

Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Activity Annual Report 2021/2022

Police, Crime, Criminal Justice, and Fire Team

Date August 2022



Foreword

Statement from Bev Hughes, Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester

“I am pleased to be able to present our Annual Independent Custody Visiting Report for 2021/22. As always, I am extremely grateful for the work that our Independent Custody Visitors do as volunteers, giving up their time to ensure that the scheme is effective, and I would like to extend my personal thanks to each of them for their commitment to this vital role.

“Custody Visitors play a vital role in providing the public with confidence that police treat individuals lawfully and with respect when detained in police custody. ICVs function as ‘critical friends’ and provide invaluable feedback on the wellbeing of detainees from an independent, impartial, and non-discriminatory view of all parties involved in the custody visiting process.

“In 2020/21 we were faced with the Covid-19 pandemic where unfortunately ICV visits were suspended. This was in line with government restrictions to protect the welfare and safety of our Independent Custody Visitors, staff, and detainees. During this period telephone visits were introduced to continue to oversee the welfare of

detainees within Greater Manchester. In 2021/22 ICVs were able to continue fully with weekly visits made face to face to each Custody Suite and I applaud them for their determination in succeeding with these.

“I would like to extend my thanks to all our Independent Custody Visitors for their assistance in participating in this role where they have been able to and their tenacity to ensure the scheme has been able to deliver this important work. Adapting to different circumstances highlights the strength and commitment of our volunteers”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beverley Hughes', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Baroness Beverley Hughes

Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester

Police, Crime, Criminal Justice, and Fire

Introduction

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has fourteen Independent Custody Visitors responsible for undertaking visits once a week to designated custody suites, as agreed with the Chief Constable.

Background

Andy Burnham was elected Mayor for Greater Manchester in May 2017. The role of Mayor of Greater Manchester includes the powers and functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Greater Manchester and Baroness Beverley Hughes was appointed as Deputy Mayor for Police, Crime, Criminal Justice, and Fire supporting the Mayor in the discharge of his PCC responsibilities.

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

The Mayor as Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester has a statutory duty under section 51 (1) of the Police Reform Act 2002 and schedule 15, part 3 paragraph 163 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, for organising and overseeing the delivery of Independent Custody Visiting in Greater Manchester.

The purpose of ICV scheme is to allow members of the local community to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which persons are detained at police stations and other custody suites such as the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) Custody Suite. It also allows members of the public the opportunity to secure a greater understanding of and confidence in the operation in practice of the statutory and other rules governing the welfare of those in custody. These arrangements also enable ICVs to make sure that police/custody officers have the means at their disposal to ensure maximum safety and welfare of detained persons.

Independent Custody Visiting Activity

Greater Manchester Police have eight purpose-built custody suites located in North Manchester, Stockport, Tameside, Wigan, Bury, Pendleton Salford and Bolton.

Custody Visits to detainees held under the Terrorism Act 2000 at GMP Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) Suite, which is the Northwest hub for Counter Terrorism are undertaken daily with reports being forwarded to the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL).

Bi-monthly ad-hoc visits are also conducted to check on facilities.

Pandemic 2020/2021

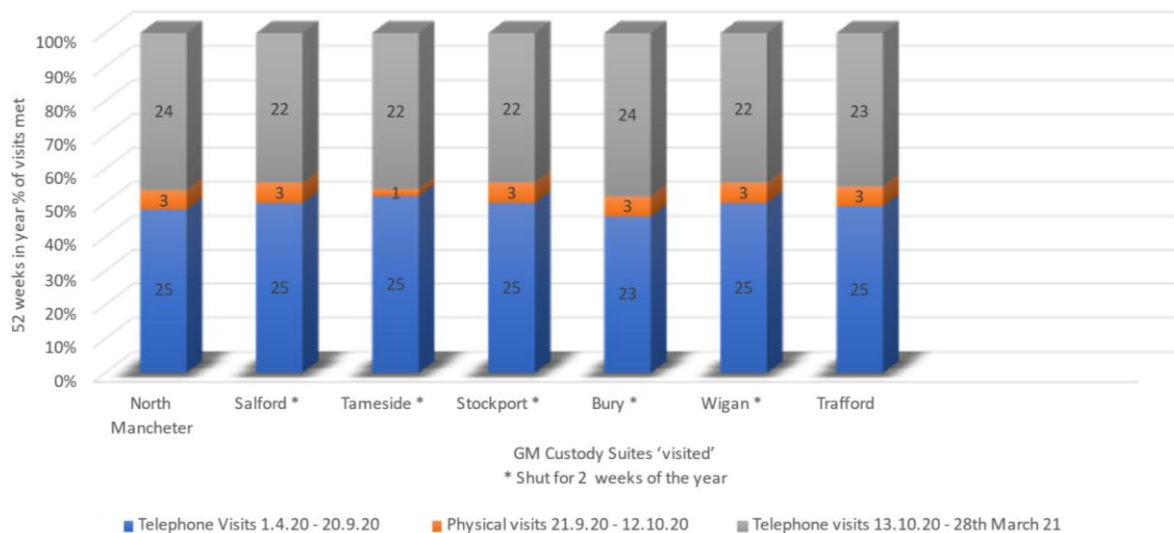
Due to the announcement of the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on 17th March 2020 visits took place in the majority over the telephone and in person for a few weeks, this was in line with UK Government guidance to ensure that the important work of the ICVs could continue.

Telephone calls were welcomed, by Custody Staff, as the aide memoir checklist had been amended to reflect the COVID crisis, around their welfare.

Performance

In 2020/2021 a total of 32,877 detainees were held in custody.

ICV activity from 1st April 2020 to 28th March 2021



Area	Telephone visits 1	Physical visits 2	Telephone visits 3
North Manchester	25	3	24
Salford	25	3	22
Tameside	25	1	22
Stockport	25	3	22
Bury	23	3	24
Wigan	25	3	22
Trafford	25	3	23

There were 322 telephone calls made to custody, as displayed in the above graph and nineteen physical visits undertaken. At the most, it was only 3 weeks that 'visits' were not conducted and 2 of these were due to deep clean closures. Visits were well received and although it was not possible to speak with many detainees, for example, not being possible to put the call through to the cells etc, the ICVs were able to speak to 24% of detainees during 20/21.

Issues raised

Issues raised and actioned:

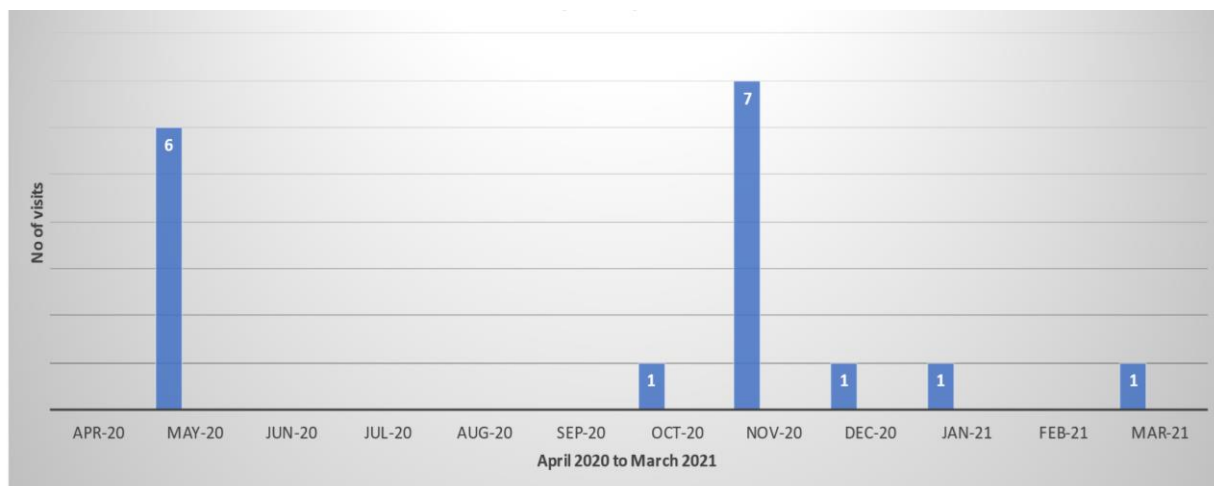
- Installation of soap dispensers in staff kitchen and toilets
- Increase in Personal Protective Equipment
- *Non-custody staff in custody suites

*Custody staff worked extremely hard to ensure that only the necessary people were in custody and due to the reporting from ICVs, signage was put up to stop the throughput.

Counter Terrorism Unit visits

There was a total of 9 telephone visits undertaken to the Counter Terrorism Unit during 2020 to 2021.

CTU ICV activity from 1st April 2020 to 28th March 2021



Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
0	6	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	1	0	1

It is to be noted that due to the pandemic, the bi-monthly visits were unable to be undertaken, as the Suite is empty if no-one is being detained, therefore they would be unable to speak with a member of staff over the phone to undertake the necessary checks.

CTU activity 2021/2022

In 2021/2022 there were a total of 45 visits undertaken to the TACT (CTU Suite) to visit individual detainees. There were no issues to be raised.

Dip sampling of custody records

The Volunteers Manager undertook dip sampling of custody records to ensure that checks and monitoring continued and that telephone visits had been recorded by custody staff on the detainee's custody record. There were no key issues identified.

Electronic reporting

A major change for 2021/2022 was the introduction of electronic reporting. This involved the placement of a GMCA tablet in each of the GMP Custody Suites that the staff place in the custody safe. ICVs identify themselves to the Custody Sergeant at the desk and then proceed with the visits, recording electronically feedback from the detainees and issues/concerns with the facilities or reported by the custody staff, which in turn automatically populates the database.

Feedback has been positive from custody staff as it frees up their time from having to scan and email forms. Also, some of the visitors themselves prefer this method, as it is more streamlined.

ICV Activity 2021/2022

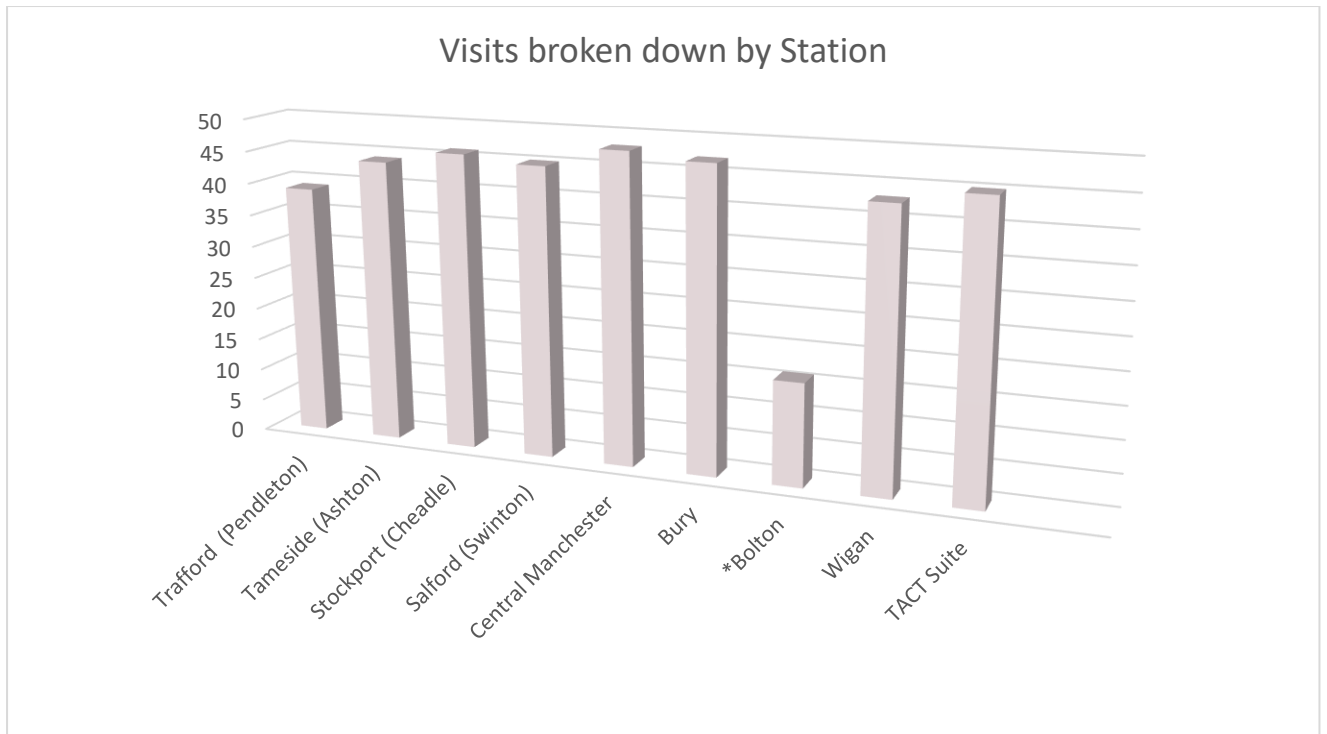
Fortunately, custody visiting resumed as normal in 2021/2022 and visits were able to continue a weekly basis.

Performance

In April 21 – March 22 (inclusive) there were a total of 38,781 detainees in custody

- Total detainees at the time of visits: 2,128
- Total detainees in custody 21/22 - 38781
- Number offered a visit: 1,483
- Number accepting from those offered: 947 (64% of those offered)
- Total visits: 328 (broken down by station below)

ICV activity from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022



GMP District with station	Trafford Pendleton	Tameside Ashton	Stockport Cheadle	Salford Swinton	Central Manchester	Bury	*Bolton	Wigan	TACT Suite
No of Visits	39	44	46	45	48	47	16	43	45

*Bolton only opened in July 2021

It is to be noted that some of the custody suites were shut for up to 7 weeks for deep clean and staffing issues caused by sickness.

Some of the issues were:

Two abandoned visits due to shortage of staff and therefore the custody visitors did not feel it was appropriate to continue with the visit, could have been a health and safety concern for staff, visitors, and detainees.

- Shortage of food due to delivery issues
- Broken phones/toilets/lights
- Health Care Professional staff shortages
- Delay in the fitting of Solicitors call booth

Custody Management

The Volunteer Manager regularly attends the weekly GMP Custody Catch Up Meeting, chaired by the Chief Inspector of the Branch, whereby any issues, concerns, changes in practice are discussed and actioned where necessary. Few areas of improvement around the dignity of detainees, were, the change from paper underwear to material and access to socks. Also, the introduction of distraction items, i.e., balls, fidget spinners and disposable prayer mats

ICVs were also involved with the analysis and tour of GM Custody Suites accompanying the Autistic Society on how inclusive the custody area is for people with autism.

The Volunteer Manager and ICVs were included in the GMP demonstration on the introduction on the use of Spit guards, whereby views/comments and concerns were obtained.

Recruitment

Prior to the commencement of lockdown, interviews for new ICVs had commenced. It was decided to proceed via Microsoft Teams, whereby a further 12 were appointed.

Recruitment will commence again in 2022/2023.

Volunteers Development

Northwest and North Wales Regional ICV Conference

Northwest and North Wales Regional ICV conference has been held previously over the past 10 years, which gives an opportunity for all regional volunteers to network and share best practice and learning – some of the past themes being around restraints in custody, vulnerable people within the custody environment, drug, and alcohol abuse.

Volunteer Training Undertaken

Due to the pandemic, training was limited, however, the following topics were held over Teams: Health & Safety within the Custody Area, role of Liaison and Diversion.

GMCA are continually looking for feedback from all stakeholders, colleagues, and custody visitors as to how the training can be developed in the future.

Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) have produced some bitesize training modules i.e., Equalities and Bias, Vulnerability, Mental Health Awareness that the ICVs can access direct from their website – the Volunteers Manager will monitor this.

Volunteer Support Meetings



Past ICV Support Meeting have had demonstration by GMP on the use of spit guards.

ICV Support meetings are held with the GMCA Volunteers manager every 9 months, due to the COVID restrictions, they were held virtually, with the first including updates from GMP Inspector and presentations on Project Nova and Information Governance by GMCA team. A further Support meeting was held whereby GMP Chief Inspector spoke about disproportionality and GMP provided an update on Custody and COVID restrictions in place.

Note from GMCA Volunteers Manager

Within Greater Manchester we are fortunate to have dedicated custody visitors who on a weekly basis conduct visits. Through their observations and reporting they have ensured that detainees are safe and well during their detention and assisted in improving conditions for not only detainees but those working within the custody suites. I would like to say a sincere thank you to all the visitors for another successful year of custody visiting even through such a challenging time, you are much appreciated.

Lisa K Hindle

Volunteer Scheme Manager

Police, Crime, Criminal Justice, and fire Team

Further information

GMCA ICV Scheme webpage

GMCA Twitter account

Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) <https://www.icva.org.uk>

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)

<https://www.nationalpreventivemechanism.org.uk>

Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (IRTL)

<https://terrorismlegislationreviewer.independent.gov.uk>