



Guidance for London ICVs using Self Introduction

Where panels have discussed and agreed, ICVs may use the option to introduce themselves to detainees when offering a visit instead of the escorting officer carrying out this task. Pilots have shown that detainees are more likely to accept a visit when ICVs are visible and introduce themselves. Self introduction should carry no more risk to ICVs than a visit introduced by the escorting officer.

Notes providing a fuller text of this guidance, including the justification and how the content was decided on are available on request and on the ICV web pages and Facebook page

On arrival....

It may be useful to decide before the visit commences which ICV will speak and which ICV will take notes.

As with any other visit you should ask the custody manager, custody sergeant or escorting officer if there is anything you need to know before starting the visit. This gives him/her the opportunity to make you aware of any concerns with detainees which may make a visit inadvisable.

When the visit starts....

The escorting officer should make a brief check that a visit is safe, practical and appropriate. He/she may do this by looking through the wicket or opening the door.

The escorting officer should open the door and give a brief introduction along the lines of ***“There are some people here to see you”***. He/she should then step aside so that the ICVs are visible to the detainee.

The escorting officer should remain within sight but out of hearing of the ICVs and detainee where possible – ***under no circumstances should he/she leave the ICVs unaccompanied.***

What should I say?....

“ We are independent members of the community who are here to check on how you are being treated by the police and to have a look at the conditions in which you are being held.

We are nothing to do with the police and are not concerned with the reason you are here but would like to speak with you for a few minutes about your treatment.

Would you like to speak with us?

Can we have your permission to see the notes the police have kept about you while you've been here?"

A card containing this introduction will be available.

What if they say 'No'?....

ICVs should withdraw if the detainee does not want to speak to them. As with any visit, ICVs do not view the detainee's custody record unless they have the detainee's permission (except in the situations specified in the London ICV Handbook).

When the interview is complete or if the detainee has declined **the escorting officer should close the cell door**

What happens at the end of the visit?....

As in any visit the visit report forms are completed, checked by the visit partner and signed by both ICVs. Detainee requests should be passed on to the escorting officer or custody manager and this should be noted on the form. Any urgent concerns requiring immediate action should, of course, be raised at the first opportunity.