

2021-2022 Annual Report

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office



S T R E T N C

3	Foreword & a word from...
---	--------------------------------------

6	Overview of Custody
---	----------------------------

8	About our ICV scheme
---	-----------------------------

10	Overview of ICV visits
----	-------------------------------

12	What's good, What's not
----	--------------------------------

17	Appointments of new ICVs
----	---------------------------------

17	Training our ICVs
----	--------------------------

17	Looking forward to 2022/2023
----	-------------------------------------

Foreword

Since my election as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset in May 2021 I have not ceased to be impressed by the time and commitment of the local Independent Custody Visitors in this crucial role. It has been more than two challenging years since the Covid-19 pandemic and despite the difficult situation the ICVs have maintained the unannounced custody visits, come rain or shine. I am encouraged by the adaptability of the ICVs to remote working, speaking to detained people by telephone and doing 'check and test' reviews of Custody Records, in addition to in-person Custody Unit scrutiny and face-to-face conversations with detained people.

Within my strategic governance and oversight role, I also welcome the good working relationships fostered between Avon and Somerset Constabulary Officers and myself and my team. Of particular merit is the efficiency and effectiveness of the Head of Custody, Chief Inspector McGowan, soon to move to a new role. My gratitude is also extended to the lead Custody Officers working with the ICV panels. The role of Custody Inspectors, Sergeants and Detention Officers is important and challenging and cannot be underestimated. It comes with great responsibilities on a daily basis and I extend my thanks to all the Police Custody Teams. Compliments to everyone who has the

continued aim of having an outstanding Custody provision and outstanding policing for everyone. Public trust and confidence in the Police is embedded in the Peelian principles, always recognising that the power of the Police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on the ability of the Police to secure and maintain public respect. It is crucial to maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that 'the Police are the Public and that the Public are the Police'. Police Officers are members of the public paid to give full attention to duties that are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

Our local Police Custody Units appear well managed, with good staffing, including Health Care Professionals in custody (24/7) and the valued assessment work of the ASCC staff (Advise and Support in Custody and Court) for vulnerable people, those with a positive drug test and detainees with mental ill health. However, there is much more to do with Partner Agencies regarding Mental Health 'Places of Safety' provision and Local Authority accommodation for children post charge.

Well done Custody Visitors. Your 'critical friend' work highlights both best practice and any concerns for action and rectification. Thank you all Independent Custody Visitors.

Fare thee well.



*Mark Shelford, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner
April 2022*



Fig 1: PCC at Keynsham Custody Bridge

A word from the Head of Custody

“As with my message to you last year, we have had another tough and testing year. Covid has continued to hit hard and although there is light at the end of the tunnel, we currently have 10 staff off with covid. I know you will agree with me that the staff and partners have really stood up to the challenge and helped keep custody running efficiently and effectively. They are real champions and the organisation is very lucky to have them.

You may be aware that I am shortly moving on. I have been successful in my application to go back into the Counter Terrorism world. The good news is my replacement has been named. Its Will Barlow who I know will be a great addition to the custody team and will continue to drive custody forward in a positive manner. In other staffing news we now have a full cohort of Inspectors (10), which helps provide much needed support and direction. This coupled with our 12 new Sgts who recently completed their training, means our staffing levels are very healthy. Added to this, we will have a new cohort of DOs [Detention Officers]. They start their training with us in late April, so should be up and running by early June 2022.

Over the past 12 months (Feb 21 – Feb 22), we have detained 18,433 DPs [Detained People] of which 799 have been children and young people. The mean detention time was just under 13 hours and the average wait to be booked was 18 minutes.

I am very grateful for your work as Independent Custody Visitors. We are probably going to be inspected (HMICFRC) in the near future. I see the role of ICV as a mini inspection, your work and support is invaluable. A critical friend helps us comply and checks we are providing an appropriate and caring service for all our detained individuals.

I cannot finish without saying a big thank you to you all for the helpful, friendly and kind comments you send when we get it right. I know it goes a long way and I do ensure the messages get out to all the staff. Thank you. ”

Patrick McGowan

Chief Inspector, Criminal Justice, Avon and Somerset Police (14th March 2022)



Figure 2: Detention Officer in Cell Corridor with ICV

Note from Kit Malthouse MP

Minister of State (Minister for Crime and Policing)



Part of the video transcript of Kit Malthouse speaking to Custody Visitors at the March 2022 ICVA Association (ICVA) National Conference:

"I wanted to come online and greet you and congratulate you and in particular thank you for all of your work. After spending some time in and around the policing world I know what a critical role Custody Visitors play in raising standards in that particular aspect of policing, but in particular I wanted to thank you for your work during Covid. The pandemic was a challenge for everybody across the whole of the United Kingdom, but it was a particular challenge for policing and the fact that you kept going through covid helped us to keep custody safe and dignified. This at a time of difficulty and stretch for Police Officers, when it would have been quite easy to allow things to slip. ...

Friends, over the last 30 or 40 years police custody has changed enormously. It's become a place of safety, with dignity, where humanity and efficiency is at the forefront of a particularly critical and dangerous moment in the interaction between the public and the Police... Custody is the manifestation, I guess, of the authorisation we give to the Police to use force against our own citizens and it's right that in contemplating that particular facility – that particular area of Police work – we are as exacting as we can be, and your input there, your visiting, your reassurance, helps us to build resilience – helps to raise custody, I guess, as an area of professionalism and care in policing, which means it's a very different place to where it was 30, 40 or even just 10 years ago, so thank you very much indeed for your work. Thank you for your volunteering ..."

March 2022: ICVA CEO Ashley Bertie:

Extract from letter to PCC:

The past year has been one of great uncertainty. The coronavirus continues to present unprecedented challenges for all, and it is unclear how new variants will impact business as usual. Despite these challenges, independent custody visiting schemes demonstrated innovation, resilience and dedication to keep monitoring of detainee welfare going. This monitoring and feedback are extremely valuable, enabling schemes to praise police's ability to adapt and respond to COVID19, whilst also being able to highlight challenges that need to be addressed. It has been a privilege to work with your schemes across this period... our plans for the forthcoming year are that:

- We will support and guide schemes in completing the **Quality Assurance Framework**. The Framework will help raise the profile of independent custody visiting on a national scale, assist schemes to benchmark against other schemes and share their fantastic work with both external stakeholders and other schemes.
- We will work with schemes to deliver a national thematic on **tackling discrimination**, underlining our commitment to tackling racial and gender inequities in custody.
- We will seek to build on the relationship we have formed with international partners to **share best practice in custody, as well as learn** from other territories on how we can continue to improve custody processes in the UK.
- Support schemes and the Home Office in any review of the Code of Practice on Independent Custody Visiting, learning from custody record reviews, best practice and taking from learning across COVID-19.

Overview of Avon and Somerset Police Custody

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has 3 custody units, built in 2014 within the Police Centres at Patchway, Keynsham and Bridgwater.

Data – Demographics 2021-2022

In summary, people detained are predominantly white males aged between 25-34 years. The highest number of detainees in custody is at the weekends, from around midnight to 3a.m.

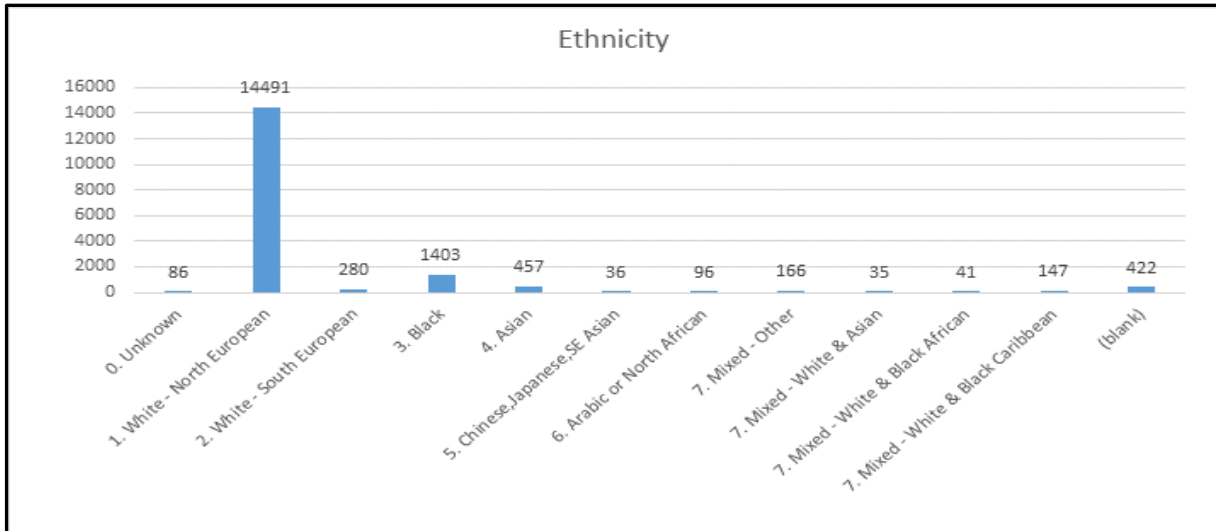


Figure 1: Detainees by Ethnicity. 84% White and 8% Black people. 2.6% Asian. 2.2 Mixed race. 2.9% u/k. Total 17660

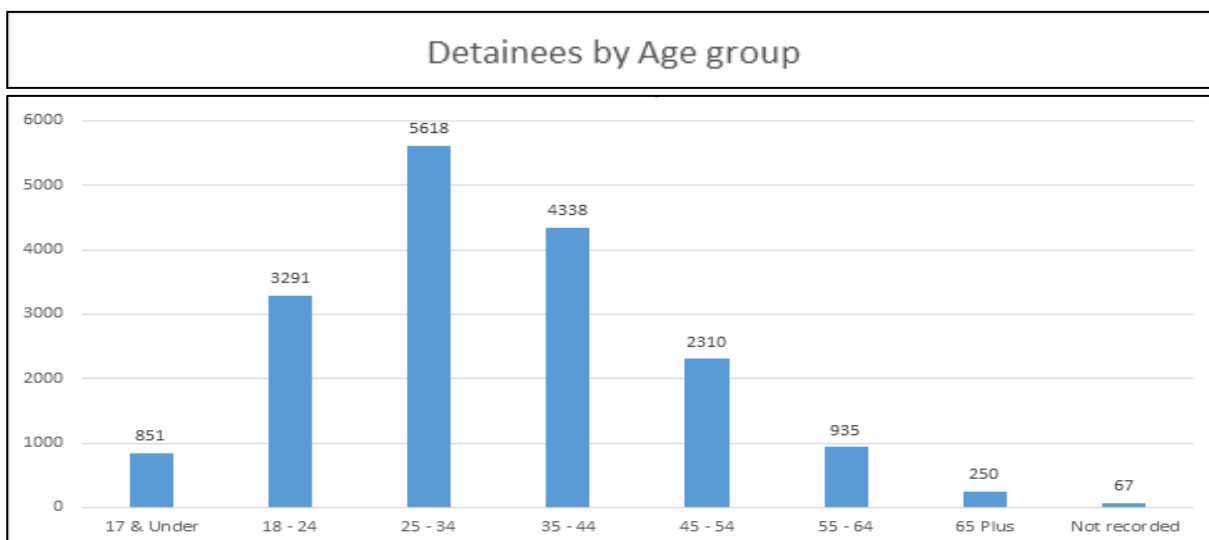


Figure 2: Detainees by Age (5% are children, i.e. aged 17 and under). Total 17660

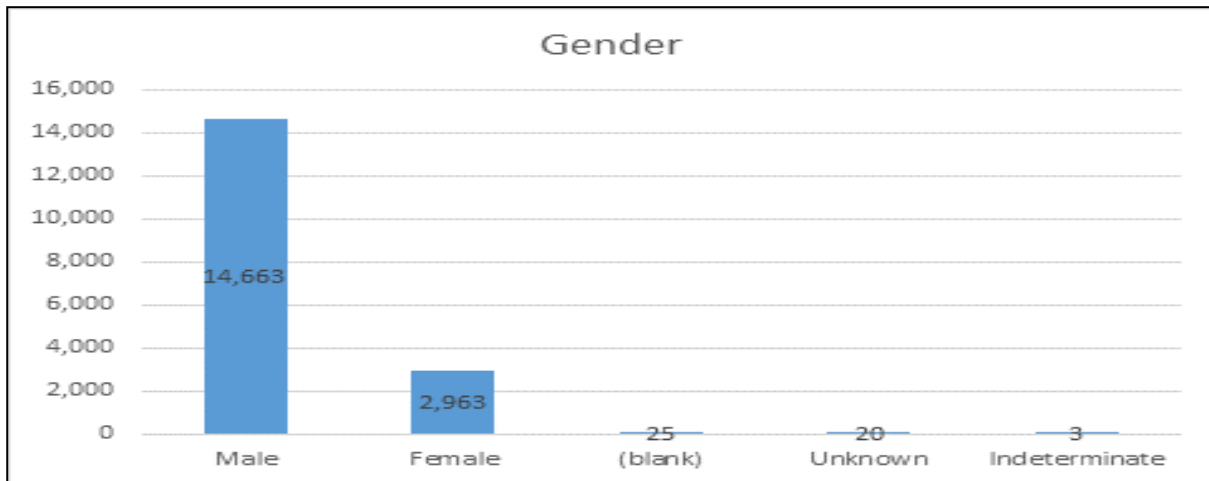


Figure 5: Detainees by Gender (83% Male, 16.8% Female, 0.02% Indeterminate, 0.1% unknown)

Booking-in start times

Time (hr.) / day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
00:00 - 01:00	146	103	123	105	133	234	232
01:00 - 02:00	130	120	117	126	130	220	261
02:00 - 03:00	110	97	97	100	99	239	240
03:00 - 04:00	84	92	76	80	87	175	186
04:00 - 05:00	79	67	68	71	66	103	123
05:00 - 06:00	64	62	60	49	75	95	86
06:00 - 07:00	37	39	32	24	38	60	52
07:00 - 08:00	32	38	45	49	28	42	43
08:00 - 09:00	61	65	89	81	78	60	51
09:00 - 10:00	82	126	135	113	92	83	72
10:00 - 11:00	92	124	131	124	109	74	88
11:00 - 12:00	99	121	134	106	99	91	93
12:00 - 13:00	93	106	109	131	89	84	88
13:00 - 14:00	96	89	120	97	87	91	67
14:00 - 15:00	95	95	100	73	67	89	81
15:00 - 16:00	90	78	93	105	91	82	89
16:00 - 17:00	86	102	121	122	84	96	120
17:00 - 08:00	131	127	129	111	83	91	111
18:00 - 19:00	142	137	127	137	109	112	98
19:00 - 20:00	116	96	134	134	142	105	129
20:00 - 21:00	120	138	118	124	149	139	139
21:00 - 22:00	126	132	116	125	147	149	131
22:00 - 23:00	87	91	83	115	128	160	113
23:00 - 24:00	100	96	110	112	189	206	126

Figure 6: Total number of Detainees by Booking-in time. Total 17660

About our ICV Scheme

As well as regular summaries in the PCC's update to the Police and Crime Panel meetings, this published Annual Report highlights the work of the PCC's volunteer ICVs. It celebrates ICV and scheme successes and describes how the PCC's office have and are working on issues with the aim of making Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Custody facilities 'outstanding' as a policing service for everyone. This Annual Report documents how ICVs are assisting the PCC in discharging his duty in delivering oversight, openness and transparency. This boosts public confidence and reassurance about the way the Police treat people detained in custody. ICVs are the 'eyes and ears' as local members of the public and want to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion.



Figure 7: PCC in Keynsham Neurodiversity-aware cell

ICV Protected Characteristics

- The total number of ICV volunteers at March 2022 was 32:
- 19 female and 13 male, no transgender or other gender identities.
- The age range is from 22 to 82.
- 3 ICVs (9%) have minority ethnicity.
- Some ICVs have declared disabilities.
- ICVs cover a range of backgrounds including students, working, non-working and retired people.

ICVA National Annual Conference April 2022. Theme: Anti-Racism.

Patchway ICV Chris attended and said:

"It was my absolute pleasure to attend the National ICV Conference in London, I enjoyed the day so much."

ICV Scheme Manager delivered training on the Custody Visiting Scheme and ICVs role to Custody Inspectors and to Custody Sergeants in 2021 and 2022.



Figure 8: Bridgwater Police Centre.
Far right, ground floor is Custody

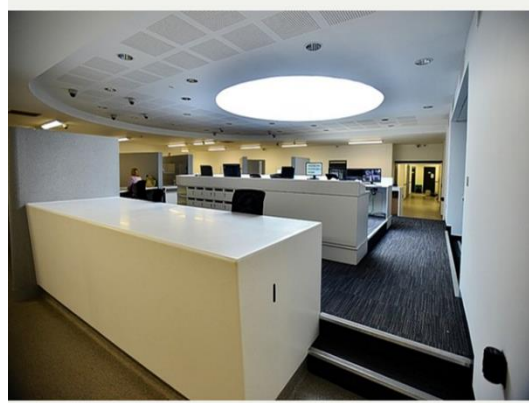


Figure 9: Police Custody 'Bridge'.

Comments from Panel Coordinators

Patchway: Coordinator Suzanne

The Custody Visiting team at Patchway is a friendly, hard-working and diverse group who help support each other in providing independent reassurance for the public about the conditions in custody for detainees.

I am proud to be the Coordinator of such a wonderful cohort of people.



Figure 10: Volunteers are priceless

Keynsham: Panel Coordinator Paul

The last twelve months (April 2021 to March 2022) have been once again challenging for everyone connected to Custody. However, the Keynsham ICV Panel continue with a rota of unannounced visits, on a once a week frequency for visits. Our team of 11 ICVs consists of five with over 7 years in the role (maximum 9 year term), one with a 6 year review and five with a 3 year review during this year.

As we are Home Office approved Key Workers, over the past twelve months our onsite Custody visits have been 100% completed visits. There have been a mixture of paired and solo onsite visits, plus remote Custody Record (CR) reading and telephoning custody to speak to detainees via the cell intercom or corridor mobile phone. ICVs liaise with each other and access a selection of CRs that have been uploaded by the PCC's Scheme Manager to the ICV App to access at home where the digital Visit Report can be input. We would, in normal circumstances, use the dedicated laptop in the Custody Unit for writing our reports but this way minimises our time in the Custody unit and allows for social distancing, focussing on ICV health and welfare. A small number of ICVs are, because of personal circumstances, still unable to do onsite visits, but are able to do the remote visits.

The quarterly ICV Coordinators meetings attended by the Head of Custody and local ICV Panel meetings attended by the Lead Custody Officer have been remote/online but now that Government Guidelines have been eased, our next local ICV meetings should hopefully be in person.

All Custody staff have been wearing appropriate PPE, as have ICVs throughout the pandemic. There were only 3 visits where Detainees with suspected Covid-19 positive and they were in cells in an isolated corridor for this purpose. Any issues have been mainly resolved before ICVs complete their visit in Custody, by viewing Custody Records and liaising with staff.

When staff have been self-isolating because of Covid, the staffing gaps, where possible, have been filled by redeploying staff from other units or from voluntary overtime, to appropriately maintain a safe working environment in each Custody Unit for staff, Detainees and ICVs.

During our ICV visits, Custody Inspectors, Custody Sergeants, Detention Officers, Police Officers performing Constant Observations, HCPs (nurses on site), Doctors, ASCC (Advice and Support in Custody and Courts for vulnerable detainees) and Cleaning staff have as always, done a remarkable job in maintaining a very high level of professionalism with Detainees' welfare, sometimes in a very challenging environment.

As 'Critical Friends', Keynsham ICVs have an excellent rapport with staff, although because of retirement and promotions, faces change frequently, but the transitions are seamless.

Overview of ICV visits

Quarterly statistics are sent by the PCC's office to the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) for national collation, as in the table below (previous year 2020-2021 figures are in brackets):

DPs through custody 2021-2022	Total ICV visits	Total DPs at ICV visits	Total Custody Record reviews	Total no. DPs visited
Apr-Jun: 4264 (4277)	41 (32)	341 (298)	114 (96)	110 (102)
Jul-Sep: 4565 (4814)	39 (43)	337 (370)	64 (126)	132 (94)
Oct-Dec: 4536 (4165)	39 (36) 4 delayed	343 (288)	40 (78)	128 (95)
Jan-Mar: 4193 (3884)	41 (36)	297 (242)	58 (116)	118 (70)
Totals:	160	1318	276	488

The frequency of visiting is 1 visit every 7 days at each of the 3 Custody Units. This has been agreed to continue (since March 2020) as the standard frequency for 2022-2023.

The tables below are a graphical overview of the ICV visits during the financial year 2021-2022:

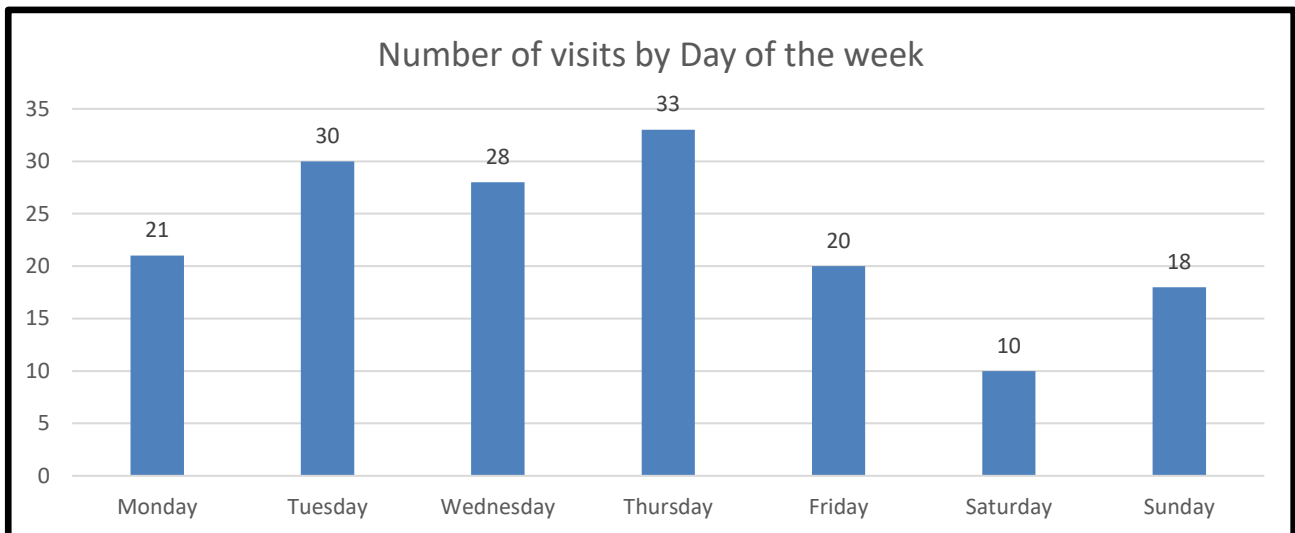


Figure 11: ICV Visits per Day. Total 160 visits 1/4/2021-31/3/2022

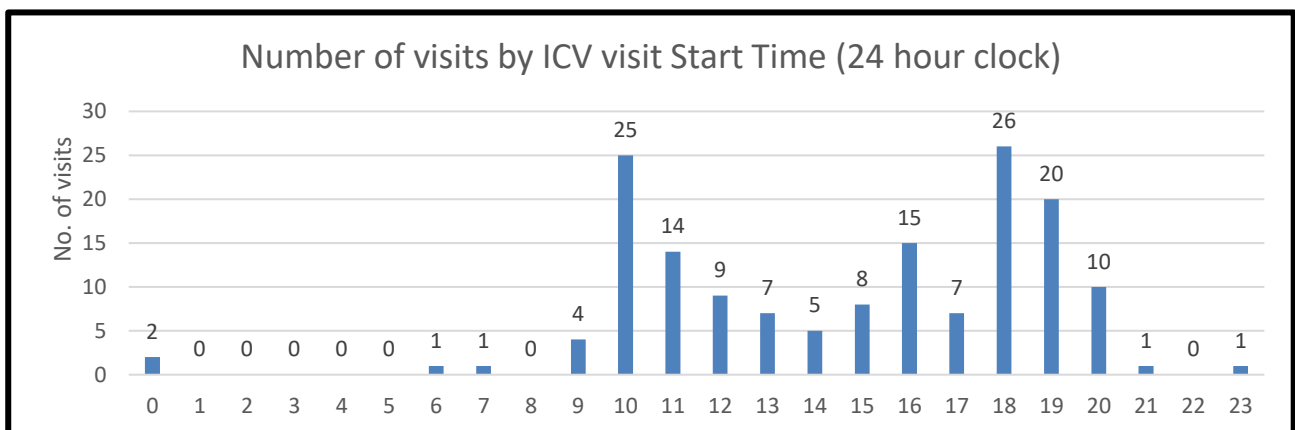


Figure 12: ICV Visits by start time (24 hour clock). Total 160 visits

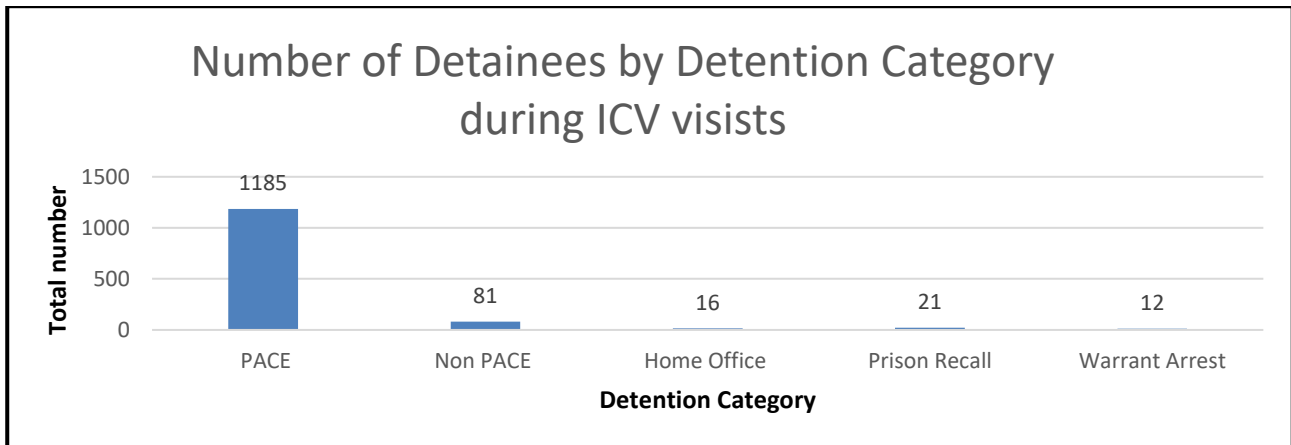


Figure 13: Detainees by Detention Category. Total 1318 detainees in custody during visits. (3 uncategorised in ICV Report)

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 is shown in the chart below.

Note: The 'consent to visit' numbers are relatively low due to mid pandemic remote, not onsite, visits, where ICVs review redacted custody records and dip sample some detained people for telephone conversations. Prioritised are children, females, relatively long detention times (mean 13 hours detention time) and any known vulnerable adults.

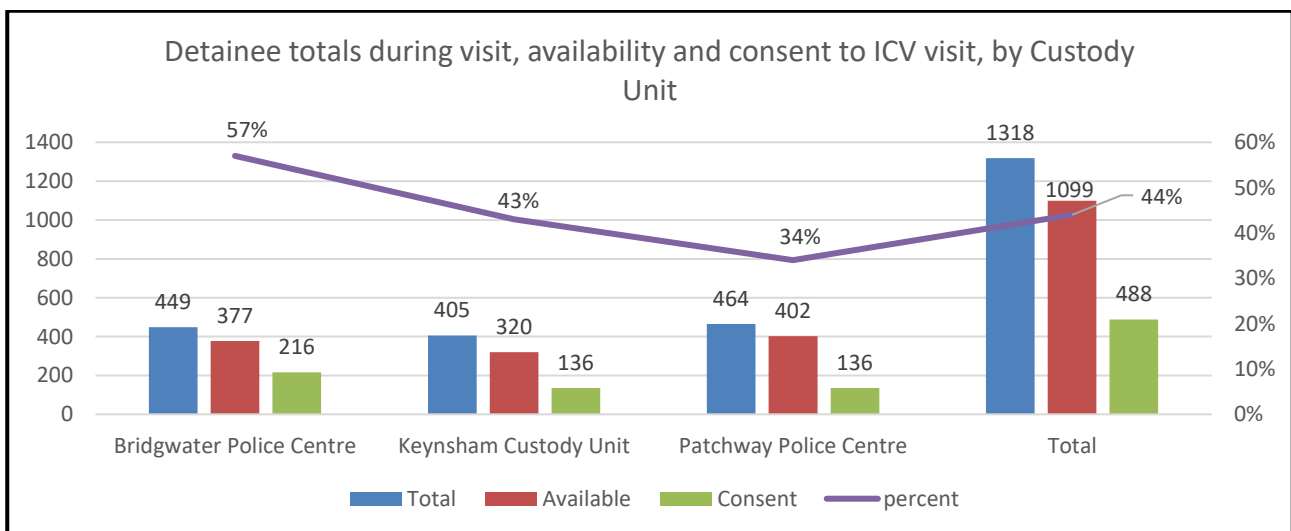


Figure 14: Detainee Availability 1 April 2021-31 Mar 2022

Adults and children in custody during the ICV visit time

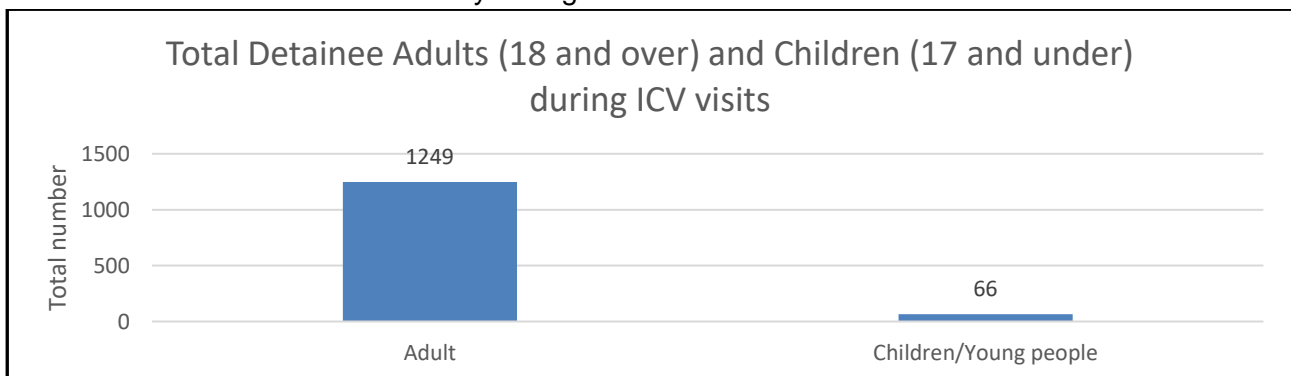


Figure 15: Detainees by age. Total 1318 detainees in custody during visits. Adults: 95%; Children: 5% (13 uncategorised in ICV Report).

ICVs prioritise visiting child detainees and check:

- An Appropriate Adult has been offered to the young person at booking in and arrives asap.
- A separate room for booking in (away from adult detained people).
- The preference for a cell with the full-length window in the cell door (not just the small hatch).
- Detention time is kept to a minimum.
- Local Authority accommodation is requested for young people at the post-charge stage.

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

There have been **7 delayed and 1 abandoned** visit of a total of 160 visits during the 12 months. 3 at Bridgwater and 5 at Keynsham. Delays related to staff needed to deal with Detainees.

- New Year's day delay: Due to bank holiday shift changeover being 1 hour later than normal.
- 10 minute delay due to Serco transport collecting a detainee for Court.
- 25 minute delay due to Staff shift handover.
- 15 minute and a 20 minute delay due to Custody Staff processing detainees.
- 15 minute delay due to staff dealing with a detainee requiring special needs attention.
- 1 abandoned Bridgwater visit 20/5/2021: No Escort available. 4 DOs, 2 tutoring new DOs.

Custody Visitor feedback: What's good, What's not

Many ICV Visit Reports include praise and compliments to the Custody staff, that there are no issues or problems and that all is as expected, to a high standard. Also, custody kitchen cleanliness, ready meals in date-order, showers and sink area cleanliness, exercise yards clean and religious material neat and respectfully stored.

Top 3 Custody Visit issues recorded for detainees and resolutions

- **Medication** request (34 reports) or Nurse seen but another visit requested (18) or Referral to ASCC (Vulnerable person or Mental Health) (11): ICVs passed on the request to custody staff.
- **Sanitary towels/tampon supply** (16): Custody Record does not always have recorded the offer of a Female Hygiene Pack. ICVs ask and if a pack is needed this is passed on to action.
- **Appropriate Adult** arrangement for Vulnerable Adults (17) and Child detainees (10): ICVs seek confirmation if an AA is arranged, either family, care worker or YOT or Brandon Trust AAs.

Top 3 High level concerns:

- **Cell intercom (analogue) poor audio quality** at Bridgwater. The pilot phones have been unsuccessful. Other Forces with the same problem (e.g. Cheshire) are being visited by officers.
 - **Minimum staffing** levels during the pandemic has now been resolved (March 2022). Inspectors, Sergeants and Detention Officers are at high staffing levels.
 - **Catering supplies** low. Short-term solution: Custody staff purchase local supermarket meals.
- Note:** In April 2022 the NPCC contracted BidFood and the catering quality and quantity has improved.

External agency concerns:

- **SERCO** low staffing causing delays in transporting detainees to court or prison. Police Officers are providing alternative transport meaning resource inefficiency, taking away frontline officers.
- **Local Authorities** cannot adhere to their statutory requirement to provide accommodation for children post-charge.
- **Home Office** block on testing before installing **cell monitors in Keynsham neurodiverse-friendly cells**. Wall painted pastel blue/green colour and dimmable lighting is complete.
- **Custody Niche database** program changes awaited to provide a dropdown (not free text) to record when a female detainee is asked if sanitary items (feminine hygiene pack) are required.

Positive Findings - Examples of good practice from the Constabulary:

Items in Custody as standard practice are:

Dignity items (female hygiene packs in various sizes and incontinence pads); Female Officer contact for female detainees; CCTV pixilation of cell toilets; soft balls in Exercise Yards as a de-escalation tool; distraction items such as puzzles, books and magazines; replacement clothing; wash items; cotton (not paper) towels; ASCC assessments and HCPs onsite; Appropriate Adult Service provision; respectfully stored religious material; compass point painted in every cell; and Nicotine lozenges. Plus:

- 'Kath Packs': Posters at booking-in to raise awareness of Female Hygiene Pack provision.
- Trial 'Direct to Court' for Warrant arrested people.
- Items offered by Custody staff to Detainees, rather than '*Request culture*'.
- Examples of ICVs commending Custody Staff for their professionalism, being friendly and interested.
- 'If it's not recorded it didn't happen' culture to record in the Detention Log.
- Adoption of new service: **Samaritans** phone call for detainees using the corridor mobile phone.
- Custody Sergeant's attention to detail saved a detainee's life. See Good practice example below.
- Examples of DO safeguarding and empathy with Detainees.
- 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 advised to staff.

Custody Staff Good Practice examples:

A 'thank you' from a detainee's father to Custody Officers/Staff – June 2021:

Edward got in touch with Avon and Somerset Police to thank 3 Custody officers he met. He was really impressed by their caring and calm approach towards his son and other detainees:

"My son was arrested and taken to Keynsham Custody, after an altercation with his partner. Due to his mental health problems, it was agreed that I'd come in to sit with him as an appropriate adult.

"From the time of my son's arrest until the time we left, he was treated with respect, dignity and with the utmost professionalism. He was struggling with his anxiety being in a cell, your superb officers calmed him and facilitated a move to a room he could remain calm in."

"I've had no dealings with police in the past and I was absolutely stunned with the calm compassion your officers treated not just us, but people in custody who were verbally abusing them. The three officers involved were an absolute credit to Avon and Somerset Police. I wish I'd taken their collar numbers and names, and I hope this unlimited praise finds its way back to them.

"I'm passionate about mental health, I'm a foster parent and the mental health first aider at work. Your guys were without fault. They calmed and kept us both informed about the process and next steps. Thank you all very much for your time and empathy in a difficult time. Hope you all keep safe in a very demanding difficult role."

Jan 2022 ICV Visit Report: Detainee in Cell 31 complained to staff about the variety of food offered, could they get him some snacks if he paid for them himself from his own money in his belongings. This they duly did from the staff 'Tuck Shop'. Well done to the excellent Custody staff for showing empathy to this DP who on arrival was extremely violent towards them.

Sent: 25 July 2021 19:47
To: DO PD

A big thank you to you for the Detainee welfare recorded in the Custody Record for Cell 4... The ICV reviewing the Custody Record gave praise and compliments to you for this recorded narrative in the Detention Log:

"Plenty of meals provided and the DO also went above and beyond by singing to the detainee at 3.55am!! I shall include those details in my review."

"Log type: Detainee welfare Log time: 25/07/2021 03:55
CELL CHECK - Detainee visited in cell given a meal and a drink and sang morning has broken to dp at his request."

The DP was provided with plenty of regular meals too, perhaps for distraction/de-escalation reasons, if not just hungry.

23/12/2021 ICV visit: Custody Record (CR) review for Detainee in cell 42(vulnerable) .

In the CR she had been taken to Hospital, but whilst there she was given an ECG, she actually concealed one of the several terminal stickers with a metal connector used in her underwear.

On returning to Custody she was able to make a small incision in her finger, with this, but blood was spotted by staff on the inside of the Cell door, when she was with the HCP and although minor abrasions, was dressed. On returning to her Cell started to grate her nails on the metal intercom cover, again with minor abrasions.

She was upped to constant observation level with Custody staff until Police Officers could arrive to take over.

Well done to the staff.



Figure 16: Image of person in cell with blanket & thinner mattress

ICV Visit Report narrative for cell 21 detainee on 11/8/2021 reads:

Detainee seemed well and was happy to answer my questions. Detainee was read rights on arrival and given a copy. Food and drink had been given however detainee commented that he could not eat the food. Solicitor contacted via intercom but detainee said the call quality was poor. Request for sister to be called, although custody staff attempted but no answer and they will try again. No medical needs. Detainee asked for an update and the Escorting Officer gave an update there and then and also arranged for a different meal and a cup of tea for the detainee. Detainee commented that he has been treated extremely well at custody and would also like to thank the officers that arrested him for being so understanding and speaking to him away from his children and being very respectful.

To DO Jennifer from ICV Scheme Manager. Thank you so much for escorting the ICVs on Friday 25 March 2022 at 18:00. The ICV electronic Visit Report is very complimentary to you and the Custody Team. The DPs were also giving positive responses to the ICVs on the way the DPs had been treated whilst in custody. The ICVs recorded these comments:

Cell 6: Child DP in interview on ICVs arrival. Escorting Officer (EO) confirmed Solicitor & Social Worker AA arranged at interview. EO was great to take us later to see child DP after his interview, who confirmed AA & Solicitor there. Child DP said he was happy how he'd been treated.

Cell 13: DP being booked in when ICVs arrived. EO good to take us to DP later. DP seemed well and already had drinks, cereal bar and happy with his treatment. DP was also given an extra pillow.

Cell 18: EO very helpful and will sort out a meal and coffee. EO also asked DP if wanted another blanket but the DP declined.

Cell 20: DP said came in 3pm today, didn't need HCP and happy with his treatment there. Cell tidy. Had a blanket too.

Cell 23: ICVs' praise to the Custody Staff/Officers. ICVs felt proud for Custody team because DP said experienced custody as being empathetic, massive source of help and support in what seemed a very challenging time for the DP. EO explained the DP seemed on arrival might self-harm. ASCC (Advice & Support in Custody and Courts for vulnerable and mentally ill DPs) organised. They had assessed DP and deemed DP not mental ill health or a vulnerable adult, although Care Plan arranged to support various life challenges including sorting medication on release. DP was on Obs. Level 3 initially. DP expressed that during his whole experience since being in custody he felt treated very well by custody staff who were polite, courteous and he felt looked after, supported and cared for, making a big difference to him. ICVs listened to DP that he felt custody was a great source of support at what sounded a very challenging time (homeless, someone in their life was at end of life). ICVs said Custody Team should feel proud.

General comments: Noticed lots of extra blankets (DPs with substance issues) and drinks given to DPs. Overall an outstanding visit with most DPs saying they felt well treated.

Examples of where ICVs have effected or requested change:

- Introduction of the Samaritans for Detainees to have telephone conversations via the cell corridor mobile phone.
- ICV noticed compass points had been over-painted in some Keynsham cells. Action taken to repaint the compass pointer so that Muslim detainees have a direction point to pray.
- 'If it's not recorded it didn't happen' culture encouraging staff to record all actions, especially offers of items rather than Detainees having to request items.
- Niche Police database change request regarding mandatory input for female dignity and informed consent for remote legal advice. In the meantime, it's Custody staff free-text input.



Figure 17: PCC in Exercise Yard (repaint planned)

Other points of interest:

- ICVs continue to request updates on the cell analogue intercom upgrade to a better audio, digital system for Bridgwater Custody unit.
- ICVs request the Exercise Yards have a softball and await the request for painted goals on the end walls.

Examples of good practice in Avon and Somerset Custody

1. Recording on Custody Record (CR) items offered to Detainees but declined (as well as accepted), for a good audit trail, e.g. meals, drinks, blanket. Examples of dignity: Staff escorting Detainees to the storeroom to select bedding.
2. Neurodiverse/Autism-friendly cell decor (walls a softer paint-colour than stark white) rolled out to all cells in Keynsham Custody unit, including LED softer lighting installed. No monitors due to Home Office testing block.
3. Reminder from Custody Head to Custody Staff/Officers: If it's not recorded then it didn't happen.
4. Pilot 'Direct to Court not Custody' for Taunton Court and to be rolled out force-wide in April 2022.
5. Female Hygiene Packs ('Kath Packs') visibly available at the booking-in desks.

Top 3 Causes for ICV concern:

1. Some SERCO transport delays resulting in some DPs longer time in custody, especially prison recalls.
2. For Q4: Food stock low/National Supplier issues. Also Supplier meals of poor nutritional value. Plus, ICV taste-testing mark 1 out of 10 for curried chips (grey, soggy, tasteless). Workaround by Custody Staff who purchased meals and drinks items (milk) from local supermarkets.
3. The ongoing lack of Local Authority (Somerset) accommodation for post-charge child detainees – a statutory requirement – resulting in extended detention times in custody overnight.

Recruitment of new ICVs

There has been one active advertising campaign for volunteers during March 2022 for Bridgwater and Patchway teams with appointments after the 2021-2022 financial year.

Advertising and appointments take place as required when volunteers either reach the maximum 9 year full term or stand down for a number of reasons, including moving away, moving to full time work or for health or personal reasons. The aim is to keep the ICV scheme as diverse and inclusive as possible.

Of the newly appointed ICVs (subject to references and vetting clearance) a Tour of Custody, shadow visits with experienced ICVs and a day's induction training are the next stages.

The PCC's Public Relations and Media staff continue to actively promote information about the ICV scheme via social media, twitter and Facebook, radio interviews with the PCC and ICV Steve as well as the PCC's newsletters. There has not been any presentations face-to-face at public events this financial year due to the Pandemic.

Training our ICVs

Training topics covered during the last 12 months include:

- Appropriate Adult safeguarding
- Assertiveness
- The role of Detention Officers, Custody Sergeants & Frontline Police (Arresting Officers).
- Vulnerable detainees.
- Equality and bias.
- Children and young people in custody.
- Detainee dignity.
- Mental health.
- Learning difficulties and Neurodiversity of detainees.
- ICV Handbook - content review.
- A session for ICVs: Mindfulness.

Looking forward to 2022/2023

- April 2022: A 'Thank you' event from the PCC to all volunteers: Afternoon tea at Police HQ.
- Quarterly ICV Coordinator meetings.
- Quarterly ICV Panel meetings.
- Working to adherence of the Scheme to the ICVA new Quality Assurance Framework.



Figure 18: ICV appointment advert example

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and ICVs will continue to be a valuable thread throughout the PCC's Police and Crime Plan priorities:

Priority 1: Preventing and tackling crime.

Priority 2: Engaging, supporting and working with communities, victims and partner organisations.

Priority 3: Leading the police to be efficient and effective.

Priority 4: Increasing the legitimacy of, and public confidence in, the police and CJS.