



London ICV Newsletter

August 2008

Meetings with MPS Custody Directorate

At the ICV Conference we promised to use this newsletter to provide feedback on the regular meetings between the MPA and the MPS Custody Directorate (CD)*. Custody issues and queries regarding procedure, process and policy can be brought to the attention of ICV Scheme Manager, Kerry McClelland, through your Coordinator.

Some of the issues addressed at recent meetings are included below.

MPA: ICVs have asked whether hand wipes or gel could be routinely offered to detainees before they eat. **CD:** Will investigate alcohol-

free products that could be used.

MPA: ICVs raised an issue that there were no Halal meals available and that custody staff did not always appear to see this as important. **CD:**

Clarified that there should always be Halal and Kosher meals on offer and will send an email reminding staff to keep stocks up.

MPA: Update on body dryers. **CD:** Investigated the environmental impact of body dryers vs. use of towels (laundering etc). Body dryers have quite a high impact and can also increase the spread of germs. MPS Property Service Department is therefore currently

looking in to a prototype towel which would be suitable for use in custody.

MPA: ICVs frequently raise issues about the FME room door and drugs cupboard being left open.

CD: Confirmed that both the FME room door and the drugs cupboard should be locked at all times when not in use, and will be working on the Standard Operating Procedure to reflect this specifically. CD is in the process of replacing drugs cabinets in FME rooms with proper drugs safes, which will eradicate the issue of these being left open. When nurses are introduced in to custody suites there will also be a

protocol in place regarding pharmaceutical supplies and up to 12 prescribed drugs that can be dispensed by nurses. More information will be provided as received.

MPA: ICVs are concerned that with the changes to police officer training, many new recruits do not appear to have heard of ICVs. **CD:** Will look at feasibility of incorporating something on the role of ICVs in the e-learning package for officers.

*Custody Directorate is part of Territorial Policing's Operation Emerald.

ICV Handbook review

The ICV Handbook was first distributed in April 2007 and it was envisaged that it would be reviewed after a period of usage. We will be starting a review in September 2008 and all ICVs will have the opportunity to contribute either individually or through their panel. A review

form will be created and circulated, enabling us to capture suggestions in a structured way. The review period will last several months, in order to give panels sufficient opportunity to discuss suggested changes to the Handbook at panel meetings if they so wish. All feedback received –

both minor and major - will be considered in the process of making changes and additions to the Handbook. ICV Coordinators will bring more information on the review and how to contribute to panel meetings in the autumn.

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Monitoring Chinese detention centres



The pilot lay visitor scheme to promote police accountability and improve human rights at a detention centre in Liaoyuan, a small city with population of one million in North East China, is underway and visits will take place over the next six months.

Twenty lay visitors have been selected from the Liaoyuan People's Congress and the Political Consultative Conference to visit the detention centre and interview

detainees and detention officers to check that treatment is fair and humane.

The pilot has the support of the local Mayor, the Secretary of the Political and Legal Committee of Liaoyuan Chinese Communist Party and Director of the Liaoyuan People's Security Bureau and the Prosecutor Director General.

Recently, Richmond ICV Nicola Macbean, in her capacity as Director of the Rights Practice, along with

her colleague Elissa Nessori, delivered a day of training to introduce the UK's Independent Custody Visitor scheme. The training focused on the importance of protecting the rights of detainees and the role of external independent monitors.

Nicola's presentations discussed detainees' basic needs, legal rights and entitlements and emphasised the need for ensuring accountability. Researchers from

Renmin University, the Chinese partner, have played a crucial role in setting up the project and supporting local officials to understand the benefits of the introduction of such a scheme. Researchers will monitor the visits to see if police practices change and whether the visits contribute towards improved treatment of detainees. We hope to hear about the results in the coming months.



Russian delegation look to MPA for guidance



The MPA recently hosted a group of delegates from Russia who were visiting the UK to look at oversight arrangements at detention facilities in both prisons and police stations.

The delegation also made arrangements to visit the Immigration Monitoring Board secretariat at the Ministry of Justice and Holloway Prison. They also visited Northern Ireland to carry out a

similar fact finding mission. The delegation of nine consisted of a member of the Ombudsman of Russian Federation, the Chair of the Independent Council on Human Rights and several journalists from well known Russian newspapers, including the president of Moscow journalists.

Ian Smith, Chief Executive of ICVA (Independent Custody Visiting Association), explained the history, principles and benefits of custody visiting.

Kerry McClelland, ICV Scheme Manager at the MPA, spoke about the role of the police authority, the structure of the London ICV scheme and how issues were raised and resolved, as well as the recruitment process here in London. The delegation, with the assistance of a translator, asked a lot of questions about how the scheme operates in practice.

After the meeting the delegation was then taken on a short tour of

Charing Cross custody suite, Westminster, by Inspector Ken Reeves. Edward Wilson, Chair of South Westminster ICV panel, was also on hand to explain the custody visiting process. Again the tour generated a lot of questions focusing mainly on the human rights of the detainee and how complaints against the police are dealt with.

Dates for your diary

*The next Chairs meeting will take place at the MPA on Monday 27 October at 6.30pm.

*This year's December ICV social event will be held again at Empress State Building, on Monday 1 December.

Training dates 2008

Initial training:

Saturday 13 September 2008, 10am-5pm, at the MPA offices.

Monday evenings (both dates to be attended), 29 September & 6 October (TBC), 6-9pm at the MPA offices.



Selvin Scott

It is with deep sadness that we report the sudden death of Lambeth ICV Selvin Scott, aged 70.

Selvin (pictured right) had been a Lambeth ICV for eight years, he was also an appropriate adult and had received three awards, including a Commissioners Commendation, in recognition of his voluntary work in Lambeth.

His funeral was attended by many members of the local community, including senior borough police officers, some of whom spoke or gave a reading.

Doye Akinlade Chair of Lambeth ICV Panel said "Selvin was a much valued and respected ICV, and the panel will greatly miss his remarkable sense of humour and generosity of spirit."

Superintendent Sutherland of Lambeth police said of Selvin "Lambeth Officers had the greatest respect for Selvin and will miss working with him. His tireless dedication and commitment as both an ICV and appropriate adult made a real and lasting difference to many vulnerable people in police custody."



Magistrates Court open days - London region

Carol Fletcher (Bexley ICV Chair) recently attended an open day at Bexley Magistrates Court. Carol felt it was a very positive and inspiring event, as she was able to gain an insight into the work of the voluntary Court Observers whose work

is similar to that of ICV in duties, and deals with the next stage of the detainee process after charging. The Bexley panel has since requested a guest speaker from the Court Observers service to attend their panel meeting.

Open days are part of the community engagement

diary for HM Courts Service and are arranged frequently at courts across London. There have also been open days in Waltham Forest and even a summer concert at the Royal Courts of Justice.

The HM Court Service's London regional office is

also holding an 'Inside Justice Week' in Oct, for which the final stages of planning are being approved.

See www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/cms/2036 for further information.

ICV Team news

As many of you will be aware the ICV team at the MPA has been understaffed since Cindy McRae's departure in early February. In early July Mike Dodsworth decided to leave the organisation for a well earned rest after 12 years working with Tower Hamlets ICVP, and the last 18 months supporting other panels whilst working for the MPA. Unfortunately the recruitment process is not quick, but we are

pleased to announce that Ed Bird arrived at the MPA on 30 June, and also the anticipated arrival of Laura Del Nevo on the 1 September.

Ed arrived during Mike's last week which provided an opportunity for a handover, and he has taken on Barking & Dagenham, Greenwich, Newham and Tower Hamlets.

On joining the MPA in September Laura will be coordinator for Bexley, Bromley, Croydon and Lewisham.

You may notice a couple of changes to the groupings as we have used the opportunity to reconfigure a couple of clusters to balance out workload anomalies.

The team wish to welcome Ed and Laura and also say a fond farewell to Mike with sincere thanks for all his hard work and dedication to the scheme over the years.



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George (george.fry@mpa.gov.uk or 07768 855 250) - Hammersmith & Fulham, Hounslow, Kingston, Richmond, Wandsworth.

James (james.tate@mpa.gov.uk or 07768 846 763) - Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon.

Jennifer (jennifer.ankrah@mpa.gov.uk or 07768 902 575 / 020 7202 0096) - Kensington & Chelsea, North Westminster, South Westminster (plus liaison for Bexley & Croydon).

Sarah (sarah.walker@mpa.gov.uk or 07768 868 055) - Lambeth, Merton, Southwark, Sutton (plus Lewisham).

Tony (tony.hawker@mpa.gov.uk or 07768 904270) - Camden, Islington, Hackney, Haringey.

*Details for Laura will be circulated in September.

Links with CEGs

It is intended that relations between ICV panels and local Community Engagement Groups (CEGs) should be enhanced over the coming year, as there is variation in the amount of liaison across London currently.

As a starting point, all CEGs will receive a copy of the local ICV panel's Annual Report, and potentially updates on ICV issues and work in their area every 3-6 months. We would encourage attendance at CEG meetings from a panel representative, usually (but not always) the Chair or Vice-Chair.

Changes to the MPA

Did you know that the MPA is made up of 23 members, 12 from the London Assembly, 4 magistrates and 7 independents, one of whom is directly appointed by the Home Secretary? No?

Well, from October this year it will all change and the Authority will consist of 12 London Assembly members and 11 independents, including one who should have experience as a magistrate and one who is the Home Secretary's appointee.

Along with the changes to independent membership, the Mayor will be able, for the first time, to Chair the Authority and with Boris Johnson signalling his intent to do so, the beginning of October will definitely be the start of a new era for the MPA.

Breaking News...

After more than four years of hard work and dedication as an independent member John Roberts will be leaving the MPA at the end of September to pursue new ventures. A feature article on John will be included in the next edition of the newsletter.

Diversity Questionnaire

There has been a great response from ICVs to the Diversity Monitoring exercise. To date the scheme manager has received 219 completed forms. This is in addition to those that had already been received during the recruitment process in recent months.

Lead member for the ICV scheme John Roberts said he was *"delighted with the response, and it will greatly assist members to get a more accurate picture of the ICV scheme across London"*.

Southwark one year on

July last year saw Southwark ICVP struggling to carry out weekly visits to its three local stations, with just five active members. As a result visiting stopped for a short period over the summer.

An intensive recruitment campaign began in April 2007, with Coordinator Sarah Walker attending university fairs, volunteer centres and posting out leaflets and posters to public places across the borough.

This all bore fruit eventually and in September the panel began visiting again.

There are now 16 active members on the panel and they have carried out 65% of their visits in the first six months of this year, up from 36% for the same period last year.

Recruitment is still ongoing and it is hoped the panel will continue to improve its visiting performance in the second half of the year.

