

Derbyshire Police Authority

Independent Custody Visiting and Animal Welfare Schemes
Annual Report

1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011

Message from Councillor Alan Charles of Derbyshire Police Authority

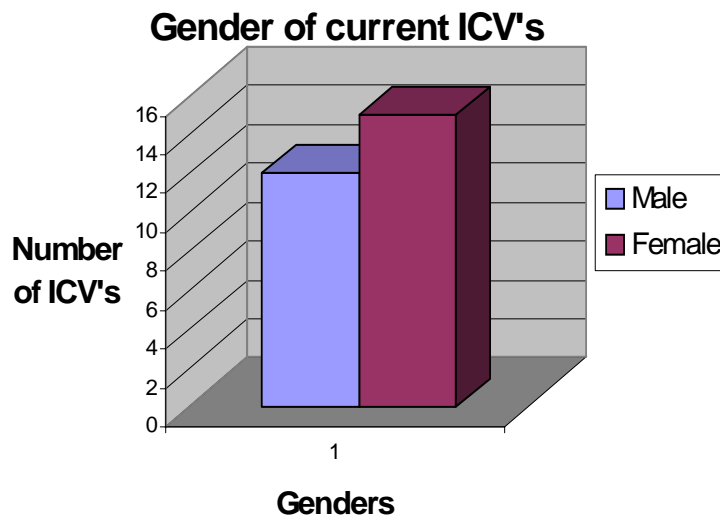


Independent Custody Visitors play a crucial role in ensuring that people being held in police custody are treated with respect and dignity and that their welfare needs are met. Similarly our Animal Welfare Visitors ensure that dogs working for Derbyshire Constabulary are treated and cared for in the best way possible. I have the privilege of being the Police Authority Lead Member in this area of important work and I thank our many volunteers for their freely given time to give an independent and community overview of our services. I also acknowledge and thank the professional work of the Police Authority staff who manage both schemes.

What is the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme?

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is run by Derbyshire Police Authority, in consultation with the Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary. The Scheme Administrator and Lead Officer within the Authority are responsible for its' day to day management.

ICV's are volunteers from a variety of backgrounds within their local community. They visit Derbyshire's custody suites and talk with any detained persons and the custody officers to give an impartial, unbiased report on the condition of the facilities and the welfare of the people held in police custody at that time.



In December 2010 twelve new ICV's, six male and six female, began making custody visits. In total there are fifteen women and twelve men on the scheme*.

What happens on a visit to the Custody Suite?

ICV's visit the custody suites in pairs. They present themselves at the front enquiry desk on arrival at the police station, or phone the Contact Management Centre should the enquiry desk be closed. ICV's should then be taken to the custody suite within five minutes of their arrival.

Custody staff escort ICV's on their visit and should remain within sight but out of hearing of any conversations which take place with detainees. ICV's should check on the conditions in which the detainees are being kept, their health and wellbeing and that they have received their legal rights and entitlements. Where appropriate, and with the permission of the detainee, they may also consult their custody record in order to check on and clarify any concerns raised.

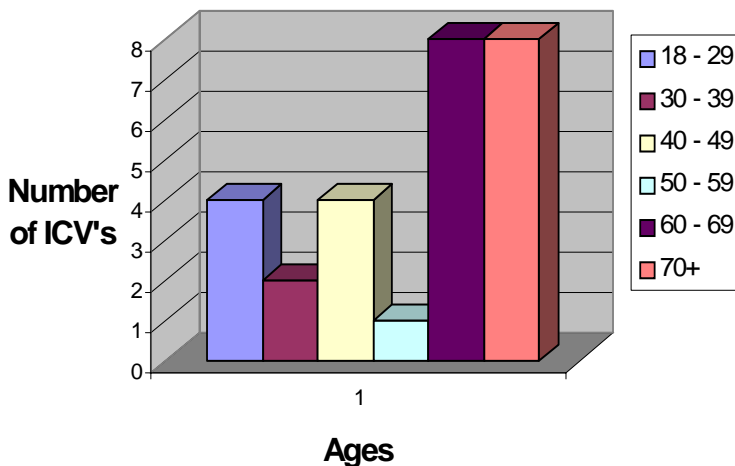
Notes may be taken using an aide-memoir, which is then used to complete the visit report form.

June 2011

To ensure that the Custody Suites are visited at a variety of times of the day and week a rota system for visits was introduced in December 2010 in Derbyshire. In order to maintain the ad-hoc nature of the visits, ICV's are given three or four day 'window' in which to make their visit. The actual date and time of the visit is only known to the visitors within that 'window'.

ICV's must be at least 18 years of age. There is no maximum age limit. There are currently sixteen ICV's of 60 years and over, and eleven between 18 and 59 years of age*.

ICV Age Range



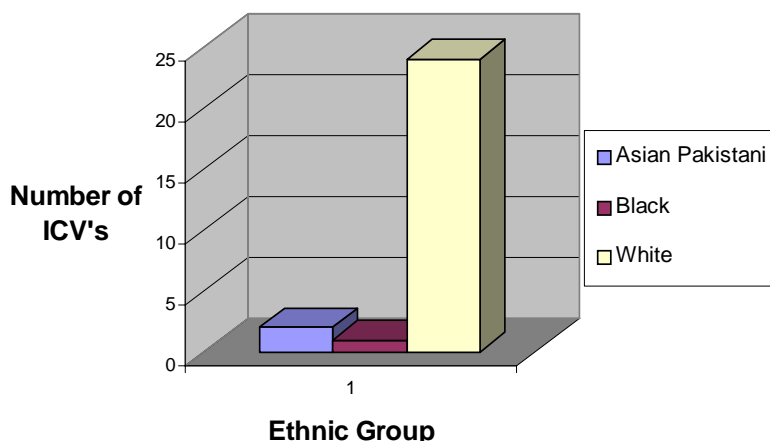
How do the ICV's report their findings?

The report form, as mentioned above, is in triplicate; one copy is sent by the visitors to the Police Authority offices, one copy goes to Derbyshire Constabulary's Custody Suite Manager and one copy remains in the custody suite.

Providing feedback on the outcome of visits is essential and Custody Visitors are asked to record all issues raised on the Visit Report Form. Some issues such as a drink request can be resolved at the time of the visit and such issues which did not require any follow up are monitored for trends throughout the year to identify patterns or any potential problems within each of the custody suites.

Some other issues, such as a heating break down, would require further investigation and action. In this instance the Custody Visitor would report the problem immediately, it would be recorded on the visit report sheet and the Police Authority would liaise with the Custody Suite Manager to ensure the issue had been resolved. Once these issues are resolved, this is fed back to the visitors concerned.

ICV Ethnicity



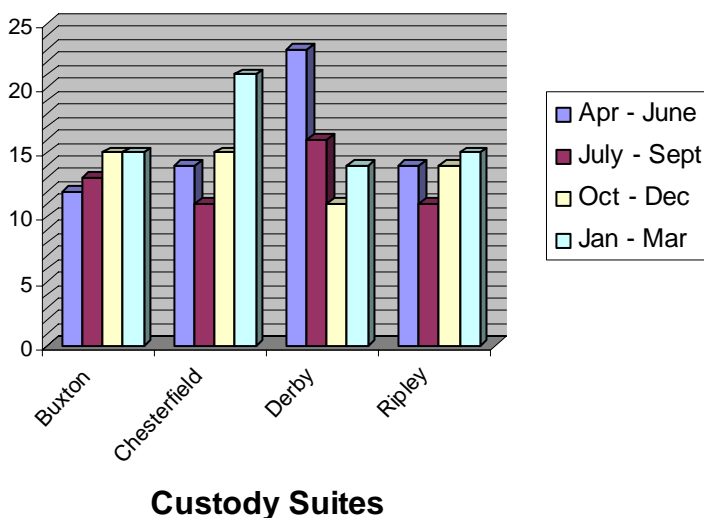
The authority is committed to the policy of equal opportunities. Although the majority of ICV's are of white ethnicity, two new recruits are of Asian Pakistani ethnicity, with one ICV being of black ethnicity*.

*As at 31 March 2011

Summaries of the reports are provided and quarterly meetings of the Professional Standards Panel and to ensure the scheme is considered in the public domain, the Corporate Governance Committee receive update reports twice yearly. The reports to the Corporate Governance Committee are published within the 'Meetings' section of the Derbyshire Police Authority website.

Number of visits to custody suites

Visits Made to Custody Suites

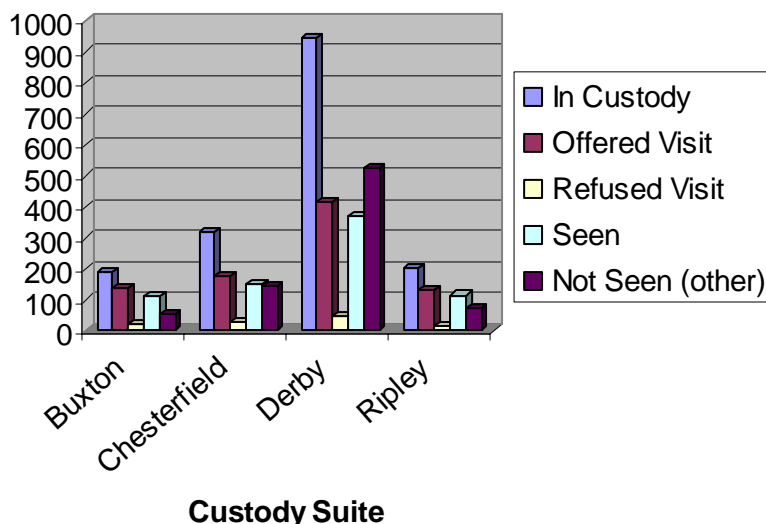


The chart to the left details the number of visits which ICV's made during the year to the four designated custody suites in Derbyshire. This is split into three monthly periods.

Note: Ripley Custody Suite closed on 31 March 2011

Detainees Visited in the Year

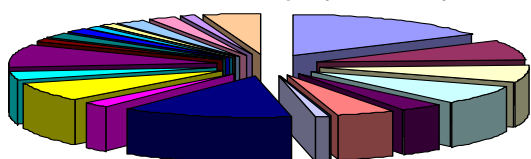
The chart on the right details the number of detained persons being held in custody at the time of the visits to the suite, whether they were offered a visit, and if they were subsequently seen or not.



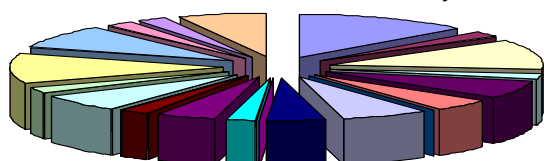
If there are a lot of detained persons in the custody suite at the time of a visit, ICV's can choose a random selection of people to see. Those chosen are then free to refuse to see an ICV if they wish. There are many other reasons why a detained person is not seen, for instance they may be asleep, in the exercise yard or in interview.

Issues raised as a result of visits

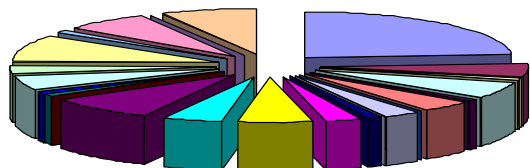
Issues Raised at Ripley Custody Suite



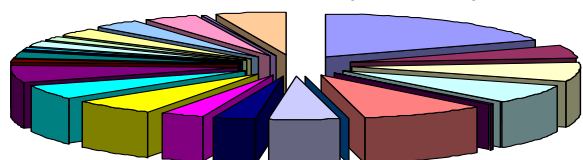
Issues Raised at Buxton Custody Suite



Issues Raised at Chesterfield Custody Suite



Issues Raised at Derby Custody Suite



- Food/Drink Requested
- Phone Call Requested
- Person to be/not to be Notified
- Solicitor Requested/Awaiting
- Written rights/entitlements
- Blanket requested
- Cell too warm
- Cell cold
- Access to exercise Yard
- Reading Material Requested
- Medication Requested
- Dr/Nurse/Healthcare
- General unwell/health issues
- Detainee with injuries
- Replacement Clothing/Footwear
- Visit from family/friend
- Alarm bell - not working/slow to answer
- Shower - access to
- Toilet - access to/problem with
- Update on what is happening
- Interpreter required/awaiting
- Advised not to see - violent etc
- Cell Unclean
- Miscellaneous

“I applied to be a custody visitor because I saw the ad and was curious. I wish I could say my motives were more altruistic. I’m retired, I enjoy a challenge and it seemed like a good idea at the time.

That’s why I joined. It’s not why I stay. I stay because every visit is different. Different custody staff have different responses to the visits. Every visitor has a unique take on how to handle the questions (and the paperwork) within the constraints of the regulations, and each detainee has his or her own opinion on what to tell us. Despite that the system provides essential independent monitoring of treatment and conditions in custody suites” **Quote from a Derbyshire Independent Custody Visitor**

The Animal Welfare Scheme

The purpose of the Animal Welfare Scheme is to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which animals are housed, trained and transported and to provide an independent check on the way police handlers carry out their responsibilities with regard to the welfare of animals in their care. Derbyshire Police Authority is one of only eleven authorities nationwide to operate a voluntary Animal Welfare Scheme. There are now four Animal Welfare visitors at Derbyshire Police Authority.

The only animals which Derbyshire Constabulary use for policing purposes are dogs. Visitors assess them against criteria set by the RSPCA, called the 'Five Freedoms' which are:-

- Freedom from hunger and thirst;
- Freedom from discomfort;
- Freedom to express normal behaviour;
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease;
- Freedom from fear and distress.

Visitors attend the kennels on the Constabulary Headquarters site in Ripley to check the dogs. In the autumn and winter when off-site training takes place, the visitors are able to attend also to ensure the dogs' are being treated humanely whilst being trained.

Derbyshire Constabulary has specially designed transit vehicles for transporting the dogs, with a large rear section for cages and separate fans so that the dogs are not in danger if they have to be left for any length of time. The visitors may also check that the vehicles are clean, that there is enough room for the dog to move, and that the fans are in working order.

"I have been visiting the HQ Kennels at Ripley as an Animal Welfare Committee member for over ten years. I have always been impressed by the care and concern for the dogs by the staff at the Kennels ably led by Sgt. Taylor with the Kennel Manager. On every visit, I have been treated with excellent courtesy by all the staff" **Quote from a Derbyshire Animal Welfare Visitor**

Visiting Statistics

There was a total of sixteen visits made to the kennels during the year; all visits were positive, with dogs being kept in good conditions.

There had been requests for an additional kennel in the isolation area of the kennels but due to the financial constraints faced by the Force and Authority the requests had been regrettably been refused. Officers from the Dog Section then donated materials at their own expense and used their spare time to build a kennel themselves.

The Police Authority is grateful to members of the dog section for their ingenuity and pro-active attitude.

CONTACTS:

For more information about the Independent Custody Visiting and Animal Welfare Schemes, please contact:

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