

The Independent Custody Visiting Association represents all independent custody visiting schemes across the UK. Local volunteers (known as independent custody visitors or ICVs) make unannounced visits to police custody to check on the rights, entitlements and wellbeing of detainees and the condition of custody.

### **The state of custody**

Positively, schemes reported:

- A high number of examples were included of good/caring detainee treatment from staff.
- Specific arrangements being made for fasting detainees in Ramadan.
- Some schemes reported improvements in terms of access to showers/distraction items and specific foods to meet dietary needs.
- One scheme reported a focus on moving away from a 'request culture' to proactively offering detainee entitlements.

Causes for concern reported by schemes included:

- Staff shortages in terms of custody staff, healthcare staff and ICVs were reported.
- A number of schemes reported issues with supplies of food in custody. ICVA has undertaken some work on and raised with the Home Office operational partners group. The NPCC custody leads have met with the main supplier experiencing problems and were assured that these were temporary. Schemes were asked to report continuing issues beyond quarter end to ICVA so that this can continue to be monitored/raised as needed.
- Two schemes reported some issues with health care wait times/provision of healthcare, in one area this is leading to a review of the healthcare contract.

### **The impact of ICVs**

ICV schemes have continued to deliver regular, independent monitoring. ICVs have reported making a difference in several ways.

- Schemes have reported ICVs being involved in training of custody staff, increasing visibility and awareness of the ICV role.
- ICVs have been instrumental in getting distraction items into custody.
- ICVs have influenced improvements in detainee access to showers, food and reading materials.
- ICVs are taking part in a pilot to increase the justification and reduce the use of anti-rip clothing in two areas.

**ICVA response**

*“ICV schemes continue to provide independent monitoring of custody with many schemes entering a phase of recruitment to return to capacity for effective visiting. Many schemes have had a high turnover in volunteers during the pandemic and arrangements for schemes to replace those who have left are in place. ICVA wishes to thank the hard work of the scheme managers in recruiting new volunteers. The reports received this quarter, whilst including some challenges for forces to respond to, was also overwhelmingly positive regarding staff treatment of detainees which is encouraging to see.” Sherry Ralph, Chief Operating Officer, ICVA.*

**Further information**

Due to the Easter holidays, there is a delay in ICVA receiving some of the Q4 data, however, ICV schemes conducted well in excess of 816 visits in quarter four, speaking to over 2,884 detainees and observing over 1,200 detainees.

If you have any comments or questions about this report, please get in touch via the email address below.

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ICVA leads, supports and represents local independent custody visiting schemes.

Further information can be found on our website: [www.icva.org.uk](http://www.icva.org.uk)