**Independent Custody Visiting Quarterly Update:**

**Oct - Dec 2023**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Total number of detainees through custody | Number of ICV visits | Total number of detainees in custody at time of ICV visits | Total number of detainees unavailable | Number of detainees observed | Total number of detainees visited |
| 1,909 | 29 | 81 | 15 | 21 | 45 |

**Active ICVs: 14**

* Pembrokeshire: 4
* Powys: 4
* Ceredigion: 3
* Carmarthenshire: 3

**Timings of Visits:**

**Scheme Update:**

* There has been an increase in delays for ICVs to enter certain custodies. In one specific custody, this occurred on two occasions within a timeframe of a week. As stipulated in the ICV Handbook, ICVs must be granted instant access into custody unless there is a risk to ICVs welfare as this will affect the credibility of the scheme. The reasons outlined by custody for these delays have been for securing evidence, staffing issues and/or repair issues with the outdoor buzzer. Due to good communication between custody staff, ICVs and the OPCC, these issues have since been rectified.
* As outlined in the previous point, staffing issues continue to persist. There have been significant challenges in relation to covering medium to long term sickness amongst custody staff which has required custody trained response sergeants to cover. This has impacted on the staffing levels of response officers and has not been helped with certain covering custody officers also reporting to be sick. This has caused significant challenges for certain custodies to remain open during the December month period.
* The provision of healthcare remains a consistent concern. ICVs have been notified of the temporary closure of Aberystwyth custody, for maintenance repairs, with resources and services being made available to Cardigan in the interim. ICVs shared their concern with regards to the requirement of healthcare professionals needing to cover the broad area of travel between Cardigan, Brecon and Newtown; coupled with the adverse weather conditions experienced over the winter period. The new Chief Inspector Jenna Jones has promptly alleviated such concerns by advising that there has been an agreement with the healthcare provider CRG, who have advised that staff nearer to Cardigan will work out of Cardigan custody and the staff residing closer to mid-Wales (who would normally have covered Aberystwyth) can work an embedded shift in Newtown or Brecon. ICVs will continue to monitor and report on progress associated with HCP on behalf of detainees rights to medical and health care.
* An example of ICVs and custody staff working well together:

ICVs experienced a challenging visit with a foreign detainee who spoke very little English. During the visit, the detainee stated that they would like to see the HCP (Health Care Professional) as they had diabetes and felt 'shaky'. The detainee also made a number of other requests including an extra blanket and a cup of coffee. All these requests were passed to the Custody Sergeant who was also asked by the ICVs whether this detainee had received a copy of the booklet regarding their Rights & Entitlement in their native language. The Custody Sergeant advised that not only had they received their Rights & Entitlement booklet via language line (telephone language service) but that they had also organised for an interpreter in their native language to be present prior to the detainee's intended interview.

* An example of where ICVs have affected change:

A detainee advised the ICVs that they had not been able to contact their teenage daughter. The daughter was about to leave school premises and the parent/detainee only had the telephone number belonging to the partner of the daughter to make contact. The detainee advised that the other parent was not able to care for the child due to social services involvement and had placed the teenage girl solely in their care. ICVs informed the custody staff of this who made contact with social services after having clarified the situation with the detainee and subsequent arrangements were made as a result.

**Force Response:**

In relation to the observations above, these are the thoughts of Chief Inspector Jenna Jones who is commenting on behalf of Dyfed Powys Police:

*“It is encouraging to see the positive impacts that ICV’s are having within custody from their visits, as I am new within this post I have spoken to a number of our Custody staff about the ICV visits and how they assist Custody, it is comforting to know that our Custody Staff feel that ICV’s make a positive impact on provisions within Custody.*

*We are working towards improving the staffing levels within Custody with a Custody Sergeant Course currently running and a further course to commence on the 12th February. This will provide a resilience of a further 15 Custody Sgts across the force. We will continue to monitor this situation and await an update from the current Force review on Custody staffing Provisions.*

*We are also running a DEO Course starting on the 29th January which will improve our DEO staffing levels in Dafen, Newtown and Haverfordwest. There are a further 3 DEO positions being advertised at present.*

*The Health care provision was challenging over the Christmas Period some of which was due to unforeseen sickness however during the CRG performance meeting they recognised the impact this had on Dyfed Powys police as a whole, not just Custody but also our frontline officers. We have 3 Nurses coming through vetting at present to bolster the retained rota and there is a CRG recruitment event in Aberystwyth this week to encourage more interest in the role. There is a national issue with recruitment into HCP for Custody especially in coastal areas with no Hospital provisions.*

*I am encouraged to read the positive working relationship between ICV’s and our Custody Staff and the example of where an ICV visit has affected change, I am confident that this is one of many examples that could have been described.*

*I would like to thank the ICV’s for their continued support, I have reviewed each of the reports sent through from the visits and having that independent view point of custody with fresh eyes really does uncover some valuable learning and areas for change. This has encouraged me to set up the Custody Independent Scrutiny Panel with the ICV’s and others as I truly see benefits from this level of scrutiny of our Custody Suites. So a thank you from me for your time and effort in ensuring we continue to make developments and improvements in this area of policing.”*