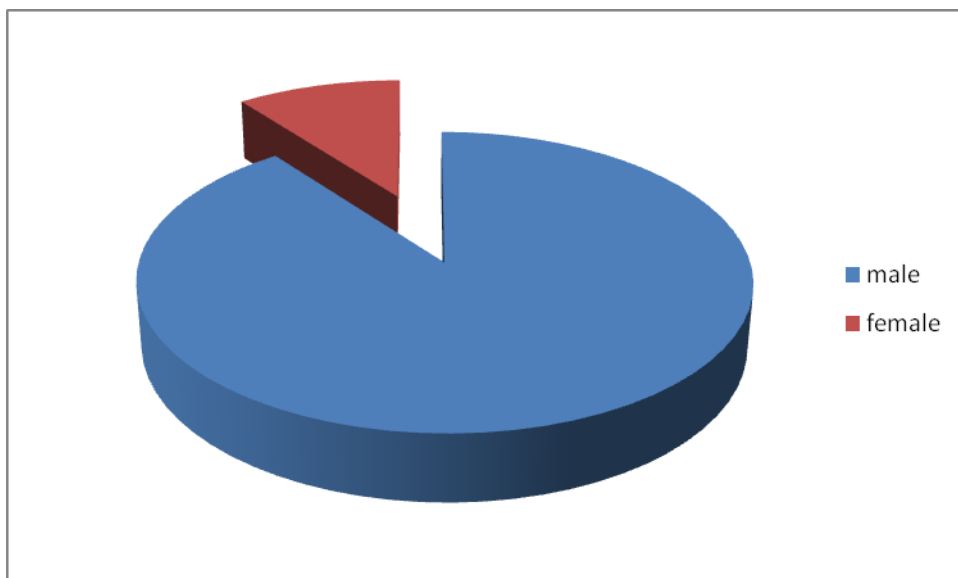
### Times of visits – by 6 hour period

As the graph below demonstrates, there were no visits conducted by the Bromley panel before 6am, the most popular time for visits was late morning.

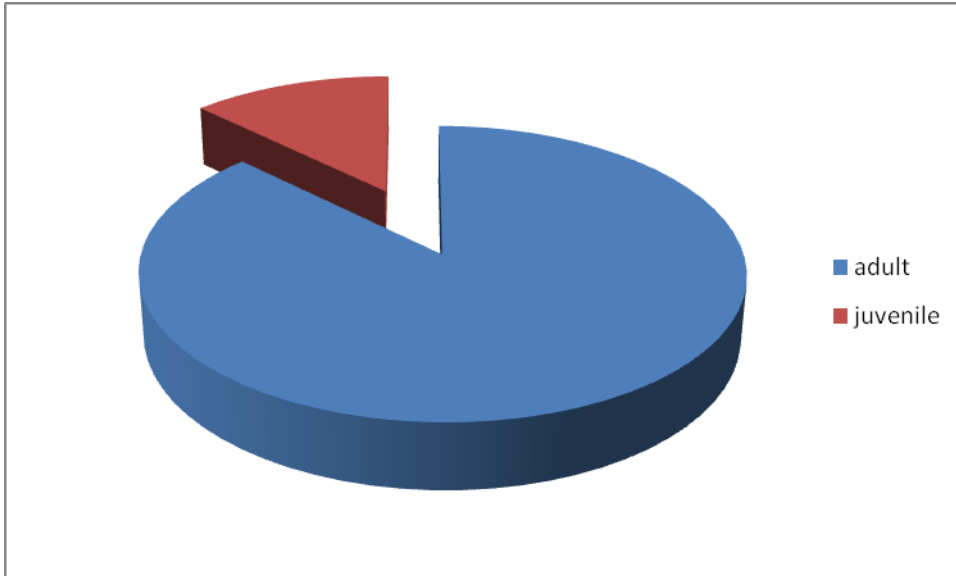


### 3. Demographics of detainees

The pie chart below shows the percentages of detainees held according to gender. As can be seen, the vast majority held in Bromley were male.

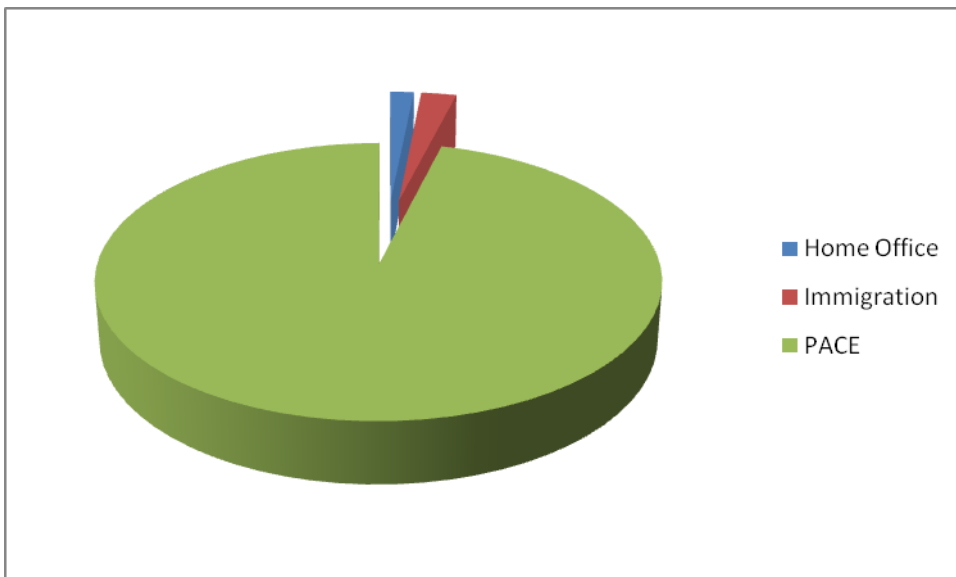


The pie chart below shows the percentages of detainees held according to age group. As can be seen, the majority held were adults (over 18).



#### 4. Categories of detainees

The pie chart below shows the categories that those held in custody in Bromley were detained under. As can be seen the vast majority were held under PACE, with a small minority being held under Immigration and Home Office (this being those recalled from prison).



## **5. Visit Concerns**

When visitors speak to detainees they record any concerns that detainees raise with them.

Visitors do not wake detainees if they are asleep, but they will usually check through the wicket in the door that all looks well in the cell. Visitors check concerns raised by detainees against their custody record (where the detainees give permission for them to do so), and will bring matters to the attention of the police if they remain concerned about any aspect of the detainee's treatment or welfare. Most minor concerns can be resolved during the course of the visit and only more major concerns or more complicated issues will be discussed at a meeting of the whole panel.

Over the course of the year there have been very few issues raised by ICVs, and those that have tend to fall into categories such as requests for reading material, drinks or food.

# OBJECTIVES FOR 2011

During 2011 the panel, with the support of their MPA coordinator, will strive to achieve the aims set out below:

- During 2010 the panel completed 100% of their scheduled weekly visits to Bromley police station. They will aim to maintain this excellent record in 2011.
- The panel will aim to ensure that their visits are more evenly spread across every day of the week and undertake a few visits at anti-social times. This will require the coordinator and panel to monitor statistics of visits they have done at several points during the year and the panel to vary the times and days they visits if gaps are identified.
- The Bromley panel will continue to undertake more community engagement work to raise the profile of the scheme locally, including improving links with the local Community Engagement Group.
- In order to address the issues raised in the Recruitment and Membership section of this report any recruitment to the panel in Bromley will be targeted at the male population of the borough aged between 18 and 45.
- The panel will work with the MPA coordinator to ensure that all members can access refresher training, either in panel meetings or centrally at the MPA offices.