

visitingtimes

The newsletter of the Independent Custody Visiting Association

Autumn 2003 - V9/2



the great divide?

the associations views

also inside

the police reform act
- codes of practice

introduction to cultural awareness and diversity
- pilot project findings revealed

custody visiting training review





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Who are independent custody visitors?

Independent custody visitors are members of the local community who visit police stations unannounced to check on the welfare of people in police custody. They come from a variety of backgrounds and sections of the community. They must be over 18 and have no direct involvement in the criminal justice system, for example, serving police officers or special constables. Other people such as solicitors or probation officers may be excluded, to prevent possible conflict of interests for the individual. This maintains the independence of the scheme as a whole.

This is your Visiting Times

This is ICVA's magazine for you. Please contribute. A proper exchange of views and debate is essential for us all to develop and progress custody visiting together. Email your views, articles, ideas, suggestions and criticisms to: visitingtimes@icva.org.uk

Visiting Times is published three times a year.

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see what our resident chef, Renford Price, is cooking up in the ICVA kitchen!



embracing a new future

a note from the Chairman

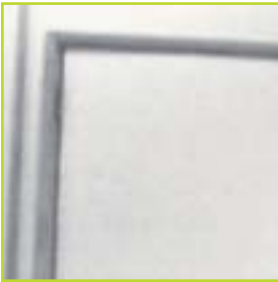
CVA has never been a stand-still organisation and that's not about to change. Of late, we've had the opportunity to meet many of you face-to-face at various conferences and workshops...it's been great - and I hope that you want more of it as much as we do. We value the chance to discuss issues that affect all of us - directly or indirectly - and most importantly, learn from one another's expertise.



In this issue of Visiting Times we bring you an update on recent and forthcoming conferences and events, with a special supplement on the highly successful inaugural Scottish Annual Conference, held in the City of Edinburgh on 31st May 2003. Also in this issue we pass on our congratulations to Nicholas Long MBE (pictured right) who has been appointed as a Commissioner for The Independent Police Complaints Commission and Tanya Ossack who has been appointed to the Parole Board for England & Wales.

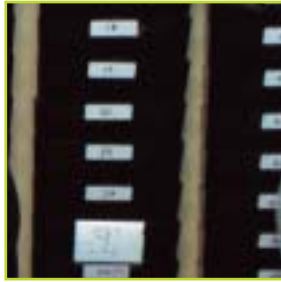


Reading on, you will learn of significant recent issues in relation to Custody Visitors working in pairs. I hope that you will appreciate the significant efforts already made to address this. As the outcome may impact on your experiences, we welcome your response and feedback on this topic - please do not hesitate to express your views by visiting www.icva.org.uk or emailing us at info@icva.org.uk.



cultural awareness training
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In the first of a series of interviews, we ask Tanya Ossack about her new role as a member of the Parole Board. Whilst future issues will include exclusive interviews with the new police minister at the Home Office, Hazel Blears MP and Nicholas Long MBE.



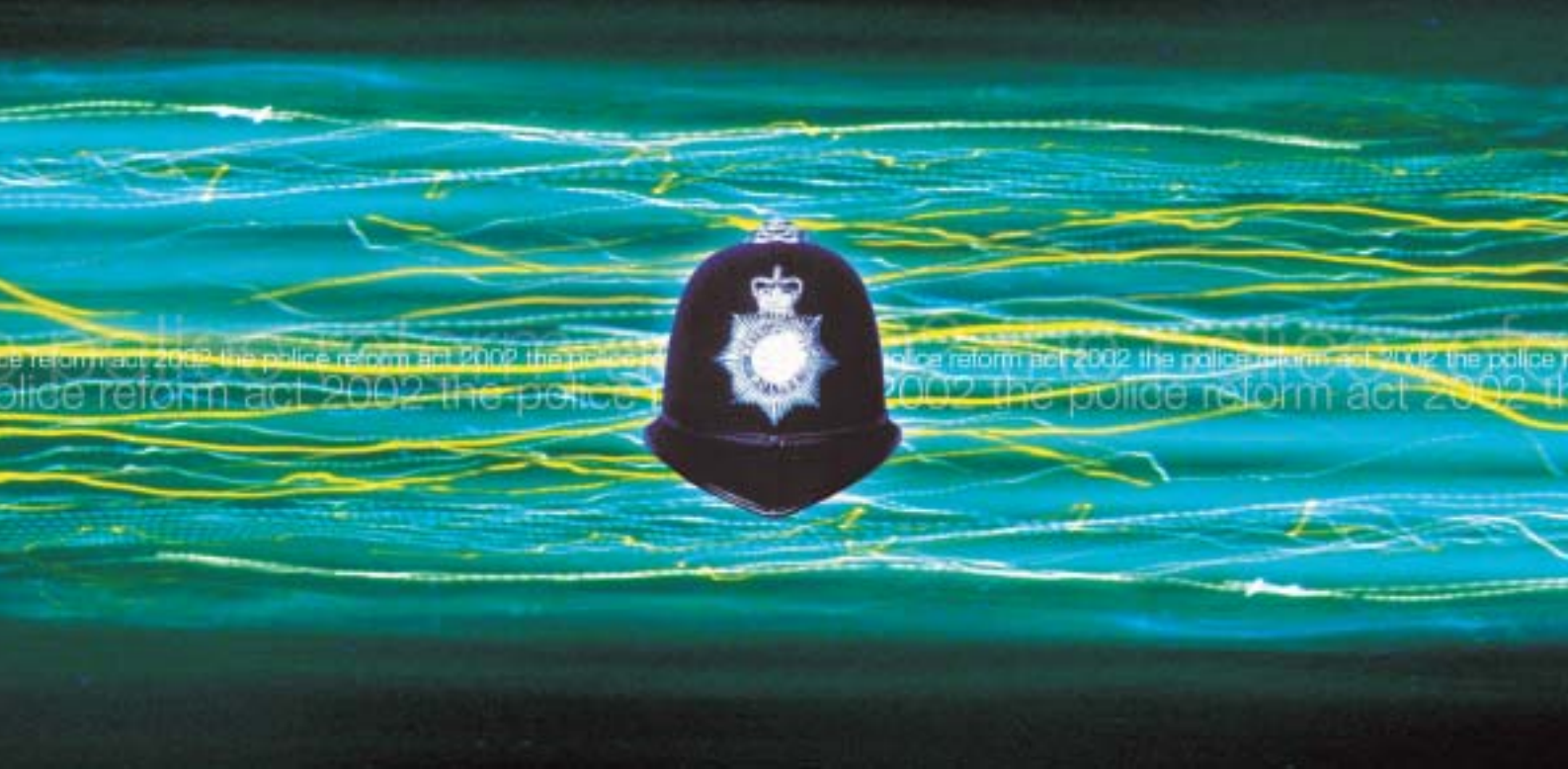
Of special interest will be the report on the evaluation of the pilot project *An Introduction to Cultural Awareness and Diversity*. There were a number of important recommendations, which the association has considered. In Andrew Steadman's Training Matters he announces the Associations decision to carry out a training review and other important issues that affect the association.

Many thanks for all of the positive feedback we've received on our new look, full colour Visiting Times - it's great to hear that you find both this publication and our website such valuable resources.



Finally, please do have a look at details on our forthcoming events - I very much hope to have the opportunity to meet many of you there.

Stephen Murphy
Chairman



the police reform act - codes of practice

Visits should normally be undertaken by pairs of independent custody visitors working together. Visits should only be undertaken by a single independent custody visitor working alone where the police authority has carried out a thorough and robust assessment of the risks that presents and has concluded that it is, in all the circumstances, the best option.

Following the article on the Police Reform Act in our last issue, we said we'd bring you the Codes of Practice underpinning the Act. As promised...there are 65 **musts** in the documentation which will impact upon all partners involved in the process so we have highlighted them all along with any other significant changes.

code of practice on independent custody visiting

introduction

1 This Code of Practice on independent custody visiting is issued further to section 51(6) of the Police Reform Act 2002. Police authorities and independent custody visitors shall have regard to the Code in carrying out their relevant functions.

2 Independent custody visiting is the well established system whereby volunteers attend police stations to

check on the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. It offers protections to both detainees and the police and reassurance to the community at large.

3 The Code will be supported by more detailed National Standards which expand on the relevant procedures and systems and set out established good practice.

organisation and infrastructure

4 The responsibility for organising and overseeing the delivery of independent custody visiting lies with police authorities, in consultation with chief constables. **Police authorities must therefore ensure that they have in place robust and effective procedures for establishing and maintaining their independent custody visiting schemes, including the allocation of appropriate resources to this function.**

5 Overall responsibility for the central administration of the scheme **must** be given to a nominated officer on the police authority's staff, supported as necessary by other personnel and resources.

6 At police authority level, groups or panels of volunteers **must** be organised to visit police stations in the authority's area. Every group needs to have its own co-ordinator, appropriately resourced to perform that task.

recruitment and conditions of service organising recruitment

7 Police authorities are responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing independent custody visitors and **must** ensure these functions are adequately resourced.

8 Adequate numbers of suitably trained and accredited independent custody visitors must be available at all times.

The recruitment process

9 Recruitment **must** be based on clear job descriptions, as well as person specifications setting out the qualities independent custody visitors require to carry out their role effectively.

10 Recruitment **must** be open, non-discriminatory and well publicised.

11 All selections **must** be made on the basis of a standard application form.

12 No person shall be appointed as an independent custody visitor without an interview taking place. The selection panel **must** record the reasons for decisions about appointment or non-appointment.

13 Any appointment **must** be made solely on merit and all independent custody visitors **must** be at least 18 years old.

who should be selected?

14 The police authority **must** seek to ensure that the overall set of independent custody visitors is representative of the local community and provides a suitable

balance in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

15 All reasonable adjustments must be made to accommodate those with disabilities and those who do not have English as their first language where they are considered suitable candidates.

16 Visitors **must** be independent persons who are able to make informed judgements in which the community can have confidence and which the police will accept as fair criticism when it is justified.

17 Where an applicant has convictions (whether spent or unspent) for criminal offences, or has received any formal caution, warning or reprimand, or has failed to disclose any such finding, the specific circumstances **must** be considered in assessing suitability to become an independent custody visitor. However, past offending is not an automatic barrier to acceptance.

18 In appointing independent custody visitors, care **must** be taken to avoid any potential conflict of interest. **For example, serving police officers and other serving members of police or police authority staff will be unsuitable for that reason.** The same will apply to special constables, justices of the peace and members of the police authority.

other possible roles for custody visitors

19 Independent custody visitors may also act as appropriate adults. However, individuals **must** not switch between those roles during the course of a visit to the same police station.

20 Independent custody visitors may also act as lay observers appointed under the Criminal Justice Act 1991 to inspect the conditions under which prisoners are transported and held.

basis of service

21 The police authority **must** provide each independent custody visitor with a written memorandum of understanding summarising

their agreed responsibilities and the legitimate expectations of both parties.

22 The police authority **must** provide each independent custody visitor with an identity pass as their **authority to visit any police station in the force area** that is holding detainees on a regular or temporary basis.

tenure

23 Appointments must initially be for three years and must not be confirmed until a six-month probationary period has been satisfactorily completed. Full re-assessments of suitability **must** take place at regular intervals but no longer than three years apart. The key factors in renewing appointments for further periods **must** be the continuing ability and willingness of the individuals involved to do the job effectively.

removal

24 A police authority can remove an independent custody visitor's accreditation because of misconduct or poor performance.

25 Procedures for considering possible removal must follow the principles of natural justice and be publicised.

complaints procedures

26 Procedures **must** be in place to deal with complaints against independent custody visitors by detainees, police personnel or others. There **must** also be a clear mechanism for handling complaints from visitors and issues of concern arising from their work.

payment

27 Independent custody visitors are entitled to be reimbursed for their legitimate expenses incurred in carrying out their role.

insurance

28 The police authority **must** ensure adequate cover and provision for claims arising from independent custody visitors' role.



the police reform act - codes of practice <cont>

training

29 The basic responsibility for training lies with the police authority and a structured plan with clear objectives **must** be developed in consultation with the police service and the local independent custody visiting community.

30 The police authority **must** evaluate the effectiveness of training and the extent to which it is achieving its objectives.

frequency and coverage

31 The police authority should liaise with the chief constable about the frequency with which visits should be carried out.

32 Visits **must** be sufficiently regular to support the effectiveness of the system, but not so frequent as to unreasonably interfere with the work of the police.

33 The frequency of visits **must** be monitored against expectations and reported to the police authority at regular intervals. Where insufficient visits are taking place, the causes **must** be investigated and corrective action taken.

34 Consideration **must** be given to making visits to all police stations where detainees are held even where they are only accommodated for relatively short periods of time.

working arrangements conducting visits

35 Visits should normally be undertaken by pairs of independent custody visitors working together. Visits should only be undertaken by a single independent custody visitor working alone where the police authority has carried out a thorough and robust assessment of the risks that presents and has

concluded that it is, in all the circumstances, the best option.

visiting procedures at stations

36 Independent custody visitors **must** be admitted to the custody area immediately. Delay is only permitted when immediate access may

place the visitors in danger.

A full explanation must be given to the visitors as to why access is being delayed and that explanation must be recorded by the visitors in their report.

37 Independent custody visitors **must** have access to all parts of the custody area and to associated facilities such as food preparation areas and medical rooms. However, it is not part of their role to attend police interviews with detainees.

38 Police staff **must** be alert to any specific health or safety risks independent custody visitors might face and **must** advise them appropriately.



39 The custody officer or a member of custody staff **must** accompany independent custody visitors during visits. (See paragraph 46)

Access to detainees

40 Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 43, independent custody visitors **must** be allowed access to any person detained at the police station. However, detainees may only be

spoken to with their consent and the escorting officer is responsible for establishing whether they wish to speak to the independent custody visitors.

41 Juveniles may be spoken to with their own consent.

42 If a detainee is not in a position to give consent, the escorting officer **must** allow the visit unless any of the circumstances set out in paragraph 43 apply.

43 The police may limit or deny independent custody visitors' access to a specific detainee if an officer of or above the rank of inspector reasonably believes that to be necessary for the visitors' safety. Such an officer may also deny or restrict access where they reasonably believe that such access could interfere with process of justice.

44 Where any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 43 apply consideration should be given to allowing the visitors some limited form of access to the detainee, such as speaking to them through the cell hatch.

45 Any decision to deny or limit access **must** be recorded in the detainee's custody record (together with the relevant authorisation) and by the independent custody visitors in their report of the visit.

Discussions with detainees

46 Discussions between detainees and independent custody visitors **must** normally take place in sight but out of hearing of the escorting officer where that is practical.

47 Discussions **must** focus on checking whether detainees have been offered their rights and entitlements under PACE and confirming whether the conditions of detention are adequate.



48 Independent custody visitors **must** remain impartial and **must** not seek to involve themselves in any way in the process of investigation. **If a detainee seeks to make admissions or otherwise discuss an alleged offence, the visitor must tell them that the relevant contents of the visit may be disclosed in legal proceedings.**

49 If an independent custody visitor realises they know or are known by a detainee, they **must** declare this and consider whether to withdraw from the visit.

50 Independent custody visitors **must** not pass messages to or from detainees or offer to perform other tasks on their behalf. **If they are asked to do so they must immediately inform the custody officer.**

51 If a detainee indicates they may harm themselves or any other person, this **must** immediately be brought to the attention of custody staff.

52 Subject to obtaining the detainee's consent to examine their custody record, the independent custody visitors should check its contents against what they have been told by the detainee.

53 If a detainee is for any reason incapable of deciding whether to allow access to their custody record, the presumption **must** be in favour of allowing the independent custody visitors to examine it.

Medical issues

54 Independent custody visitors have no right to see the detainee's

medical records, even where these are attached to the custody record. However, key points relevant to medical treatment should be recorded in the custody record itself.

Dealing with issues and complaints

55 Where a detainee makes a complaint or raises an issue about their general treatment or conditions, independent custody visitors **must** (subject to the detainee's consent) take this up as soon as possible with police staff in order to seek a resolution. The same applies to similar issues identified by visitors in the course of their attendance.

56 If a detainee makes a complaint of misconduct by a specific police officer, they **must** be advised to address it to the duty officer in charge of the police station.

Effective working relationships



57 For independent custody visiting to be effective, it is essential that visitors and police staff develop and maintain professional working relationships based on mutual respect and understanding of each others' legitimate roles.

Reporting on a visit

58 At the end of each visit, and while they are still at the police station, independent custody visitors **must** complete a report of their findings in a standard format. One copy of the report **must** remain at the station for the attention of the officer in charge.

Copies must go to the co-ordinator of the local independent custody visiting group.

59 Report forms **must** include an undertaking not to reveal the names of persons visited or other confidential information obtained in the course of a visit.

Feedback

60 Systems **must** be in place to ensure that the output from visits is drawn rapidly to the attention of those in a position to make the appropriate response.

61 Co-ordinators are responsible for drawing together issues and identifying trends emerging from visits in their area and addressing these with relevant police supervisors.

62 The central administrator **must** have a regular and formal opportunity to raise concerns and issues with a designated senior officer with force-wide responsibilities. It will usually be appropriate for that officer to be of Assistant Chief Constable rank. The central administrator **must** also produce regular reports for the police authority summarising the output from independent custody visiting and the way in which concerns have or have not been addressed. These reports **must** be discussed at police authority meetings as appropriate and reflected in an entry about independent custody visiting in the police authority's own annual report.

Sharing experience

63 The police authority **must** ensure that independent custody visitors have regular opportunities to meet together to discuss their work.

Reviewing performance

Item 3 of the above code refers to National Standards which we are at present looking to establish. Once we have reached agreement on what is a national standard and what is considered to be an area of local best practice with the Home Office, ACPO and the APA we will publish a future issue.



when are two pairs of eyes better than one?



...the Association has always recommended visits in pairs and feels that this last minute change is unacceptable.

codes of practice amendment challenges custody visitors working in pairs

In this issue you will find the Codes of Practice, which underpin paragraph 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002. Within this, a last minute change was made with regard to the 'visits must be made in pairs' section - which may have implications for police authorities, independent custody visitors and certainly has had implications for ICVA training materials.

Officers of the APA approached the Home Office directly following the issue of the final draft codes of practice with this amendment that we have been advised had not been discussed by the membership of the APA. Additionally, no other members of the Home Office Working Party had agreed to support

this change to allow single visits to police stations to take place.

In the belief that it is crucial to maintain the system of visiting in pairs, ICVA put together the following action plan, some of which has already been implemented:

- ICVA should strongly advise police authorities and ICV's that visits in pairs remained a national standard for safety and corroboration.
- Chief Executive should write to the Home Secretary outlining ICVA's position on single visits
- The content of all ICV training materials will be identified by icons to indicate Statutory Requirement, National Standards and Locally Accepted Best Practice
- All training materials will carry the endorsement of the Home Office, APA and ACPO

A copy of Ian Smith's letter to the Home Office follows ...addressing the Secretary of State, the Rt. Hon David Blunkett he wrote:

Dear Secretary of State,

STATUTORY INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING (formerly known as lay visiting)

I am writing on behalf of the Independent Custody Visiting Association to express the concern of the membership over the decision of the former Police Minister, John Denham MP to allow independent custody visiting to be carried out by a single visitor. This decision was made in the light of a representation made by the Association of Police Authorities (APA).

By way of background, lay visiting, now known as independent custody visiting was introduced as part of the recommendations by Lord Justice Scarman following the disorders in the early 1980s. Pilot schemes were introduced and following their success the practice was recommended for adoption on a non-statutory basis to police authorities. The Home Office continued to support the process by the issue of circulars and following independent research into lay visiting, Home Office circular 4/92 stated that best practice should be that visits to police stations should be made in pairs.

This has continued and since then police authorities have accepted the value of the arguments of paired visiting. There are possibly now only 4 or 5 out of the 44 police authorities who continue with the practice of allowing single visits.

In 2000, following the latest research findings, the Home Office established a working group. Following approximately 12 months of deliberation and extensive consultation with the working group and all involved in the process, the Home Office issued circular 15 / 2001 in which paragraph 63 stated that visits MUST be made in pairs and advised police authorities that the practice which allowed solo visits must be phased out.

In 2002 the decision was made to include a provision for statutory independent custody visiting in the Police Reform Act and the working group was reformed to develop codes of practice. At no time since the issue of Home Office circular 15 / 2001 or during the working group's development of the codes of practice has a logical reason to drop this from the codes been identified.

The Independent Custody Visiting Association has always supported the Home Office in respect of its operation to provide independent advice and along with the Home Office, has always advocated visiting in pairs. This is not only to support and protect the individual visitors but also to ensure a fair reflection of the discussion held between the detainee and the custody visitor and the police and the custody visitor.

Many areas of the country have both rural and urban areas and schemes work very successfully on a paired basis. It has no impact on the rural aspect of the visiting process or on the number of visits undertaken.

The future health and safety requirement which may be placed on police authorities by the Police Reform Act means even more so that police authorities will be held to account for any breaches to this. Custody areas are one such risk assessment area and for police authorities to agree to their visitors visiting alone, may be putting not only volunteers but also anyone involved in the process at unnecessary risk. Police authorities must be aware of the health and safety issues associated with single visits and cannot feel content that visitors are visiting alone and making that assessment for themselves. The APA also cites that there may be "exceptional grounds" that could justify single visits. Members of the Association would be interested to know what these grounds could be and how this fits with the generic risk assessment carried out for the custody area.

The APA argument about allowing for police authorities schemes to remain adaptable and efficient is not acceptable as the whole point of the visiting process becoming statutory is to allow for consistency of application of the visiting schemes across the country. Visiting in pairs does not preclude efficiency - in fact it is essential to the experiential learning of independent custody visitors.

In ICVA's experience many of the "experienced" custody visitors who visit alone do not do so randomly and previously single visits have led to individual visitors turning up at the same time or within hours of one another - the codes of practice encourage visits to be random - not uncoordinated.

ICVA are seeking to promote the concept of custody visiting to a much wider population with its statutory footing with volunteers representing a much wider cross section of the community in which it operates.

As you can understand the Association has always recommended visits in pairs and feels that this last minute change is unacceptable. This is an important issue that a view from the APA at the last minute is not a good reason to change course at the end of 3 years' hard work of the group.

The Association would wish you to reconsider this decision at the earliest possible opportunity and to reinstate the previous advice to police authorities that visits must be made in pairs.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Smith OBE - Chief Executive ICVA

a result?

The Home Office responded to Ian Smith's letter with the following:

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June to the Home Secretary regarding the Home Office's decision to allow some degree of flexibility on whether independent custody visits are carried out by two visitors together or by a single visitor. I have been asked to reply as this section deals with issues relating to police custody.

As you highlighted in your letter, a significant point of disagreement amongst some of the Working Group who originally considered the issue was whether visits should invariably be carried out by pairs of volunteers or whether there should be some limited scope for solo visits. The Home Office agrees with ICVA's argument that it is important that custody visitors should almost always visit in pairs on grounds of mutual safety and support, to ensure good

practice and to guard against allegations of misconduct. However, we also have to consider the arguments from the Association of Police Authorities (APA) that there may be particular circumstances in which custody visitors should exceptionally be allowed to visit alone.

As we discussed at our meeting last week, the Home Office will be inviting members of the Working Group to reconvene in the autumn to consider ICVA's proposals for new National Standards. This would seem to be a good opportunity to review once again the issue of single custody visits. In the meantime, we will return to the APA for further information about its concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Hudspith

avoiding misdiagnosis

We'd like to share the following letter, published in the Guardian in August 2003, written by custody visitor, Mick Farrant. You may recall Mick recently played host for a member of the Physicians for Human Rights from Israel to visit to a police detention facility in London - published in the previous edition of Visiting Times. Thanks for your ongoing support Mick from all at ICVA.

action over police cells

As one of the independent custody visitors who visits local police stations, I am not surprised that the police misdiagnosed a detainee (Payout for blood clot man mistaken for drunk, August 2).

Police custody suites are often extremely hectic places. In our local suites, on busy days there maybe 12 detainees in cells. In addition,

solicitors, detectives, doctors, immigration officers and community psychiatric nurses (not to mention independent custody visitors are milling about the charging area. Two custody sergeants and two jailers are responsible for all of this.

As well as looking after the welfare of those in cells, the custody staff have to charge, release on bail, arrange transport to courts, search and fingerprint detainees.

We estimate that some 20-30% of people we see detained in cells are suffering from the acute effects of drugs or alcohol. They are required to remain for a minimum of six hours until they have sobered up. Police cells are not the place for such vulnerable people nor are the police qualified, nor should they have to, care for them regularly.

It is not surprising if in the hectic activities of a custody suite the police

misdiagnose a detainee who is seriously ill, or if they sometimes do not have the time to check on a detainee who is 'quiet'.

The new Police and Criminal Evidence Act guidelines are an improvement on earlier procedures for caring for detainees in police cells. But they cannot compensate for the fact that a considerable proportion of people should not be in police cells since they require some form of immediate medical intervention.

Either medical cover for custody suites should be increased for people under the influence of alcohol or drugs should be placed else where under medical supervision. If not, more will suffer the fate of the person in your report. It is neither fair nor a solution to make the police responsible for such vulnerable people.

Mick Farrant - Chair, Camden Panel, Independent Custody Visitors

Tanya Ossack



Congratulations go to Tanya Ossack, ICVA's Legal Advisor, who has been made a member of the Parole Board. Here she shares what the role will involve with VT readers...

what exactly is the parole board?

It is an independent Body set up by the Home Secretary - its role is 'to protect the public and successfully reintegrate prisoners into the community through a just, open and efficient process.' The Board assesses the risk associated with the early release of determinate or life sentence prisoners under the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and Crime (Sentences) Act 1997, advises the Home Secretary of the risks, and makes decisions on his behalf.

The Board also makes recommendations concerning the recall to prison of prisoners who break their licence conditions. At present there are about 120 members of the Board.

what will your new role entail?

I have been appointed as an independent part-time member. I will be expected to sit on at least one panel per month (20-30 cases) and that will involve visits to prisons to interview prisoners applying for parole, and reading all the dossiers for each of the applicants for Parole.

will you work alone or as part of a team?

This is all team work. A parole board panel sits every day, and consists of three members. All decisions are jointly made. My understanding is that I will only be dealing with determinate sentences - lifers and discretionary lifers are dealt with by the Judicial

members of the Boards. There are also psychiatric panels that sit.

what previous experience did you bring to ICVA?

I had been a Lay Visitor to Police Stations in the London Borough of Barnet for 6 years, from 1984-1990. I also wrote my MA (in Socio-Legal Studies) on a study of the efficacy of the scheme in Barnet. I was originally involved in the Association of Members of Boards of Visitors (AMBOV) which was the catalyst for forming the National Lay Visitors Association. Although called to the Bar in 1993, my 'first' career was as a Whitehall Spin Doctor - although we weren't called that then!

do you see any potential conflicts of interest between your profession as a barrister and your membership of the parole board?

I can't see it. It's always possible that I might come across one of my ex-clients of clients of my solicitors in which case I would simply withdraw. To the contrary I hope that 10 years at the Criminal Bar will help me contribute to the work of the Board.

will you be able to continue your work with ICVA in addition to your new role?

Is that an invitation to resign?
[quite the opposite in fact!]

how do you feel that your work with the parole board might complement that with ICVA?

That's an interesting question. The Parole Board is not of course

concerned with issues which directly impact on ICVA. But it is concerned that people get a fair hearing, get the opportunity to make their case and get access to all that entitles them to that - so in that sense there are overlapping areas. The real answer to the question is I'm not sure - I will be better able to answer after a year in the post.



are you involved with any other organisations?

A member of several - but not really involved! Not enough time!

do many women work in this kind of role? can you tell us what benefits/ drawbacks this brings?

From the make up of the Board, it seems there are numerous male judges, but the rest seem about 50/50 - although the newly appointed probation members are all women. I'm not sure what this shows - of course most of the prison population is male - but there are an increasing number of women going to prison.

your work sounds quite intense - how do you like to chill out in your spare time?

Drink is a great comfort! Apart from that I very reluctantly go to the gym, I do love gardening (old age onset here) and the theatre.



the suffolk mental health high risk scheme

At the regional conference delegates were given an opportunity to hear about the suffolk mental health high risk scheme. It was well received so we offer our readers the same opportunity.

The Suffolk Mental Health High Risk Scheme was established following recommendations of the Jason Mitchell enquiry. Stating that “No single agency can either meet all the needs of those who pose risk, or act alone to effectively manage public safety and individual care,” Karen Clements of Suffolk Mental Health & Social Services explains how the Scheme was set up and outlines its vital role...

In December 1994 Jason Mitchell, a patient of St. Clements Hospital, Ipswich, killed his father and a retired couple. He was later sentenced to three terms of life imprisonment for manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. Specific recommendations from the Jason Mitchell enquiry state:

“Given the need for close networking between many agencies and the establishment of supervision registers, some thought should be given by the Department of Health and the professional bodies to drawing on the best practice from Child Protection in developing an interagency approach to case management for mentally ill patients who are discharged into the community”.

The key role of the Trust-managed scheme is to encourage the exchange of relevant information between agencies in cases where people with mental health problems are posing a significant risk to the public or themselves.

No single agency can either meet all the needs of those who pose risk, or act alone to effectively manage public safety and individual care. People who pose a risk to themselves or others often have complex problems these may include family difficulties, mental illness, substance misuse,



homelessness or difficulties with housing, legal problems or they may be in financial difficulty. Consequently they will require a spectrum of services from a range of agencies. Risk can be safely managed when agencies are working together, sharing their goals and recognising that each agency has a part to play.

A recurring concern expressed in mental health enquiries is that decisions were being taken by some agencies without consideration of additional relevant information that was in the possession of other bodies. Therefore in an attempt to learn the lessons, the aim of the scheme is to encourage exchange of relevant information regarding risk in the most appropriate forum. The scheme is not primarily concerned with establishing that someone or some agency does something. It is concerned with ensuring that the agencies involved make a fully informed decision about what they intend to do or not do.

The procedure to be followed will begin with a telephone call to the co-ordinator; this will start a discussion regarding the risk.

This may include specialist advice about risk assessment, risk

management, CPA, the need for a forensic assessment and about how best to share information with other agencies. It may result in a referral to the Scheme for a review. If so the referrer will be asked to complete a referral form. Following a formal referral the Scheme co-ordinator will organise and chair a review.

In all cases seeking the Client's co-operation is preferable, they should be informed what information is being shared about them, and agree giving valid consent. However, if this is not possible then all the agencies need to be respectful of the Client's wishes as far as possible and to be mindful of their own confidentiality policies. Disclosure may be justified without the Client's consent on the grounds that it is in the Client's best interests or in the public interest.

The main role of the Co-ordinator is to encourage multi-agency information sharing on clients who have mental health problems and may present as high risk to themselves or others.

The Co-ordinator is available to offer advice, information and supervision to staff who are concerned about risk. Support can be offered to staff who wish to organise multi-agency information sharing meetings.

If you feel information needs to be shared about an individual in order to minimise risk then SMHRS will be a benefit.

If you would like more information about the scheme, wish to discuss and/or refer a case or would like a presentation to your practice/team, please do not hesitate to contact the scheme co-ordinator.

Copies of a handbook for practitioners in Suffolk - **'Offenders with Mental Health Needs'** - are available from www.suffolkmentalhealth.org.uk

For further information please do not hesitate to contact:

Karen Clements
scheme co-ordinator
tel: 01473 329064 or
email: karen.clements@lhp.nhs.uk

This scheme is funded by Suffolk Health and Social Services and is managed by Local Health Partnerships

Co-ordinator: Karen Clements, Activities Centre/Easton Ward, St. Clements Hospital, Foxhall Road, Ipswich, IP3 8LS

Tel: 01473 329064
Answerphone/Fax: 01473 400167
Mobile: 07855 773419
E-mail: Karen.Clements@LHP.NHS.uk



the european dimension

ICVA Chief Executive, Ian Smith reports back on a hectic and productive schedule.

european commission visit

I was invited to a meeting of representatives from the Directorate-General of the Justice and Home Affairs Department of the European Commission Brussels, Belgium.

The representatives of the commission included, Ms Giselle Vernimmen, the Head of the B3 Unit, Mr Christoph Sanjonz from Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters, Officials from A5 (Citizenship, fundamental rights, racism and xenophobia), Ms Sabine Zwaenepoel (External relations and enlargement) and from B5 (Management Title VI programmes). In addition, the principle administrator Caroline Morgan was also present.

the European Commission would welcome a bid to extend the programme of independent custody visiting

The meeting offered an opportunity to present the work of ICVA from its beginnings in March 1993 to present date. Of particular interest were the establishment of schemes in Northern Ireland, Scotland and more recently Romania. The European Commission noted with great interest that schemes in England and Wales were to become statutory with effect from 1 April 2003

and that the Northern Ireland scheme had been made statutory in 2000.

Following the presentation, the officials asked questions relating to their involvement in the criminal justice system throughout the European Union and the accession countries.



During the discussion, it became clear that although bids for funding for the AEGIS money were committed for the 2003/2004 financial year, the European Commission would welcome a bid to extend the programme of independent custody visiting and if requested would assist in the formulation of the bid.

Ms Caroline Morgan suggested that another source of funding may be available for the association to carry out a scoping study of independent oversight procedures within European Union member states and accession countries and offered her assistance.

Mr Christoph Sajonz recommended that the association consider lobbying their MEP's to establish independent custody visiting to be part of each country's judicial process. It was this type of cross border co-operation that may attract support throughout the EU.

Ms Sabine Zwaenepoel informed me that she was the desk officer for Poland, Bulgaria and Romania and asked me to explain the involvement of the association in Romania. She was surprised at the success of the pilot project and was keen to assist in a further expansion. She suggested

by Ian Smith OBE, Chief Executive

that a way of making progress would be to use the EU delegation in each accession country - each delegation has a budget and this could be used to pump prime pilot projects if this was acceptable to the host country. She also advised that the Norwegian government work in harmony with the EU and their embassies may also be interested in supporting such work.

At the request of the Director General of the Justice and Home Affairs Department of the European Commission, I attended an experts meeting in Brussels during May. The meeting looked at the issue of pre-trial detention across member and accession states and concluded that a green paper for discussion would be issued in July 2003.

scotland

I have delivered training sessions for Strathclyde Joint Police Board and Lothian and Borders. I have worked on materials for the Scottish schemes including videos/DVD's, workbooks and trainers guides and produced a Scottish progress report for the Conference on 31 May 2003.

romania

I completed the final training sessions in Bucharest on 22nd and 23rd of February 2003. There are now four schemes established within Romania, Arad, Brasov, Iasi and Bucharest. Since my return I have held meetings with the Romanian Embassy and Lord Lamont of Lerwick with the President in attendance to pursue funding for the schemes and further development.

Delegates from eastern European countries are to be invited to Bucharest to a round table of

discussion hosted by the Romanian Ministry of the Interior. The event which will take place from 7-10 November 2003 will be organized by the Regional Facilitation and Negotiation Center (RFNC) with assistance from ICVA. The theme will be 'Enhancing the Transparency and Accountability of Police Arrests in Central and Eastern European Countries'.

RFNC, who assisted ICVA in the arrangements within Romania for the pilot visiting projects, were set up 2001 as an initiative to promote peacemaking and the protection of human rights in the developing countries.

Following the successful pilot projects in Romania, this event aims to help achieve the following goals:

- Building the capacity of public institutions (Police Custody Facilities) to act according to the principles of transparency and accountability, thus supporting the Eastern European Countries in achieving the necessary standards to join the European Union.
- Introducing the independent custody visiting model in police arrests in Central and Eastern Europe in order to ensure the treatment of the persons in custody in accordance with the European Convention of Human Rights.

An impressive line up of speakers includes:

- **H.E. Mr. Quinton Quayle**, British Ambassador to Romania
- **H. E. Mr. Alexandru Farcas**, Secretary of State Ministry of Interior Romania
- **Mr. Andrew Felton**, Former Romanian Ministry of Interior Adviser

Ian Smith, Chief Executive Officer, ICVA will provide a background of independent custody visiting concept and working groups will discuss topics including:

- Implementing change
- Independent oversight of schemes
- Support and guidance for the public institutions towards transparency and accountability

frequently asked questions

From time to time we'd like to share information gathered from the most frequently asked questions on

www.icva.org.uk with our readers. Two examples follow in this issue...

how to...online

Q What downloads do I need in order to view videos on the ICVA website?

A The man behind the website - Chris Preston, Digital Creative at Whitenoise Studios explained:

To view the videos on the ICVA website, you should download the 'Quicktime' player, available from, <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/products/qt/>. Simply follow the on screen instructions to install the player.

There are two ways to watch the ICVA videos:

- 1** Click on the required video link - this will bring up the Quicktime player and you can watch the video as it loads. (note: slower connections the video will not play straight

through as it needs to load, so the video will stall slightly; this is known as 'buffering'.



- 2** The other method is to right click ('control, click' on macs) the required video link and select 'save target as'. This will download the entire video to a specified folder on your computer. You will not be able to watch the video until it has completely downloaded but when finished, playback is completely smooth.



and on a more serious note...

Q What happens if there is a fire alarm during a visit, and if real, what happens to any person held in cells?

A Mark Kenny of GMP responded:

There is a generic requirement within GMP as indicated within the Force health and safety policy to have in place appropriate fire procedures. This would include all custody areas. As you will appreciate with the variety of building stock, each custody area will have a plan that compliments the particular structure of the building.

Any independent custody visitors should be made aware of the procedure by the officer in charge of the custody area.

There will be local policies on the evacuation of detainees. Usually they will be taken through the van dock, but obviously it will very much depend on the circumstances at the time.

Most of the Fire alarm panels tend to be in the custody suite, so if the alarm is activated in another part of the building they may well make a quick visit to the location prior to evacuation, just to make sure it is not a false alarm. Some signage will be visible in the custody area.

Mark Kenny



an introduction to cultural awareness training

The association commissioned a pilot training scheme titled “an introduction to cultural awareness training” those who participated were promised an opportunity to view its findings - so here goes....

evaluation report

This report evaluates a pilot training scheme aiming to raise awareness about Cultural Awareness and how related issues may impact on Custody Visiting.

The work was commissioned by the Independent Custody Visiting Association in recognition of its aspiration to best practice, its ethical responsibilities and the legal obligations of its members.

project aims and processes

By commissioning the training, Independent Cultural Visiting Association aspired to:

- Encourage **learning** about different cultures and religions
- Ensure that we (Custody Visitors) have enough **time** and other resources to allow us to consider and respond to these matters
- Encourage respectful **questioning** to enable us to gain relevant information
- Develop **confidence** so that these matters can be address openly
- Provide opportunities for **practice** in dealing with these matters so that, even if we have limited contact with individuals from different cultural or religious backgrounds, we will be prepared to work in a more effective manner
- Meet **legal requirements** which promote diversity, human rights and equality of opportunity

training aims & objectives

In turn, the pilot trialled a specially designed course that in turn had the following aims and objectives:

aims

To raise awareness of cultural identity and diversity within the UK so as to promote effective independent custody visiting.

objectives

By the end of the session you should be able to:

- Recognise some of your own cultural ‘norms’
- Recognise some of the cultural norms of others
- Identify ways that cultural issues may impact upon Independent Custody Visiting processes

approach

We all live in a rich and diverse multicultural society and some of us have different cultural backgrounds to others. This background can influence what is important to us as individuals - praying, eating and hygiene preferences for example - and these preferences may be different from those of others. In turn, these important issues can affect the experience of individuals in detention, particularly where the entitlements of detainees are involved. This course has been created to help all Visitors have a minimum level of understanding about these issues and how they can affect the work of independent custody Visitors and the processes used. This training will lead to effective and efficient independent custody visiting.

method

The session was designed to last 3 hours to fit in with volunteer working evenings or 5 days to allow for weekends.

Each session was a designed for a maximum of 16 participants.

- As part of the research and development stage of the project, preliminary workshops were held at Gloucestershire Police Authority and the Independent Custody Visiting Association National Scheme Administrators Conference in Birmingham.
- The course was hosted by individual schemes at their police authority headquarters.
- These schemes responded to an invitation letter from the Independent Custody Visiting Association to participate on the pilot and sessions were allocated on a first come first served basis.
- On one occasion the course was held at a regional ICVA conference for a representative group.

process

The following activities and devices were incorporated into the session:

- **Pre course Questionnaire** - Which helped participants consider their own cultural norms and their preferred lifestyles
- **Bubble Sheet** - Which helped participants consider their own values
- **Glossary of terms** - Designed to ensure that all participants had equal understanding of related terms and references
- **Areas of difference framework** - Created to provide a relevant list of possible considerations of cultural issues and the detention process
- **Basic religious clip sheets** - Used as a clear example of any one of the areas in which people may have cultural influences and differences
- **Personal Profiles** - These enabled case studies to be created for further consideration of the salient issues
- **Custody Visiting Check List** - This form enabled participants to identify areas where the detention process and cultural issues may be in conflict
- **Action Planning Form** - Designed for the participants to convert any learning into personal behaviour
- **Evaluation sheet** - This collated the participants' responses and opinions on the session.

evaluation and monitoring processes

In order to encourage a 360-degree evaluation and feedback process, the following devices provided relevant data and information:

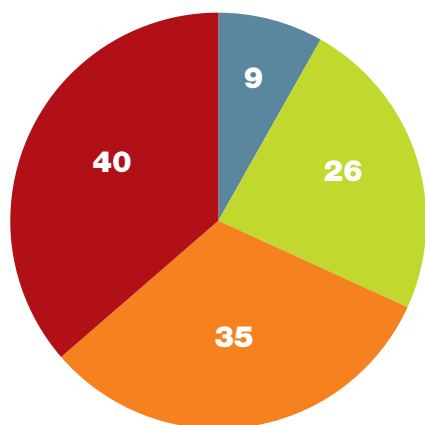
- Anonymous post session evaluation questionnaires
- Evaluation questionnaires and reports (post session - written and anecdotal) to Independent Custody Visiting Association by scheme administrators and a range of observers - *please note that these have not been integrated in this external consultant-led report.*
- Verbal and anecdotal feedback from participants
- Observation by trainers

What did you find most useful?

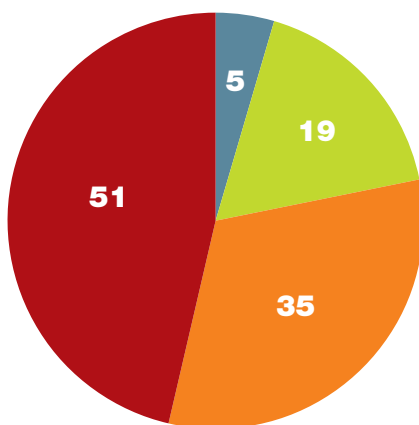
- Excellent method of examining a very important area
- Excellent course tutor
- Awareness of significance of names, objects, etc., that you may usually take for granted
- I found that religious values must always be considered when making visits
- Interaction with colleagues to explore issues - case studies -

findings

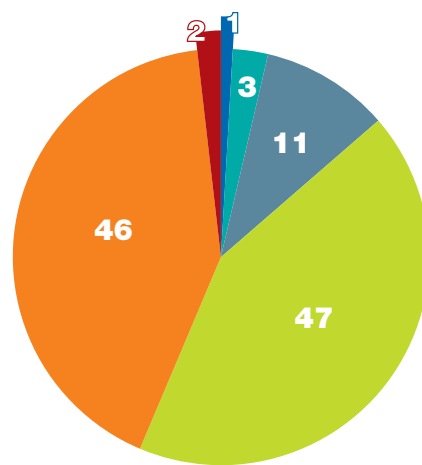
session evaluation questionnaire unedited responses



Did you find the course relevant to Independent Custody Visiting?



Did you find the course enjoyable?



Was the course pitched at the right level for you?

key

- Not Relevant
- 1 - Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - OK
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

practical exercises

- Applying the religious/cultural awareness to the Custody Visitor Checklist
- Listening to 'older' persons' perceptions of CV related awareness.
- Being made aware of various cultural anomalies
- Finding out more about my Islamic colleagues in relation to faith structures, etc.
- Cultural norms
- Different way of presenting the course, making you do the work was good.
- The interactive discussions based on scenarios
- Looking at it from the detainees point of view
- Learning the needs of Muslims
- Discussing 'grey' areas

What did you find least useful?

- I found it all very interesting
- The initial study of one's own cultural background could have been curtailed significantly
- Some areas not entirely relevant to custody visiting
- Comparing a fictitious person with insufficient information about them
- Presumptions on authenticity of foreign customs
- A danger of over emphasis on diversity and not enough on plain, simple common sense and decency.

As an independent custody visitor, what did you want to know more about?

- Diversity, i.e. disability, gender, wider remit!
- Other experiences of Visitors
- Religious beliefs
- Food, religious observances, colours, that may affect detainees in the way they are treated.
- Police training in ethnic matters
- Systems to implement cultural awareness scheme and programme
- Police - Detainee relations conveyed to CV's
- Explore more deeply partnership training opportunities with officers
- How the course would relate to our duties as Custody Visitors
- More specifics about different cultures
- Dietary requirements, religious articles/jewellery
- The views of a police person who has the power to implement or comment on the issues raised
- What could be done to overcome the problems raised?
- Police Authority attitudes
- Visiting rights
- Various rights available within PACE already when dealing with religious issues
- General nation-wide practice in custody suites
- When will this be put into operation and will you notify us of the acceptance level?
- Why all police authorities do not have the same information and facilities
- The various and diverse cultures in our society and how different authorities have worked towards

developing this knowledge/ application.

- What questions to ask to assist in visits
- Ethnic problems of detainees. Would like to meet Custody Sergeant's for discussion.
- Access to advice on foreign customs

As an independent custody visitor, what did you want to know less about?

- I was open to everything given the fact that I haven't been in the programme that long.
- Everything discussed was relevant in one way or another
- Happy with inclusion of all content
- Stereotypes (which was minimal)
- Anecdotes from audience
- Self evaluation

Other comments

- It was action packed - excellent
- Very good course, thank you.
- Food for thought.
- Very safe, enjoyable, interesting session
- I will now change the way I think
- A well delivered and thoughtful evening
- Very informative
- Plenty of time given to discuss issues.
- Both facilitators were clear concise and knowledgeable
- Excellent standard of teaching.
- Information was clear and thought provoking, interactive opportunities abound. A+.
- An excellent session which met the objective of raising cultural awareness as a way of life.
- Thank you for your openness and willingness to listen
- A well presented course worth attending
- A good structure to deal with a difficult subject
- Relaxed atmosphere
- I have undertaken my Forces diversity training and have enjoyed and learned just as much from this.
- Excellent tutor - good listener and teacher. Well Done
- Please may we have more
- Very worthwhile from start to finish
- Could of spent a couple of days, rather than hours, discussing points raised during the day.

pilot schedule

23/5/02 Research & Development
Gloucestershire Police Authority

27/6/02 Research & Development
ICVA Administrators Conference

5/2/03 Training Session
South Wales Police Authority

12/2/03 Training Session
Gwent Police Authority

15/2/03 Training Session
Norfolk Police Authority

19/2/03 Training Session
Leicestershire Police Authority

24/2/03 Training Session
North Wales Police Authority

08/03/03 Training Session
Cleveland Police Authority

09/03/03 Training Session
West Yorkshire Police Authority

22/03/03 Training Session
ICVA Regional Conference

29/03/03 Training Session
Gtr. Manchester Police Authority

- You always learn something from these training groups.
- Role play and better training all round should be provided within ICVA
- Some baseline assessment of participants would have been useful.
- For ICVA to develop stations further, we need to be able to 'score' stations on their conformity to PACE, then use that as a benchmark nationally.
- Hope to see further developments in cultural awareness training soon.
- It would be useful to know about other issues, cultural sexual orientation, etc.
- Questionnaire prior to course considered too racist by some team members (refused to attend). Should have been stated at the beginning of the questionnaire that this was just one aspect of diversity to be considered on the night.
- I believe a custody visitor is there and sees detainees to establish that "basic" criteria of custody are being observed. I am very unsure about widening the role.
- Lets hope this is the start of more training for us and therefore help us to have a better recognition of each others roles, i.e. ICVA - Police

Other information

The Independent Custody Visiting Association received one letter of complaint about the personal questionnaire used as the start of the training. In addition to the explanatory letter which accompanied the questionnaire (read?), the following response was offered by the trainers.

"The questionnaire is used to reflect on your own cultural preferences and then as a comparison to the cultural preferences of others.

This is done through small group discussion for about 10 minutes. We then look at areas of difference. The revelations are designed to be no more disclosing than a detainee may experience in a potential custody situation."

recommendations for further consideration

organisational development

Independent Custody Visiting Association should consolidate a mission statement that includes its purpose, organisational aims and objectives and its stated values

Many Custody Visitors are unclear about the Independent Custody Visiting Association's actual role and are confused about their relationship with the Association. This can lead to some conflict in unrealistic expectations ('ICVA should tell us what to do').

Members of the Independent Custody Visiting should consolidate a mission statement that includes its purpose, organisational aims and objectives and its stated values

Many Independent Custody Visitors are unclear about the values of equality of opportunity, non-judgmentalism and proficiency. This was apparent in 2 main fundamental debates

- 1 Whether their role is to observe or protect/insist upon standards
- 2 Whether it was right to accommodate cultural difference in the detention process (phrases like 'but in reality can we really look into these matters' or 'are you telling me that if it was Christmas I would be treated differently to other people in detention')

The Independent Custody Visiting Association and its members must produce a policy development statement and 'smart action plan' relating to cultural awareness

It is strongly advised that, having commissioned this pilot project, the Independent Custody Visiting Association must be seen to progress the issues. There is now an inherent expectation of 'action' from those who participated in the project

recruitment

Schemes should attract greater representation from their own

communities in terms of ethnicity, cultural background, age, gender and religion.

In order to encourage development within these areas one could resume a bias towards positive representation from all these 'groups' and the marketing of the Custody Visiting Scheme should be reviewed locally to ensure that 'exclusion of interest' is avoided. In particular, the targeting of colleges and universities by some schemes appeared effective in the schemes visited on the pilot. Considering the frustration of scheme administrators when discussing recruitment and representation, the Independent Custody Visiting Association could help its members in conducting a recruitment review and producing some proactive marketing guidelines for schemes.

training

The Independent Custody Visiting Association and its members should also develop training in Diversity issues such as disability and gender and how such matters can impact upon the detention process and the custody visiting process.

There was some confusion (generically not uncommon) between cultural awareness training and, say, disability awareness training. Custody Visitors felt under-skilled in other areas relating to diversity. This training could be incorporated into other recommendations raised within this document.

The initial training of Custody Visitors should include cultural awareness and diversity training into its initial training

These issues are fundamental to the stated values of equality, non-judgmentalism and proficiency and need to be reinforced for the whole process at the point of entry, not when other ways of practising have been developed.

- 1 Such important awareness is best explored at point of entry and linked with recruitment practices
- 2 Issues relating to equality of opportunity are a central tenet of the development and practice of custody visiting and should be used as a fundamental value, not

an additional aspiration.

- 3 By raising the profile of these issues, and making their importance known, it will also help recruit more representative Custody Visitors, and discourage unsuitable applicants.
- 4 By training at the point of entry, additional - and often intrusive - time commitments and training session can be avoided. Such important training needs its own space and should not be squeezed in at the end of monthly meetings
- 5 A suggestion might be that Schemes provide this training for new 'recruits' at the end of the initial training - possibly during the probationary period - with the approach that potential Visitors need training in the procedures first and then in how these procedures may differ for individuals.
- 6 Schemes should then also be encouraged to provide existing Custody Visitors the opportunity to attend the 'improved' version of the session used on this project to ensure comprehensive delivery - this could be facilitated by:
 - commissioning another national delivery project by the consultants who developed the project,
 - co-training with Regional Police Services and their own Cultural Awareness training initiatives (this point of delivery merits further exploration)
 - training the Association's own trainers (definitely not scheme administrators - this works requires experienced facilitators)

The training session developed for the pilot project should be improved in accordance with the evaluation findings

- 1 The Personal Questionnaire used at the centre of the training should be explained in more detail.
- 2 The initial information letter about the training should be more explicit in terms of expectations
- 3 The timing of sessions should be programmed in line with an appropriate time allocation

The work discussed in this report could be referred to as 'awareness raising workshops' as opposed to 'training'.

It is a more accurate description of the spirit of the sessions - people

are asked to consider the impact and relevance of issues, they are not 'trained' in the issues. This would avoid raising false expectations.

The Independent Custody Visiting Association and its members should explore the use of printed reference guidelines relating to Cultural Awareness and Diversity

The use of materials such as 'The Changing Faces of Britain' is controversial. On one hand training professionals believe that

- 1 Distributing general descriptions of ethnicity leads to a dependent 'workforce' who seek prescribed courses of behaviour as they carry out their duties
- 2 Training should develop interpretation of issues within local context
- 3 General descriptions of people lead to stereo-typing

On the other hand, the case for such material includes

- 1 Those doing the work want such support materials at an introductory level
- 2 Best Practice can be stated (although this has never been done owing to the number of different interpretations of given cultures, religions and conditions such as 'disability'.

However, it may well be appropriate to produce support materials about the generic issues relating to how the detention processes can impact on certain individuals - rather than specific examples - so as to encourage interpretation.

The Independent Custody Visiting Association and its members should consider conducting a comprehensive training review.

To date the content of the training has been maintained and updated as required. However, new issues have been added on to existing training processes. With such fundamental and developmental issues being raised continually by the organic nature of Custody Visiting - e.g. cultural awareness, diversity, recruitment

policies, European legislation and the Police Reform Act 2002 - the organisation might be at an appropriate moment to consider, say, a mid to long term training policy to accompany such factors as the 'movement' goes from strength to strength, rapidly. Such a review would take precedent over all recommendations within this report - although not necessarily exclude them from such a review.

best practice development

Independent Custody Visiting Association and its members should form a national 'best practice committee' to ensure continual review of Custody Visiting practice and procedure.

It is often stated that Custody Visitors themselves lead their own progression and it was apparent after the project that there are pockets of 'best practice' in different issues around the country. This committee would meet, say, quarterly to discuss specific operational areas and disseminate best practice updates. E.G. One of these quarterly meeting might review Equality, Cultural Awareness and Diversity Issues. It could be formed from the current scheme co-ordinators. 'Pockets' of best practice relating to this pilot scheme included

- 1 The use of 'prayer boxes' - a collection of materials needed for religious worship
- 2 Approved meals relating to specific diets - e.g. sanctioned by religious leaders
- 3 Recruitment of Custody Visitors with disability - 2 schemes are working with potential
- 4 Visitors who are also wheel chair users
- 5 Recruitment of Custody Visitors from local colleges and universities - sometimes in association with a specific course (social work)
- 6 General advanced cultural awareness - in areas with rich ethnic representation
- 7 Structure additional training activities - some schemes appeared more 'geared up' for weekend - and longer - regional training

training matters

with Andrew Steadman



Welcome to the latest edition of Training Matters...

Did you know?...

In the private sector, blue chip companies invest 3% of each individual employee's time per year in training. Add an average 3% absence from work and this totals a 6% time deduction for training alone each year. Here at icva, we hope to encourage police authorities to do the same for their volunteers who play a vital role in our communities and which we expect to be carried out to extremely high standards.

I know that I reflect the views of everyone in the organisation when I say that as volunteers we want to feel supported and that adequate training is a good way to show this. Custody visitors must be equipped to face and

manage every potential outcome in a proficient manner, for everyone's benefit.

Having received and considered Ben Eccles report on the introduction of cultural awareness & diversity the association has produced the following action plan

- The report gives a number of recommendations for adoption and whilst not wishing to minimise their importance there are some significant areas, which should be considered immediately:
- Overall training review to take place over the next year, the findings of which will be distributed to all members. To include 'safe' 360 degree stakeholder evaluation of current practices, swot, areas for development, best practice review, impact of police reform act on training etc. Possible benchmarking.

- Encouraging police authorities to agree a minimum entry level training provision for newly appointed visitors to cover these and other diversity issues
- Continuing to offer a new improved 'cultural awareness workshop' to existing custody visitors for a period of, say, 2 years and then scrap it.
- This overall review should also include a review of police authorities recruitment and marketing of schemes
- Create a diversity guidelines reference booklet for visitors re: culture, gender, and disability.
- Commission the creation of a mission statement for icva - again this will involve some 'safe' consultation.
- Commission the creation of a template mission statement for schemes and visitors themselves.

may the force be with you...

We were so impressed by the commitment to best practice in Custody Visiting demonstrated by Avon and Somerset Constabulary that we had to share it with you!

The following email was issued to all Front Office staff by Force Custody Manager, Hilary Yenson and reflects the kind of attitude that is highly beneficial in facilitating the Custody Visitor's role.

"If you ever work / help out / have anything to do with the Front Office in a station where there is a Custody Unit please read on:

Custody visitors are appointed by law to check on the welfare of prisoners held in our custody units. In order to

do that properly they MUST be allowed free and unfettered access to those units at whatever time of the day or night they choose to attend.

Free access means that they must be allowed to go to the unit WITHOUT the Custody staff being alerted as to their presence, so it is very important that you allow them to enter the police station quickly and freely to go to the unit. They have all been security checked and there is NO NEED to accompany them.

In effect, when Custody visitors present themselves at the Front office they will show you their ID. You must then:

- Allow them straight into the station
- Allow them straight into the

custody unit

- *Not do anything that could be construed as alerting the custody staff as to their presence in the building*

I have every confidence in the integrity of my Custody Staff. The Chief Constable, Chief Superintendent Gould and I welcome the presence of custody visitors in our units at any time in order that we can clearly demonstrate that Avon and Somerset staff consistently comply with PACE and Human Rights legislation."

Hilary Yenson

Force Custody Manager

**On behalf of all of us
- thanks Hilary!**



news and reviews

We've been out and about a lot lately and hope that you've valued the opportunity to meet face-to-face and discuss the issues that affect us all as much as we have. For those who missed out, this special Conference Review provides an insight that may just inspire some of you to attend future events!

We've enclosed a separate report on our biggest event of the year so far!!! - the First Scottish Annual Conference, which took, place in Edinburgh on 31st May 2003.

While this review details conferences in Suffolk, North Yorkshire and West Mercia - it also previews:

- the Scheme Administrators Conference on 3rd September at Birmingham
- the Northumbria Police Authority Conference at Gateshead on 6th September 2003
- the Welsh National Independent Custody Visiting Seminar on Saturday 25th October 2003 at Porthcawl hosted by South Wales Police Authority
- the 10th Anniversary ICVA Annual Conference on 28th/29th November hosted by Greater Manchester Police Authority
- a round table of eastern European countries in Bucharest, Romania from 7th-10th November 2003

central 1 regional conference

The second joint Independent Custody Visiting Seminar for the counties of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk was held on 10th May at Police HQ, Martlesham Heath in Suffolk. Ian Smith provided an update on recent issues in the wider world of custody visiting. Interesting and informative

presentations were made by Karen Clements of the Suffolk Mental Health High Risk Scheme (see feature on page x) and Russell Hobbs, Operations Manager of Group 4 Court Services. The morning sessions ended with an enlightening presentation by Allison Squirrel, Project Leader of the Suffolk Community Arrest Referral Scheme.

Afternoon sessions commenced with a presentation from John Woodcock of the Police Powers & Procedures Unit at the Home Office who informed delegates of the latest changes to the PACE Codes of Practice and the Code of Practice and National Standards for Independent Custody Visiting. Abraham Eshetu, Diversity Policy Advisor for Norfolk Constabulary raised many items of interest regarding diversity issues and the afternoon ended with a helpful presentation on the role of the Custody Sergeant by Sergeant Tim Maycock of Suffolk Constabulary and Andrew Rowe, Panel Co-ordinator of the Ipswich Custody Visitors Panel.

north east regional conference

The ICVA Northern Regional Annual Conference took place on 19th July in York, It was chaired by Bill Miller, ICVA's North East and opened by North Yorkshire's Chief Constable Ms. Della Cannings. Ms Cannings, who has ACPO's portfolio for Health & Safety issues, delivered an informative presentation on the challenges that lay ahead in policing and in particular within North Yorkshire. She thanked independent custody visitors for giving their time and commitment and recounted some of her experiences as a custody officer.

Ian Smith spoke of the changes that affect all involved in the independent custody visiting process as a result of



Ian Smith OBE pictured with delegates at the Central Regional 1 conference held on 10th May at Police HQ in Martlesham Heath in Suffolk.

paragraph 51 of the Police Reform Act and its related codes. He explained of the need to also establish National Standards for visiting and for local ICV's to continue to develop and highlight local best practices so the process continued to evolve. He explained ICV's statutory obligations to the conference and led a lively question and answer session on related issues.

The afternoon session consisted of workshops run by Ben Eccles on an introduction to cultural awareness.

central 3 regional conference

We'd like to share your feedback on the ICV Regional Conference in Worcester on 22 March 03, with the pleasing conclusion that this was 'a great conference and excellent day' with 'a well balanced range of topics'.

upcoming events

Final preparations are underway for this event, which takes place on 3rd September 2003, just after we go to press. Widely anticipated by police authority scheme administrators, as it will provide the first forum to discuss the implications of paragraph 51 of the Police Reform Act and the related

Codes of Practice since independent custody visiting became statutory.

The full day event will launch the ICVA Training Review by Ben Eccles, (ICVA's Training Consultant) and outline of the Implications of Code of Practice and the setting of national standards for schemes by Ian Smith. This will be followed by workshops on Training Needs Analysis and Scheme Administration, concluding with a Q&A session on The Way Forward.

A little further down the line is our biggest event of the year - the ICV Annual Conference which this year will be hosted by Greater Manchester Police Authority. Already arranged is a drinks reception in the prestigious Lowry Centre in Salford in the evening of Friday 28th November whilst the main event takes place at the Lancashire Cricket Club in Manchester on Saturday 29th November 2003. Chaired by our President, Nicholas Ward, the impressive list of speakers

includes as follows:

- **John Willis**
Clerk to Greater Manchester Police Authority
- **Michael Todd**
Chief Constable Greater Manchester Police
- **Nick Hardwick**
Chair Independent Police Complaints Commission
- **Michael Knight**
Secretary of the Association of Forensic Medical Examiners
- **Paul Goggins MP**
Parliamentary Under Secretary
- **Mr Terry Wynn MEP**
- **Chief Supt. Andy Felton**
Adviser on policing issues to Secretary of State Romania
- **Sean Hurley**
Chief Executive Garda Police Complaints Authority

We're sure you will agree that attendance at this event will be both enjoyable and invaluable.

a day in the life...

The following is a brief review of a recent information packed day for custody visitors.

Custody visitors from Cambridge, Norfolk and Suffolk met at Suffolk Police HQ for a very informative day on 10th May. There were a wide variety of speakers including Ian Smith who gave an interesting talk on ICVA's work and particularly on the role IVCA have played in Romania. I personally would have liked to hear more about police stations and how they operate there but in a crowded day, Ian only had a short time to bring us up-to-date with ICVA.

For me the two highlights of the day were Russell Hobbs, Operations Manager for Group 4 and John Woodcock from the Home Office. Visiting Cromer Police Station where Group 4 bring detained persons to

by Shirleyanne Seel, Norfolk ICV

the local court has made me aware that I did not know whether or not Group 4 were subject to scrutiny in a similar way as custody visitors work. I had not realised how large Group 4 were and it was particularly interesting to hear how detainees were transported to different courts around the country.

John Woodcock went through PACE Codes of Practice and its main changes. He was clear and a very good speaker, knowing his subject well. He also said that if anyone wanted a copy of the Code, they could email him on **john.woodcock@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk** and he would send them a copy - he says his office is full of them waiting to be sent out!

So a good day and well worth giving up a sunny Saturday as I am confident we all learned something.



in the papers...

This little gem was published recently in the Berwickshire Gazette:

Two traffic patrol officers from North Berwick were involved in an incident whilst checking for speeding motorists on the A1 road last May. They were using a hand-held radar device to trap unwary motorists on the Edinburgh to London trunk road.

One of the unnamed officers used the device to check the speed of an approaching vehicle, and was surprised to find that his target had registered a speed in excess of 300 miles per hour. The £8,000 radar then seized up and could not be reset by the bemused Policemen.

The radar had in fact latched on to a NATO Tornado aircraft in the North Sea, which was taking part in a simulated low-flying exercise over the Borders and Southern Scotland. Following a complaint by the Chief Constable of the Lothian & Borders Police force to the RAF liaison office, it was revealed that the officers had a lucky escape.

The tactical computer on board the aircraft not only detected and jammed the 'hostile' radar equipment, but had automatically armed an air-to-ground missile ready to neutralise the perceived threat.

Luckily the Dutch pilot was alerted to the missile status and was able to override the automatic protection system before the missile launched.

Lothian & Border Police Department have declined to comment, although it is understood that officers will be advised to point their radar guns inland in future.

NB Visiting Times neither supports nor espouses the views expressed in this article.



Nicholas Long MBE

Congratulations also go to two of our members who have recently been moving onwards and upwards...VT catches up with them for an update on their new roles.

Our congratulations go to Nicholas Long MBE who has just been appointed a Commissioner of the Independent Police Complaints Commission. This comes in addition to his role as Trustee for NACRO, member of Metropolitan Police Authority where he is Deputy Chair of Finance Committee and member of Operation Trident Independent Advisory Group and surveyor.

As an independent member of the Metropolitan Police Authority and a member of ICVA's Executive Committee, you're already a very familiar

face with us... for the benefit of VT readers, tell us about the difficulties in carrying out these duties and the demands of working full time.

I resolved when appointed to the MPA that I would make time available (after all, the MPA is in control of a £2.5bn spend) but I did not anticipate quite the demand on my time as an active Member. Luckily my professional work as a surveyor is flexible but undoubtedly some of my business and charitable interests have suffered.

You juggle a number of important roles - what do you do to relax?

Architecture! I have always been interested in buildings and design and, particularly, in conservation. Before the MPA I was active in a number of conservation bodies including The Victorian Society and The Twentieth Century Society, the latter from 1986 as it grew from a

small group - then as The Thirties Society - to its present size, with over 5,000 members. In my new role I look forward to having so much more of England on my doorstep to explore and enjoy.

The new commissioners are from a diverse range of backgrounds - what particular qualities/experiences will you bring to the role?

In some way I have had an association - direct or indirect - with policing for over 30 years, mostly in inner London. In recent years I have been involved with much of the learning experienced by the MPS. I have had firsthand experience of many of the issues that give rise to complaints against the police, be it incivility or more serious matters such as deaths in custody or shootings and I have been instrumental in ensuring change, where appropriate, came from the incident.

commission on women and the criminal justice system

Phase Two Women and Offending



The Fawcett Society has established a Commission to look at the experiences of women in the criminal justice system, of which I am the Chair. The Commission will run for one year and there are three phases of work:

- women as victims and witnesses
- women and offending
- women working in the system

We are now taking evidence in the second phase of work on women and offending and we would very much like your help. We are asking individual women and organisations with relevant experience to tell us about the key issues in this area.

We are keen for women's voices to be heard in the current debates

by Vera Baird QC MP

around the criminal justice system.

Vera Baird QC MP - Chair, Commission on Women and the Criminal Justice System

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Holly Dustin on 020 7253 2598 ext 213, or email holly@fawcettsociety.org.uk.