



MPA

Metropolitan Police Authority

Southwark Independent Custody Visiting Panel

Annual Report 2008



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Introduction

Welcome to the annual report of the Southwark Independent Custody Visiting Panel (ICVP). This report covers the period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008.

The purpose of this report is to give a general overview of the work of Southwark ICVP and:

- Provide the local community and the MPA with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held in custody
- Set out the issues and concerns that have arisen during 2008
- Evaluate the panel's performance
- Set out the panel's objectives and plans for 2009.

We hope this will increase knowledge and understanding of the London Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

Who are Independent Custody Visitors?

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the local community who volunteer their time to visit police stations unannounced to check on the conditions and treatment of people in police custody.

What do Independent Custody Visitors do?

Once a week two visitors from the Southwark ICVP attend Peckham and Walworth police stations at a random unannounced time to make an inspection and speak to detainees. On arrival at the police station, visitors are escorted to the custody area where they speak to a number of detainees in their cells and complete a structured report form. The panel also made visits to Southwark police station until October 2008 when the custody suite was closed. Southwark is now only used as custody facility for overflow from other stations, for serious public disorder and special operations.

London Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

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 works in partnership with the police 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 to provide a custody visiting scheme in London. The scheme has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Borough Commander for Southwark, 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.

How to become an Independent Custody Visitor

The MPA is seeking to recruit visitors from as many different backgrounds and communities as possible to ensure the scheme reflects London's diversity.

To be eligible to join the London ICV Scheme you must be 18 or over and live, work or study in the capital. Visitors must have no direct involvement in the criminal justice system. For example, they cannot be serving police officers or staff, special constables or magistrates.

For more information please see the MPA web site on the ICV Scheme at: <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/partnerships/icv/get-involved/> or contact: ICV Co-ordinator by freephone: 0808 100 1036, minicom: 020 7202 0173, by e-mail: icvrecruitment@mpa.gov.uk or enquiries by post: ICV Co-ordinator, MPA, FREEPOST, LON17808, LONDON SW1H 0DY.

Co-Chair's Report

This has been a positive and exciting period for the panel, especially after the challenges of the recent past. Having struggled for several years to fulfil our commitment of weekly visits due to a shortage of visitors our membership is now up to full strength. With all members doing their utmost to ensure that very few visits were missed the number of visits completed increased significantly in 2008 and in December we completed 100% of our visits! We are sure that with each member continuing to contribute to the work of the Panel the Panel will go from strength to strength.

Generally during visits the panel has found that detainees were treated satisfactorily within the provisions of the law and that the police in Southwark demonstrate high standards of professionalism and commitment in their work. We have found that the police at both a senior management level and in the custody suites welcome our input as independent members of the public observing and recording what is happening in the custody suites.

The panel meet regularly to discuss their visits and representatives attend these meetings from the MPS stations in its area. Inspector Leverett has attended our panel meetings since September 2007 and in 2008 he was joined by Inspector Martin and Chief Inspector Blanchard. Our thanks to them for their swift response to all issues and enquiries raised during visits and panel meetings.

There were a number of changes to the operation of the custody suites in Southwark during 2008. In February the National Strategy for Police Information Systems (NSPIS) was introduced. This is a new computer system for custody centres now used across London. There was some apprehension as to how it would impact on our visits and we were grateful for a comprehensive training session earlier in January. In the event there have been no significant problems.

Since 2004 Southwark Custody Suite has been used as a designated holding centre for immigration detainees who have been served with removal papers (IS91). Any immigration detainees held at Southwark were allowed out of their cells for supervised association with other immigration detainees. The immigration suite was closed in October and is now only used for overflow, serious public disorder or special operations. The panel were sad to learn of its closure. We believe that it provided a better environment for immigration detainees, who can be held in custody for up to 7 days, than a normal custody suite.

Lastly we would like to thank to all panel members for their fantastic enthusiasm and support throughout 2008. We would not have achieved our goals without their serious dedication to custody visiting.

Avril Jones and Dayon Haynes
Southwark ICVP Co-Chairs

Aims and Achievements

The aims and objectives of the panel are laid out in the Home Office Codes of Practice, the National Standards governing Independent Custody Visiting and the MPA ICV Handbook.

The primary objective of the panel is to make unannounced visits to the custody suites in Southwark to check and report on the treatment of people in police custody and to ensure their rights and entitlements are being observed.

This is achieved by:

- Making one visit per week to each custody suite in Southwark borough.
- Holding monthly panel meetings
- Increasing public awareness of the London ICV Visiting Scheme.

Visits

In 2008 the panel made a total of 77 visits against the target of 144. This represents an achievement of 53% of the panels visiting target. 33 visits were made to Peckham, 22 to Walworth and 22 to Southwark.

A good spread of visiting times was achieved in 2008. However, fewer visits were conducted on Sundays than other days. 13 visits were made between 08:00 and 11:59 and 9 visits were conducted between 12:00 and 15:59. 46 visits were made between 16:00 and 19:59 and 9 visits were conducted between 20:00 and 23:59. No visits were conducted between 00:00 and 07:59. Although detainees have a right to eight hours undisturbed rest it is important that a small number of visits take place between these times to ensure the panel checks on the running of the custody suite at night. The panel will aim to vary the timing of visits more in 2009.

Detainee concerns cover a wide range of subjects and in the majority of cases there were no significant issues raised. However, there have been a number of recurring issues that have been recorded in ICV reports during 2008 (see page 11).

The panel would like to thank Rose Davidson from Lewisham ICVP who visited with Southwark during 2008 while the panel was short of members.

Meetings and events

The panel meets monthly to discuss concerns raised on visits, administration issues and to share experiences. Panel meetings are not held in August. A police representative attends each meeting. Inspector Leverett, Inspector Martin and Chief Inspector Blanchard are the panels police representatives. All officers kept the panel advised of developments at Southwark custody suites and within borough. Malcolm Tillyer, Former Borough Commander for Southwark attended the September meeting. The panel would like to thank them for their attendance at meetings throughout 2008. Yvonne Davies (Youth Offending Practice Manager) gave a very informative and interesting presentation on the Appropriate Adult Scheme for young people in Southwark at the November panel meeting. The panel greatly appreciate her giving her time to attend the meeting.

During the year the Chairs and Panel Members represented the Southwark Panel at:

- Meetings of the Southwark Community and Police Consultative Group
- Meetings of the London ICVP Chairs and Vice Chairs with the MPA
- A meeting of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the South / South-East Cluster of ICVPs
- The London Independent Custody Visiting Conference
- The MPA Christmas Social
- A refresher training event

Panel Membership

Southwark has a population of approximately 267,750. According to DMAG¹ figures 38% of the population of Southwark belongs to a black and minority ethnic group (BME) and 62% belong to the white community. The gender figures show the population is 51% female and 49% male.

Recent diversity monitoring has allowed the panel to consider how well it reflects the community it represents. According to available figures 60% of the panel belonging to a BME group and 40% are from the white community. 58% of the panel are male and 42% are female.

Members of Southwark ICVP

Name		Date of Appointment
Yemi Adebawale	Left	September 2007
Kese Boateng		November 2008
Fernando Grace		January 2008
John Guntrip		July 2007
Dayon Haynes		April 1994
Francis Igbokwe		December 2008
Kofoworola Jacobs		July 1999
Avril Jones		February 1992
Sulyaiman Matthews	Sabbatical	November 2007
Philippa Millward		March 2008
Kartik Muthusamy		October 2008
Ina Norton	Sabbatical	May 2005
Patricia Onuorah	Left	March 2007
David Patience		January 2008
Wilmot Roberts		October 1997
Yusuf Sadiku		September 2007
Ashley Squire		November 2008
Cheryl Stepton		August 2007
Maurice Thomas		July 1995
Francisca Ubogagu		October 2008
Rachel Walsh		March 2008
Li Xu	Sabbatical	April 2008

The panel finished 2008 with 17 active members.

Sulyaiman Matthews, Ina Norton and Li Xu decided to take sabbaticals from custody visiting in 2008. The panel would like to thank them for their committed service to

¹ Population and diversity figures are based on projections derived from the 2001 census calculated by DMAG - the Data Management and Analysis Group - based at the Greater London Authority (GLA). These data comparisons are confined to apparent strands of diversity only.

the panel and the local community. The panel looks forward to welcoming them back to custody visiting.

Yemi Adebawale and Patricia Onuorah both left the panel in 2008. We thank them for the time and effort they dedicated to the panel and the local community and wish them well for the future.

Recruitment

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. Since April 2007, panels have been asked to adhere to recruitment and interviewing guidance provided by the MPA.

Throughout 2008 we actively promoted Southwark ICVP with the aim of recruiting new members. Local recruitment included sending posters and leaflets to all Southwark libraries, Citizen's Advice Bureau's, free legal advice centres and various doctors and dentist surgeries and Universities and colleges in Southwark. The MPA also regularly advertised in the Metro and Evening Standard newspapers. The panel is registered with Southwark Volunteer Centre and South Bank University Volunteer centre and advertises on the national volunteering website www.do-it.org.uk.

Through these efforts we have raised the profile of Southwark ICVP and in 2008 the panel successfully recruited 9 new members.

The target membership for a panel that visits 2 custody suites is around 17 members plus additional members as reserves. This number allows for one visit by a pair of visitors each week to the 2 Southwark custody suites. It also allows each visitor to conduct one visit per month.

By the end of 2008 the Southwark panel had achieved the target membership of 17 members. Therefore the panel will not actively recruit new members in 2009.

Station Visit Issues

The panel makes weekly, unannounced visits to each operational custody suite in Southwark. These are located at Peckham and Walworth Road. When visitors speak to detainees they record any concerns that detainees raise with them. Visitors do not wake detainees if they are asleep, but they will usually visually check the detainee through the wicket in the door. Visitors check concerns raised by detainees against their custody record (where the detainees give permission for them to do so), and will bring the matter to the attention of the police if they remain concerned about any aspect of the detainee's treatment or welfare. Most minor concerns can be resolved during the course of the visit and only more significant concerns or more complicated issues will be discussed at panel meetings.

Most of our reports have not raised any significant issues that had to be brought to the attention of the MPA or which required a response from the local police. However, there have been some recurring issues of concern:

- The panel has raised concerns that detainees who have been in custody for longer periods of time are not routinely offered a shower. Detainees do not seem to be aware that they need to ask for a shower if they want one, and when they do ask sometimes there is not the staff available to facilitate it. The panel would like to see all detainees held for long periods being offered a shower.
- A number of concerns were raised about the poor cleanliness and untidiness in some areas within custody. This issue was also highlighted in a joint inspection by HMIC and HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) of the custody facilities the borough of Southwark in April 2008. As a result of this inspection the police introduced a number of changes to improve the custody suites. These changes included the introduction of multi-agency custody stakeholder meetings, which involve representatives of custody users groups such as the ICV panel, appropriate adults schemes, Forensic Medical Examiners and the UK Borders Agency working with the police to make a positive improvement to the custody environment. Throughout 2009 the ICV panel Chair will continue to attend custody stakeholders meetings. The panel will also continue to monitor the cleanliness of the custody suites and work with the police to resolve any issues.
- Some panel members were concerned about the variety of meals offered to detainees particularly to those with specific dietary or religious needs. Brian Childs (Catering Manager for Peckham) and Anthony Dunball (Higher Catering Manager for Southwark Borough) attended the November panel meeting and addressed these concerns. The panel are grateful to them for their speedy response to the panels concerns.
- The panel were disappointed that immigration custody suite at Southwark was closed in October 2008. Subject to risk assessments any immigration detainees held at Southwark were allowed out of their cells for supervised

association with other detainees. Whilst out of their cell detainees were able to use the TV room and exercise yard. They were supervised at all times to ensure the health and safety of detainees, officers and any visitors to the custody suite.

Fortunately no significant issues have been raised in 2008 and ICVs have been well received and accommodated by Custody Staff. The panel also has an excellent working relationship with the police representatives, Inspector Leverett, Inspector Martin and Chief Inspector Blanchard, and the panel is grateful for their diligent and prompt responses to the issues raised.

Statistical Analysis of 2008 Panel Reports

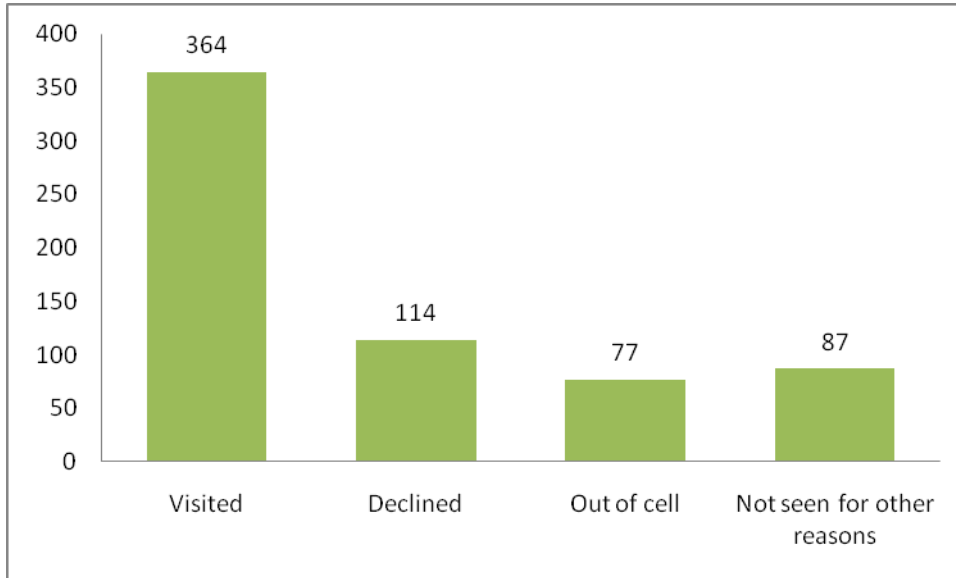
Number of detainees held in Southwark Custody Suites

Peckham	7171
Southwark	1587
Walworth	6770
Total	15528

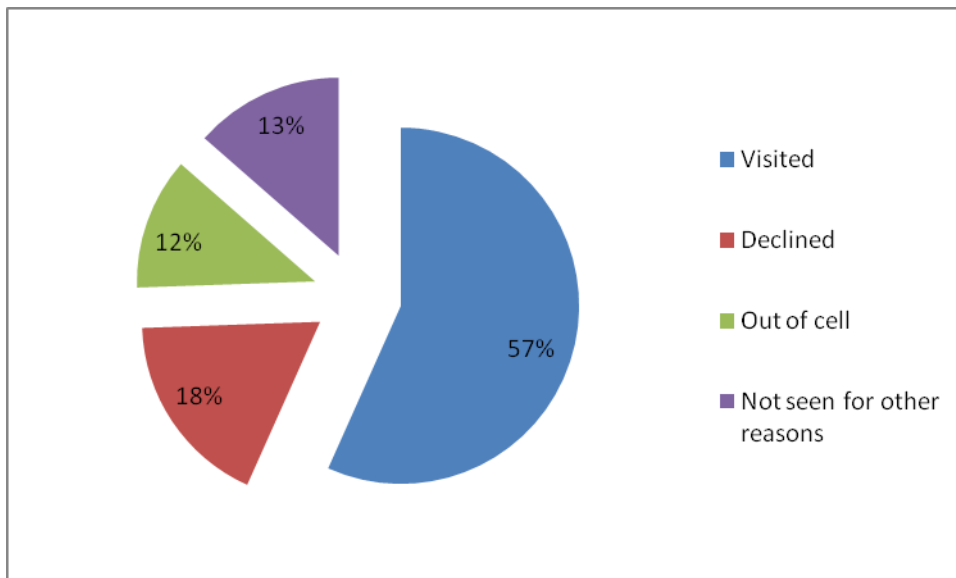
Breakdown of detainees in custody in Southwark Custody Suites during visits by gender, age and category

	Peckham	Southwark	Walworth
PACE Adult Male	177	18	169
PACE Juvenile Male	32	7	25
PACE Adult Female	17	4	24
PACE Juvenile Female	3	0	0
Immigration Adult Male	25	93	13
Immigration Juvenile Male	0	0	0
Immigration Adult Female	2	6	2
Immigration Juvenile Female	0	0	0
Other Adult Male	12	1	8
Other Juvenile Male	0	0	0
Other Adult Female	2		2
Other Juvenile Female	0	0	0
Total	270	129	243

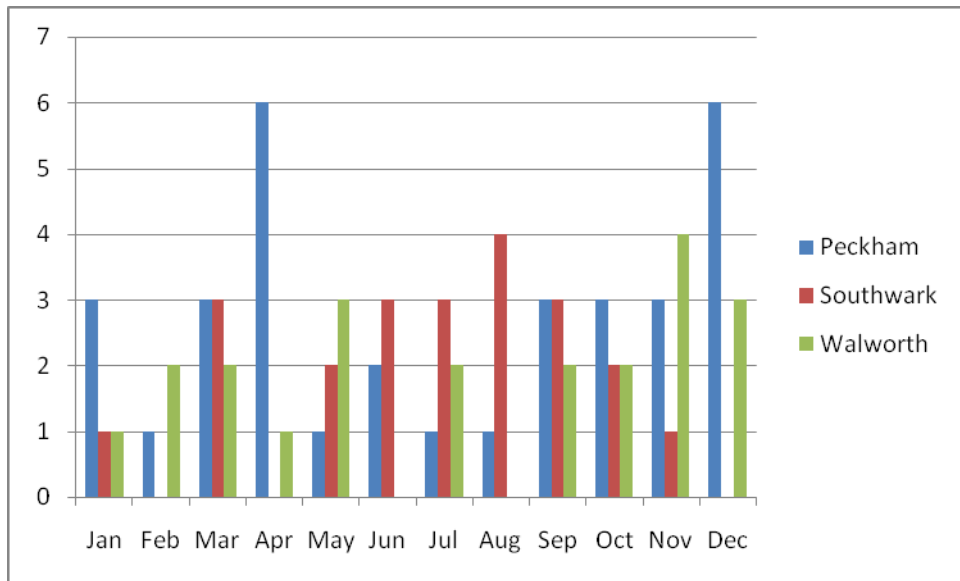
Number of detainees seen by ICVs



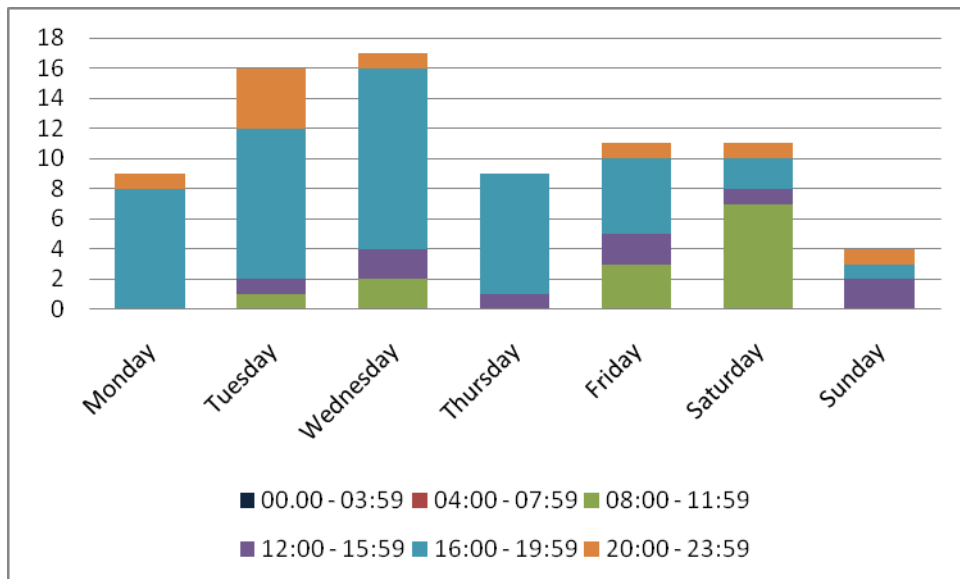
Percentage of detainees seen by ICVs



Visits by station and by month

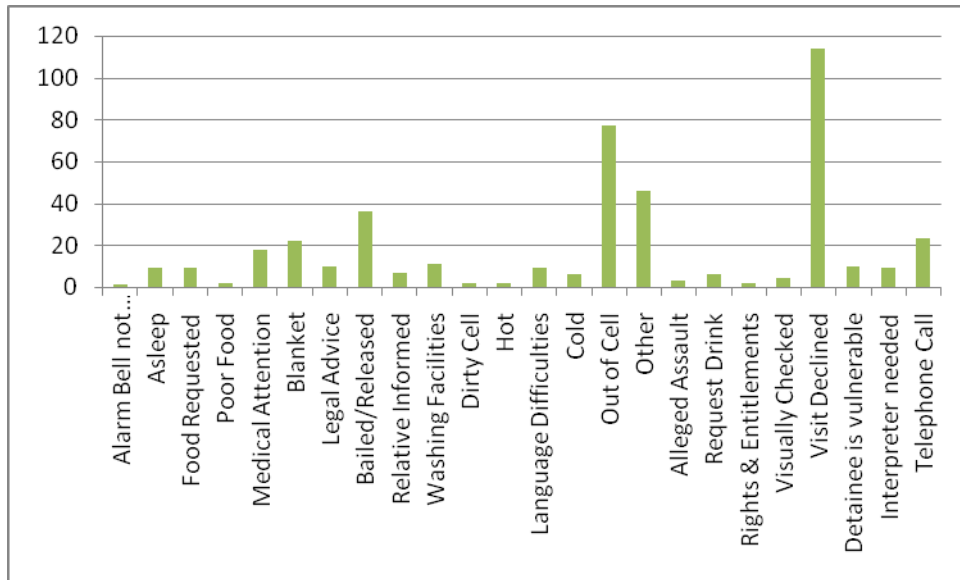


Visits by day and time period



Detainee Concerns

When visitors speak to detainees they record any concerns that detainees raise with them. The chart below shows a summary of concerns raised by detainees during visits made to Southwark station in 2008.



Targets and Plans for 2009

1. To continue to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees are upheld and to raise concerns promptly and effectively with local police and the MPA as appropriate.
2. To make one visit a week to each custody suite
3. To vary the days of the week and times of visits to get an accurate picture of the Custody Suite.
4. To endeavour to attend the majority of panel meetings.
5. To work with the MPA on the recruitment of new members; to ensure that the membership remains above a minimum of 17 volunteers and ideally reflects the community served by the Panel.
6. To ensure that new members undertake MPA initial training and that experienced members undertake refresher courses.
7. To promote and raise awareness of the London ICV Scheme within Southwark.
8. To continue to assist the MPA to fulfil its statutory responsibility to provide independent custody visiting in London.