



Independent Custody Visiting Annual Report 2013-14

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Each Police and Crime Commissioner is statutorily required to operate an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and as such a scheme operates within Cleveland.

Purpose of the Report

This is the Annual Report of the Cleveland Independent Custody Visiting Scheme for the period 1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014.

This report will outline the following information:

- The number of visits undertaken by custody visitors during 2013-14;
- The number of detainees in Cleveland custody suites during 2013-14;
- The number of detainees offered a visit by custody visitors;
- The number of visits accepted by detainees;
- A breakdown of times and day of the week visits were undertaken; and
- General information about the Cleveland Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

Definition of Independent Custody Visiting in Cleveland

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteer members of the public, who live or work in the Cleveland Police area.

Their role is to visit police custody suites unannounced to evaluate the welfare of detainees.

There are currently two 'live' custody suites in Cleveland, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough. These are visited by a total of 17 Volunteer Custody Visitors on a weekly basis (11 in Middlesbrough and 7 in Hartlepool)¹.

Recruitment of Independent Custody Visitors

During 2013-14, five new ICVs were appointed following the relevant recruitment process. These individuals were appointed on a six month probationary period following completion of a one day initial training programme. This was followed by a familiarisation visit around custody areas with input from a Custody Sergeant.

During the six-month probationary period, new recruits were paired with experienced visitors to gain experience in the role. After successful completion of the probationary period, they were appointed for a three year term, subject to annual reviews.

¹ One individual attends visits at both Hartlepool and Middlesbrough

Independent Custody Visits & Statistics 2013-14

Each Cleveland Police custody suite is scheduled to be visited weekly as per a rota prepared by the Scheme Administrator. Visits did not always take place as scheduled due to various issues; however ICVs ensure the rota is followed as much as possible.

Breakdown of Detainees during Custody Visits 2013/14

The total number of visits undertaken during the period 1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014 was 82. This equates to 39 visits in Hartlepool (75% of total visits scheduled) and 43 visits in Middlesbrough (83% of total visits scheduled). During these visits there were 905 individuals detained in custody - 115 in Hartlepool and 790 in Middlesbrough. A breakdown of these numbers can be seen in Tables 1 & 2 below:

Table One:

Hartlepool Custody Suite	Breakdown of detainees during Custody Visits 2013/14				
	Male	Female	Male Juvenile	Female Juvenile	Total
	90	15	10	0	115

Table Two:

Middlesbrough Custody Suite	Breakdown of detainees during Custody Visits 2013/14				
	Male	Female	Male Juvenile	Female Juvenile	Total
	645	83	54	8	790

Breakdown of Detainees offered a Custody Visit during 2013/14

Of the 905 detainees, 524 were offered a custody visit, representing 58% of detainees across Cleveland. There are a number of reasons why custody visitors do not offer detainees a visit - primarily due availability, (i.e. being at interview / advice from the Custody Officer that the detainee is violent or under the influence of alcohol). On these occasions detainees are often observed through the viewing window. A breakdown of detainees offered a visit can be seen below in Tables 3 & 4 below:

Table Three:

Hartlepool Custody Suite	Breakdown of detainees offered a custody visit during 2013/14				
	Male	Female	Male Juvenile	Female Juvenile	Total
	78	13	6	0	97
86.6%	86.6%	60%	0%	84.4%	

Table Four:

Middlesbrough Custody Suite	Breakdown of detainees offered a visit from a Custody Visitor during 2013/14				
	Male	Female	Male Juvenile	Female Juvenile	Total
	331	64	27	5	427
51.3%	77.1%	50%	62.5%	54.1%	

Breakdown of Detainees accepting a Custody Visit in 2013/14

Of those detainees offered a visit, in total 335 accepted equating to 64%. Tables 5 & 6 below show a breakdown of the number of visits accepted by detainees, including the percentage of uptake (from being asked by a Custody Visitor to visit and those accepting):

Table Five:

Hartlepool Custody Suite	Breakdown of detainees accepting a custody visit in 2013/14				
	Male	Female	Male Juvenile	Female Juvenile	Total
	62	10	6	0	78
79.5%	76.9%	100%	0%	80.4%	

Table Six:

Middlesbrough Custody Suite	Breakdown of detainees accepting a custody visit in 2013/14				
	Male	Female	Male Juvenile	Female Juvenile	Total
	192	37	25	3	257
58%	57.8%	92.6%	60%	60.2%	

Times of Visits undertaken by Custody Visitors

ICVs are encouraged to undertake visits during evenings, weekends and at various times throughout the seven day week. A breakdown of visit times visits are shown in Tables 7 & 8:

Table Seven:

Hartlepool Custody Suite	Time of Visits		
	06:01 – 14:00	14:01 – 22:00	22:01 – 06:00
	19	20	0

Table Eight:

Middlesbrough Custody Suite	Time of Visits		
	06:01 – 14:00	14:01 – 22:00	22:01 – 06:00
	37	6	0

Days Visits are undertaken by Custody Visitors

As seen above, no visits were undertaken at both Hartlepool and Middlesbrough between the hours of 22:01 and 06:00. This issue will be addressed during 2014-15 with the possibility of arranging some visits within this timeframe. Tables 9 & 10 show a breakdown by the day of the week visits were undertaken:

Table Nine:

Hartlepool Custody Suite	Day of Visit						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	14	8	5	5	7	0	0

Table Ten:

Middlesbrough Custody Suite	Day of Visit						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	3	8	6	13	5	7	1

In Hartlepool no visits were undertaken on a weekend. Again this will be addressed during 2014-15 with associated targets being set.

Main Issues Raised

Any issues raised by ICVs are brought to the attention of the Custody Inspector and rectified as soon as possible. These issues are also discussed at Quarterly meetings of ICVs and logged on an issues raised action plan. This is to ensure that ICVs receive feedback as necessary.

No major issues were raised by ICVs during 2013-14 however concerns were raised regarding the delay in accessing Appropriate Adults on an evening and weekend.

This has been an ongoing concern for a number of years in Cleveland and research is currently being undertaken to assess best practice in other Forces for accessing appropriate adults.

Conclusions

The Cleveland Independent Custody Scheme continues to run successfully with no major issues raised by ICVs.

It is hoped the scheme can be developed further in 2014-15 with additional training to be arranged for volunteers around the use of custody records.

In addition, six vacancies will be filled in April 2014 bringing the scheme to full capacity of 22 volunteers.

**Rachelle Kipling
Governance Officer
April 2014**