

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 Covid 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 detainee access to washing facilities, attendance of safeguards and staffing in custody.

Feedback

The following feedback summarises responses from independent custody visiting schemes from January 2022. ICVA received feedback from 17 police force areas across this time.

Key messages

- Almost all schemes reported that detainees had good access to handwashing, face coverings and showers with the exception of one, where showers were not routinely offered when staffing was low.
- 3 of the 17 respondents indicated that there were some issues with AA and solicitor attendance, with one scheme noting that whilst AA attendance was good, solicitor attendance in person was still posing a challenge. They commented that this had been raised with the Head of Custody and staff were advised to explain that custody was a safe environment and encourage in person attendance.
- 5 schemes reported issues with low staffing in custody suites. Two of the respondents noted that this led to poor morale amongst staff and impacts on detainee care including the offering of showers.
- Other schemes who had noted low staffing commented that there were no recorded impacts on detainees and that the staffing issues had either been effectively remedied or escalated to Heads of Custody etc.
- One scheme reported better service delivery from a prisoner escort service which was encouraging but still noted a concern with lack of local authority overnight accommodation for children post charge and a large number of detainees experiencing mental health illness.

Using feedback

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