



Annual Report

December 2024

City of London

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Foreword, by ICV Cohort of the City ICV Panel

In the last 12 months, the police service nationally has faced an array of challenges, due to concerns demonstrated by the wider public regarding trust and confidence in policing. This has frequently been compounded by the often difficult, demanding, and unpredictable nature of policing incidents and criminality; and perception of procedural justice – the fair and respectful treatment of citizens.

Custody is an important component of the Criminal Justice System. The City Independent Custody Visiting Scheme has continued to play a key role here, by continuing to act as critical friend to the City of London Police, ensuring that the provision of a detainee's rights, welfare and entitlements continues to be adequately addressed and delivered throughout the custody process. Our City scheme has learned more about the possible needs of detainees with physical and non-visible disabilities in custody, which has helped to build our awareness of how a detainee's needs may fluctuate and change throughout their stay in detention.

We have seen first-hand how an individual's experiences of the police, police conduct, and media coverage can affect trust and impact public perceptions of police performance. Nevertheless, throughout the course of the year we have observed examples of good practice and procedures across a full range of custody operations, which have led to positive interactions with detainees. We are pleased to report there were no deaths in custody, or following police conduct for the City of London Police during the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

We have been struck by the professionalism, care and engaging nature demonstrated by the City of London Police Custody Team to process detainees in a sensitive and appropriate way; and protect life in circumstances where there has been a real and immediate risk to it (as required under Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights).

Increasingly, the City of London Police have been required to undertake more complex and resource-intensive policing activity within custody. A combination of pre-planned and spontaneous public order events have presented considerable challenges in respect to public safety and security, which has led to the force providing more cross border support to assist policing operations outside the Square Mile. Protests Groups such as Just Stop Oil, Extinction Rebellion have continued to remain active across London, along with other protest groups linked to the Israel-Hamas conflict. On the occasion where protest has been experienced in the City, it has remained low level. On a small number of occasions, custody officers have been temporarily abstracted from custody and relocated to front line operations, which has required custody to function with minimal staffing levels.

Professional development opportunities have regularly been provided to sergeants and Dedicated Detention Officers (DDOs) via Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and bespoke training sessions throughout the course of the year. Invitations have been extended to us, from the City Police's Learning and Development Department to attend custody training and provide input in relation to the roles we perform in custody. It is evident that Custody Management have taken steps to foster learning, as several officers across the custody cadre have secured secondments and promotions. While we are encouraged by the opportunities presented for custody officers to broaden their skills and knowledge, we remain mindful of the vacancies that are created as a result of this progression. Continued contingency and succession planning will be required to ensure that custody staff can continue to manage the wide range of individual and diverse needs of detainees entering custody.

As expected, the number of individuals seeking mental health support from the City of London Police's support services has continued to increase, with many detainees arriving to custody in a volatile or emotional manner - often exacerbated by intoxication or mental health issues.

These types of concerns for welfare link to current cases of thematic work for the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) nationally.

While there has been a reduction in the use of police custody as a place of safety for people detained under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act (1983), we have been encouraged to see a culture demonstrated by the City of London Police which emphasises the importance of protecting vulnerable people. The City of London Police have piloted several new and innovative partnerships this year, which has led to increased rapport between custody staff and detainees and improved provision of individualised care.

There are a wide range of policies and partnerships currently in operation across Bishopsgate Custody such as the Samaritans Listening Service, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous and Veterans Aid which have continued to provide detainees with opportunities to receive mental health support during health crises. Additionally, the City of London Police have continued to develop progressive methods to meet the needs of vulnerable people; and support detainees with neurodiversity and mental health vulnerabilities. A good example of this includes the issue of autism passports that can be supplied to a detainee, which may help with any future police interaction.

In May 2023, the City of London Police became the first police force in the country to screen those detained in custody for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This has helped to increase awareness and education of neurodiversity and ensure detainees with mental health conditions or disorders accurately identified and supported throughout the detention process. Much of these well-developed partnership arrangements, have most notably resulted from the Mental Health Crisis Concordat which has helped to bring about a shared and consistent understanding of vulnerability among City of London Police officers and staff.

While the City of London Police have taken steps to develop better mental health triage services that are equipped to meet the needs of vulnerable people, we recognise from a holistic perspective that the quality of interactions and co-operation between the force, wider public sector and protective services (E.g. social services, health and housing) requires improvement, with each service fully discharging its responsibilities so that the force and Bishopsgate custody does not become the default position for vulnerable people in crisis.

As a Panel, we will continue to work jointly with the City of London Police to ensure that they are consistently achieving the recommendations set out in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 2018 Inspection; and sufficiently prepared for their forthcoming reinspection. We will also continue to work with the Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA) to ensure that national themes are addressed.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our late Chair, Mr Godfrey Baillon-Bending, who greatly impacted the work of this Scheme during his tenure as Chair.

We also extend our thanks for the City of London Police, Custody Manager, Lead ICV Scheme Sponsor Member from the Police Authority Board and the City of London Scheme Manager for their continued commitment to the Scheme.

Deborah Oliver, ICV Scheme Sponsor, Police Authority Board

Foreword, by Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Sponsor, Police Authority Board Member Deborah Oliver:

Several events have occurred nationally over the last year that have undermined public confidence in, and perceptions of, police legitimacy and procedural justice in custody. This situation has raised concerns regarding the fairness and effectiveness of police interactions with the public in their efforts to tackle rising crime and ensure public safety.

The City Independent Custody Visitors Scheme (ICV) plays a crucial role in building trust and safeguarding detainee welfare in the City of London. Additionally, it supports the City of London Police in delivering quality service through volunteer oversight.

Despite significant challenges, Independent Custody Visitors have remained committed to providing effective oversight on behalf of the Police Authority. They have continued to act as critical friends to the force, sharing insights from their visits to enhance custody conditions and advocating for equitable care for all individuals entering the detention process. The sudden death of Chair, Godfrey Baillon-Bending, was much regretted and his expertise, experience, leadership and deep insight has been missed.

Independent Custody Visitors have expressed their findings and opinions freely, bringing attention to discomfort of individuals held in custody and highlighting notable practices within custody operations.

The City of London police have continued to face challenges in managing increased numbers of detainees with diverse needs due to planned and unplanned protest activities. This situation is expected to persist, making ongoing contingency and succession planning for custody staff vital - to ensure the necessary resources are available.

I am pleased to see the City of London Police spearheading initiatives in neurodiversity, particularly through the introduction of the Mental Health and Neurodevelopmental Checklist (MHND); and ADHD screening

programmes for detainees; and would encourage the force to further develop partnerships and explore funding opportunities for this essential work.

Overall, feedback I have gathered from Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) underscores the dedication and professionalism of custody staff. However, it also identifies areas for improvement, particularly in the efficiency of recruitment and vetting procedures for custody staff and the ICV community. The dedication and professionalism of custody staff are commendable. However, there are areas requiring improvement. Among these, the attendance times of Appropriate Adults, defined as individuals who assist vulnerable persons during police custody, is particularly critical; they should consistently attend within 90 minutes. Additionally, a code complaint custody suite should be established during the transition to the new custody estate. Improving operational resilience across the existing voluntary scheme could significantly improve the effectiveness of the independent custody visiting scheme.

I look forward to seeing both the City ICV Scheme and City of London Police build on these improvements in the coming year.

INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF LONDON INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME (ICV SCHEME)

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the City of London ICV Scheme in the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 including:

- the Panel's performance.
- areas of good practice or issues and concerns the visits have raised; and
- objectives of the ICV Scheme for 2023/24.

The City of London Corporation, as the Police Authority for the City, is a separate body to that of the City of London Police. It has a statutory duty to ensure the delivery of the Independent

Custody Visiting Scheme. Oversight of the ICV Scheme is provided by the Police Authority Board.

Independent custody visiting is governed by a range of legislation and guidance including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and Home Office Codes of Practice and National Standards (2013).

ICVs are members of the local and business community who volunteer to visit police stations on an unannounced basis to check on the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held. To be eligible to become an ICV, individuals must:

- be over 18.
- be independent from the police force and policy authority; and
- have no direct involvement in the criminal justice system.

The City of London ICV Panel currently consists of 5 volunteers who visit the custody suite situated at Bishopsgate Police Station on an unannounced basis once a week.

The City of London ICV Panel collaborates closely with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to highlight issues in custody detention, such as delays in the attendance of Appropriate Adults and legal representation for detainees.

A member of the Police Authority Board attends the quarterly Panel meetings along with a representative of the City of London Police to ensure that any questions or concerns that have surfaced from visits to custody can be adequately addressed. The quarterly Panel meetings are supported by the Police Authority ICV Scheme Manager.

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of volunteers, it is mandatory for visits to custody to be undertaken in pairs. Visits to custody are made on an unannounced basis so ICVs can

look, listen, and report on conditions in custody at the time of their visit.

The primary objective of all visitors is to observe and report on the treatment and conditions of individual detainees and to check that their rights and entitlements are being observed.

ICVs are always accompanied by a custody officer throughout their visit to custody. Each detainee is provided with an opportunity to engage and speak directly to custody visitors. Circumstances may arise where detainees should not be disturbed, particularly when they are asleep during a rest period, or when specific health or safety risks have been identified which prevent an interview from taking place. Detainees may only be interviewed with their consent and may choose not to provide permission.

Visit interviews with detainees are undertaken in clear sight, but out of earshot of the escorting officer so details of what visitors see and hear remain confidential. Strict rules of confidentiality apply so detainees are identified by their custody numbers only. ICVs are independent and impartial. They do not provide advice or involve themselves in the process of investigation. In this respect, they are not concerned with any alleged offence and cannot perform tasks on behalf of the detained person.

ICVs complete a report to record details of the visit. The information included in this report focuses on actions for City of London Police and the ICV Scheme Manager and can include:

- details of any good practice ICVs have observed during their visit;
- reference to any immediate problems encountered and resolved at the time of visiting; or
- details of any matters requiring further action.

Copies of the reports are provided to the Superintendent (if appropriate), the Custody Manager and the ICV Scheme Manager. The

information provided within each report is discussed by the ICV Panel at the next review meeting. If necessary, more serious issues can be highlighted directly to the Police Authority Board or dealt with outside Panel meetings.

PANEL MEETINGS

Quarterly Panel meetings provide ICVs with an opportunity to discuss each visit and raise any issues that have arisen across the previous quarter.

Short update and information sessions are also incorporated into each agenda to ensure ICVs are kept up to date and well informed of national developments regarding the custody environment.

Topics discussed this year included:

1. Recruitment of New ICVs

Membership of the Panel has reduced from 7 to 5 as a result of the untimely passing of the City ICV Scheme Chair and departure of the Vice Chair, which has reduced the capacity of the scheme significantly.

Outcome: The Scheme Manager has taken steps to utilise existing recruitment channels internally to promote the work of the City Scheme; and has committed to an ultimate target of appointing eight new volunteers to the City Scheme.

Separately, The Scheme Manager and the City of London Police are in the initial stages of agreeing an 'onboarding process,' to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the onboarding and ongoing maintenance of the ICV Scheme volunteers, providing clarity on roles and responsibilities.

This process is expected to enhance the effectiveness and representation of the City ICV Scheme; and is expected to be finalised in May 2024.

2. Re-introduction of Operation Safeguard

In February 2022, the Ministry of Justice notified the National Police Chiefs' Council to make custody cells available to house lower risk male detainees, as part of Operation Safeguard.

Outcome: Three custody cells have been allocated to house male defendants under Operation Safeguard at Bishopsgate Custody during 2023/24. The City of London Police have continued to keep both cells available while this operation has been ongoing. It should be noted that no cells were required during 2023/24.

3. Use of Force

Scrutiny and oversight of the use of force remain recurring themes in recent inspections conducted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue services.

There has been a steady increase in the number of detainees experiencing use of force during their detention in City custody, rising from 5.6% last year to 10.4% during this reporting period. This increase is attributable to enhanced reporting practices. It should be noted that most incidents of force occur while detainees are in handcuffs.

Outside these specific instances, the rationale for use of force is evaluated through CCTV footage. Reviews of records have highlighted:

- good and thorough rationale provided by officers in use of force reports supporting use, with detailed descriptions of detainee behaviour and risk and
- detailed explanations of officer rationale provided to the ICVs querying use of force during visits; and following review of individual detainee custody records.
- CCTV of Use of Force is viewed on CCTV monthly by Custody Managements and quarterly by the

Superintendent responsible for custody.

- CCTV has shown officers engaging with detainees, exhibiting patience and de-escalation.
- Monthly reviews of Use of Force Forms by the Custody Manager – allowing for opportunities to improve performance and improvements to the information recording in custody records.

4. Mental Health Initiatives in Custody

Veterans Aid

In May 2022, the City of London Police launched expedited support for veterans in custody, aimed at identifying and assisting ex-servicemen and women at risk of homelessness.

The partnership is centred around a poster campaign directing officers to the charity, encouraging them to 'Approach, Engage and Advise'.

Outcome: Veterans requiring support are automatically referred to Veterans Aid, where they receive bespoke, individualised assistance.

Introduction of the Mental Health and Neurodevelopmental Checklist (MHND)

In March 2023, the City of London Police volunteered as one of five pilot forces to test a new mental health and neurodevelopmental checklist.

This checklist, developed by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), is designed to enhance the quality of information provided to the CPS prosecutors before charging suspects and making case management decisions.

Outcome: The checklist ensures that detainees with mental health conditions or disorders are accurately identified early in the interview process. It also prioritises information sharing

between agencies while upholding the rights of vulnerable individuals.

Launch of PHL Group Mental Health and Neurodevelopmental Checklist (MHND)

In November 2023, the City of London Police launched a second MHND screening pilot with PHL Group, where embedded healthcare professionals conduct screening.

Outcome: A non-judgemental, patient focused approach allows for the immediate healthcare needs of detainees to be addressed.

Launch of ADHD Screening Programmes for Detainees

In 2021, Dame Sally Coates' released a report for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales. In this report she suggested that at least 50% of prisoners may exhibit some form of Neurodivergence. This figure is believed to be significantly higher in the City of London (75%), where the force has begun screening for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in custody.

A checklist for ADHD was devised by Sarah Templeton, who has worked in four English prisons.

Outcome: This checklist ensures that there is a clear pathway to diagnosis, with urgent cases fast traced to an NHS provider for ADHD assessments.

This analysis will also evaluate the prevalence of undiagnosed ADHD among detainees, with anecdotal evidence suggesting a rate as high as 85%. This highlights a critical issue that necessitates the adoption of the City of London model by all police forces.

Implementing this approach could also enhance our understanding of the underlying issues and contribute to reducing reoffending.

Samaritans Listening Service

In June 2022, HMICFRS published 'Expectation for Police Custody', which outlines the framework and criteria for inspectors to assess

police custody arrangements and detainee outcomes across all police forces in England and Wales.

The framework emphasises the treatment conditions and standards required by the inspectorate and highlights the necessity for police services to collaborate with partner services to divert vulnerable adults and children away from custody and ensure their welfare.

Outcome: As of March 2024, it had been 32 months since the Samaritans partnered with the City of London to support individuals entering policing custody and officers across the workforce.

The success of the partnership includes:

- Recognition of ‘good practice’ by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and Independent Advisory Panel for Deaths in Custody (IAPDC)
- Seven forces at various stages of implementing their own Samaritans partnerships based on the CoLP model (with some regional variations to suit their locality)
- The integration of Samaritans into CoLP policing initiatives, including Operation Reframe and well-being events.
- Training sessions focused on input and organisational development.

A total of 170 officers and staff have received listening training from the Samaritans.

5. Final Project Plan for custody at Fleet Street

Consultation with internal and external stakeholders has continued during this reporting period.

It is crucial that the new facility reflects a multi-agency approach to engagement during detention. This includes providing opportunities for diversion through mental health, substance misuse support while maintaining the dignity of detained persons.

The Scheme Manager and the City ICV Panel have emphasised the need for updated design plans that acknowledge advancements in policing and technology (i.e. exercise yard CCTV), while also supporting officers and staff in the custody environment.

Outcome: Ongoing collaboration with the City of London Custody Management Group (CMG) and CoLP’s Director of Estates and Support Services, aims to ensure that all stakeholders, including the ICV Scheme Manager and ICV Cohort are consulted on design plans and have the opportunity to provide input before the new custody estate at Fleet Street is finalised.

It is expected that stakeholders will have further opportunities to input on Stage four of the full design process in early 2025.

Appropriate Adult Attendance

The provision of an Appropriate Adult’s oversight of proceedings undertaken with juvenile and vulnerable adults held in police custody is a safeguard enshrined within the Police and Criminal Evidence (‘PACE’) Act (1984).

The Appropriate Adult plays a crucial role in safeguarding the rights and welfare of children and vulnerable adults suspected of a criminal offence.

The Appropriate Adult ensures that these individuals are treated fairly and justly, enabling them to participate fully throughout the detention process. The primary responsibility of the appropriate adult is to facilitate communication and accompany the vulnerable detainee or juvenile during police interviews and other key moments in the detention process, including the collection of samples and bail charging.

According to national standards, response times for appropriate adult attendance should not exceed 90 minutes.

Outcome: Appropriate Adult arrival times demonstrate a (77.5%) compliance rate for arrivals within 90 minutes.

The ICV Scheme Manager has liaised with the Custody Manager to ensure that each detainee receives support from an Appropriate Adult under an annual contract.

Monitoring meetings have continued to occur throughout this reporting period between the Custody Manager and the Commissioning team to review key concerns.

The City of London Police have continued to maintain an on-the-spot purchase solution with the Appropriate Adult Network to address slow attendance times.

6. National Police Estates Group (NPEG) Gap Analysis

The City of London Police have commissioned the National Police Estates Group (NPEG) to conduct a Gap Analysis of custody. This analysis aims to identify immediate safety issues that require remedial action and is scheduled to take place in May 2023.

Outcome: Despite the challenges posed by an aging custody estate, the City of London Police have taken steps to address the following concerns:

- Specifically, cell doors that have failed ligature tests have been replaced.
- A new wicket has been installed in 15 cells to enhance safety protocols.
- Privacy screen issues (caused by a limitation in space within custody)
- A thorough analysis of the financial implications associated with the installation of new handwash basins for detainees.

- Implementation of a secure storage solution for keys: enhancing safety and minimizing the risk of unauthorised access within the facility.
- Introduction of a modern cell buzzer system to improve communication and response times, thus enhancing the overall safety and security of the facility.
- Updating the aesthetics of the cells, including painting ceilings: to contribute to a more human environment, which may positively impact the mental wellbeing of detainees.
- Upgrading CCTV system: crucial for enhancing surveillance capabilities and ensuring the security of both detainees and staff.
- Revamping the custody suite interview rooms: to improve functionality and ensure a more professional atmosphere conducive to respectful interactions.

7. Priorities for 2024/25

City ICVs continue to report on a professional custody environment.

The commitment and dedication of volunteer visitors ensures an appropriate level of scrutiny; however further opportunities have been identified across the following areas:

- To work with City of London Police to ensure feedback provided by ICVs regarding the custody design programme for Fleet Street is reflected in the consultation process and delivery of a code compliant custody suite.
- Strengthen the resilience of the City Scheme through the recruitment of new volunteers.

- Work with ICVA and other ICV Schemes to ensure that national themes are addressed.
- Work with the City of London Police to continue to address the recommendations made by the HMICFRS following their inspection in 2018.
- Deliver a Compliant Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, in accordance with the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) Quality Assessment Framework.

Visit Statistics

	Total number of detainees in Custody at time of visit	No of detainees offered visit	No. of detainees accepted visit
Bishopsgate Q1	40	24	15
Bishopsgate Q2	34	25	20
Bishopsgate Q3	31	13	12
Bishopsgate Q4	34	15	15
Total	139	77	62

ISSUES AND CONCERNS ARISING FROM VISITS

This list of issues and concerns reflects the range of issues that have been raised by detainees in the last year and other issues which have been reported by ICV Panels elsewhere for which there has been a nil return in the City of London.

	Bishopsgate
No of Total Visits	
Report Form with no matters requiring a police response	0
Infrastructure/furnishings/fittings/out of service	37
Comments individual officers – Positive	20
Comments individual officers – negative	0
Cleaning, tidiness and general hygiene – positive	1
Cleaning, tidiness and general hygiene negative	3
Information Technology	7
Temperature	4
Health related matters	21
Procedures not followed	0
Rights and entitlements seemingly delayed	10
Personal hygiene requests – (showers, washing etc)	8
Requests for phone calls	8
Perceived risk to detainees	0
Periodic checks (15, 30 minutes) not maintained	0
Requests for food and drink	1
Requests for literature/documents	4

Station	Target No of Visits	Achieved	% of Target
Bishopsgate	52	47	90.38

DAYS OF VISITS

	No of Visits	% (figure expressed to two decimal place)
Monday	4	8.51
Tuesday	7	14.89
Wednesday	15	31.91
Thursday	12	25.53
Friday	5	10.63
Saturday	4	8.51
Sunday	0	0
Total	47	

TIME OF VISITS

00.01-06.00	0
06.00-12.00	18
12.01-18.00	20
18.01-00.00	9

DAYS OF VISITS/TIMES – COMBINED

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
00.01-06.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
06.00-12.00	2	3	5	4	1	3	0
12.01-18.00	1	2	6	6	4	1	0
18.01-00.00	1	2	4	2	0	0	0
	4	7	15	12	5	4	0