



# London ICV Newsletter

June 2008

## London ICV Conference Report

The 3<sup>rd</sup> London Independent Custody Visitor's conference took place on Saturday the 26 April 2008 at the lovely Riverbank Park Plaza hotel. Nearly 200 delegates were expected, with 121 attending on the day – perhaps a result of the unusually warm weather. None the less, the conference auditorium was buzzing with ICVs catching up with old friends and fellow panel members or meeting visitors from other panels for the first time.

The main theme of the conference was around raising standards in custody. After a welcome by John Roberts, MPA lead member for Custody Visiting, delegates heard from Deputy Assistant Commissioner Rose Fitzpatrick who, on behalf of the Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, thanked ICVs for their commitment and dedication to custody visiting. Completing the welcome addresses, Kerry McClelland, ICV Scheme Manager spoke briefly about the achievements of custody visitors in London over

the past year and the MPA's commitment to provide ongoing support, training and information, enabling ICVs to get the most out of their vital role.

The first key speaker of the day was Alan Brown, from the Police Powers and Protection Unit at the Home Office, who gave a very detailed and wide ranging speech covering a range of proposals which may impact on ICVs, including the recent Home Office consultations on PACE; the idea of a nationally organised support service for 'volunteers in criminal justice' and the move away from classing police stations as a place of safety.

After a short tea break Chief Superintendent Joanna Young, Commander for Emerald (encompassing the Custody Directorate), gave a very engaging and interesting presentation about modernising custody, using motifs of elephants, butterflies, light bulbs and swans to illustrate her talk. Just before lunch, there was time for some questions

from the floor to both Alan Brown and Chief Superintendent Young.

A Mediterranean inspired Lunch was served in the hotel's lovely Thames room, where ICVs enjoyed fine views of the river, as well as their meal.

After lunch the first session of the afternoon was geared to ensure that delegates didn't fall asleep as Inspector Lawrie and Sergeant Harding from the Territorial Support Group gave a fast paced, interactive, multi-media presentation on the use of Tasers which delegates found highly engaging.

A coffee break (plus doughnuts and muffins) was followed by a very interesting and informative presentation from Fiona Cooper, Detention Services Officer from the Borders and Immigration Agency, which fed nicely in to the final presentation of the day by Detective Superintendent David Imroth from the Custody Directorate, who spoke about immigration detainees from a Met, and particularly, a custody perspective.

Again, questions from the floor were taken by all speakers at the end of the afternoon and the conference closed at 4pm, allowing delegates to spill out along the embankment in to the unseasonably warm April sunshine, hopefully having had an informative, entertaining and worthwhile day spent listening to and exploring a range of issues of concern to Independent Custody Visitors.

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## London conference pictures...



### How does the MPA work with the Custody Directorate?

Panels sometimes need more answers than the police representative can provide at their meetings, or if the issue seems to be broader than borough level. Custody issues and queries regarding procedure, process and policy can be brought to

the attention of ICV Scheme Manager, Kerry McClelland, through Coordinators. Issues raised are discussed at bi-monthly meetings between Kerry, John Roberts and Superintendent Dave Imroth at Custody Directorate.

These meetings are important in keeping both sides up-to-date with current plans and developments, as well as providing an opportunity to clarify or get the perspective of the Custody Directorate on issues or

concerns raised by ICV panels.

Clarification has been sought for concerns such as delayed entry to custody suites due to staff being too busy/ understaffed (Answer: ICVs should never be delayed entry for this reason, but the custody closure policy may be invoked in this situation); FME delays (Answer: the majority of responses should be within 1 hour. If the delay is unacceptable the custody manager should remove

the detainee to hospital. If it is an ongoing issue, the panel should raise this locally, via the custody manager, with the principle FME. **If** local resolution can't be found, it should be referred **by the police** via the CD FME service manager) and a range of other issues. We will be publishing questions raised and responses in the newsletter as a regular feature.



## A long serving ICV tells us why he keeps on visiting...

Ian Oppenheim has been an ICV in Tower Hamlets for almost 16 years (with a short break when ICV tenure was limited to just 6 years).

As a former company director, Mr Oppenheim felt he had a lot to offer as a custody visitor when he responded to a newspaper advert back in the early 1990's. However he was initially turned down for the role because he would have turned 70 in his first 3 years, and at the time there was an upper age limit of 70 for Lay Visitors.

Mr Oppenheim objected to this on the grounds of discrimination, and the decision was overturned. This decision contributed towards the Home Office changing its policy on upper

age limits nationwide.

Mr Oppenheim has seen many changes within custody over the years, and noticed a marked improvement in the attitude of the police and the relationship with ICVs.

Mr Oppenheim has held the posts of Vice-Chair and Chair on the Tower Hamlets panel over the years and has also been a strong recruiter of new volunteers. He feels the role is necessary and important within local communities, and is the reason why he is still visiting 16 years on.

Outside of his ICV role, Mr Oppenheim also volunteers for the Stepney Jewish Community Centre as well as his old school, Lauriston, where he helps children with their reading.

## Diversity monitoring

All ICVs will shortly receive a letter requesting that they complete and return a diversity monitoring form. The purpose of diversity monitoring is to enable the MPA to measure the diversity of independent custody visitors in London so that we can assure Londoners that ICVs are as diverse as they are. We have already been collecting diversity information from new applicants since April 2007 and now want to ensure that we are in a position to capture the diversity of the scheme as a whole. As with all diversity monitoring forms, the completion of this form is voluntary, however we hope that you will appreciate the importance of this monitoring exercise, and assist us by completing and returning your form in the Freepost

envelope provided. Please be assured that all responses received will be treated in strict confidence. We discussed the form with ICV Chairs and Vice Chairs at a meeting at the MPA on 21 April. Many questions were raised about the form, however there was a widespread understanding of the need to monitor diversity. Some of those present asked why ICVs were being asked to put their names on the form. We thought it might be helpful to share our response. The sole reason for this is so that the MPA can ensure that the monitoring information we hold remains accurate. When ICVs leave the scheme, we would like to be able to remove their monitoring information, enabling us to maintain totally accurate records. In order to

do this, we need to record the information against individuals. Paper copies of the forms will be destroyed and the monitoring information will be held securely on a password-protected system. Operating the system in this way will mean that we do not have to ask all ICVs to complete a new monitoring form every year.

If you have any further questions about the form or how the MPA intends to use the information collected, please speak to your ICV Coordinator who will be happy to go through your questions with you. We hope that we will receive your form back in the very near future.

**Visiting Times**  
Volume 3 Issue 3 1996  
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LAY VISITING

**VIZ BIZ**  
**NALV**  
**AGM/ CONFERENCE**  
**Birmingham**  
**9th November**  
**1996**  
*All welcome!*

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**UNDER A BLUE LAMP?  
MORE LIKE A GREEN LIGHT!**

See page 6 and read how the man on the right got the 'Go' to become a lay visitor

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**COMMUNITY AND POLICE KEEPING PAGE**

Mr Oppenheim (above right) appeared in 'Visiting Times' in 1996, and was pictured making a visit with a former Tower Hamlets colleague.



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**Training dates 2008****Initial Training:****Saturdays**

14 June - 10am-5pm  
At MPA Offices

13 September - 10am-5pm  
At MPA Offices

**Monday evenings**

16 & 23 June - 6-9pm  
At MPA offices.

For registration details please contact your Coordinator for further information.

**Conference report pack: questions & notes**

Following on from the general conference report in this edition of the newsletter, a full feedback pack will be available in the coming weeks.

This pack will hopefully include speakers notes, answers to unanswered questions (left behind on tables), and a full summary of the evaluation forms received from those in attendance, which in the main were very positive.

As some ICVs could not attend the conference this year, all ICVs will be notified when this pack is available and they can then request either a hard copy to be sent to them or access it electronically via email or online.

**Borough based custody centre update**

Borough based custody centres are part of the plan for making best use of the MPS estate; they will be large single custody suites with up-to-date facilities. Updates for the various boroughs currently affected are as follows: Merton – planning approval was granted for a custody centre at Wimbledon in September 2007 but the scheme has been hindered, as a patrol base is required. However design of the custody centre (in consultation with custody users) has now begun.

Haringey - the planning application for the scheme at Wood Green was withdrawn in March 2008, as a successful outcome was not expected. The Met is now looking at alternative options for the site that will maintain the existing building frontage.

Hillingdon – the scheme for a combined custody/patrol base at Hayes is progressing but is still at an early stage.

Waltham Forest – the scheme at Leyton is now at the detailed design stage.

Barking & Dagenham – the scheme at Fresh Wharf is now at the detailed design stage.

Croydon – the business case for

the scheme at Windmill Road will be submitted in August 2008 for approval.

Lambeth – the borough commander has confirmed Brixton police station will be the preferred site for the Lambeth custody centre with 40 cells. The Met is currently conducting the feasibility study on this site.

Greenwich – the Met has developed a new approach to the scheme at Warspite Road that they hope will negate Environment Agency concerns.

Enfield – the scheme for a custody centre at Edmonton police station is progressing with an expected investment board submission in summer 2008.

Hammersmith – a plan has been produced for a custody centre at Hammersmith with a possible overflow site at Shepherds Bush. The Custody Directorate agreed to this proposal on the basis that the borough has a large commitment to football and the new Westfield shopping centre.

Wandsworth – it has been agreed that the custody centre location will be at Wandsworth police station. The building frontage will need to be maintained, the Met is conducting a feasibility study.

