

Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner

Topic: Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

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Purpose of briefing

To provide an overview of the Durham Independent Custody Visiting Scheme which is a statutory duty for the Police and Crime Commissioner

Background

The purpose of Independent Custody Visiting arrangements is to enable members of the local community to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which persons are detained at police stations and the operation in practice of the statutory and other rules governing their welfare, with a view to securing greater understanding and confidence in these matters. These arrangements also provide an independent check on the way police officers carry out their duties with regard to detained persons.

This scheme was established by Durham Police Authority in consultation with the Chief Constable. From November 2012, the operation of the scheme is the responsibility of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner and that responsibility is exercised in consultation with the Chief Constable. The Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner has the final responsibility in all matters relating to the operation of the scheme.

The Durham scheme currently has 20 Independent Custody Visitors. The Custody Visitors will make unannounced visits at any designated stations in the force area.

Current issues

COVID 19 – in March 2020 the decision was taken to suspend in person Custody Visits as a result of restrictions around the COVID 19 pandemic. The situation in Custody was monitored by the Scheme Manager and Custody Management and any issues were fed back to the PCC office.

In October 2020 visits were reinstated and a process for ICVA's to carry out telephone visits was also established.

Partnership involvement

The Scheme is supported by the Independent Custody Visiting Association which is a national body to assist PCC offices.

Police involvement

The PCC office works closely with the Custody Management Team and a good working relationship has been established to support the custody visiting scheme.

People to meet

Anne Gladstone – ICV Scheme Co-ordinator

Katy Bambridge, Senior Support Manager

Insp/Custody Management