

Review of independent custody visiting in London

Ian Smith's report into the operation of the independent custody visiting scheme is due to be presented to the Authority in November 2004. The Community Engagement Committee agreed that a conference will be held in January/ February 2005 for all London ICVPs to review the recommendations arising from the report. A working group has already been set up to plan the details of the conference.

Details of the conference date and venue will be circulated to all panels towards the end of November.

CHANGE OF STAFF AT THE MPA

The MPA recently said goodbye to Ruth Tooley, Project Assistant for ICVPs as she took up a new post in Sheffield. Ruth did a sterling job with the panels and her work was hugely appreciated.

Her place has been taken by Agnes Kitto, a new hand at ICVPs, but someone who was previously a member of the Consultation, Diversity and Outreach Unit [now Community Engagement]. Agnes worked mainly on the CPCG side of things for eighteen months from November 2001 before joining the MPA's Planning and Performance Unit for a year. She is now back in Community Engagement and hopefully her previous experience will ensure a smooth transition.

Agnes said "I am very happy to be back in Community Engagement. I am particularly pleased to be working with ICVPs at a time of transition. I believe I bring a commitment to the task ahead coupled with a tremendous admiration for the work that our volunteer independent custody visitors carry out to ensure that the welfare of those detained in police custody is properly safeguarded."

Agnes can be contacted at the MPA Office, 10 Dean Farrar Street, London SW1H 0NY.
Tel:020 7202 0230 e-mail:agnes.kitto@mpa.gov.uk

Training Issues

The issue of training for new visitors was brought up at the last Chairs and Administrators' meeting in September. The MPA is responsible for providing the training and will reimburse the expenses incurred by Panels who host training sessions.

It is clear that a more comprehensive system of hosting training sessions is needed to allow for better planning by Panels for their recruitment and training needs, and an approach is being considered to publish a yearly calendar of training sessions.

The aim will be to have about six initial training sessions scheduled in throughout the year, with a spread of all day/ dual sessions and venues in different parts of London including at least two centrally in the MPA offices.

We have already had offers from three Panels to host a training session each, throughout next year and the programme is currently being firmed up. We still need an offer to host training in West and South London and if any Panel wants to offer a venue, please contact Agnes Kitto [020 7202 0230] to discuss it. As soon as the training calendar is complete it will be circulated to all Panels with details of how to nominate visitors to attend.

This would enable the initial training to be organised better and we can then discuss the management of refresher training in due course.

