

Report of the PCC on the ICV Scheme 2018



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Introduction

The work of Independent Custody Visitors is very much valued by the PCC both personally and by his office. The importance of ICVs in ensuring those detained in custody are treated with dignity and have been afforded their rights is an important in reassuring the general public's trust and confidence in the police and also assists the police in providing an independent source of critique and observation. The dedication of all of the ICVs in the Warwickshire scheme is admirable and I want to extend my personal thanks to all you. I'd like to extend my particular thanks to Richard Cox, Chair of the Southern Panel, and to Rhian Luke, who up until recently fulfilled the role of the Chair of the Northern Panel, and Maureen Burckitt, for stepping up and assisting in Rhian's absence.

Scheme Manager

The ICV scheme manager role is carried out by Zeynab Gamielien, the Criminal Justice and Equality Policy and Development Lead for the Warwickshire OPCC. Zeynab has been in post since January 2018. The role of administering the ICV scheme is part of a larger role which encompasses the criminal justice sphere. As part of this role, Zeynab has been working closely with Liz Wydra, the ICV Scheme Administrator in West Mercia. This collaboration has enabled shared working arrangements and alignment where possible of the two schemes, offering further opportunities for ICVs from both Warwickshire and West Mercia to share knowledge and learn and develop in their roles.

The work of the OPCC

The current PCC, Philip Seccombe, has been in post since 2016. This year Philip has attended panel meetings for both the Southern Panel and the Northern Panel and will be spending an evening in custody in November 2018 to provide some further publicity and appreciation for the work ICVs do. Philip has also recently issued a press release and was a signatory to a call from PCCs to ensure the dignity of female detainees are upheld.

The Chief Executive of the OPCC, Neil Hewison, has also attended meetings of both the Southern Panel and Northern Panel and Anya Ward from the OPCC provided support for the scheme while the post of Scheme Manager was vacant. The OPCC has had staffing changes internally and current staffing levels are at 16 personnel, including 3 staff members shared with West Mercia PCC and 2 staff members shared with West Mercia, Staffordshire and West Midlands.

Since coming into post, Zeynab was keen to drive forward new developments as per the ICVs' request: the implementation of the electronic recording system, the convening of an AGM, which had not taken place for a number of years, and a major recruitment drive. The electronic recording system is now available for all ICVs to use and there is no longer any need for paper recording of visits. Training and support continues to be offered to ICVs on the usage of the system and

discussions are ongoing regarding computer access, which custody staff have been generally very willing to facilitate.

The AGM has been convened and a large recruitment drive took place earlier in the year with the participation of Richard Cox and Maureen Burckitt, resulting in the successful recruitment of 4 new ICVs for the Southern Panel and 5 new ICVs for the Northern Panel. These new ICVs are due to commence in their roles shortly.

ICVA have commenced a quality assurance system for ICV schemes across the country through peer-to-peer ranking. The Scheme Manager attended an ICVA Masterclass on this Quality Assurance Framework earlier this year. The Warwickshire ICV Scheme will be participating both to be ranked and to be a peer assessor for another scheme.

Zeynab is also updating the MOUs to be circulated amongst the ICVs and has updated the Handbook which is to be circulated.

Training and events

There have been numerous events this year including the training day in February 2018, the ICVA Conference in London in March 2018, the Police Volunteers Conference and the Regional ICV Conference in September 2018. The Scheme Manager has attended all panel meetings this year. The recruitment drive commenced in May/June 2018 with the PCC publicising the scheme through media channels which led to a large volume of interested applicants. There were an excess number of candidates compared to the number required, which was a great outcome and demonstrates the interest the community has in the scheme.

Issues raised

The work of the ICVs have identified issues relating to various areas, such as the supply of blankets at Leamington Justice Centre and occasional issues with access to the custody suites and behaviours of CDOs. These issues have been discussed as they arise with the OPCC and there has been a great willingness from Warwickshire Police to address and talk through issues with ICVs, and this is set to continue with Inspector Dave Valente and his staff.

Changes in personnel

There has been some movement with the custody personnel. Chief Inspector Ian Wall has now moved on to a different role outside of custody as of September 2018 and has been replaced by Chief Inspector Keith Gee for Alliance-wide custody functions. Inspector Chris Walton has unfortunately been off and as at September 2018 the post of custody inspector has been filled by Inspector Dave Valente.

The scheme continues to have good engagement with ICVA, whose president remains Katie Kempen.