

## Feedback from police custody

### Introduction

The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) leads, supports and represents independent custody visiting schemes across the UK. ICVA is requesting additional feedback from schemes throughout the Coronavirus pandemic. ICVA is sharing this monitoring with national bodies to help to identify strengths and challenges and help to resolve problems. This month ICVA requested information from schemes on prisoner escorts from police custody and the impact on custody suites.

### Feedback

The following feedback summarises responses from independent custody visiting schemes from mid-September to mid-October 2021. ICVA received feedback from 15 police force areas across this time.

### Key messages

- A third of respondents indicated that there were currently delays in transport for detainees from custody to court/prisons.
- One respondent noted that delays were occurring in their area, but that this was due to the impact of social distancing at courts having a knock-on effect in terms of the demand on custody staff and suites. The respondent noted that whilst the situation overall was considered manageable, there was a recorded impact in terms of detainee care correlated with increased demand on the suite. The areas of detainee care being noted as impacted were meal provisions and attendance of healthcare professionals.
- Other respondents from areas where there were delays noted that the impact of the delays meant increased capacity in suites impacting on staff.
- Respondents noted that the main impact of delays was for detainees. They commented that detainees, in particular those with mental health issues are impacted. One scheme noted that the delays are meaning that healthcare professionals are having to increase medication to support detainees who have anxiety/self-harm issues in cases where they are being held for extended periods of time, such as over the weekend.
- One respondent noted that there is a reduced availability of detention officers to care for detainees due to increased demand.
- Two schemes report that detainees, even when delayed, are being given good standards of care.
- One scheme notes that they have restarted virtual courts, and comment that there this relies on extra police and court staff who are not always available, leading to further delays in the area with an impact on detainees, witnesses and victims.

### Using feedback

ICVA continues to share feedback with national operational organisations such as the NPCC and Home Office.