

The October 2013 Report to the British Transport Police Authority on Independent Custody Visiting

1. Introduction

This report is a record of visits carried out by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme on behalf of the British Transport Police Authority (BTPA), and the issues identified. It covers the period from July 1 to September 30 2013. The delivery of the service and this report are in line with the contract agreed from April 1 2009 between BTPA and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA). The MOPAC assumed all responsibilities for the London ICV Scheme from January 16 2012 under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011).

The contract covers the delivery of a custody visiting service at five BTP custody suites at Brewery Road (described as 'Caledonian Road' in previous reports), Ebury Bridge, Fulham Palace Road, Tottenham Court Road (TCR), and West Ham. The West Ham custody suite closed in April for refurbishment. MOPAC has not been informed of a reopening date as yet.

2. Overview of visits

27 visits to BTP custody suites were undertaken in the reporting period. Of these only three raised issues that required a response from police, all of which received comprehensive replies.

Only five of the scheduled 13 visits took place at Brewery Road. This is disappointing and mirrors a similar performance by the Islington ICV Panel in the previous quarter. The number of volunteer visitors on the panel recently fell by six and this may have resulted in difficulties in fulfilling the visit rota. Interviews of new applicants to the Islington panel have already taken place.

As the last received visit report from Brewery Road is for the visit of August 20, there may be outstanding visit reports which have not yet arrived at the MOPAC offices. Any such reports are unlikely to contain serious concerns as ICVs will contact MOPAC immediately following a visit should such concerns arise. Any outstanding reports and/or concerns will be addressed in the next BTPA ICV report.

ICVs enquired about a detainee transferred from Brewery Road to Homerton hospital in July, and about the review of detention for one detainee in August. Both concerns were responded to and further information provided at the panel meeting in September. The panel was satisfied that no further action or information was required.

Eight of the 13 scheduled visits to Ebury Bridge were completed. The Westminster ICV panel that visits this suite continues to have performance issues, to MPS and BTP custody

suites. In response to this MOPAC has removed a number of unreliable volunteers and is in the process of recruiting replacements. Unfortunately the recruitment and induction of new members to the ICV Scheme can be lengthy and members of panels in other London boroughs have been invited to assist.

Of those visits completed none resulted in an issue requiring a police response and only four people were in detention at the time visits occurred. ICVs found the custody suite quiet, clean and tidy, and were well received by custody staff.

One report was received of the three scheduled visits to Fulham Palace Road. There may be an outstanding report yet to arrive, or the panel may not have readjusted to a schedule that includes visits to this custody suite following a prolonged closure. MOPAC officers will monitor the panel’s performance and take remedial action if necessary. The report contained no concerns and the suite was reported as being clean and tidy.

All 13 scheduled visits to TCR were completed. One concern was raised in September regarding the use of clinical waste bins. No concerns were raised about detainee care. As the concern was not about detainee care the ICV panel is happy to wait for a response via its normal six-weekly cycle of reports. Positive comments were made about the cleanliness of the custody suite and the helpfulness of the custody staff.

West Ham custody suite was closed for the reporting period and no visits scheduled.

A summary of all visit reports received is attached as APPENDIX 1.

3. Statistics on visits to BTP facilities

Facility	Panel	Target visits	Visits made
Brewery Rd	Islington	13	5
Ebury Bridge	Westminster	13	8
Fulham Palace Rd	H’smith & Fulham	3	1
TCR	Camden	13	13
West Ham	Newham	0	0
Total		42	27

MOPAC has experienced delays in receiving a number of visit reports. Any adjustments to these figures will be included in the next BTPA ICV report and reflected in the invoices for the provision of the service.

4. Additional information

- As a result of a High Court judgement in April that 17 year olds in detention should be treated as juveniles under PACE, the Home Office opened a five week consultation in August on the relevant amendments to PACE codes C and H.
- To reflect recent changes to PACE codes C and H and amendments to the Home Office Codes of Practice that govern custody visiting, the Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA), the national organisation for custody visiting schemes, was commissioned to produce a new set of National Standards for custody visiting.

Consultation with ICVs took place over the summer and the standards, which will not only provide guidance for custody visiting schemes but can also act as benchmark, will be rolled out in early 2014.

- On September 9 the BBC Panorama programme reported on the detention of people with mental health issues in police custody suites. ICVA released a press release commending the programme for raising the issue. ICVA has produced a training module for ICVs who frequently encounter detainees with mental health issues. MOPAC plans to deliver this training module to its ICV panels, including those who conduct visits to BTP custody suites, over the coming year.
- MOPAC delivered an ICV Initial Training session to 25 volunteers on September 28. The attendees included new ICVs and experienced ICVs undergoing refresher training. ICVs from panels conducting visits to BTP custody suites were among those who attended.
- ICVA will host its annual conference in Brighton on November 2. MOPAC will send 25 London ICVs as delegates. The conference provides a networking and ongoing learning opportunity for ICVs and is part of MOPAC's strategy to support and value its volunteers. ICVs from those panels who conduct visits to BTP custody suites will be among the delegates.
- MOPAC will host the six-monthly ICV Panel Chairs meeting on November 14. The meeting provides the opportunity to discuss developments in custody and look at ongoing or unresolved issues. BTP custody officers will be among those invited to attend.
- MOPAC will hold a social event for ICVs on December 17 at City Hall. The event is part of MOPAC's strategy to recognise and reward its volunteers and acknowledge the collaborative relationship with custody staff. Met Police and BTP custody staff will be invited.

5. Summary

The low number of visits made to the Brewery Road custody suite by the Islington ICV Panel resulted in a disappointing total number of visits. MOPAC has identified membership issues in the panel and has taken remedial action. We would expect the Islington panel to return to its normal high levels of performance once new members are accredited and inducted. Similar actions are under way with the Westminster panel that visits Ebury Bridge.

Visits took place across a varied number of days of the week and times of the day and once again the experience of those conducting the visits was that they were consistently well received. BTP custody staff were helpful and professional in conducting the visiting procedure. A higher number of people (65) were detained at the time of the visits than in the last two quarters, and just under 50% of those in detention were interviewed. Visible checks were conducted on most of the others. On the very few occasions that concerns were raised, visitors were satisfied with the responses and assured that those detained in BTP custody suites continue to be well cared for.

BTP continues to ensure that those detained in its custody suites have their health and welfare needs accommodated and their rights and entitlements upheld. This is a message that MOPAC and its volunteers is happy to relay to the community.

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Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

Appendices; 1. Summary report of visits to BTP custody suites Oct 2013

APPENDIX 1: Summary report of visits to BTP custody suites October 2013

Form No	Station	Date of Visit	Detainees in	Spoken To	Matters Requiring Response
50913	Brewery Road	15/07/2013	2	2	<p>Police responses in red</p> <p>General observations: Cells out of action: 5 (CCTV faulty), 15, 18 (plaster peels). Mental health assessments being done regularly by someone who is on call 9-5.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: 1666 - When was detainee transferred to Homerton Hospital? Was detainee accompanied by AA when receiving rights and entitlements? DP was conveyed to Homerton for Psychiatric care at 19.23hrs, once a bed had been identified. She had been in police detention since 20.13 the preceding day. At the time of arrest it was considered alcohol contributed to bizarre behaviour. An AA was not present when rights were given.</p>
50914	Brewery Road	26/07/2013	3	1	<p>General observations: Custody Suite was quiet and well organised. However, a number of meals are out of date. 1 Tuna meal expired January 2013. 3 chicken satay expired 9 July 2013.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>
50915	Brewery Road	06/08/2013	5	1	<p>General comments: Everything is fine. Escorting officer was very helpful.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>
50916	Brewery Road	15/08/2013	2	1	<p>General observations: Quiet in Custody Suite. Central air conditioning was working fine. Cells 1, 2 & 15 are awaiting repair of the skylights.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>

Form No	Station	Date of Visit	Detainees in	Spoken To	Matters Requiring Response
52501	Brewery Road	20/08/2013	8	2	<p>General observations: Escorting DDO was very helpful, polite and conscientious. Busy but quiet.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: Detainee in cell 3 - 2002 - what time has he been updated by the Duty Officer? ICVs request at 13:20. Update occurred during review at 13.37 – Inspector CLARK was the reviewing officer and the review was 44 minutes late.</p>
30663	Ebury Bridge	07/07/2013	0	0	<p>General observations: All fine. Staff helpful. No detainees.</p> <p>Matters requiring response: None.</p>
30664	Ebury Bridge	12/07/2013	1	0	<p>General Observations: Not busy, one in custody. C/N 814 - M, A, P – Asleep</p> <p>Matters requiring response: None.</p>
30665	Ebury Bridge	15/07/2013	0	0	<p>General Observations: Generally looked around. All clean and tidy.</p> <p>Matters requiring response: None.</p>
49420	Ebury Bridge	28/07/2013	0	0	<p>General Observations: None</p> <p>Matters requiring response: None.</p>
30666	Ebury Bridge	30/07/2013	2	2	<p>General Observations: No problems. All in order.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>

Form No	Station	Date of Visit	Detainees in	Spoken To	Matters Requiring Response
45407	Ebury Bridge	06/08/2013	0	0	General observations: Not busy. Gate still not working. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
26505	Ebury Bridge	22/08/2013	1	1	General observations: All clean, running well, very helpful. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
30667	Ebury Bridge	04/09/2013	0	0	General Observations: Friendly, helpful staff. Clean and tidy premises. Matters requiring a response to panel: None - no detainees present.
50802	Fulham Place Road	19/07/2013	3	1	General Observations: Quiet, clean and tidy. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
48615	Tottenham Court Road	02/07/2013	2	1	General concerns: Clean and tidy. Staff very helpful. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
48616	Tottenham Court Road	09/07/2013	4	1	General concerns: Busy, but staff were helpful and efficient. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
48804	Tottenham Court Road	14/07/2013	7	4	General observations: Clean and tidy. Quite busy. Staff were helpful and pleasant. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.

Form No	Station	Date of Visit	Detainees in	Spoken To	Matters Requiring Response
4048	Tottenham Court Road	23/07/2013	5	2	<p>General observations: Quite busy and feeling rather tense. Custody sergeant gave the impression he was too busy to deal with ICVs or find someone else to delegate to Matters requiring a response to panel: Why was reception (public reception) area unstaffed?</p> <p>Normally the reception desk staff finish at 7pm and the reception buzzer goes through to Custody. On this night the reception desk was still staffed and the reception staff was at the toilet.</p> <p>Escorting Inspector seemed not to be up to date with ICV role, eg self induction, standing back from cell door.</p> <p>There have been discussions between the BTP and the MOPAC about self-introduction. Standard guidance has been provided to the Custody staff in order to provide clarification.</p>
52757	Tottenham Court Road	03/08/2013	3	2	<p>General Observations: Clean and tidy, staff helpful. FME room in use.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>
48625	Tottenham Court Road	07/08/2013	2	1	<p>General Observations: All orderly - helpful staff.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>
52772	Tottenham Court Road	18/08/2013	1	1	<p>General observations: Very friendly and helpful staff. Everywhere was clean and tidy.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None.</p>
52760	Tottenham Court Road	21/08/2013	7	6	<p>General Observations: Clean, tidy, staff helpful, despite station being busy.</p> <p>Matters requiring a response to panel: None</p>

Form No	Station	Date of Visit	Detainees in	Spoken To	Matters Requiring Response
49857	Tottenham Court Road	30/08/2013	1	0	General Observatons: Very quiet station, clean and tidy. Staff good humoured and helpful. Matters requiring a response to panel: None
52769	Tottenham Court Road	06/09/2013	3	2	General Observations: Cupboard door unlocked. Matters requiring a response to panel: Pointed out yet again clinical waste bin should not be used for general waste due to cost of disposal. Perhaps a notice could be put up so that FMEs aware. Could we have follow up on detainee 2194 and if he was released unsupported into the community.
49485	Tottenham Court Road	15/09/2013	1	0	General observations: Clean and tidy. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
46705	Tottenham Court Road	17/09/2013	0	0	General observations: Cell 6 needs deep clean following positive Hepetitis C+VE detainee - all over cells. No problems. Matters requiring a response to panel: None.
51002	Tottenham Court Road	27/09/2013	2	1	General Observations: Clean and tidy despite a huge delivery of stores including new 'suicide' suits made of unappable material. Sgt very enthusiastic re his role and ordering new podshifts and other kits. Matters requiring a response to panel: None