



Annual Report & Statistics

1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022



STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONER
Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING

2021 / 2022 Annual Statistics 1st April 2021– 31st March 2022

Purpose

To provide statistical data on Independent Custody Visits made to the Custody Suites in Staffordshire during the period 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022.

Background

It is the responsibility of the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO), in accordance with section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002, to operate an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. The scheme provides an independent check on the way the Force carry out their duties with regard to detained persons.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteers appointed from the local community. Their role is to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which persons are detained in Police custody. Their visits provide an independent check on the way Police Officers carry out their duties in relation to the statutory and other rules governing the welfare of Detained Persons (DPs).

In Staffordshire there are two ICV Panels. The Northern Area Panel has 13 members and is responsible for visits to the Northern Area Custody Facility (NACF) at Etruria. The Southern Area Panel comprises of 8 members and visits the Watling Custody Facility at Gailey.

ICVs are required to conduct their visits in pairs and following each visit, complete an ICV1 Form. The ICV1 form records the arrival, start and end time for each visit, the category of DPs present and whether they are male, female, adult or child/young person. It records the number of DPs who accept a visit and also the reasons why a visit was not accepted or conducted. The form also has space for the ICVs and Custody Sergeants to make and respond to comments and also for the ICVs to record matters raised by the DPs they visit.

These arrangements allow the SCO to secure greater understanding and confidence in the operation, in practice, of the custody environment and the treatment of detained persons.

The SCO produce quarterly statistical data and annual statistical data from the information provided by Independent Custody Visitors on their ICV1 report forms. The production of statistical data in a report format will ensure a formal independent oversight of custody proceedings.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The SCO closely monitored the pandemic through 2021. Face to face visits were initially suspended from 13th March 2020 and replaced with a remote check on custody records. This suspension of activity allowed appropriate guidance to be sought and risk assessment completed specific to the working environment and the individuals responsible for tasks, safeguarding the ICVs, those working within the custody environment and the detainees. Working closely with the Independent Custody Visitors Association and Staffordshire Police the SCO, there was a combined effort to ensure independent scrutiny of the facilities in Staffordshire was maintained.

Face to face visits resumed on a phase basis to both custody facilities between April 2021 and September 2021

The following section serves to explain methods utilised in Staffordshire, please note that these are not traditional ICV monitoring methodologies but were suggested by the Independent Custody

Visitors Association as reasonable alternatives to implement during the restrictions of lockdown. Therefore numerically the figures contained within the rest of the standardised report are lower than those which would be seen in a usual year.

COVID-19 Staffordshire's ICV Scheme Response

Actions taken by Staffordshire Police and SCO in response to the pandemic were shared with the ICVs at regular intervals throughout 2021-2022. National guidance and best practice was also shared with the ICVs to ensure they were consulted regarding implementing the following monitoring methodologies:

- **Custody Inspector Conference Calls** – These were telephone conference calls with the ICVS and Custody inspectors and covered the custody environment, PPE and cleaning regimes, the impact of Covid-19 on the facility, staffing issues and availability of Appropriate Adults, Duty Solicitors and Healthcare Professionals.
- **Custody Sgt Virtual Visits** - The virtual visits aimed to emulate the usual ICV face to face visits and were facilitated by a Custody Sergeant. The ICVs had a standard checklist to work through and check detention records as they would do in a usual visit. There was also opportunity to ask additional questions surrounding the environment and information regarding knock on effects being felt in the custody facility from other Criminal Justice System partners.
- **Detainee Statistical Analysis** – these were weekly reports from the SCO Performance Team regarding the length of stay of detainees in custody facilities in Staffordshire.
- **ICVA Mid-Week Monitor** - The Independent Custody Visitors Association sent out a survey surrounding the custody environments. These surveys were completed and returned, initially on a weekly basis and then a monthly basis until they ceased in March 2022. Each survey contained questions relating to hygiene, safeguarding, Appropriate Adults, Solicitors, social distancing arrangements and child detainees.

The scheme has now returned fully to normal face to face visits. In addition, the scheme is looking to implement Custody Record Reviews which enable a more in-depth scrutiny of the custody record and give Independent Custody Visitors an opportunity to broaden their oversight of custody.

Detainee Statistics

Between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022 12,504 people were detained by Staffordshire Police. Of those 480 detainees (3.8%) were present when Independent Custody Visitors conducted their visits/ calls.

Visiting Panel		Northern Area	Southern Area	Total Across all Panels
Breakdown of Detained Persons	Adult	337	137	474
	Juveniles	4	2	6
Total Number of Detained Persons Present		341	139	480

- Adults 98.8% make up the majority of detainees across all panels and 1.3% were juveniles. Proportionally, of all detainees for Staffordshire Police for the 12-month period 2020/2021, adults represented 94.5% and juveniles 5.5%.
- During the visits a total of 203 detainees were visited and 112 had their custody records only analysed.
- During these visits 278 detainees were not physically visited for the reasons as detailed below:

Reasons why visits were not made to Detained Persons	Northern Area	Southern Area	Total for Reason Specified
Visit refused by Detainee	8	15	23
Being interviewed	22	10	32
Asleep	19	5	24
Advised not to visit	28	7	35
Not selected/observed	31	21	52
Other reason (incl. record analysis due to Covid19)	112	0	112
Total of Detainees not visited	220	58	278

Visit Statistics

Day of the Week:

The following table summarises the number of days on which ICV visits/calls took place and the total visits in the period undertaken by that panel:-

Day of the week that Visits were undertaken	Northern Area	Southern Area	Total All Panels
Monday	6	6	12
Tuesday	14	7	21
Wednesday	7	7	14
Thursday	16	9	25
Friday	13	4	17
Saturday	5	5	10
Sunday	3	2	5
Total number of visits conducted	64	40	104

- Please note that the total number of visits conducted is how many ICV visits were undertaken, it does not represent the number of detainees that were present for each visit undertaken by the ICVs.

Visit Times:

The following table summarises the times of day on which visits took place:

Visit Start Times (24hour)	Northern Area	Southern Area	Total All Panels
06:00 -12:00	24	17	41
12:01 - 18:00	36	14	50
18:01- 00:00	4	9	13
00:01 – 05:59	0	0	0
Total number of visits conducted	64	40	104

Waiting Times:

ICVs should note their arrival time on the ICV1 Form as the time they present themselves at reception and declare their intention to perform a custody visit. ICVs should be admitted immediately to the custody area. The visit start time should be recorded at the moment they have been admitted to the custody area. If access is delayed for more than five minutes the credibility of

the visit could be questioned. Access to the general custody suite from the reception area should only be delayed when the Custody Officer considers that the ICV may be placed in immediate danger if they are allowed to enter. Once inside the custody suite ICVs are aware that they may have to wait for staff to become available to escort them on their cell visits but are able to utilise any time they may have by observing the formal booking in process and checking any ancillary rooms.

The following table summarises the length of time that ICVs had to wait to be admitted to custody:

Waiting Times	Northern Area	Southern Area	Total All Panels
Entry within 5 minutes	58	36	94
Entry after 5 but before 10 minutes	2	2	4
Entry after 10 but before 15 minutes	0	0	0
Entry after 15 minutes	5	1	6
Total for Individual Panels	65	39	104

Length of Visit:

The following table summarises the length of each custody visit/ call

Visit Length	Northern Area	Southern Area	Total Across All Panels
0 - 30 Mins	3	8	11
31 - 60 Mins	23	19	42
61 - 90 Mins	21	9	30
91 - 120 Mins	9	2	11
Over 2 Hours	8	2	10
Total for Individual Panels	64	40	104

- Average visit / call length across all panels for the period 69 minutes.
- Actual time spent by Staffordshire's ICVs inspecting Custody records in this period amounts to 119 hours and 36 minutes.

Summary

- Staffordshire's response to the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in more innovative ways to ensure appropriate scrutiny of the custody facilities and detainee welfare. Inspector Conference Calls, Virtual Visits, Detention Data Reviews and a return to face to face visits ensured that the SCO and ICV Scheme had an effective and appropriate oversight in the most unusual of circumstances. Since September 2021 the Independent Custody Visitors

have returned fully to face to face visits.

- The introduction of Custody Record Reviews will enable a more in depth scrutiny of the custody record and enables the Independent Custody Visitor to have a more rounded observation of the care and welfare of detainees.
- The SCO wishes to thank the Custody Teams in Staffordshire Police and the Independent Custody Visitors for their willingness to adapt to challenging circumstances over the last 2 years and in the way they embraced different ways of working. In particular, their commitment to ensuring that the welfare of detainees was maintained in unprecedented circumstances.

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ICV Results on a Page Annual 2021/2022

