

BEDFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

INTRODUCTION

Under the Police Reform Act 2002, all police authorities are required to run a custody visiting scheme. The scheme gives appointed members of the public opportunities to observe and report on the conditions under which people are detained in police stations and to provide an independent check on the way police officers carry out their duties with regard to detainees. Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Schemes provide assurance to members of the community that detainees in Police Custody are treated fairly and in accordance with the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and associated codes of practice. Custody Visitors play a very important role and the Authority is grateful for their continuing involvement and contribution.

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT OF BEDFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME 2010-2011

This report details the activity of Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme from 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011. During that time 18152 people were detained in police custody in Bedfordshire. 870 (4.8%) of those detainees were in custody whilst an independent custody visit was carried out.

VISITS

I APRIL 2010 – 31 MARCH 2011											
Custody Suite	Number of visits		Day of week							Time	
	Target	Visits carried out	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	6am - 6pm	6pm - 6am
										%	%
Bedford	48	48	12	7	7	9	10	2	1	31	17
	100	100	25	16	16	19	21	4	2	65	35
Dunstable	48	45	9	4	9	7	12	1	3	36	9
	100	94	20	9	20	16	27	2	7	80	20
Luton	60	47	8	8	10	11	6	2	2	34	13
	100	78	17	17	21	23	13	4	4	72	28
Total	156	140	29	19	26	27	28	5	6	101	39
	100	90	20	14	19	19	20	4	4	72	28

There were 140 visits reported from a target of 156 (90%). Visits were carried out over all days of the week. Most visits were carried out between 0600 and 1800hrs (72%).

Outcomes of Visits

Of the 870 people in custody at the time of visits undertaken from 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 555 (64%) were interviewed, 43 (5%) declined an interview and 264 (30%) were unavailable to be visited due to such reasons as being processed/interviewed, with health care professionals, released during visit etc.

DETAINEES

All data in this report was collected from Custody Visiting Records from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and only represents information recorded during the time that a custody visit was being undertaken.

Detainees at Police Station at time of Custody Visits							
	Bedford		Dunstable		Luton	Total	
	264	30.3%	240	27.6%	366	42.1%	870

Gender of Detainees at Police Station at time of Custody Visits							
	Bedford		Dunstable		Luton	Total	
Female	39		33		42	114	13%
Male	209		197		314	720	83%
Not stated	16		11		9	36	4%

Age of Detainees at Police Station at time of Custody Visits							
	Bedford		Dunstable		Luton	Total	
Adult	209		196		321	725	83%
Juvenile	36		34		35	105	12%
Not stated	19		11		10	40	5%

Category of Detainees at Police Station at time of Custody Visits							
	Bedford		Dunstable		Luton	Total	
1. PACE	202		216		307	725	83.3%
2. Home Office Prisoner	5		2		3	10	1.1%
3. Immigration Detainee	0		5		27	32	3.7%
4. People at Risk	4		0		0	4	0.5%
5. Other	15		3		10	28	3.2%
Not stated	32		15		24	71	8.2%

Ethnicity of Detainees at Police Station at time of Custody Visits					
	Bedford	Dunstable	Luton		Total
A1	12	3	18	33	3.8%
A2	13	9	51	73	8.4%
A3	4	2	17	23	2.6%
A9	8	3	5	16	1.8%
B1	21	9	37	67	7.7%
B2	4	0	13	17	2.0%
B9	1	5	2	8	0.9%
M1	14	2	10	26	3.0%
M2	1	0	2	3	0.3%
M3	0	0	3	3	0.3%
M9	2	2	2	6	0.7%
O1	3	1	0	4	0.5%
O9	1	1	2	4	0.5%
W1	127	154	161	442	50.8%
W2	0	2	4	6	0.7%
W9	27	15	46	88	5.9%
NS	25	16	10	51	10.1%
TOTAL				870	

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimate for 2007 for the ethnicity minority population across the three unitary authorities was Bedford Borough 14.5%, Central Bedfordshire 6.7% and Luton 32%.

ISSUES RAISED AND POSITIVE COMMENTS

Custody visitors raised matters of concern, key issues being: - cleanliness, insecure sharps boxes, litter in exercise yards, faulty sinks/toilets and graffiti.

The custody visit reports indicate that Estates matters are being addressed in a timely way and that general day to day cleaning standards and tidiness have improved at all custody suites. Custody staff continue to be helpful and supportive to the custody visitors.

Custody visitors were satisfied that concerns and requests of individual detainees raised during visits were addressed. The few matters not able to be addressed at the visit were either escalated to the Duty Officer at the time or forwarded to the Scheme Administrator and progressed with the Chief Inspector of Custody.

OTHER ICV ACTIVITY 2010-11

Custody Sergeant and Detention Officer Training

The Chair of the ICV Panel and one Custody Visitor have been included in Custody Sergeant and Detention Officer training in 2010-11. This activity has improved the understanding of the ICV scheme by those that work in the custody environment and has had a positive impact on the working relationship between custody staff and custody visitors.

Custody Forum (Partners)

Independent Custody Visitor representation has been welcomed on the Custody Forum (Partners). This forum consists of criminal justice partners and two custody visitors attend these meetings regularly. Notes from these meetings are circulated to all custody visitors for their information.

HMIC Inspection of Bedfordshire Police Authority July 2010 and HMIP/HMIC Inspection of Bedfordshire Police Custody Suites August 2010

The Chair of the ICV panel, the Scheme Administrator and Independent Custody Visitors were interviewed as part of the HMIC Inspection of Police Authorities in July 2010 and HMIC/HMIP Inspection of Police Custody in August 2010. Both final reports (available to view on the HMIC website) acknowledged the effectiveness of the Bedfordshire ICV scheme and the positive relationship between the Force and the Authority on matters of custody and custody visiting.

ICV Recruitment

A recruitment campaign took place at the beginning of 2011 and 22 applicants were successful. 11 new custody visitors underwent induction training on 25-26 June 2011 and a further 11 will be trained in March 2012. New custody visitors will be mentored through a six month probation period by experienced colleagues.

Conferences and Training

All ICVs were invited to attend Diversity and Human Rights Training in April and May 2010. All Bedfordshire ICVs were invited to attend the Regional ICVA Conference in Hertfordshire in June 2010 and four ICVs attended the National Conference in Leeds in November 2010.

CONCLUSION

Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visitors continue to share a supportive and positive working relationship. Visits to all the designated police stations indicate that detainees are treated fairly and in accordance with the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and associated codes of practice. Any matters of concern that arise during custody visits are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The diversity data collected from custody visiting records shows that breakdown by protected characteristic is broadly as expected in comparison with previous years and in line with local authority statistics and that no matters of concern have been identified.

The success of the Scheme is due to the commitment of the Independent Custody Visitors and Bedfordshire Police Authority would like to thank them all for their dedication and hard work.

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