

CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME: ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

BACKGROUND

- The scheme has been in operation since 1985 as a result of the Lord Scarman report following the Brixton riots in 1983 and became a statutory function in 2002. The Scheme comprises volunteers making unannounced weekly visits to designated custody suites to check on the welfare of persons in custody and the operation of the statutory and other rules governing their welfare.

OPERATION OF THE SCHEME

- The Scheme currently has 32 active custody visitors (and 3 reserves) who undertake weekly visits to three custody suites. Annual in-house and regional training is provided in addition to opportunities to discuss issues at regular Panel meetings.
- The combined statistics for all three panels for 2016/17 and a comparison with the previous year are detailed below:-

	2015/16	%	2016/17	%
Number of visits made	157		156	
Number of detainees <i>(all persons held in custody at the time of visit)</i>	1302		1275	
Detainees consenting to a visit	637	94.9	610	91.5
Detainees not available for a visit <i>(in interview, asleep, doctors' visit, Custody Officer/Visitor refusal as detainee violent/drun)</i>	445		438	
Detainees declining a visit	33	5.1	52	8.5
Detainees not selected for a visit	187		175	
Detainees raising issues	341		333	
Number of issues raised	484		503	

Time	No of visits	
	15/16	16/17
00.00 - 06.00	1	0
06.00 - 09.00	0	5
09.00 - 12.00	66	46
12.00 - 15.00	23	24
15.00 - 18.00	33	51
18.00 - 21.00	32	27
21.00 - 00.00	2	3

Day of week	No of visits	
	15/16	16/17
Monday	34	25
Tuesday	32	38
Wednesday	36	37
Thursday	19	29
Friday	15	19
Saturday	13	2
Sunday	8	6

- Of the 610 detainees seen, 333 (54.5%) detainees raised 503 matters mainly relating to their detention; medical issues; and requests for telephone calls. The majority of issues raised by detainees were resolved at the time of the visit by the Custody Officer. Issues which are not resolved by the Custody Sergeant, are referred to the Chief Inspector responsible for custody for consideration and appropriate action. The vast majority of reports received from Custody Visitors were complimentary about the custody staff and the conditions within the custody suites.
- The Scheme continues to operate well with very few issues being reported by Custody Visitors.