

London ICV Newsletter

February 2010

2009 Scheme performance

During 2009 the London ICV Scheme achieved some great work. In the last quarter of the year an average of 91% of visits were carried out across London, with 12 individual panels achieving more than 90%.

The Scheme now has more than 420 dedicated and valued volunteers across London's 31 panels.

For the first time the MPA hosted a Summer social event and volunteer recognition awards ceremony at City Hall. Six initial training events were

held, along with more refresher training modules and the newly developed Chair's and Diversity training courses.

Last year we also focussed on awareness raising, launching our first radio advert on Choice FM and a Facebook Fan Page during Volunteers' Week in June, along with visual adverts on Community TV channels across the capital.

Circulation of panel annual reports was increased to a wider audience, and for the first time we published a scheme-wide compendium annual report.

The MPA ICV Scheme continues to be a model of good practice and is often referred to by international organisations when looking at how detainees in other countries are held. Examples of how far reaching this reputation has stretched includes links with organisations in China, Russia and Ukraine.

We would like to thank all of our volunteers for their hard work and commitment in 2009 and hope that we can build on these successes in 2010.

Mayor steps down as MPA Chair

Following the Mayor's decision to stand down as Chair of the Authority the MPA released this statement on 27 January:

The Mayor of London Boris Johnson today stood down as Chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA). The Mayor has nominated his Deputy Mayor for Policing Kit Malthouse as Chair of the MPA, and Reshard Auladin, an Independent Member, as Vice Chair.

In the fifteen months that the Mayor has been Chair of the Authority, he has honoured his manifesto commitment to Londoners by fighting crime,

increasing public confidence and providing value for money in policing.

He personally presided over the selection of a new Commissioner and his 'top team' and put in place Met Forward, the MPA's strategic direction for policing in London over the next three years.

The Mayor is confident that Kit Malthouse is exactly the right person to take forward the Mayoral priorities and direction he has set, to oversee the delivery of Met Forward, and to work closely with senior management at the Met to reduce crime and make London a safer city.

Inside this issue

Virtual Courts 2

Custody Directorate update 3

Interim reports 3

Baby news 4

Diary dates 4

Virtual courts - the removal of consent

As of Monday 14 December, defendants were no longer given the option to decline to appear via a virtual court.

The removal of consent follows the signing of the Commencement Order within the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and means all first hearings (that meet the necessary suitability criteria) at the 15 MPS pilot sites will now have to be processed through virtual courts.

Virtual courts is a multi-agency national project being coordinated by the Office of Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR). The MPS has been selected to take part in the national pilot, alongside a site in Kent. The pilot commenced

in May 2009 and is due to run until 2010, during which time an evaluation will take place.

In addition to the extension of court hours, the removal of consent is another positive development within the pilot. The removal of consent means more first hearings will be delivered through the virtual court, allowing a fuller test, helping to highlight where processes can be improved and supporting the MPS and partners in realising the full benefits of the technology. As additional cases are resolved more quickly, this will further support victims and witnesses, as well as delivering benefit to the taxpayer and the defendant themselves.

All impacted staff and officers



have been provided with direct notification and instructions to help them in managing this change.

Custody sites involved in the pilots are:

Lewisham, Plumstead, Bexleyheath, Croydon, South Norwood, Paddington, Belgravia, Charing Cross, Brixton, Streatham, Kennington, Peckham, Walworth, Bromley and Sutton.

Founding lay visitor Greta Brooks

Jane Warwick, Chair of Lambeth ICV panel informed us of the following sad news;

It is with sadness that I write to inform you that Greta Brooks passed away on the 26 December 2009 at the age of 92, after spending two happy days of Christmas celebrations with her family, including all her grandchildren.

Greta was a founder member of the Lay Visiting Scheme (later to be called Independent Custody Visiting) following the Scarman Report on the Brixton disorders in 1981.

One of the recommendations made in the report was that the police should have more accountability to the public and police with consent. From this the first Community Police Consultative Group (CPCG) was formed in 1982 following meetings with the Home Office between Greta and other members of the Lambeth community.

Following further meetings with the Home Office

the lay visiting scheme was formed, with Greta a driving force behind it. The scheme became statutory under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

Both Greta and her husband Doctor Victor Brooks were active members of the Lambeth Community and formed the Lambeth Mediation Service which is still very active today.

Although Victor died on the 24 June 2005, Greta carried on as a member of the CPCG Board until 2008. Greta was also a member of the Lambeth Older Peoples Partnership Board.

Both Victor and Greta are laid to rest at Gruinard Cemetery Westor Ross, Scotland, where Victor was based during the war, and a place that was subsequently the spot of his proposal of marriage to Greta.

A celebration of Greta's life is being held on 6 February in Brixton Hill.

Custody Directorate update

Following on from previous newsletter updates, here's the latest feedback on issues panels have asked us to raise in meetings between the MPA and the Custody Directorate (CD).

MPA asked about the shortages of blankets and track suits being experienced in some boroughs. **CD** reported that the track suits issue is bigger than first thought. There is a need for supplies to be better managed. Track suits should be issued as a last resort following reasonable efforts to supply the detainee with some of their own clothes, but this isn't happening. A number of track suits are also being returned to custody, fully cleaned, but then disposed of rather than retained. CD will look at this along with blanket supply issues and the ICV Team will try to monitor the problem through ICV reporting, in order to help identify and spread

best practice. So please keep us informed on your reports.

MPA asked about the FME service and roll out of Custody Nurses. **CD** reported that there are still issues around waiting times for FMEs. A new FME service management system has been introduced and there is an expectation of an improved service. The roll out of custody nurses means that the FME groups will be reduced from 19 to 17. There is a provisional roll out schedule for the custody nurse service. Your Coordinator can give details for your borough if required.

New build custody suites - **CD** reports that Barking and Dagenham and Leyton are still on target for completion in Autumn 2010. A new Heathrow police station, with custody suite, at Polar Park, should be on line this year once some facilities issues with BAA are addressed. Haringey is still a work in progress due to issues around preserving the building's

facade and the subsequent cost implications. However, it is hoped that it will be on line late 2011/early 2012.

The Croydon suite is at the first design stage and a community consultation will follow shortly.

In response to panel concerns over the difficulties of visits to detainees who don't speak English, the ICV team are in discussions with CD and ICVA around guidance for ICVs and custody staff.

Panels may be aware that a number of custody suites have been subject to inspection visits by HMIP/HMIC. ICVs will recognise some of the findings. If chairs think their panels may want to discuss this following an inspection in their borough they can ask their Coordinator to liaise with the police and put it on the agenda.

Interim ICV panel reports - how will they work?

From the start of this year a new interim report has been introduced, which will be sent out to panels at the half way point between meetings i.e. 6 weeks since and until meeting. This report is designed as a summary of all the visits that have taken place since the previous panel meeting, and contains transcriptions of all 'matters requiring a response

to panel' from Part 1 of the visit report form.

The interim report will have been sent to borough Custody Managers/Panel liaisons for the police to provide feedback where required. These responses will then be added to the interim report and distributed to all panel members. Panel members may then raise further queries

through their panel Chair and/or Coordinator if they are not satisfied with the response provided.

On the whole these reports have been appreciated by those panels where they have already been introduced, as they provide a good, at-a-glance overview of recent visits and concerns raised.

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FREEPOST address for report forms and application forms only :

ICV Coordinator
 Metropolitan Police Authority
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Coordinator contacts

Due to changes within the team an updated contact list will be sent out shortly. In the meantime here are the teams numbers and emails.

Office phone numbers:

020 7202 0127
 020 7202 0121
 020 7202 0096
 020 7202 0160

Coordinators:

Mike Dodsworth - 07768 886 278 or
 mike.dodsworth@mpa.gov.uk

Jennifer Ankrah - 07768 902 575 or
 jennifer.ankrah@mpa.gov.uk

Sarah Walker - 07768 868 055 or
 sarah.walker@mpa.gov.uk

Tony Hawker - 07768 904 270 or
 tony.hawker@mpa.gov.uk

Acting Scheme Manager:

James Tate - james.tate@mpa.gov.uk

MPS staff training on ICVs and their role

Over the last year the ICV Scheme Manager has worked with colleagues in the MPS to help develop new training materials for custody staff.

There are two modules of training that are being rolled out during 2010, and these apply to both uniformed and civilian custody staff.

Both modules include explanations about who ICVs are and what they do, where their authorisation to carry out their role comes from and what custody staff should do during and after a visit.

Modules also make reference to the duties of the custody staff under the Home Office codes of practice for custody visiting.

Baby news!

We are delighted to inform you that Kerry McClelland had a baby Boy - Noah - on 23 December 2009, weighing 9lb 8oz. Both Mother and son are doing very well.

**Dates for your diary 2010**

Dates of forthcoming ICV events in 2010. Most are still to be confirmed (TBC) but should be around the time stated.

Initial training:

Mondays 1 & 8 February
 6-9pm at the MPA

Saturday (TBC) May
 10am-4pm at the MPA

Mondays 6 & 13 September
 6-9pm at the MPA

Saturday (TBC) November
 10am-4pm at the MPA

Chairs training:

May (TBC)
 6-9pm at the MPA

November (TBC)
 6-9pm at the MPA

Diversity training:

Mid-March (TBC)
 6-9pm at the MPA

Mid-October (TBC)
 6-9pm at the MPA

MPA and Chairs meetings:

Tuesday 13 April
 6-8.30pm at the MPA

Tuesday 5 October
 6-8.30pm at the MPA

Christmas social:

Monday 13 December
 Venue and timings TBC.