

*Welcome to the fourth London Independent Custody Visitors newsletter. The focus of this issue is the highlights of the 2nd London Independent Custody Conference held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2006 at the Congress Centre. The newsletter also contains other news items that we hope will be of interest to you.*

*Photographs courtesy of Maurice blades, MPA*



The conference was extremely well attended with almost 200 people present. The evaluation report showed that 93% of all those who attended felt the conference met or exceeded their expectations.

There were representatives from nearly all the Panels in London as well as MPA Members and Staff, Officers from the MPS Custody Directorate, Custody Staff, Home Office, Borough Commanders, City of London Police, IPCC, (Independent Police Complaints Commission), ICVA (Independent Custody Visiting Association) amongst others.

Aneeta Prem, who was then the MPA Lead Member for Independent Custody Visiting opened the conference by stressing the importance of the work of ICVs in reassuring the public and reiterating the commitment of the MPA in improving the ICV Scheme in London.

The presentations from the speakers, an FME (Forensic Medical Examiner), a drugs referral worker, a nurse and mental health workers were informative and interesting. Commander Steve Allen, Head of Custody Directorate gave a presentation on the MPS Service Review. This presentation as well as those of the health speakers stimulated a lot of questions during the table discussions. Opportunities were given to tables to raise questions to the speakers. The tables and individual ICVS that didn't get a chance to put their questions directly to the speakers submitted their questions to the MPA who obtained the answers from the speakers. ICVs can request for a copy of the unanswered questions and the evaluation report by contacting their panel administrator or the MPA at the FREEPOST address. The questions and responses will also be posted on the MPA website. A summary of the speakers presentations follows inside.



**Commander Steve Allen,  
MPS Head of Criminal Justice**

- The MPS Service Review aims to create the right balance of policing for London in the 21st Century including a shift of resources into neighbourhood policing initiatives.
- There are plans for borough-based custody centres. Most will be 'new build' as current sites cannot be upgraded to standard. The first new sites should be open in about two years time.
- The new guidance on the 'Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Custody' has led to a greater emphasis on improved medical care for detainees
- From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 detainees will be tested for drugs on arrest rather than on charge.
- The MPS is reviewing the roles of health professionals in custody.
- The contribution of community groups such as custody visitors is vital to the work of the police. The MPS is committed to listening, hearing and responding to what ICVs have to say.
- In response to concerns raised by ICVs, it has been agreed that ICVs will no longer be required to sign the OSA, however ICVs need to be aware that, like other visitors to police stations, they are covered by its provision

**Dr. Michael Knight-FME,  
Force Medical Advisor and  
Occupational Health Physician  
to the Suffolk Constabulary**

- FMEs now dealing with detainees that have consumed/are withdrawing from large amounts of drugs (opiates, stimulants, benzos) or alcohol.
- There has also been an increase in dual diagnosis; physical illnesses, injuries/alcohol & drug abuse/injuries/mental health problems. Diagnosis have to be made without access to medical history.
- Many deaths in custody involve underlying physical conditions (e.g. heart problems), self harm, substance abuse, and or head injuries. Head injuries are particularly problematic as there may be no visible signs.
- Detainees who cannot walk or talk should be sent to hospital as should those whose level of consciousness is declining. Hence the importance of half hourly rousing which enables declining consciousness to be identified.
- Future will see a variety of health professionals working in custody suites and a multi-disciplinary approach.
- New centralised custody facilities will offer specialised medical facilities within a secure custodial environment as well as advice on social care, housing, benefit and financial issues and instant referral to drug and alcohol services.



*Table Discussions*



**Phil Howes, Social Worker Member of the Mental Health Act  
Inspector Bruce Frenchum, MPS Mental Health Project Team**

- Mental Health issues affect between one fifth and one third of the total UK population
- They can affect any one of any age, class or ethnic group.
- All major NHS Trusts in London have provisions for 'places of safety' for those considered a risk to themselves or others.
- However mental health patients are still found in police cells either because they have committed an offence or because NHS 'places of safety' in the vicinity are full.
- If the mentally ill commit an offence they should in many cases go through the normal process, leaving the court to decide if punishment or treatment is most appropriate
- Detainees with mental health issues can cause problems for the arresting officer, custody sergeants and FMEs.
- There is an urgent need for the MPS to send out clear messages on how offenders should be treated. The following is required;
  1. A clear statement from MPS on how such offenders are to be treated.
  2. More mental health training for FMEs.
  3. Clear policy statement from Crown Prosecution Service
  4. A strategy on alcohol, including overlap with mental illnesses.



*Phil Howes, Inspector Frenchum and Julia Green*



*Representatives from IPCC*

**Julia Green, Senior Practitioner of the Drug Intervention Programme's Arrest Referral Scheme**

- From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, drugs testing in custody suites will be on arrest not on charge
- Restrictions on bail will encourage those who test positive to talk to drug workers
- Drug referral schemes aims to get people into help after they leave custody
- Drug referral workers work proactively, visiting cells round the clock.
- Drug referral workers work for a variety of outcomes including making the best of client's lifestyle (e.g. clean needles) if he/she wishes to remain involved with drugs.



*Mark Sergeant*

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**Mark Sergeant-Mental Health Nurse, Criminal Justice Mental Health Liaison Team, Merseyside**

- Health of detainees across the criminal justice system is on the national agenda for the first time in a decade. The aim is to reduce crime through integration of services and to improve health care and health assessments.
- Safer Detention and Handling of persons in Police custody requires police to be pro active in addressing the mental and physical vulnerabilities of detainees.
- Key principles that will guide criminal justice system's handling of detainees with health problems including development of good practice, equal care to that provided in the health service,

development of multi-agency relationships, pathways to GP, community, hospital, court or prison and integration with health services to access beds, specialist teams etc.

- For these good intentions to work, permanent ring fenced monies are essential as are improved facilities to address the needs of vulnerable detainees and a change in culture so the needs of detainees are recognised as part of health and social care.

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*Left: Aneeta Prem, Right: Kerry McClelland*



**Kerry McClelland, ICV Scheme Manager**

- Keen to move custody visiting in London forward, to raise the profile of the Scheme, develop best practice and to produce tangible results.
- Determined to achieve increased recognition for custody visiting.
- More resources have been obtained to improve recruitment, training, marketing and communication.

- A new report form and database being trialed enables the MPA to monitor trends and issues around custody visiting. Feedback from panels will be taken into account before the final format of the form is decided.
- A policy framework is under development. A memorandum of understanding for volunteers is also being produced.

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**David Riddle, Deputy Chief Executive and Solicitor to the MPA**

- MPA is 18 months into a programme to improve support given to, and the organisation of custody visiting in London.
- The process is driven by a Programme Board elected by the chairs of London ICV Panels of which Rachel Harper-Chair of Tower Hamlets ICVP, Len Clark-Chair of Westminster North ICVP, Samuel Wynter-Chair of Haringey ICVP and Mick Farrant-Chair of Camden ICVP are members.
- Computerised database of ICVs is now up and running and will provide vital information to inform discussions on custody with the MPS.
- Other work under way include vetting period, ICV handbook and a review of the London ICV Scheme to achieve the best possible balance between local and regional levels.
- The MPA is undertaking a major review of administration arrangements provided to all the ICVP Panels. This review should provide a sustainable administrative support for ICV Panels in the long term.
- The MPA strongly welcomes the development of a set of protocols to deal with difficult or unusual situations. The MPA would especially like to thank Rachel Harper and Len Clark.

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**Acknowledgements**

*The MPA would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who contributed to making the conference a success: Conference chairs Rachel Harper and John May, Conference Planners: Len Clark, Avril Jones, Peter Tihanyi, Bernard Hanks, Jennifer Ankrah & John May, Conference Speakers, MPS Custody Directorate, Facilitators, Scribes, MPA staff and all ICVs and Guests who attended. Also to Dinah Gallop, Treasurer of Camden ICV Panel for her report on the speakers presentations which has been used in this Newsletter.*

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## Other News

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### ICV Scheme Staff at MPA

The ICV Scheme staff at the MPA is made up of Kerry McClelland, ICV Scheme Manager, Jennifer Ankrah, ICV Coordinator. Emma Nuttall the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICV Scheme Coordinator will be joining the team on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2006. Once all the staff are in place, the overall responsibility for panels will be split between the two Coordinators. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

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### Greetings from John Roberts, MPA Lead Member for Independent Custody Visiting

*Hello,*

*I'm John Roberts, the new MPA lead member for Independent Custody Visiting. I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to take forward this significant piece of work and as the new lead member I am keen to continue an open and transparent approach to developing the work around Custody Visiting.*

*I enjoyed meeting some of you at the ICV Conference in March and appreciated listening to the frank discussions that took place. Over the coming months I will be making some visits to boroughs and look forward to meeting more of you individually then. I am also happy to be contacted directly by email: [john.roberts@mpa.gov.uk](mailto:john.roberts@mpa.gov.uk)*

*I see Independent Custody Visiting as playing a vital role in developing openness and public confidence between the Police and the community. I am aware that it hasn't always been given the profile that it has deserved within the MPA or in the public arena generally. As lead member, I am committed to ensuring that this changes. I am also keen to ensure that the recurring issues raised by you concerning detainee's welfare are addressed.*

*In taking on this portfolio, I am aware that there is a lot of work to be done to further develop the ICV scheme in London and to ensure its effectiveness and resilience for the future. I see the current ongoing review of administrative arrangements as a key part of this. I will be working closely with Kerry to ensure that we move the scheme forward around many of the identified priority areas during the course of the next year.*

*Take care & happy visiting!*



*John Roberts*



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**Future newsletters will feature a 'questions and answers' section.**

**If you have any questions for John that you want answered please e-mail or write to him at:**

**John Roberts, ICV Scheme**  
MPA FREEPOST LON 17808  
10 Dean Farrar Street  
London SW1H 0NY

Please ensure the envelope is marked **John Roberts, ICV Scheme**

## **Official Secrets Act**

Following discussions between the MPA, Commander Steve Allen and Phil Flower, Head of Vetting for the MPS, it has been agreed that ICVs will **not** be required to sign the Official Secrets Act as part of Security Vetting.

The MPA would like to reassure ICVS of their commitment to ensuring that Panels concerns around vetting are listened to. Negotiations are taken place currently regarding the new vetting form.

All ICVs are requested to complete and return the existing yellow security clearance form (7091) if they have not done so already.

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## **Protocols Document**

The guidelines for ICVs faced with certain difficult situations have been prepared by members of the MPA Programme Board, Rachel Harper and Len Clark in consultation with the MPS Custody Directorate. The protocols document was introduced at a training and information session held at the MPA as well as a refresher training in Brent. Panels were asked to send a representative to the training session who could take the learning back to the Panel. 16 Panels were represented at the training session.

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## **Training Dates**

### **Initial Basic Training for New Visitors**

May 15th and 22nd	MPA	2 Monday evenings, 6pm-9pm (attendance required for both evening sessions)
July 3rd and 10th	Stratford	2 Monday evenings, 6pm-9pm (attendance required for both evening sessions)
September 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Westminster	Saturday session 10am -5pm
November 6th and 13th	MPA	2 Monday evenings 6pm-9pm (attendance required for both evening sessions)

*All new visitors are expected to have completed their training during their first six months.*

### **Refresher Training for Experienced Visitors**

Monday 12th June	6 - 9pm, hosted by Richmond ICVP
August, South London	to be arranged
October, North London	to be arranged
December, South East London	to be arranged.

*Experienced visitors are encouraged to attend a refresher training in their local area once a year.*

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## **ICVA National conference**

This years ICVA conference will be held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006 in Cambridge. Panels have been asked to nominate a representative who has not attended an ICVA conference before. The closing date for nominations is May 25<sup>th</sup> 2006. Due to the restricted numbers, it will not be possible to have a member of every Panel attend, but we would also like to offer as many Panels as possible the opportunity to send a representative.

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## **Future ICV London Conference**

ICVs from the conference planning team have suggested that future conference should have a training social element.

*If you have any suggestions on this or on any other issue(s) raised in this Newsletter or would like to suggest items for future newsletters, please send your letters to the MPA FREEPOST address below:*

ICV Scheme, MPA FREEPOST LON 17808, 10 Dean Farrar Street, London SW1H 0NY