



MPA

Metropolitan Police Authority

**BARNET
INDEPENDENT
CUSTODY VISITORS
PANEL**

**INTERIM
ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL-DECEMBER 2007**



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the annual report of the Barnet Independent Custody Visitors Panel.

This (interim) report covers the period from 01/04/07 to 31/12/07.

The purpose of this (interim) report is to give a general overview of the work of the Barnet ICV Panel and:

- Evaluate the panel's performance
- Provide the local community and the MPA with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held including the treatment of those held in custody
- Set out issues and concerns that have arisen
- Set out the objectives for 2008.

The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) is an independent statutory body, which exists to make sure that London's police are accountable for the services they provide to people in the capital. The MPA has 23 Members who scrutinise and support the work of the police. The MPA promotes equality and diversity within the police service and is working in partnership to ensure all those who live and work in the capital are treated fairly and with respect.

The MPA has a legal obligation under the Police Reform Act 2002 for a custody visiting scheme to operate in its area. In April 2007 the MPA brought together the custody visiting arrangements managed by the boroughs into one London scheme. The scheme has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Borough Commander for Barnet, but is independent of the police. The MPA holds overall responsibility for the scheme's management and administration; a member of MPA staff is responsible for supporting the panel.

Prospective custody visitors are volunteers from within the community. The MPA is responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing all custody visitors and tries to ensure a balance of age, gender and ethnicity. Successful applicants to the scheme are given training in all aspects of a custody visitor's role and responsibilities. Custody visiting is governed by a range of legislation and guidance including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 as well as Home Office Codes of Practice and National Standards.

AIMS & ACHIEVEMENTS

The Barnet panel currently makes 2 scheduled visits per week to Colindale Police Station, which is above the minimum requirement of one visit per week per 24/7 custody suite, that the MPA sets panels as a target. Therefore, visiting targets for the borough have been exceeded by around 60%.

Barnet Panel meetings have been held every month at Colindale Police Station, and are well attended by members and the police. The venue continues to be the most satisfactory, and the panel wish to thank the Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Stephen Kavanagh for allowing it to meet there.

The Borough Commander has taken a personal interest in the affairs of the Panel, and the Deputy Borough Commander is also always available to the Chair for consultation, should the need arise.

The panel's police liaison officer, Sergeant Peter White, continues to assist the panel in its work, and thanks go to Sgt White for his cooperation and help in investigating any concerns and observations, and in answering questions at panel meetings. In 2007 the panel were also pleased to congratulate Sgt White on his long service medal, which he was awarded for 22 years service to the force.

The Chair has continued to represent the panel at meetings of the Barnet Community and Police Consultative Committee (CPCC), and is also a member of the CPCC Executive. The Chair has also attended the London ICV Chairs and Cluster meetings.

Many panel members have busy home and professional lives, and some also maintain other community roles as well as that as an ICV. Nevertheless, attendance at meetings and visit performance has been consistently good.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Firstly I would like to thank all panel members who have maintained the level of visiting during the year, their cooperation and sense of duty have been very much appreciated, along with the level of support they have provided me with, as Chair.

Secondly, thanks go to all the police staff and officers, whose cooperation, often in difficult circumstances, has been of great value to the panel. Thanks also to Sergeant White for his help and valued assistance.

Finally, we'd like to thank the MPA for overseeing the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and for providing the funds and training, so that we can perform our community role. Our thanks also go to our coordinator Emma Nuttall.

Gerry Kirby
Barnet ICVP Chair

February 2008

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

Since April 2007, panels have been asked to adhere to recruitment and interviewing guidance provided by the MPA. The MPA expects all panels to adhere to the MPA's equal opportunities policy, recruit new panel members from all sections of the community and actively foster good relations between people of different races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

In 2007 the Barnet panel had 11 accredited members.

Name	Appointed
Gerry Kirby – Chair	2003
Michael Christie – Vice Chair	2004
Allen Williams	1998
Evelyn Kennedy	1998
Henry Cohen	2005
Jack Galaun	2004
John Bailey	2004
Minnette Brown	2004
Mohammed Youssef	2006
Ocho Agwu	2006

The Following Member(s) Joined

Ellen Woodhouse	2007
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The Following Members Resigned/De-accredited

Martin Collins	2004
Sharon Rapaport	2005

The panel comprises of 8 men and 3 women with varying diversity in age and ethnicity.

Recruitment

There are currently 3 applicants awaiting interview, and 2 applicants who were recently successful at interview going through the vetting and accreditation process.

Should all applicants be successful and accredited there will be an improved gender balance for the panel. However, the panel operates well with the number of visitors it has and so further recruitment beyond what is already ongoing will be limited to filling any vacancies made by resignations.

VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

The panel have also made some visits to Whetstone custody suite as this has been used in recent months for Operation Safeguard¹ and good standards of care have been noted, despite the pressures on police.

There have been few major concerns this year. The relationship with the custody staff has continued to be positive and the panel are happy with the way in which jailors have explained the ICV role to detainees.

It has been rare for there to be a delay in entering the custody suite, even though visits are often at busy times. It is a source of satisfaction to the panel that there have been few complaints, if any, from detainees on how they are treated at Colindale.

¹ Operation Safeguard is the way the Home Office are currently addressing the shortage of prison spaces, by housing prisoners in spare police cells. The Met currently provides up to 50 cells per night to the Home Office on a full cost recovery basis.

DATA FROM PANEL VISITS

Visit Figures from 1 April to 31 December 2007

1. Number of Visits

Station	Annual no. of visits	% of Annual Target*
Colindale	62	159%
Whetstone	1	N/A
Total	63	-

*MPA Annual Target is 52 visits per 24/7-custody suite.

2. Time of Visits

Time Period	Annual no.	% of all visits
0001 – 0900 hrs	0	0%
0900 – 1200 hrs	19	30%
1201 – 1500 hrs	6	9.5%
1501 – 1800 hrs	12	19%
1801 – 2100 hrs	16	25.5%
2101 – 0000 hrs	10	16%
Total	63	100.00%

3. Days of Visits

Day	Annual no.	% of all visits
Monday	12	19%
Tuesday	12	19%
Wednesday	7	11%
Thursday	11	17.5%
Friday	12	19%
Saturday	4	6.5%
Sunday	5	8%
Total	63	100.00%

4. Details of Visits

Reason Detainee was seen or not	Annual no.	% of all DPs*
Detainees seen	318	45%
Detainees who refused to be seen	132	19%
Detainees absent from cell at interview, etc	94	13%
Detainees not seen due to other reasons	164	23%
Total	708	100.00%

*% of all DPs in custody at time of visit

5. Immigration Detainees and Home Office Prisoners

Category of Detainee	Annual no.
PACE Prisoners noted	293
Immigration Detainees noted	20
Other Prisoners Noted	5
Total	318

6. Combined Total of Detainees and Home Office Prisoners in Custody During Visits

Annual no.

708

7. Overall detainee total held in Police Custody

No. held April – December 2007	9750
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Plans for Forthcoming Year 2008

Targets:

- A minimum of 1 visit per week to Colindale Police Station.
- A monthly visit to Whetstone Station whilst it is used for Operation Safeguard.
- To record the diversity of Barnet's panel membership in comparison with the make-up of the borough, and how the panel reflects or not the community it represents.
- To maintain panel membership at a minimum of 12 volunteers.