



2019-20 Annual Report

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office



Figure 1: View of a Custody cell corridor

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Foreword

Independent custody visiting is an essential element of the work of my office in ensuring the police service is open and accountable to the people it serves. I am delighted to be able to give residents the opportunity to be involved in their local policing service and this includes opening up Custody Units for scrutiny of the processes involved in safely and lawfully detaining people, treating each person with dignity and respect.

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme gives the public a real insight into conditions in custody and reassurance that someone independent of the Police has oversight. This mandatory Scheme cannot exist without the commitment of local volunteers. I know that newly appointed Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) often say that it is really interesting to see what goes on inside Police Centres and they recognise the importance of their independent role and feel proud of their visit, having spoken to detained people. ICVs emphasise that they do not want or need to know why the detained person is there but ask about their welfare, if they have been treated according to the law for their rights and entitlements. ICVs also provide a friendly smile and a respectful conversation.

The ICVs' independence is crucial and they must not be afraid to challenge and raise any concerns, even niggles, to ensure the high standards within the Police Custody Units are maintained. Any items are reviewed, action taken where necessary and issues resolved. Equally, any compliments to Custody Officers for good practice observed during the unannounced visits are recorded.

I value Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Custody Staff for their commitment to the role and responsibilities. Detainees can understandably be challenging, often having chaotic lives, mental ill health and substance misuse. I encourage ICVs to continue to report the good aspects and compliments to Custody Officers.

We rely on the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of our volunteer ICVs and I thank them all for their dedication. I am extremely grateful to the work of Coordinators and Deputies at Bridgwater: Rob and Anita, as well as Daren as Acting Deputy; at Keynsham: John (with nearly a full 9 year term), Paul and Justine; and Patchway: Annaphie (a 9 year full term), Amie and Dawn. Thank you for supporting the volunteers within your Teams.

Thank you to each and every ICV. I have huge appreciation of what Custody Visitors do towards increasing the public's trust and confidence. Custody Visitors are one of the 'critical friends' of the Police. This is due to the altruistic contribution made by our Independent Custody Visitors. On behalf of us all, I thank them for their continued service.

Finally, I would like to welcome the newest Custody Visitors who have successfully completed their probation and are now fully accredited Independent Custody Visitors, as well as the newest appointed volunteers, at the induction training stage. Be very proud.



Sue Mountstevens, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner

31 March 2020



Head of Custody, Temporary Chief Inspector Mark Collins

A word from the Head of Custody:

“With each passing year the role of the ICVs becomes more and more important as the complex needs of detainees increase. The role of the ICVs is a crucial one within the custody environment to ensure we provide the best service we can in terms of safe, efficient and consistent standards. The custody review which took place over the last 12 months was focussed on ensuring we are constantly evolving and improving the service we provide to all our detainees and with the support of the ICVs we look forward with confidence to providing the best service we can. I would like to pass on the thanks of everyone in custody to the ICVs for their continued support to us and the Constabulary.”

11 March 2020

Avon and Somerset Constabulary’s Head of Custody, T/Chief Inspector Collins

Introduction

The Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) visiting process and procedure is governed by a Code of Practice which is issued by the Home Office (2013). See Annex 1. This states:

“Systems must be in place to ensure that the output from visits is drawn rapidly to the attention of those in a position to make the appropriate response.

The PCC is responsible for drawing together issues and identifying trends emerging from visits in their area and addressing these with relevant police supervisors.

The PCC must have a regular and formal opportunity to raise concerns and issues with a designated senior officer with force-wide responsibilities. It will usually be appropriate for that officer to be of at least Assistant Chief Constable/Commander rank. Regular reports shall be provided by the administrator of the scheme to the PCC. These reports must be discussed at PCC meetings as appropriate and reflected in an entry about independent custody visiting in the PCC’s own annual report.”

The full Code of Practice is published here but expected to be updated in 2021:

http://icva.org.uk/uploads/publications/ICV_Code_of_Practice-APR2013.pdf



Figure 2: PCC Sue Mountstevens checking a Custody Unit cell

This ICV annual report provides an opportunity to highlight the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (PCC’s) volunteers, to celebrate ICV and scheme successes and to describe how the PCC’s office have and are working on issues with the aim of making Avon and Somerset Constabulary’s Custody facilities ‘outstanding’ in the policing service provided. This ICV annual report documents how ICVs are assisting the PCC in discharging her duty in delivering oversight, openness and transparency. This is part of the PCC’s important role in being a bridge between the public and the Police. The ICV scheme delivers continuous improvement and, in doing so, boosts public confidence and reassurance, ICVs being the ‘eyes and ears’ as local members of the public. The information within this ICV Annual Report aims to provide the required information for an effective and transparent ICV scheme. The format of this report has been developed by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) in consultation with ICV schemes, the Home Office, the National Preventive Mechanism and the inspectorates. It also adheres to the requirements with the ICVA Quality Assurance Framework.

Independent Custody Visiting Schemes exist to provide assurance to local communities that they can have confidence in the way the Police treat people who are held in custody. Ensuring effective management and oversight of the ICV Scheme is a statutory responsibility of the PCC and the PCC ensures that robust and effective procedures for establishing and maintaining the scheme are in place.

The PCC's office appoints volunteers from the local community to undertake the role of the Independent Custody Visitor and provides them with support and initial training - as well as on-going, regular training - to ensure that they can carry out their role effectively and with confidence. The ICV scheme also plays an important part in maintaining Police accountability to the local community and this annual report is a means to ensure that this information is published and available in the public domain.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has 3 modern custody units, built in 2014 within the Police Centres at Patchway (near Bristol), Keynsham (near Bath) and Bridgwater (near Taunton). The Custody units have been carefully designed around the custody process, with the custody booking in/charge area centrally located, known as the 'Bridge', with cell corridors as well as holding rooms, fingerprint processing rooms, medical room and interview rooms. The Custody Unit also includes a vehicle docking area within the secure compound and CCTV throughout the Custody Unit.

Statistics

Demographics of the detained persons going through custody by age, gender and ethnicity are shown in the tables below. This information has been provided from the Constabulary's Niche database. In summary, the data shows that people detained are predominantly white males aged between 25-34 years. This is the same as in 2018-19.

The highest number of detainees in custody is at the weekends, from midnight to 3a.m. (1-2am in 2018-19). ICV visits in the morning are important to check on the welfare, rights and entitlements of these detainees.

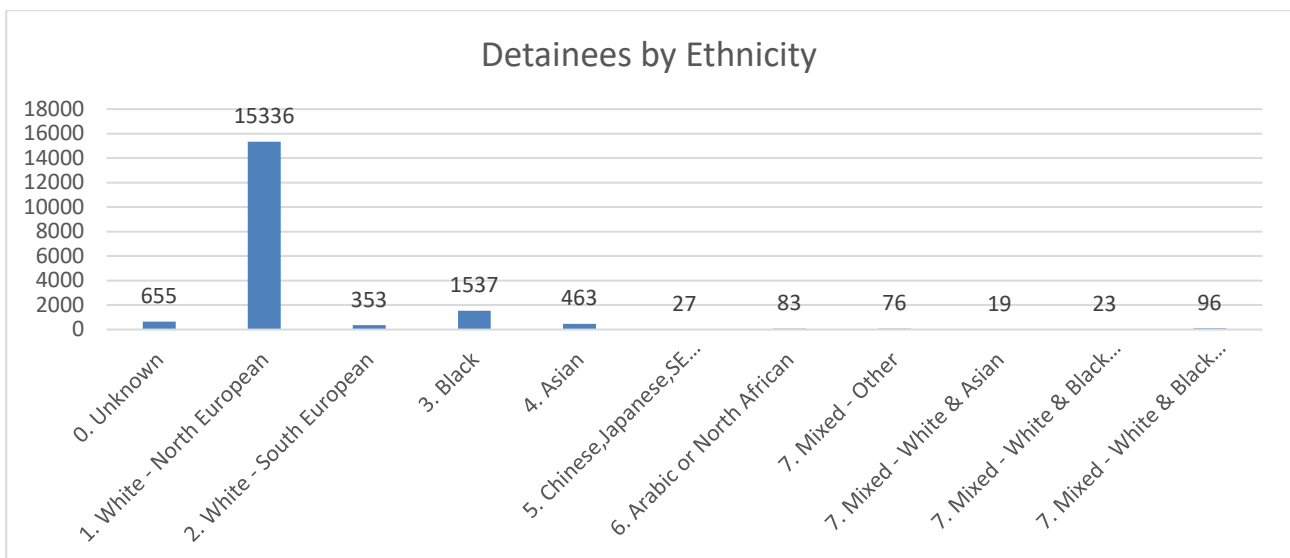


Figure 3: Detainees by Ethnicity. Total 18668 detainees 2019-2020

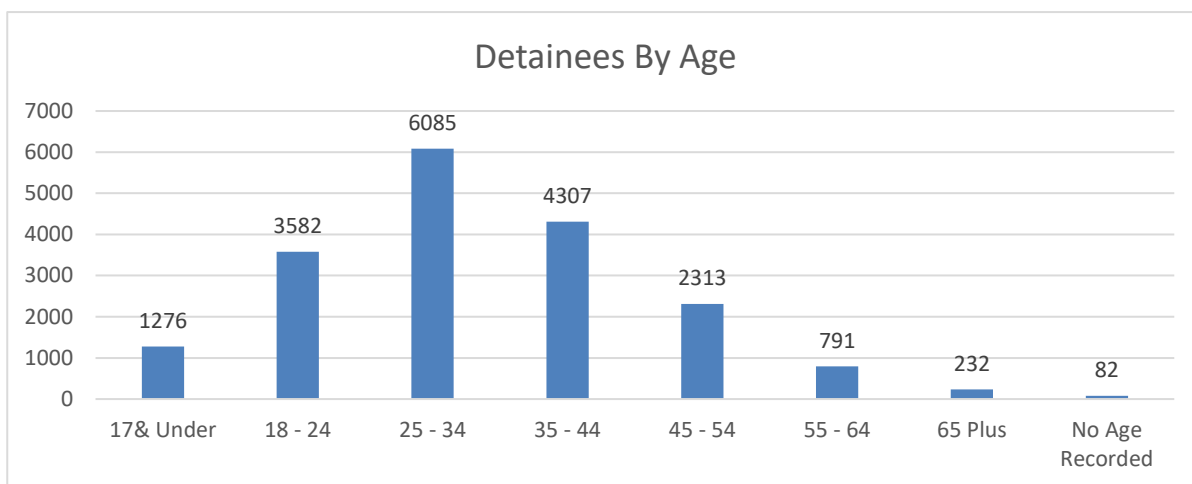


Figure 4: Detainees by Age

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
07:00 - 08:00	22	36	35	30	30	37	36
08:00 - 09:00	55	57	71	61	71	69	75
09:00 - 10:00	84	88	109	114	76	80	80
10:00 - 11:00	93	109	103	122	104	90	72
11:00 - 12:00	92	95	124	101	104	80	117
12:00 - 13:00	110	115	128	129	114	83	98
13:00 - 14:00	98	108	117	107	96	91	86
14:00 - 15:00	124	131	135	115	133	114	93
15:00 - 16:00	87	128	146	133	108	113	112
16:00 - 17:00	123	116	130	124	96	109	123
17:00 - 18:00	132	105	139	133	84	101	105
18:00 - 19:00	116	155	131	154	147	127	116
19:00 - 20:00	129	142	134	133	140	142	132
20:00 - 21:00	109	123	146	135	171	146	126
21:00 - 22:00	117	130	149	132	141	145	132
22:00 - 23:00	128	102	123	128	150	169	108
23:00 - 24:00	135	102	125	126	172	156	133
24:00 - 01:00	138	137	147	111	140	234	226
01:00 - 02:00	129	102	117	139	131	277	268
02:00 - 03:00	97	89	111	103	132	244	268
03:00 - 04:00	92	63	84	67	97	181	183
04:00 - 05:00	64	62	66	58	89	154	147
05:00 - 06:00	51	61	59	50	60	122	105
06:00 - 07:00	29	27	20	42	31	46	67

Figure 5: Detainees by Booking-in time

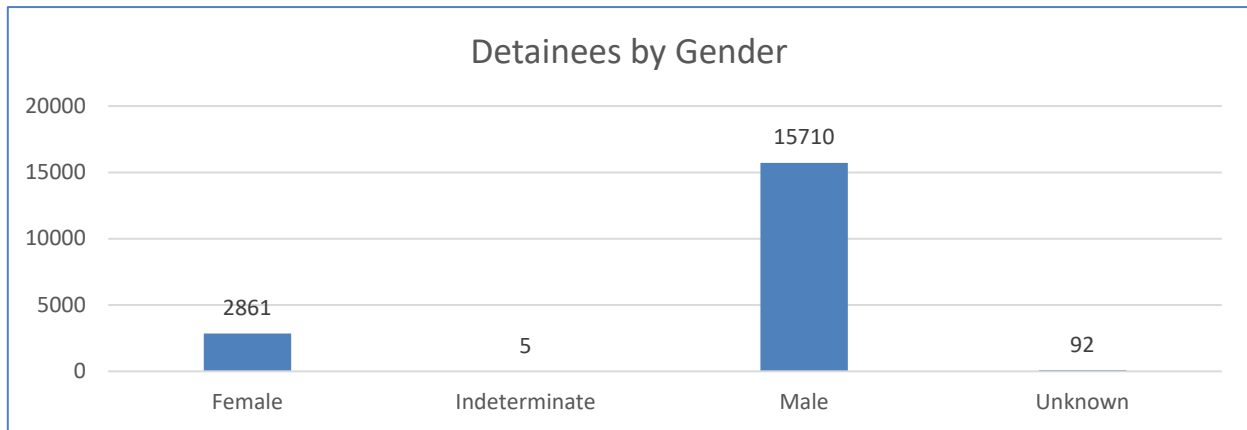


Figure 6: Detainees by Gender

How the ICV scheme works



ICVs are volunteers, over 18 years old, from a variety of backgrounds who live or work within the local policing area. Visits are unannounced and can take place at any time of the day or night.

ICVs go straight to the Custody Unit main door, press the intercom to announce themselves (with photo ID cards viewed via CCTV) and request immediate access into the unit.

The ICVs are given a report of cells occupied and are allocated an Escorting Officer to open the cell door so that the ICVs can self-introduce and ask the detained person if they wish to talk.

Figure 7: Standard library photo - Cell interior example

Conversations between the ICVs and detainee (out of hearing of the Escorting Officer, but still in sight) focus on the detainee's welfare needs and the provision of rights and entitlements under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).

ICVs also may review a detainee's custody record, to seek assurances about any concern or to check about an item mentioned by the detainee. The custody record includes a detention log which records all aspects of the detention such as the booking in, risk assessment, processing, cell checks, meal and drink provision, blanket provision, exercise yard time, shower, reading and religious material provided, Health Care Professional (HCP/nurse) attendance, legal representation, Appropriate Adult presence where necessary for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, as well as the regular Inspector's Review of the detention. The ICVs receive a redacted version of the Custody Record which excludes personal data, medication and arrest information.

ICVs do not wish or need to know the identity of the detainee or the reason for the detention. It is not relevant to the role. Any issues raised by the detainee or concerns of the ICVs are discussed as appropriate with custody staff with the aim of resolving requests as soon as possible, such as providing a magazine or a drink. ICVs also inspect and comment on the general condition and facilities of the custody unit including the cells,

kitchens, storage rooms, exercise yards, shower areas and ensure that religious material is stored respectfully.

ICVs look, listen, observe and create an electronic Visit Report for the PCC's lead officer and Custody Inspector on the ICVs' findings. Any issues not immediately sorted out during the ICV visit are recorded in the Visit Report and remain outstanding until they are responded to, actioned as appropriate by the Lead Custody Inspector and acknowledged within the electronic ICV Visit Report.

Any thematic and serious issues are raised with the Head of Custody and the PCC kept informed. The PCC and Chief Constable also discuss any high level items and this has included the annual discussion about frequency of ICV visits. The ICV Reports are significantly positive. There have been no deaths in custody during the year and no reports by ICVs of any unfair treatment of detainees by Custody staff.

Independent Custody Visiting schemes are supported nationally by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA). ICVA is a voluntary organisation that promotes the custody visiting process nationally through advocacy, training, publicity and ongoing support to all involved in the process. Ultimately, ICVA aims to assist the Home Office, PCCs and other interested bodies in the formulation of best practice for custody visiting schemes, increasing public awareness and understanding.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary area - ICV Scheme

There has been active recruitment of new volunteers during 2019-2020 for Bridgwater, Keynsham and Patchway, with 13 new ICVs appointed. The total number of ICV volunteers is 38 (March 2020), 20 female and 19 male, no transgender. The age range is from 21 to 84 and 2.56% (1) ICV has a Black or Asian minority ethnicity. Some ICVs have declared disabilities and ICVs cover a range of backgrounds including students, working and retired people.

Promotion and publication of ICV activities is ongoing. Advertising and appointments take place as required when volunteers either reach the maximum 9 year term or stand down for a number of reasons, including moving away, moving to full time work, travelling or for personal reasons. The aim is to keep the ICV scheme as inclusive and diverse as possible. Appointment activity including increased ethnicity representation will continue to take place for Keynsham, Bridgwater and Patchway ICV Panels during 2020-2021. However, the Teams are currently at full capacity, particularly for the weekly visit frequency newly introduced (instead of 4 day frequency).

Of the newly appointed ICVs, 4 have induction training to be re-arranged. The initial arrangements had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 restrictions from 23 March 2020.

The ICV scheme's Terrorism Act (TACT) trained ICVs' training has not been refreshed over the last few years because Avon and Somerset Constabulary are not designated to detain anyone under TACT. Should this situation change then appropriate vetting levels will be re-introduced and training will be provided so that a sub-group of ICVs can visit people detained under the Terrorism Act.

Comments from Panel Coordinators



Figure 8: *Volunteers are priceless. Trained ICVs ensure openness and transparency of Custody*

Bridgwater: Coordinator Anita Dibble

The influence and contribution of ICVs in our team are three-fold: ICV visits and quarterly Panel meetings create communication; this enables ICVs to understand Custody pressures; and Custody understand ICVs' experiences with detainees. This communication creates WIN/WINS.

Custody staff commonly experience detainee aggression these days. Custody staff can communicate the triggers to ICVs. When ICVs see detainees they add another form of de-escalation by communicating to detainees the Custody staff situations (such as, that custody staff are eager to fulfil requests but it is dependent on how busy and how many staff on shift). Custody staff can understand ICV and detainee experiences better such as: A detainee came into a cell in the afternoon but needed medication in the morning. Custody staff know the importance of detainees seeing the on-site Health Care Practitioners and that the detainees get their desperately needed medication. This in turn reduces the detainee level of aggression and/or harm in the custody unit.

There are many WIN/WINS with this collaboration. One example is the influence ICVs have had regarding the provision of female hygiene packs (sanitary towels) within custody on as high up as the Prime Minister and the Home Office and a 2019 change to the Code of Practice relating to Custody. ICVs can be proud in the influencing work they do.

Keynsham: Panel Coordinator Paul Randy

During 2019 the ICV visits have been running like clockwork with John as Panel Coordinator and also Justine as Deputy Coordinator producing the rotas. During the year, 2 very experienced ICVs completed their maximum 9 years in the role and as well as John's just under 9 years, we have said farewell and huge compliments to all 3 standing down. Also one other ICV has stood down due to increased work commitments. The PCC and ICVs were represented to give their condolences and respects at the funeral of a longer serving and very popular member of the team who sadly died after a short illness.

In January 2020, after 5½ years as an ICV, I took on the Panel Coordinators role. I have been on a number of Interview Panels and 6 new volunteers have been appointed, resulting in 5 completing their probationary period and accepting the role, with 1 new team member awaiting induction training. This brings our total strength back up to 14 excellent panel members.

Visits have been completed every 4 days with none being aborted. However from late March 2020 due to the Coronavirus situation a sub-group of our Panel have teamed up with Bridgwater and Patchway ICVs to complete remote/telephone visits and to review Custody Records on a weekly basis.

The Keynsham team have always had an excellent rapport with the Detention Officers, Custody Sergeants, and the Custody Inspectors who are always very helpful and nothing is too much trouble. We do raise issues and concerns during our visits, but these appear not to be taken as criticism, but as matters which require explanation, clarification and, at times, action. Equally we aim to recognise what we see as good practice and pass our positive observations to the staff.

We have progressed to a laptop for digital report writing and have the choice to find a quiet area to complete our visit reports when in the custody unit.

Patchway: Panel Coordinator Annaphie Rogers

At Patchway, I have completed my maximum 9 year term and along with four other ICVs, I have stood down. Three newly appointed people have joined the Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) team, have had a tour of the Custody Unit and a shadow ICV visit with two ICVs. The induction training is the final part of the process before these three law students are fully on the team to carry out custody visits and the good work of the team.

An element of training has been introduced at every ICV quarterly panel meeting with topics this year including Children in custody, Detainee vulnerability and mental health services and De-escalation and Use of Force, all helping to enhance the ICVs' understanding of the custody process and detainee welfare, rights and entitlements.

There have been a number of improvements over the last year including the provision of a dedicated ICV laptop which has simplified the logging in procedure and also means that ICVs do not have to search for an available custody computer. It is also pleasing that the staff now have a dedicated restroom to take their breaks away from the working area.

Another development, driven by ICVs, has been the agreement on the viewing of cell CCTV for detainees on observation level 2, where Custody Staff rouse the detainees at least every 30 minutes and the detainee must respond to questions to ensure they are alright after the effects of drugs or substances. This is called Obs level 2. Rouse and Respond (R&R). The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA), a national organisation, considered that the viewing of CCTV to check that the detention staff had properly "R&R" the detainee would be a breach of the detainee's privacy. Our view was that possible danger to life trumped privacy. The purpose of R&R is not just to check that the detainee is still alive, but to check that their condition has not deteriorated within the last 30 minutes, and if it has, then the necessary take action. Therefore it is important to see that this has been done by reviewing the CCTV if there is an ICV concern and the detainee hasn't been seen, rather than just checking entries on the custody record. This ICV check was agreed by the Chief Constable and the PCC, after an HM Inspectorate of Constabulary custody inspection.

PCC's office activity overview

Changes to PACE Code C and H in July 2019 regarding Menstrual Care and Dignity in Custody have been highlighted and subsequently scrutinized by ICVs, such as ensuring female detainees are offered sanitary towels/tampons, that this is recorded on the Detention Log, along with the offer of a conversation with a female Officer. Also, information that the in-cell toilet is pixelated.

The quarterly Panel meetings for Bridgwater, Keynsham and Patchway provide an opportunity for ICVs to meet together and for each ICV to highlight any issues and good practice. The standing agenda items include an update from the Custody Inspector, an update from the ICV Panel Coordinator and an update from the PCC's office, as well as a training topic.

There was no Annual Conference during 2019. However, a full day's Induction Training was delivered in Keynsham and in Patchway in 2019 and in Bridgwater in January 2020 for newly appointed Custody Visitors as well as being offered as a refresher for any other Custody Visitors. Attendance by the Custody Inspector for a Q&A session is very helpful.

A survey took place in 2019 to consult with ICVs on the topics required for future training sessions during future quarterly Panel meetings. The topics chosen and delivered during 2019-2020 have been: Mental Health; Vulnerable detainees; Children in custody; and Independent investigations into deaths and serious injuries in custody. Additional surveys have included the frequency of visits, the start day of each rota slot and the number of visits preferred by each ICV.

Avon and Somerset PCC has again offered to host the next one day South West Regional ICV conference at Portishead Police Headquarters in the Autumn of 2020, where ICVs meet up from Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Avon and Somerset.

The PCC's Volunteers Management Officer, Kathryn Palmer, has attended tours of the Custody Units at Bridgwater, Keynsham and Patchway and also shadowed Custody Visitors visits at each of the 3 Custody Units with newly appointed ICVs. The standard of the Custody facilities are impressive and also there is evidence seen of a respectful culture within custody. There are also good critical-friend working relationships between the ICVs and the Constabulary. This is also the situation between ICVs and the PCC's office, as evidence within the ICV 6 monthly induction and 3 yearly reviews (the latter a Home Officer requirement). The PCC's office has fostered a very good working relationship with the Constabulary's Head of Custody, Guy Shimmons, and after his promotion to Superintendent and head of Criminal Justice, this continued with the Acting Head, Temporary Chief Inspector Mark Collins and currently on-going with Chief Inspector Debbie Palmer-Lawrence. The Head of Custody attends the quarterly Coordinators meetings, either at Police HQ or most recently online. This may continue as remote meetings. With a shared vision for the Constabulary to be outstanding, this positive working relationship also applies to Custody Officers and Staff, particularly with the 3 Lead Custody Inspectors who attend the ICV Panel meetings for their specific Custody Unit.



Figure 9: Bridgwater Police Centre. Far right ground floor is the Custody Unit

The National ICVA Conference planned for March 2020 in London was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown regulations.

The PCC's Public Relations and Media staff continue to actively promote information about the ICV scheme via social media, twitter and Facebook, as well as the PCC's newsletter, both printed and electronic.



Figure 10: ICV appointment advert example

ICV activity overview – Custody Visiting Data

Quarterly statistics are sent by the PCC’s office to the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) for national collation, as in the table below. However, the updated data since those figures states the total detainees during the 2019-2020 financial year that have been held within the three Avon and Somerset Constabulary Custody Units is revised up to **18,889**.

The number of detained people per Custody Unit is recorded as:

Quarterly data submitted to ICVA	Total number of detainees through custody	Number of ICV visits	Total number of detainees in custody at time of ICV visits	Total number of detainees unavailable	Total number of detainees visited
Quarter 1	4654	66	545	121	280
Quarter 2	4844	65	593	112	325
Quarter 3	4657	67	571	126	281
Quarter 4	4567	56	520	97	316
Totals:	18722	254	2229	456	1202

The frequency of visiting has been one visit every 4 days at each of the 3 Custody Units, with this changing to weekly visits during last few weeks of the financial year and a short suspension in March due to Covid-19 risk assessment.

The graphs below are a visual overview of the visits during the financial year 2019-2020.

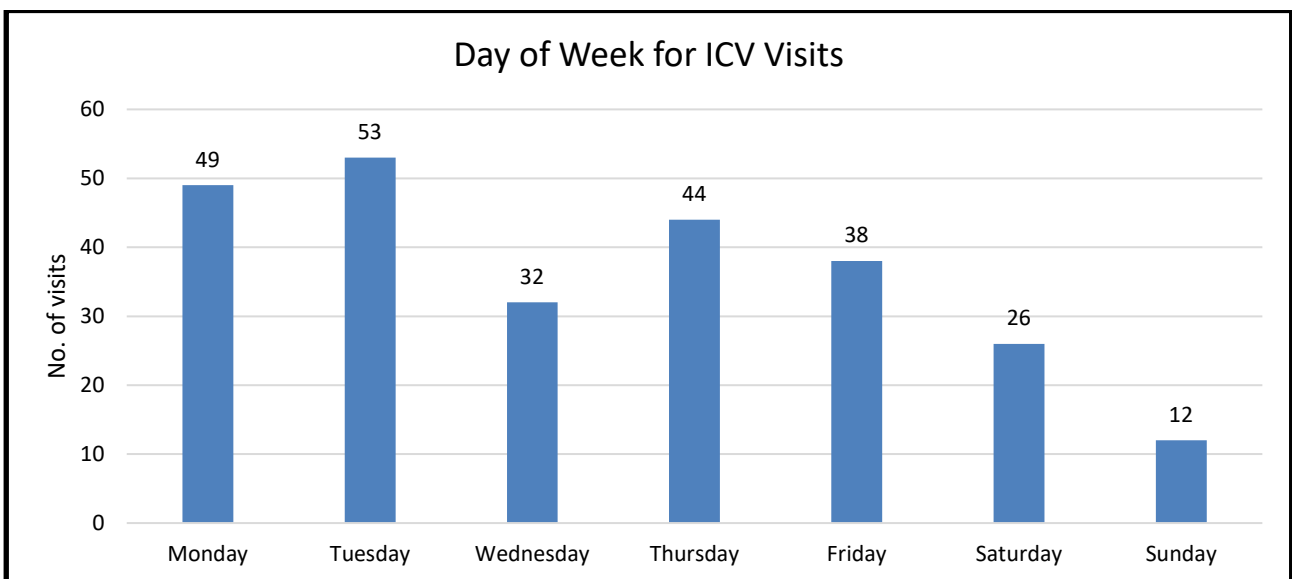


Figure 11: ICV Visits by Day. Total 254 visits

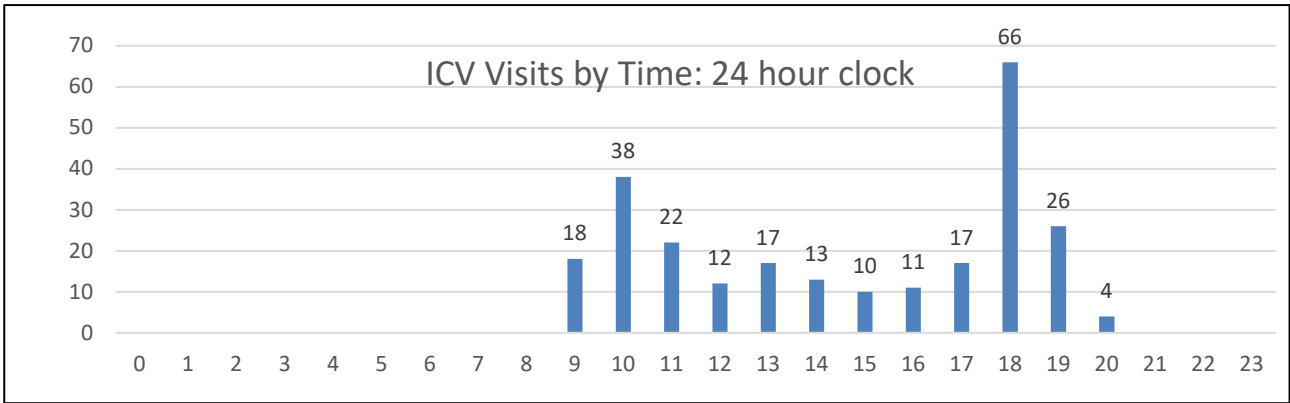


Figure 12: ICV Visits by Time. Total 254 visits

Visits are predominantly occurring on **Mondays (19%) Tuesdays (21%), Thursday (17%) and Friday (15%)** and at **10am and particularly 6pm** as the most popular visit start times. Requests have been made at the Quarterly Panel meetings for more weekend and visits starting after 8pm. ICV visits last up to 90 minutes with an additional 30 minutes in the Custody Unit for Report writing, therefore, ICVs are within the Custody Unit from times ranging from 9a.m. to approximately 10p.m.

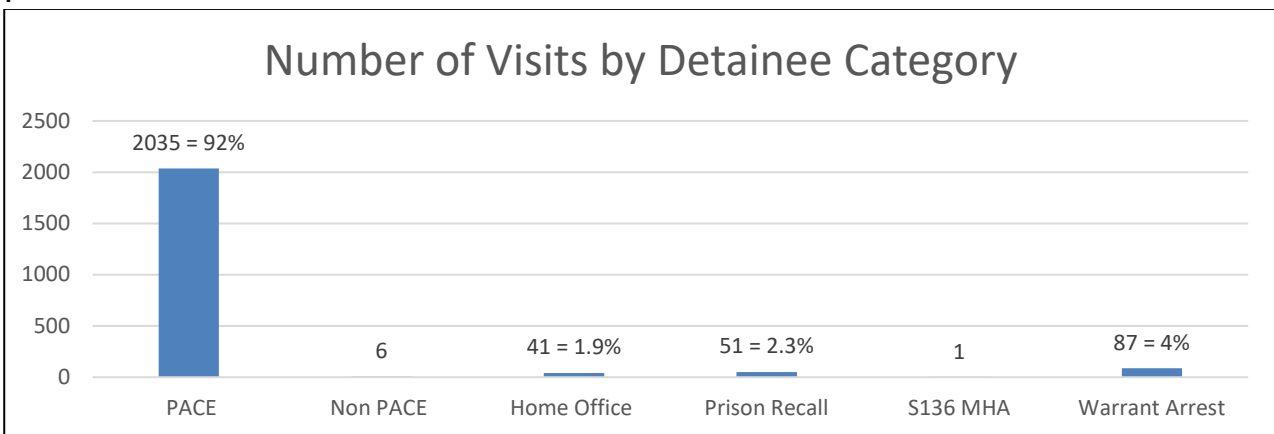


Figure 13: ICV Visits by Detainee Category. Total 2221 detainees visited.

92% of Detainees visited were detained under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (**PACE**). The aim is to have no people detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act because Custody is not an appropriate environment. However, when beds (places of safety) are not available then Custody has to be used as the last resort. The Home Office category relates to UK Border Agency regarding immigration.

The total number of detained people in custody during ICV visits over the 12 month period is **2221**. The total number of detainees available to speak to is **1773** (i.e. in their cell and not for example at interview, hospital, having data processed or sleeping). **1202 detainees gave their consent to speak with the ICVs**. This means that during visits ICVs are speaking to **68%** of available detainees in custody.

Detainee Availability

The number of detainees in Custody at the time of ICV visits, the number of detainees available and the number of detainees giving consent to talk with the ICVs, including as a percentage, is shown in the chart below:

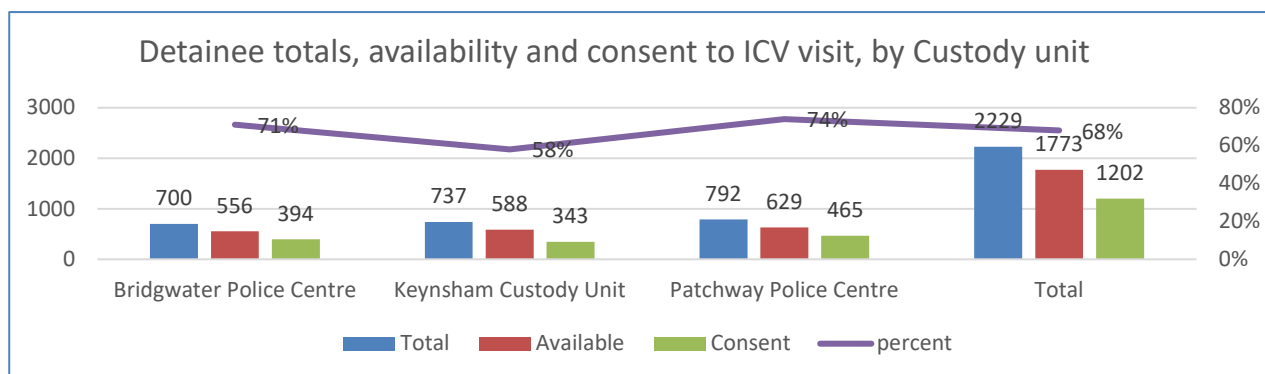


Figure 14: Detainee Availability

Adults and children (under 18) in custody during the visit time is shown below. There is no significant change from the 2018-19 figures of 2068 Adults (94%) and 138 children (6%). However, the number of young people in custody is being monitored and given high priority for visits.

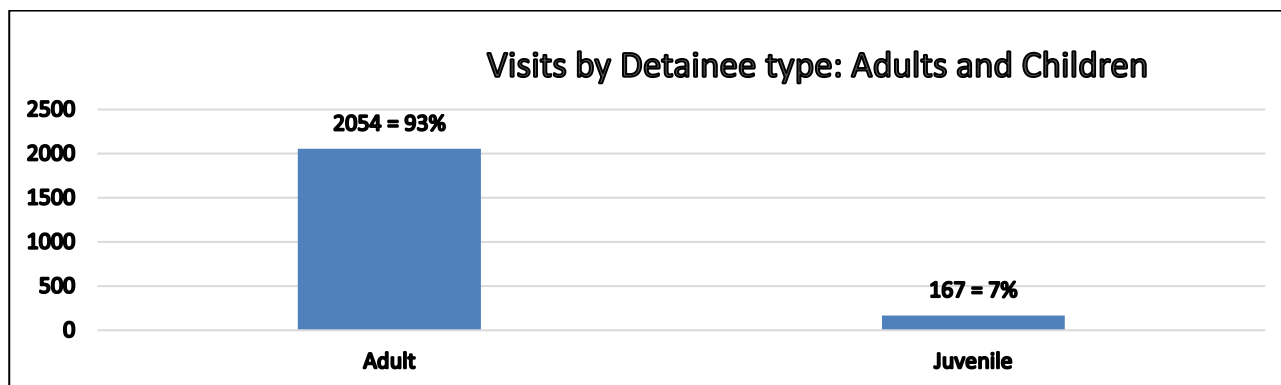


Figure 15: ICV Visits by Detainee Type. Total 2221 detainees recorded.

ICVs have continued to record their concerns in ensuring Local Authority accommodation is obtained as soon as possible for young people at the post-charge stage and that the detention time is kept to a minimum.

Delayed Visits – Reasons why an ICV visit was delayed over 10 minutes

There have been **16** delays (out of a total of 254 visits) in ICV access to the Custody Unit, (8 at Bridgwater, 4 at Patchway and 4 at Keynsham), 15 were due to staffing shortage and 1 due to not having a computer available for the ICVs (who now have an ICV laptop).

Abandoned Visits – Reasons for delayed access over 20 minutes

There have been 6 abandoned ICV visits (ICV inside the Unit), all due to staff shortages (Patchway Sep and Dec 2019) and Bridgwater (Oct and Dec 2019 and March 2020 and also a detainee's medical emergency requiring full staff attention at in July 2019). More staff have been recruited.

Custody Visitor reports

Most ICV General Comments on the Visit Report include praise and compliments to the Custody staff, that there are no issues or problems and that all is as expected. Also, custody kitchen microwave cleanness, food in date-order, showers and sink area cleanliness, exercise yard order and religious material neatness and respectfulness.

High level areas of concern

Staffing levels during 2019 have been of concern and reported by ICVs to the PCC's office. A minimum staff resourcing resilience document was written and the Constabulary have recruited and trained additional Custody Sergeants, Inspectors and Detention Officers to achieve full staffing levels.

Custody Visit Positive Findings

- Early implementation of some PACE Code C legislative changes (prior to 21/8/2019) including good provision of sanitary items (different sizes of tampons/towels) and incontinence pads. Cell toilets blanked out from CCTV. Revised Notice of Entitlements documentation seen.
- Good use of the Exercise Yards for detainees with high anxiety in the cell, to de-escalate the situation.
- Good use of the Language line and ICVs using the Translation Sheets and picture cards during their visits where English is not understood by a detainee.
- Health Care Professionals, Mental Health Assessors, including for drugs and alcohol substance use are located in Custody. Timely responses to detainee requests for medication, including by detainees with mental ill health.
- Religious material kept tidily and respectfully.
- Free clothing provision for detainees in need (i.e. T shirts, jog bottoms, pants, socks). This includes donations from ICVs (including hats).
- Introduction of 'Claro Pro' talking software for detainee Rights & Entitlements. Speech variable speed option. Used for detainees who with reading difficulties or blind/partially sighted.
- Increased calories in microwave meal provision. Also catering changes, including decaf coffee to improve detainee sleep and behavior. Also a popular porridge option.
- Most ICV visits report compliments to the Detention Officer escorting them and the respect towards detainees and de-escalation actions.
- Examples of polite and respectful Detention Officers during cell intercom calls made by detainees.
- Good service provision for vulnerable detainees by 'ASCC' (Advise and Support in Custody and Court). ASCC staff are located in Custody Units who assess and arrange on-going support plans for detainees post-release.
- Detention Officer advice given to detainees to just ask via the cell intercom for assistance.
- Custody staff training provision, including Mental Health, Children in custody, immigration, ASCEND and personal safety.
- Nicotine tablets available for smokers prohibited from smoking in custody.
- Respectful acknowledgement of religions, e.g. during Ramadan, meals provided to Muslims after sunset and arrangements for Muslim detainees wishing to wash their feet before prayers (the cell sink being too high). ICVs also noted Ramadan dates and times posted up in the Police Centre.
- De-escalation/Use of force training session by Constabulary to ICVs to raise awareness, including cell extraction and restraints.
- Upgrade to zonal alarm strip.
- Custody staff (welfare) option to not work night shifts.

Custody Visit findings of concern and how it has been responded to and resolved

- Local Authority statutory requirement to provide accommodation for children post-charge. Constabulary ongoing demands to Authorities. YMCA provision.
- Cell intercom poor audio quality. The Constabulary review report and plans for digital phone installation into a Bridgwater pilot cell (during 2020-21) is welcomed.
- The cell sinks allow water to run for less than 20 seconds, with 10 minute gaps. A Covid-19 concern.
- Exercise yard recommended distraction items, such as a soft ball and painted goal posts on the end walls. The Bath University review and Autism friendly cell proposal, as well as authorised work on the yards is awaiting roll out. Delayed by Covid-19.
- Weekly Risk Assessment of Exercise yards now includes checks for wet leaves (in Autumn) as a slippage risk and well as checking and cleaning the walls (graffiti and algae).
- Police Niche database program changes were requested by ICVs to include the August 2019 PACE Code C female dignity changes (offer of: a Conversation with a female officer and sanitary towels/tampons) as a mandatory booking-in Risk Assessment recording item rather than free-format text on the Detention Log.
- March 2020: Covid-19 being managed but initially a lack of PPE and 3 Custody units reduced to 2 for 14 days. Staffing reduced by 30% (shielding).
- Detainee feelings expressed of excess force used during arrest and ICV advice given about the complaints process.

Examples of where ICVs have effected change:

- ICV's have been committed to continuing with remote visits to custody and Custody Record reviews throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, which has allowed for continuous monitoring of detainees, and conditions in custody across this period.
- ICVs have been proactive in their enquiries about detainee(s) access to hygiene and reported good practices/matters requiring follow up in a timely manner.
- ICV survey contribution to review cell intercom audio quality.
- ICV contribution to the autism-friendly cell re-decoration.
- ICV request for the Exercise Yards to have a ball and painted goal on the end walls.
- Fire policy request for review.
- A wide range of books and magazines have been donated by ICVs.
- ICV review of detainee cutlery, including environmentally friendly and safe options.
- ICV donation of clothing to the Custody Unit for detainees.
- ICV encouraging staff to keep the microwaves clean, including the use of plate covers.
- Seeking assurances about the alarm strip in the cell corridors and the upgrade.
- Request for distraction items, such as soft ball in the Exercise Yard.
- Creation of a laminated check sheet for the Keynsham Custody unit Faith Box to help remind staff that it remains respectfully maintained.
- Detainees stating they have changed their mind about having a legal representative.
- Detainees disclosing only to ICVs that the detainee has medication requirements.

Other points of interest:

Cells for vulnerable detainees and a better environment for detainees on the autism spectrum (such as pastel wall colours, softer lighting and screens displaying programs or detention information) is being piloted in one Keynsham Custody Unit. ICVs will follow the progress of the pilot over the next 12 months.

Annex 1: ICV Code of Practice

The Home Office published Code of Practice on Independent Custody Visiting (2013) is published on the ICVA website:

http://icva.org.uk/uploads/publications/ICV_Code_of_Practice-APR2013.pdf

This includes:

“This Code of Practice on independent custody visiting is issued in accordance with section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002, as amended by section 117 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and paragraph 299 of Schedule 16 to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Local policing bodies and independent custody visitors (ICVs) shall have regard to the Code in carrying out their relevant functions. ...”

(page 5)



Figure 16: Image of person in a cell with blanket & mattress (the thinner option)

Annex 2: Independent Custody Visitor Person Specification

Essential criteria are requirements necessary for safe and effective performance in the role, whilst **desirable criteria** list elements that would contribute to potentially improved performance in the role.

	CRITERION	COMPETENCY
ESSENTIAL	Eligibility	<p>Must be 18 years of age+ and live or work in the Avon and Somerset Constabulary area.</p> <p>Must hold a current driving licence or be able to travel around the force area by alternative means.</p> <p>Ineligible are: Past or serving Police Officers, PCSOs, Specials, Police Staff or Volunteers of any Police Constabulary;</p> <p>Ineligible are: Volunteers in the Appropriate Adult Scheme due to a possible conflict of interest.</p> <p>Ineligible are: Past or present Justices of the Peace in the Avon & Somerset Policing area.</p> <p>Other people may be excluded if they have a direct involvement in the Criminal Justice System within the Constabulary area, such as Solicitors, staff in the CPS, Probation Service or Prison service. Each application will be treated on its merits, but the over-riding factor will be to prevent possible conflicts of interest and to maintain the independence and integrity of the Scheme as a whole.</p>
	Working with people	<p>Able to demonstrate the ability to work as part of a team</p> <p>The ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with a wide range of people</p>
	Effective communication skills	The ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing
	Working within guidelines	Previous experience of working to established guidelines and procedures
	Reporting skills	Computer literate and previous experience of completing and submitting records
	Respect for people	Capacity to treat all people fairly and with respect, to value diversity and respond sensitively to difference

	CRITERION	COMPETENCY
DESIRABLE	Additional useful experience	Previous knowledge or experience in custody visiting or Active community involvement as a volunteer
	Flexibility	<p>Able to offer assistance in fulfilling scheduled visits in other panels, promoting exchange of skills and experiences across visiting panels</p> <p>Able to visit at a higher frequency if and when asked to do so by the panel coordinator</p>

Annex 3: Independent Custody Visitors Role Profile

Role

To undertake custody visits with other panel custody visitors, checking on the conditions in which a detainee is kept, their health and well-being and rights and entitlements with reference to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984 (PACE) code of practice (Code) C (regarding Custody).

Responsibilities

- To carry out custody visits to custody units in line with the panel rota, scheme guidelines and training received.
- To carry out the duties of an Independent Custody Visitor as set out in the scheme's handbook, giving due regard to Health and Safety requirements of the custody visiting scheme and custody unit.
- Where appropriate, to review the detainee's custody record to clarify and check any concerns raised by the detainee.
- To complete an electronic Custody Report after each custody visit, highlighting any concerns or requests arising from the visit and any issues that need to be resolved.
- To complete and submit any necessary documentation relating to the scheme, or in connection with the appointment process in a timely manner.
- To retain a good working relationship with key people (stakeholders), including custody visiting colleagues, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, custody staff and any other interested groups or individuals.
- To attend and take an active part in at least two of the four Independent Custody Visitor panel meetings per year.
- To commit to a three year term as an Independent Custody Visitor. An optional two additional terms are permitted, totalling 9 years.
- To keep the panel coordinator and other panel members informed of any problems relating to meet the requirements of the visiting rota – averaging one custody visit per month - or changes in personal circumstances
- To attend seminars, developmental and training sessions as and when required.
- To contribute towards the success of the independent custody visiting scheme, promoting improvement in the way that the scheme is delivered.

Annex 4: ICV Electronic Visit Record

Content:

Visit unique reference
Start of Visit
End of Visit
Location of Custody Unit

ICV name 1
ICV name 2
Custody Inspector
Escorting Officer and Sergeant

Cell no.
Category of detention
Record number
Type (Adult or Juvenile/Child)
Gender

Visit details:
Available for visit?
Visit consent given?
Custody Record consent?
Custody Record viewed?
Observation Level

An Issue?
Issue category
Issue narrative/details
Issue to resolve
Comments – free format

The screenshot displays a web-based interface for the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. The main content area shows a table titled 'Detainees' with the following columns: Cell, Category, Type, Gender, Visit Details, Has Issue, and Actions. The table lists several detainees with their respective details and visit status.

Cell	Category	Type	Gender	Visit Details	Has Issue	Actions
11	FACE	Juvenile	Female	Available for Visit? Yes Visit Consent Given? Yes Custody Record Consent? No Custody Record Viewed? No Record Number? 6:591	No	View
14	FACE	Adult	Male	Available for Visit? Yes Visit Consent Given? Yes Custody Record Consent? No Custody Record Viewed? No Record Number? 6:577	No	View
16	Home Office, UK Border Agency (immigration)	Adult	Female	Available for Visit? Yes Visit Consent Given? Yes Custody Record Consent? No Custody Record Viewed? No Record Number? 6:591	No	View
17	FACE	Adult	Female	Available for Visit? No Reasons (if any):	No	View
19	FACE	Adult	Female	Available for Visit? Yes Visit Consent Given? Yes Custody Record Consent? Yes Custody Record Viewed? Yes Record Number? 6:585	Yes	View
39	FACE	Adult	Male	Available for Visit? Yes Visit Consent Given? Yes Custody Record Consent? No Custody Record Viewed? No Record Number? 6:585	Yes	View
27	FACE	Adult	Male	Available for Visit? No Reasons (if any):	No	View
33	FACE	Adult	Male	Available for Visit? Yes	Yes	View

ICV General Comments – free format.
Custody Inspector General Comments.