

Report of the PCC on the ICV Scheme 2019



**Philip Seccombe
Police and Crime
Commissioner
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Introduction

2019 has yet again been a busy and productive year for our Independent Custody Visitors. We have continued to strive for a visit per week at each custody suite and it is pleasing to see that we have largely been successful at meeting this.

The PCC is very appreciative of the work all ICVs are doing and the time that you give in fulfilling this important and necessary role. In particular, our two chairs, Richard Cox and Maureen Burckitt, have done an outstanding job in leading the two panels and providing key support and liaison with the OPCC. Warwickshire Police's new Custody Inspector, Inspector Lucy Sewell, has been a great asset thus far in liaising with ICVs and with the OPCC.

In 2019 there a number of new initiatives commencing in custody. Key amongst these is the NHS England Liaison and Diversion service, which will screen detainees for vulnerabilities in both custody suites in Warwickshire, 7 days a week.

Scheme Manager

The ICV scheme manager role continues to be carried out by Zeynab Gamiendien, 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. Whilst Warwickshire will no longer be in a strategic alliance with West Mercia, there continues to be opportunities to collaborate and share best practice in relation to the ICV scheme at a regional and national level.

The work of the OPCC

The current PCC, Philip Seccombe, has been in post since 2016 and will be standing for election for a second term in May 2020. As discussed previously Philip will be spending an evening in custody to raise money for charity, raise awareness of issues in custody and to provide some further publicity and appreciation for the work ICVs do.

The OPCC has had staffing changes internally and current staffing levels are at 13 personnel, including 2 staff members employed at a regional level in collaboration with West Mercia, Staffordshire and West Midlands.

The electronic recording system continues to be implemented and supported, with all visits now being recorded on it except where there are exceptional circumstances.

The OPCC continues to monitor volunteer numbers for both panels as due to various personal circumstances volunteers have had periods where they are unavailable to conduct visits. A 'rolling

recruitment' approach has been taken where the OPCC takes expressions of interest throughout the year.

Training and events

This year has seen a number of events attended by both the Scheme Manager and ICVs. These include:

- The ICVA National Conference in London
- The ICVA Regional Conference at Staffordshire Police HQ
- The National Scheme Managers Conference (upcoming)

Training sessions have been delivered at panel meetings on transgender detainees and at the AGM a training session will be delivered on menstrual care in custody.

Issues raised

The work of the ICVs have identified issues relating to various areas, such as the supply of blankets at Leamington custody suite (which appears to be largely resolved, but ICVs are continuing to monitor) and occasional issues with access to the custody suites and behaviours of Detention Officers. A suggestion has been made that ICVs have input into the training of these new personnel, particularly as the two panels conduct their visits slightly differently and personnel may work across the two custody suites.

As issues have arisen they have been discussed with the OPCC and there has been a great willingness from Warwickshire Police to address and talk through issues with ICVs. ICVs will also be able to engage and have input into a new Warwickshire Custody group which will replace the previous meeting held at an Alliance level.

Changes in personnel

Inspector Lucy Sewell has commenced in the role of Custody Inspector in 2019. A new Warwickshire Chief Inspector for Custody will be appointed as the previous position was at an Alliance level.

The scheme continues to have good engagement and support from the national Independent Custody Visitors Association, whose president remains Katie Kempen.