

Anti-Rip Clothing An ICV Checklist

Those detained and thought to be at risk of self-harm in cell, can, in some areas,¹ be placed in anti-rip clothing. This is typically a shorts and top style of clothing, which is made of re-enforced material to reduce the risk of detainees being able to tear clothing and make ligatures. This can be given to the detainee to change into, or force can be used to remove the detainees own clothing, circumstances depending.

Many schemes are undertaking some more in-depth reviews into the use of this clothing, as the [inspectors for police custody](#) have noted issues with the proportionality and justification of use in many areas. ICVA is supporting work in several areas, most notably a pilot in Dyfed Powys, which you can read more about [here](#). The most frequent reported issue by the inspectorate is that of the clothing being used when the detainee has refused to answer the risk questions on booking in. This use of the clothing is most typically one involving force.

This checklist provides ICVs with areas to consider when going on custody visits. ICVs are in place as members of the public to report on what is and is not acceptable in custody. You are not expected to be risk assessment or self-harm experts, but this checklist should guide you as to what to look for and record in custody.

Please note: Silence or violence from a detainee deemed non-compliant with the Risk Assessment process alone is insufficient justification for the issuing of an anti-rip suit.

When you arrive in custody

- Prioritise visits to children and vulnerable adults as usual.
- Ask if there are detainees who have been placed in anti-rip clothing.
- Record the reason for the detainee being put in anti-rip clothing.

During your visit

- Check on rights, entitlements and wellbeing as you would for any visit.
- Check additional arrangements such as:
 - Does the detainee know why they are in the clothing?
 - Has the clothing been reviewed, and consideration been given to returning the detainees clothes/replacing with a tracksuit?
 - Has the detainee been offered distraction items to help reduce stress during their time in custody?
- Ask the detainee if you are able to check the custody record.

When looking at the custody record (with permission)

- Check how long the detainee has been in custody.
- Did the detainee answer the risk questions on booking in?
- Check the rationale for use of the anti-rip clothing, had the detainee made comments leading custody staff to believe that they would self-harm?

¹ Not all force areas use this clothing, favouring monitoring risk via increased observations. Please check and see if your area uses the suits.

- Were increased observations considered as a method of keeping the detainee safe?
- Is there evidence in the custody record of the use of the clothing being considered for removal?

If you observe Inspector reviews (you may not, but this will be helpful if you do)

- If the detainee has been in custody a long time, have showers/exercise been offered?
- If the detainee is in anti-rip clothing suit has the Inspector reviewed and given directions as to if the suit needs to be removed based on reduced risk?

When completing your report

- Note how long the detainee has been in custody.
- Note if the detainee is in anti-rip clothing.
- Report on rights, entitlements and wellbeing as normal.
- Report on whether the detainee has been offered distraction items.
- Note if you have not been able to access the custody record and why.

If you have had access to the custody record:

- Report the rationale given for the detainee being in anti-rip clothing.
- Report as to whether the custody record contains any detail on reviewing the use of the clothing and whether normal/custody clothing has been considered.

Scheme managers

- Please highlight any problems, themes or strengths to your PCC.
- Please report themes and issues to ICVA either as part of your quarterly report or by emailing info@icva.org.uk.

What does good practice look like?

- Allowing detainees at risk to keep their own clothing but increased observations to protect the detainee from self-injury.
- Using tracksuits where own clothes not appropriate rather than an anti-rip suit.
- Anti-rip suit use in suites being minimal, justified and proportionate, recorded effectively in the custody record.
- Detainee dignity being paramount in the issuing of the clothing.
- Use of anti-rip clothing and risks posed reviewed, and clothing swapped for own clothes or custody tracksuit as soon as practicable.
- Detainees only wearing anti-rip in cell and never around the suite or in interviews.

Briefing Ends.