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# ICV ANNUAL REPORT

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# WELCOME

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I am pleased to present this Annual Report highlighting the vital work undertaken by our Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) in Northumbria during 2021/22. This has been a very challenging year for the country, Northumbria Police, and our excellent visitors however I am delighted with the support and dedication ICVs have provided.

Several of our excellent ICVs have been unable to visit during the pandemic to ensure that they were as well protected as possible, however I am pleased to say that all ICVs have now returned to visiting. Thank you for your patience and support through these difficult times.

As covid restrictions were reduced this meant that ICVs and also custody staff adapted once again to new ways of working and changes to the way detainees were dealt with in custody. This dedication ensured that those detained in custody suites in Northumbria were well looked after, safe and their rights and entitlements were upheld.

During the year, several of our long-standing visitors retired from the scheme and I want to record my thanks for the many years of volunteering they have given to the Northumbria ICV scheme. I wish you all the best of luck in the future.

It is imperative that our scheme is representative of the communities in Northumbria therefore we also undertook a demographic assessment of our ICVs which I am pleased to say increased the diversity of our ICV scheme.

The Independent Custody Visitor Association have also continued to adapt their training and support to schemes which has seen our ICVs provided with training on key topics to assist them in their role. This training has allowed our ICVs to further their knowledge in their own time through straight to ICV resources which has continued to be welcomed by visitors.

Throughout the year ICVs have focussed their attention on detainee dignity. This is paramount when they are in custody and has included ensuring that detained females have been provided with specific hygiene products for their needs.

# WELCOME

That detainees where appropriate have access to toilet paper within cells without having to ask for it to be provided and also ensuring that access to support has been provided to all that need it.

Being detained in custody can be a stressful experience for anyone, which can also be heightened if you suffer from mental health issues or neurological disorders.

Through observations made by ICVs, Northumbria Police have now invested in “distraction items” within our suites. These include items that individuals can utilise to reduce stress, anxiety and boredom whilst being detained. These items have been welcomed by visitors and detainees who they have visited.

I am pleased to announce that we will be holding a regional training seminar in 2022 with our colleagues in Durham and Cleveland ICV schemes. This will have a focus on disparity of treatment whether that be because of race or gender. We want to ensure that our ICVs are well trained and can spot any signs and ensure that if any issues arise that these are identified and addressed.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of the report which includes some key facts about our scheme, the work of ICVs throughout the year and the work we are undertaking to improve our scheme further.

Many Thanks  
Kim



# OVERVIEW OF CUSTODY IN NORTHUMBRIA

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We currently have 3 dedicated Police custody suites which is where most detainees are detained. These are located at:

- Forth Banks – 50 cells
- Middle Engine Lane – 40 cells
- Southwick – 28 cells

These suites cover 2,000 square miles, from the Scottish Border to County Durham and from the Pennines to the North East coast.

We also have 4 Resilience custody suites which are only opened when one of the main suites are not operational or there is increased demand such as Christmas and New Year. These are located at:

- South Shields- 12 cells
- Etal Lane – 22 cells
- Bedlington – 20 cells
- Berwick – 6 cells

We also have cells that can be used at the two North East football grounds at Sunderland AFC and Newcastle United.

# OVERVIEW OF CUSTODY IN NORTHUMBRIA

## Stats of those detained in custody

There were over 25k detainees in custody during 2021/22 which is broken down by custody suites below:

Custody Suite	Detainees
Forth Banks	11277
Middle Engine Lane	7832
Southwick	5474
South Shields (Resilience)	947
Etal Lane (Resilience)	22
Stadium of Light (Resilience)	13
St. James' Park (Resilience)	3
Berwick (Resilience)	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>25570</b>

# ABOUT OUR ICV SCHEME

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## Number of ICVs

We currently have 15 visitors split between two panels and each panel has a Panel Co-ordinator responsible for ICVs and visiting custody suites within their area.

## ICV Training

Training of our visitors is of the upmost important to ensure that they are fully up to date with changing legislation, and they have the tools to do their work. ICVs have continued to receive virtual training through the Independent Custody Visitor Association.

## ICV Times of Visits

Our ICVs make visits to those in custody at varying times of the day and evening including weekends and public holidays. This ensures that they see a wide range of detainees that are brought into custody at vary times of the day and night. ICV panel co-ordinators ensure that visits are made at varying times of the day with these visits being worked around volunteer's commitments.



# OVERVIEW OF OUR VISITS

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## Overview

Between April 2021 and March 2022 (65) face to face visits were undertaken to our custody suites with 305 detainees visited.

Visitors who were unable to undertake visits during Covid have now returned to visiting which has allowed for a significant increase on the number of visits we have undertaken and detainees we have visited throughout the year.

Of the 65 visits undertaken:

**772** detainees in custody

**305** detainees visited

**304** were unable to be seen

**72** refused to be visited

**85** were not in the sample of detainees that were to be visited





# POINTS HIGHLIGHTED AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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- We wanted to ensure that all detained no matter their gender or ethnicity are treated equally which we refer to as disparities in treatment. To ensure this was not happening we refreshed our ICV questionnaires which now includes the collection of ethnicity and gender information and also any observations ICVs may have on disparity of treatment. ICVs have reported no concerns of any disparity of treatment relating to race or gender within our custody suites.
- Specific focus on ensuring detainee dignity in relation to the provision of both toilet rolls and the offering of washing facilities to detainees. This extra focus has resulted in the force now introducing a process whereby the availability of showers is communicated to detainees as part of their initial booking in process.
- As Northumbria was a leader in ensuring menstrual products were provided to female detainees and in addition a female member of staff was assigned, this has continued to be monitored.
- ICVs highlighted that reading materials were available following these being removed during covid however it was highlighted that more appropriate materials for juveniles could be made available. This was taken onboard by the force with the addition of "distraction Items" such as foam balls also being introduced for detainees which will reduce stress and anxiety of detainees.
- ICV Panel Co-ordinators met with the Managers of the Northumbria Local Appropriate Adult Scheme to share knowledge and learning with regards to each other's roles.
- ICVs highlighted that religious texts are available in all suites however it was felt that these may need to be replaced due to damage over time and policy for storage updated. Northumbria Police have taken this onboard and will be reviewing the storage of religious items across all suites.
- Specific focus on ensuring that detainees were provided with face to face legal advice or support from Appropriate Adults.
- Ensured repairs to cells or equipment were actioned promptly by the force where concerns were raised by ICVs.
- Highlighted issues with low stocks of detainee meals which was found to be a national issue

# DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

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- It is important that our scheme is representative of our communities across Northumbria therefore a demographic assessment of our visitors was undertaken in 2021 prior to our recruitment drive and we identified that a focussed recruitment drive would be beneficial to the scheme. We achieved this through advertising with our local Universities and volunteering groups.
- To ensure that our recruitment drive was successful, we undertook a further demographic assessment of our scheme in March 2022 which showed that the demographic makeup of our scheme had improved. We will continue this approach for future recruitment to ensure our scheme is as diverse as the communities we serve.

We currently have a total of 15 ICV's

- 10 demographic forms returned
- 5 preferred not to supply this information

Of the 10 forms returned this shows:

## Gender

- 4 Male
- 6 Female

## Age

- 18-35 = 3
- 36-60 = 5
- Over 60 = 2

## Ethnicity

- 1 – Pakistani
- 1 - Black, Black British, African or Caribbean
- 1 – White British
- 7 - White

## Disabilities

No ICVs have stated that they are disabled

# MEET OUR ICVs

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'I am proud to be an Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) for Northumbria, as it allows me to build upon my knowledge of the criminal justice system and to ensure that those who are in custody receive the rights that they are entitled to. Also, being an ICV has significantly developed my interpersonal skills by acting as a facilitator between police staff and detainees. I have also developed my skills of resilience, decisiveness and organisational/prioritisation abilities.

My role as a custody visitor involves visiting detainee and assessing the quality of their treatment during their time in custody. We do this by asking a range of questions which include whether they have been informed of their rights and entitlements, whether they have been offered legal advice and ensuring that any religious or cultural needs are met. Should the detainee have any concerns or raise any issues which myself or other independent custody visitors, we ensure this corroborates with the custody record held by the police station and take further action by informing a senior officer.

For me personally, the ICV role is pivotal to provide public reassurance that the quality of detainment in custody is compliant with relevant legislation. The training I have been provided helps me to understand these factors in a more general context. The regular training and support lines available enable me to seek help if I have been personally affected by a visit.

Being an ICV is a very fulfilling role and I know we make a difference'.

**Ahmad Hayat**

# TRAINING OUR ICVs

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## Training our Visitors and support from ICVA

The Independent Custody Visitor Association (ICVA) provides leadership to Independent Custody Visiting schemes in the UK, helping fulfil their roles and ensuring that schemes remain up to date through regular training for ICVs. We have a put in place a training record for each visitor and we will then award each visitor with a certificate of training undertaken.

## What Training have ICVs received?

- ICVA Anti-Racism Training
- ICVA Vulnerability Training
- Joint Interim Interview Protocol Briefing
- HMICFRS Updated Questionnaire Training
- ICVA Bitesize Mental Health in Custody and Neurodiversity
- ICVA Dignity in Custody
- ICVA Women in Police Custody
- ICVA Learning Disability and Neurodiversity



# LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022/23

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## ICVA Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

What is the QAF?

The QAF was developed by the Independent Custody Visiting Association to benchmark the level that ICV schemes are operating. Levels include code compliant, silver, gold and platinum awards.

In 2019 the Northumbria ICV Scheme received a “Gold Award” which was a brilliant achievement and showed that Northumbria have an excellent scheme in place.

The QAF will be launched again in April 2022, and we are aiming for the top award of “Platinum”.



## Updated ICV Questionnaire

Following the HMICFRS inspection of Northumbria Police Custody, an updated questionnaire for ICVs to utilise on their visits has been developed and is now in use by ICVs. Questions relating to gender, ethnicity and racial disparity have been included. These will then allow us to highlight any disparities when visits are undertaken. I am pleased to state that no disparities relating to race have been identified since the introduction of the new questionnaires.



## Regional Seminar

We will be holding a Regional Training Seminar for ICVs from Durham, Cleveland and Northumbria. The focus of the day will be on ensuring our ICVs are aware and trained in relation to race related issues and will include guest speakers and input from the Independent Custody Visiting Association.



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# ICV ANNUAL REPORT

FORTH BANKS