

Haringey Independent Custody Visitors Panel

Annual Report 2010

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Introduction

Welcome to the annual report of the Haringey Independent Custody Visiting Panel.

The report covers the period from January 2010 to December 2010

The purpose of this report is to:

- Evaluate the panel's performance.
- Provide the local community and the MPA with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held in custody.
- Set out issues and concerns that have arisen.
- Set out the objectives for 2011.

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 Commanders, 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.

Chairs Report

This is Haringey Independent Custody Visitors Panel 22nd annual report.

This report is produced to provide the community of Haringey, which we serve, and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) under whose authority we act, with an insight of how the panel performed over the year and to note the issues that have arisen. It is circulated within the community in order to increase the understanding and awareness of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and the service for the community that we perform.

In general, we found that detainees continued to be largely satisfied with the service afforded to them during their stay in custody and the public can be assured that those in police custody are treated with respect and dignity and that their varied cultural and religious needs are being met.

We have found that on the whole the police have welcomed our input as independent members of the public, observing and recording what is happening in the custody suite at any time, despite often being under pressure from the increasing demands of the custody suite. There have been no fatalities or serious items to note regarding the detainees during the course of the year. This is a credit to, and a reflection of the care with which the borough police go about their task. However, the panel is aware of the dangers of becoming complacent and remains vigilant in ensuring that the Police & Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) is always adhered to.

Most issues have been answered and resolved during the visit by the Custody Sergeant. The panel still continues to meet every 3 months with the Custody Support Manager, Sergeant Ian Millar where visits, procedures etc are discussed. I would like to thank Sergeant Miller for the ongoing support and dedication he has given the panel.

We have recently started self introduction, this is a process where the ICV's introduce themselves to the detained rather than the Escorting Officer. The objective of the change to introduction procedures was to increase the acceptance rates of detainees wishing to see ICV's. So far, the uptake has been good and the panel has welcomed this change.

As Chair, I have attended and represented the panel at the Independent Advisory Group meetings and I am also a board member at the Haringey Police Community Consultative Group. These meetings are a opportunity for representatives of the community to discuss policing and crime in our area with the police service, police authority and other key stakeholders. I have also attended meetings at the MPA which have included diversity training, cluster meetings, chair's meetings.

As always during the year we were sad to see some of our long-standing, established panel member's leave. Their departure was, for the most part, for personal reasons such as moving out of the area, changing jobs or being no longer able to make the time commitment to be an Independent Custody Visitor. We thank them all for their work whilst members of our panel.

As Chair, I would like to give my personal thanks to my Co-Vice Chairs Diane McCreedy & Natascha Franklin for the overwhelming dedication, support and commitment they have both given to myself and the rest of the panel. I would also like to thank all the panel members for the diligence and enthusiasm with which they carry out their visits and attend panel meetings. Without their enthusiasm and their serious dedication to custody visiting, we would not have achieved our goals.

Sandra Gouveia, March 2011

Aims and Achievements

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

The primary objective of the panel is to make unannounced visits to police stations in the borough to check and report on the treatment of detainees in police cells to ensure their rights and entitlements are being observed. The panel makes visits to the two '24/7' stations: Tottenham, and Hornsey and also the overflow station at Wood Green during the first part of the year before its closure.

In the previous annual report the following specific aims and objectives were set out for 2010. The panel had success in endeavouring to meet these objectives and in so doing continued to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees were upheld. To raise concerns promptly and effectively with the local police or the MPA as appropriate and to challenge where appropriate.

To the '24/7' stations Hornsey and Tottenham the panel completed 85 of its 104 scheduled visits (82%*) – 42 to Hornsey (81%) and 43 to Tottenham (83%) and 10 to Wood Green. Of the total of 104 visits that the panel was committed to make 95 were completed (91%)

Of the total of 95 visits made throughout 2010 to Haringey police stations, the spread was uneven with Friday, Saturday and Sunday receiving noticeably fewer visits. The peak times were Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday when 70% of the visits were done.

The distribution of times of visits were good with 31 visits taking place between 06:00 and 12:00; 32 visits between 12:00 and 18:00 and 32 visits between 18:00 and 00:00. The earliest visit was 09:08 and the latest undertaken at 21:00.

The panel enjoyed excellent relations with the borough police and were confident that the rights and interests of detainees were ensured. The panel Chair and Co Vice Chairs maintained a presence on the Haringey CPCG group and attended MPA meetings on behalf of the panel when required.

Recruitment and Retention

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, faiths, races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

The Haringey panel has always striven to reflect Haringey's diverse communities in its membership and has endeavoured to recruit accordingly. The MPA has conducted a diversity monitoring exercise but the Haringey panel is not fully covered, with statistics only available for two thirds of the members. This means that it is not possible to publish statistics on ethnicity.

The breakdown of men to women in the borough is approximately even with marginally more women 51% to 49% men. The panel did not match this at any time. Over the whole year the panel membership included 6 male and 11 female volunteers and at the end of the year there were 6 male and 9 female ICVs. The split of female to male was roughly 64% to 36% throughout the whole year.

The panel is healthily diverse in its make-up and although this diversity doesn't form an exact match to the demographic breakdown of the borough as identified by census figures and projections, we can confidently state that no applicants are denied membership of the Haringey panel on the basis of any information provided in the diversity monitoring completed on application

The ICVs who made visits for the panel during 2010 were:

Harold Blackett	Nuru Kimazi
Carol Brown	Diane McCready, Co-Vice Chair
Rose Bruce	Ahmet Mehmet
Shmuel Davidsohn	Carey Miller
John Dixon	Mellissa Morland
Natascha Franklin, Co-Vice Chair	Margaret Springer
Sandra Gouveia, Chair	Sybil Stair
Claire Hall	Simon Thomas

The recruited and accredited members of the panel at the end of the year were:

Harold Blackett	Nuru Kimazi
Rose Bruce	Diane McCready, Co-Vice Chair
Shmuel Davidsohn	Ahmet Mehmet
John Dixon	Mellissa Morland
Natascha Franklin, Co-Vice Chair	Margaret Springer
Sandra Gouveia, Chair	Sybil Stair
Claire Hall	

Visits to Police Stations

There are three custody suites in the borough of Haringey, these are Tottenham and Hornsey which are fully operational and open 24 hours per day and also Wood Green which is only used when the other 2 stations are full or if there are any special operations taking place within the borough which may create a influx of detainees. A total of 8,909 detainees were held in the borough custody suites during 2010. 446 of these were detained at the times of the visits made by the ICVs.

Of the 183 detainees spoken to during visits 127 had no concerns at all. Of all those who did have requests or concerns most were resolved by the visiting ICVs. The majority of our reports have not raised many significant issues that required the attention of the MPA. Only 20 of 95 visit report forms had matters requiring a police response to the panel and five of those that did included a positive mention of a police officer participating in the visit. It is a source of satisfaction to the panel that there have been few, if any, complaints from detainees on how they are treated at any station. However, there have been a few recurring issues upon which responses were sought by the panel.

- The accuracy of entries in NSPIS or NSPIS not being updated when actions were taken by custody staff.
- The infrastructure, temperature of the cells, furnishings and safety concerns over hazards such as overflowing sharps containers.
- Supplies of food or out of date stock.
- The provision to detainees of interpreters, Appropriate Adults and legal advice.

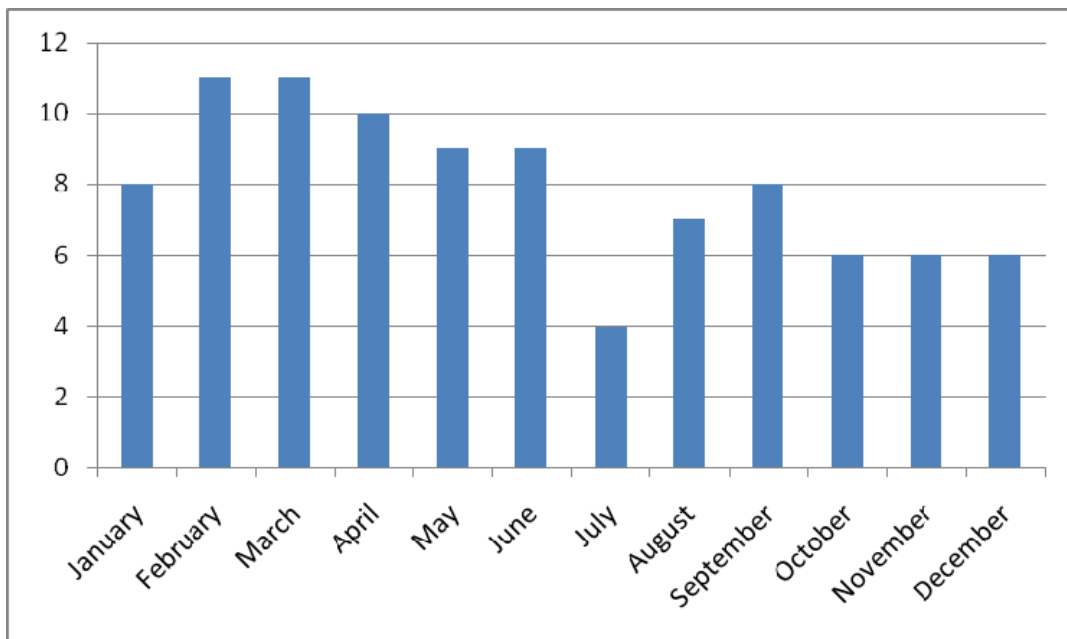
ICVs have been well received and accommodated by Custody Staff. Police staff were mentioned in 6 visit report forms. All but one of the comments were positive and some resulted in emails of commendation to the officer's line manager. Also it was noted on two occasions that the escorting officer was not familiar with the ICV scheme but this was not the cause of any problems during the visits in question. The relationship with custody staff has continued to be positive and professional and panel meetings are well attended by members of the Custody Management.

It has been rare for there to be a delay in the granting of access to the custody suite, despite visits being carried out at busy times. It should be noted that only on the grounds of safety should ICVs be prevented from accessing the custody area. There were no significant concerns raised during the year that have not been addressed and dealt with either during a custody visit or through the monthly panel meetings.

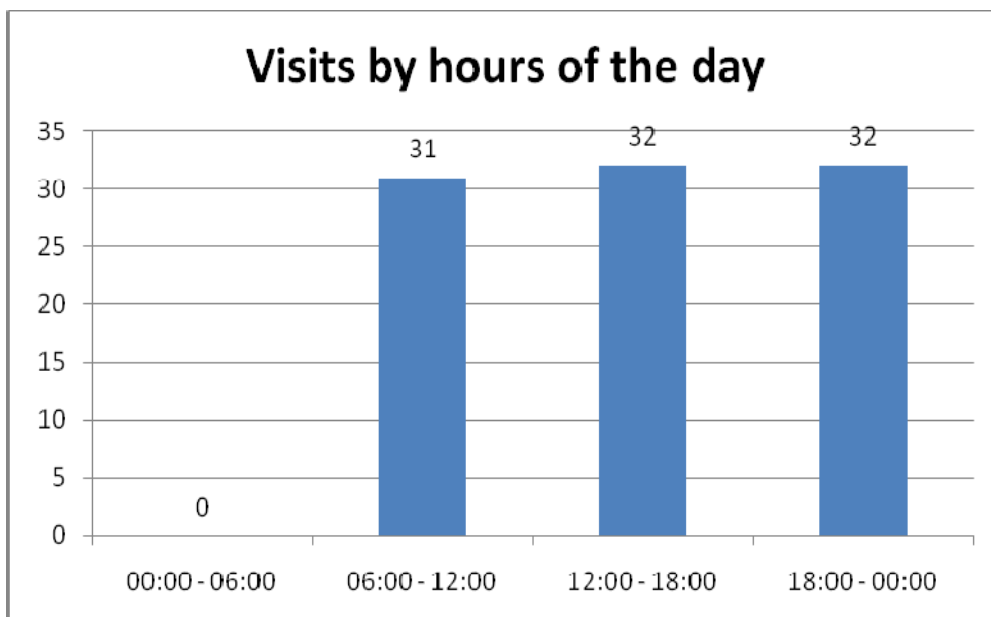
Data from Panel Visits

1. Number of Visits

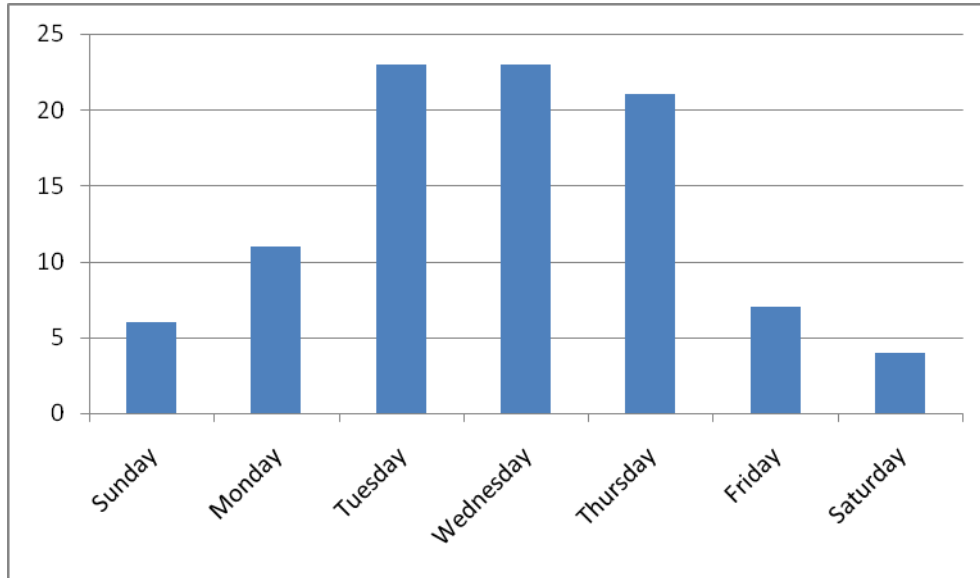
Station	Annual no. of visits	% of Annual Target*
Tottenham	43	
Hornsey	42	
Wood Green	10	
Total Visits	95	91%



2. Time of Visits



3. Days of Visits



Breakdown of detainees at the time of the visits

Total in custody	Offered a visit	Accepted a visit	Refused a visit
446	293	183	110

	Adult	Juvenile	Total
Male	335	41	376
Female	67	3	70
Total	402	44	446

Detainee by type

PACE	Immigration	Other	Total
418	14	14	446

4. Details of detainees' concerns:

No Complaints	127	Blanket/temperature	16
Interpreter	11	Washing Facilities	10
Relative informed of detention	7	Appropriate Adult	7
Legal Advice/Consultation	6	Health/Medication concerns	6
Conditions in cell	3	Notification of Rights	2

Plans for Forthcoming Year 2011

Targets:

- To make a total of 52 visits over the year at a rate of one visit per week to both Tottenham and Hornsey stations
- To maintain the excellent distribution of visits across the week.
- To improve the distribution of the times of visits across the 24 hour period, to include visits between 00:00 and 15:59 hours.
- To maintain and improve upon the level of communication with Haringey police, the custody manager during panel meetings and custody staff during visits.
- To maintain and improve communications with other important organisations within the community such as the Haringey Community & Police Consultative Group
- To continue to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees are upheld. To raise concerns promptly and effectively with the local police or the MPA as appropriate and to challenge where appropriate.
- To ensure that all new recruits receive local and MPA training and that existing members of the panel undertake refresher training at least once during their three-year tenure.
- Together with the MPA, to continue to promote and raise awareness of the work of Independent Custody Visitors.
- To attempt, through the application of an equal opportunities recruitment policy, to ensure that the panel reflects the diversity of the London Borough of Haringey across all strands.
- To investigate new initiatives designed to target different types of people and increase the take up of the ICV role.