

**Custody Staff Handovers**  
**A briefing for ICVs and Schemes**  
**December 2023**



**Introduction**

After a request at the National Expert Forum (NEF), ICVA has created this briefing on what to expect at staff handovers and what ICVs can observe. Observing handovers is not a requirement of the ICV role per the Codes of Practice, however some schemes choose to do so. This briefing does not suggest that all ICVs should observe handovers as a matter of course and if this is not current practice for ICVs they should, in the first instance, discuss with their scheme manager.

**What is a handover?**

A handover is the swap from one shift to another where discussions about detainees should take place between the outgoing custody officers and those beginning their shift to ensure relevant information is shared.

**What to expect**

According to the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice guidance, "It is essential that enough time is allowed for a full and effective briefing and debriefing between custody officers and staff when handing over responsibility for detainees, particularly at shift change over. This ensures that all relevant information is passed on and understood by the person taking over responsibility".<sup>1</sup> Usually handovers will take place in or around the booking-in desk.

Further, HMICFRS's expectations of police custody (the criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for detainees in police custody) note that "Handovers involve all custody staff where possible, are recorded and conducted in private. They result in the accurate sharing of relevant information."<sup>2</sup>

**What to monitor**

- Whether important details about detainees are appropriately handed over such as levels of observation, rousing checks and review times.
- Whether communication of risks, disabilities, medical needs, vulnerabilities, emerging issues, control strategies and welfare needs of each detainee was effective.

Briefing ends.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.college.police.uk/app/detention-and-custody/detainee-care/detainee-care>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/expectations-for-police-custody-version-4/>