



METROPOLITAN POLICE AUTHORITY

Havering and Redbridge Independent Custody Visitors Panel

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the annual report of the Havering and Redbridge Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) Panel.

This annual report covers the period from 01/01/09 to 31/12/09.

The purpose of this report is to give a general overview of the work of the Havering and Redbridge ICV Panel and:

- Evaluate the panel's performance in 2009
- Provide the local community and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held in custody
- Set out issues and concerns that have arisen
- Set out the objectives for 2010.

The MPA is an independent statutory body, which exists to make sure that London's police are accountable for the services they provide to people in the capital. The MPA has 23 Members who scrutinise and support the work of the police. The MPA promotes equality and diversity within the police service and is working in partnership to ensure all those who live and work in the capital are treated fairly and with respect.

The MPA has a legal obligation under the Police Reform Act 2002 for a custody visiting scheme to operate in its area. In April 2007 the MPA brought together the custody visiting arrangements managed by the boroughs into one London scheme. The scheme has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Borough Commanders for Havering and Redbridge, but is independent of the police. The MPA holds overall responsibility for the scheme's management and administration; a member of MPA staff is responsible for supporting the panel.

Custody visitors are volunteers from within the community. The MPA is responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing all custody visitors and tries to ensure a balance of age, gender and ethnicity. Successful applicants to the scheme are given training in all aspects of a custody visitor's role and responsibilities. Custody visiting is governed by a range of legislation and guidance including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 as well as Home Office Codes of Practice and National Standards.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Havering and Redbridge panel currently makes one scheduled visit per week to both Romford (Havering) and Ilford (Redbridge) police stations. This meets the minimum requirement of one visit per week per 24/7 custody suite, that the MPA sets panels as a target. The panel has maintained a good visiting level of 85% to Ilford station and 94% to Romford station over 2009. The visits to Ilford Station are down however by 4%.

Havering and Redbridge Panel meetings have been held every two months, alternating between Ilford (Redbridge) Police Station and Havering Town Hall in Romford. These meetings are well attended by both panel members and the police and the venues continue to be most satisfactory. The panel wishes to extend its thanks to Borough Commander of Redbridge, for allowing it to meet at Ilford Police Station.

Sergeant Eunice Ridout became the panel's police liaison for Redbridge in the early part of 2009 and along with Sergeant Ian Lowe of Havering borough, provided feedback at meetings.

The police liaison officers continue to assist the panel in its work, and the panel wishes to thank them for their cooperation and help in investigating any concerns and observations, and also in answering questions at panel meetings.

The Chair and Vice-Chair have represented the panel at meetings of the London ICV Chairs and at Cluster meetings. The panel is also represented by members at both borough Community Engagement Groups who keep the panel up to date when necessary of community issues that may be of relevance.

The MPA deems that panels with two police stations to visit weekly require a membership of 17 ICVs, as this allows for ICVs to maintain a visiting level of one visit per month, as laid out in the scheme handbook and memorandum of understanding. The panel's membership in Havering and Redbridge has been fairly well maintained despite some resignations, as a number of new members have also joined.

Many panel members have busy home and professional lives, and some also maintain other community roles as well as that as an ICV. Nevertheless, attendance at meetings and visit performance has been good.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Since custody visiting began, Havering and Redbridge panel have worked hard in their role, in order to secure the accountability of the police to the local community they serve, bringing police and the community closer together, enhancing the public perception of police procedures and practices.

This annual report will we hope, provide the community with Information about the work the panel has carried out on its behalf in 2009.

ICVs very often address needs such as making sure detainees have clean cells and bedding, appropriate food and washing facilities - and reassuring the public that this is so.

We have found that on the whole the police welcome our input as independent members of the public, observing and recording what is happening in custody suites at any one time. We sometimes have to raise issues and/or oversights, reported by detainees to the custody manager who has always cooperated with us and dealt with the issue.

For their part the detainees are often only too pleased that someone has taken the trouble to check they are being treated properly.

Generally while conducting visits the panel have found detainees held in custody to be treated correctly, in accordance with their rights and entitlements, and that the police in this part of London continue to demonstrate high standards of professionalism and commitment in their work.

The Havering and Redbridge panel meets regularly to discuss visits made and custody managers or their deputies attend these meetings, in order to respond to any queries the panel members may have raised in connection with their visits to stations.

We have had some issues to deal with around health and safety, mainly in the replacement of broken or hazardous equipment in the custody area, but eventually these matters were dealt with to a satisfactory conclusion.

The panel suffered from a number of resignations in 2009, due to changes in Panel members' personal circumstances but it endeavoured to recruit new members in order to maintain visiting levels, and the panel now has 14 members. Some further work in this area is required in 2010 and it is hoped we will achieve our target of 17 by late spring.

I would like to thank all the officers we come in to contact with, in Havering and Redbridge boroughs. Overall the police work very hard to facilitate our visits and any requirements we have during these times, despite often being under pressure from the increasing demands of the custody suite.

Thanks must also go to the panel members for all their hard work and commitment to their visits and meetings over the past year. I must also sincerely thank Roy Pursey my Vice-Chair for the way he backed and helped me during the year.

Stephen Phillips
Havering and Redbridge ICVP Chair

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

Since April 2007, panels have been asked to adhere to recruitment and interviewing guidance provided by the MPA. The MPA expects all panels to adhere to the MPA's equal opportunities policy, recruit new panel members from all sections of the community and actively foster good relations between people of different races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

In 2009 the Havering and Redbridge panel was made up of the following accredited members:

Name	Appointed
Amarjit Phull	2002
Frederick (George) Ford	2004
Joyce Ragbir	2004
Roy Pursey	2002
Stephen Philips	2000
Roger Dixon	2006
Alison Maybin	2007
Victor Omoyinmi	2007
Linda Powell	2008

The following member(s) joined

Nigel Collins	2009
Sanjeet Bhogal	2009
Suriya Kalyan	2009
David Rowlands	2009
Lynn Tomlinson	2009
Suresh Vasishtha	2009
Saidi Athekame	2009
Henry Acheampong-Brembah	2009
Zabir Mohmed	2009

The following members resigned/de-accredited/sabbatical

Philip Feldman (Sabbatical)	2006
Manisha Kumar (transferred to Hounslow)	2008
Suriya Kalyan (resigned)	2009

As of the end of 2009 the panel comprised of 12 men and six women with varying diversity in age and ethnicity.

Recruitment

The panel had a very successful year in terms of recruitment, and took on a total of nine new members. One resignation is anticipated in the New Year.

VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

Good standards of care have been noted at all stations however, despite the pressures on police.

There have been few major concerns this year. The relationship with the custody staff has continued to be positive and the panel is happy with the way in which custody staff have explained the ICV role to detainees, and answered any queries they might have during visits. It is a source of satisfaction to the panel that there have been few complaints, if any, from detainees on how they are treated at Ilford and Romford stations.

ICVs have noted issues around health and safety in both stations. They have brought to the attention of staff, matters such as the FME rooms being left unlocked/open with sharps boxes and other medical items being left out.

At over 90% of visits being completed, the panel is doing well at maintaining high levels of visiting overall. Visit performance dipped slightly (by less than 1%) but this can be linked with a fall in membership and the availability of ICVs over the summer period. Only three visits were missed to Romford over the year, but eight were missed to Ilford, of a target of 52 per year to each station.

DATA FROM PANEL VISITS

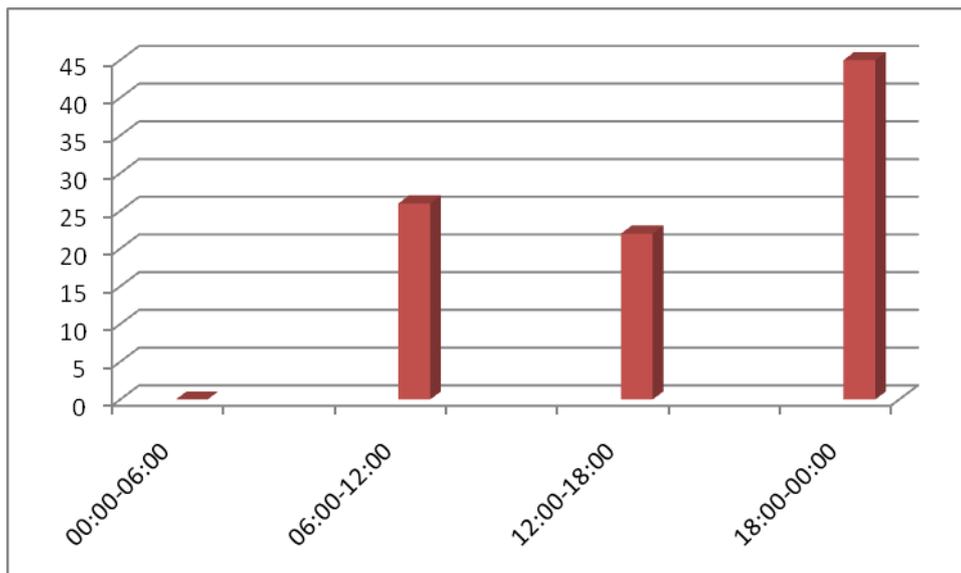
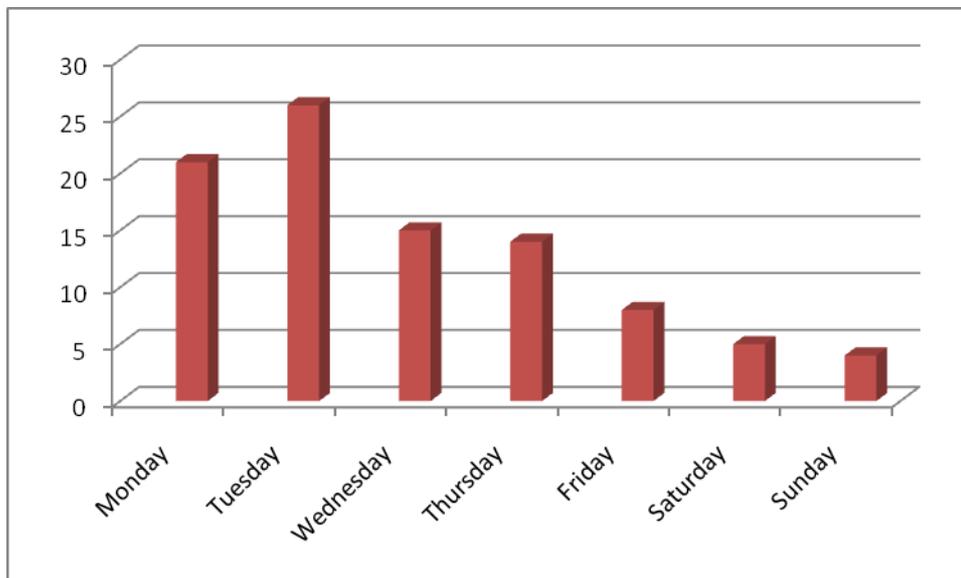
Visit Figures from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009

1. Number of Visits

Station	Annual no. of visit	% Annual Target
Romford (Havering)	49	94%
Ilford (Redbridge)	44	85%
Total	93	89%

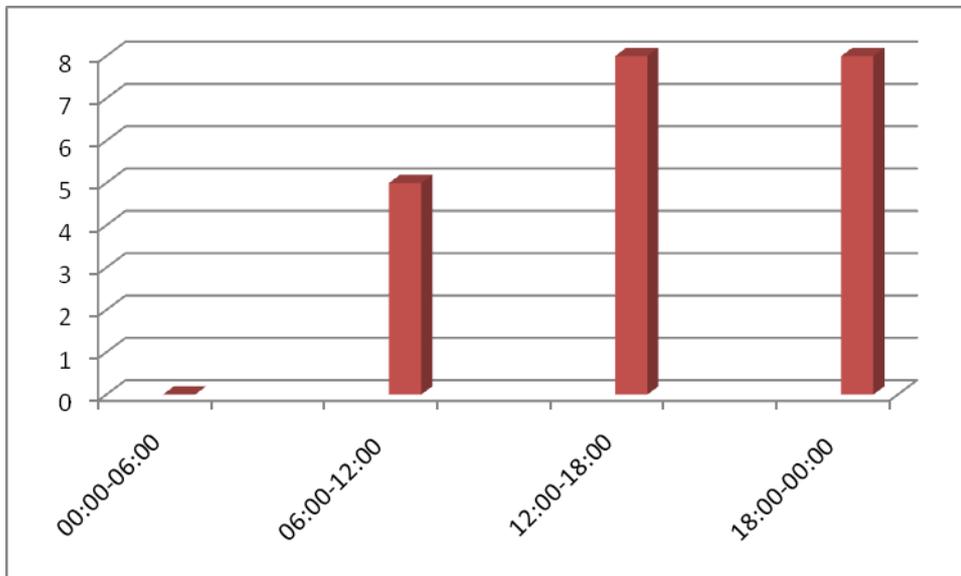
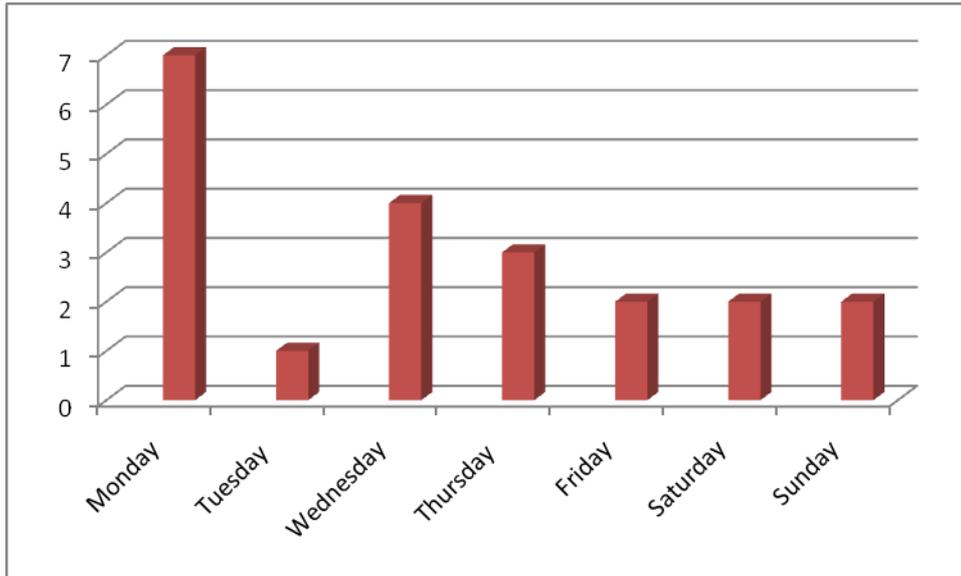
*MPA Annual Target is 52 visits per 24/7-custody suite – pro rata where applicable.

2. Time and day of visits – All stations



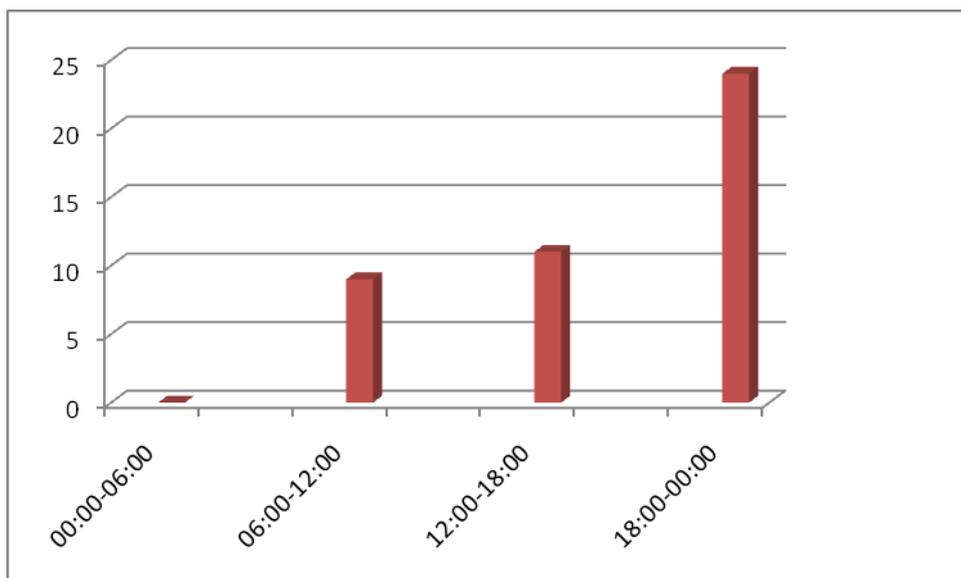
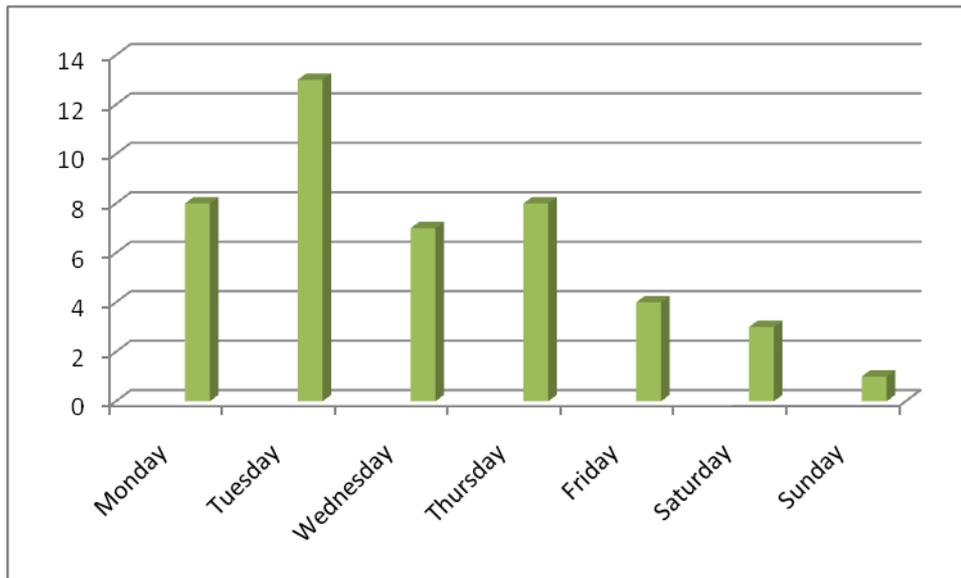
As can be seen from the above graphs, most visits to all the stations in Havering and Redbridge were carried out on Monday and Tuesday and the majority were in the evening, after 6pm.

3. Havering station time and day of visits



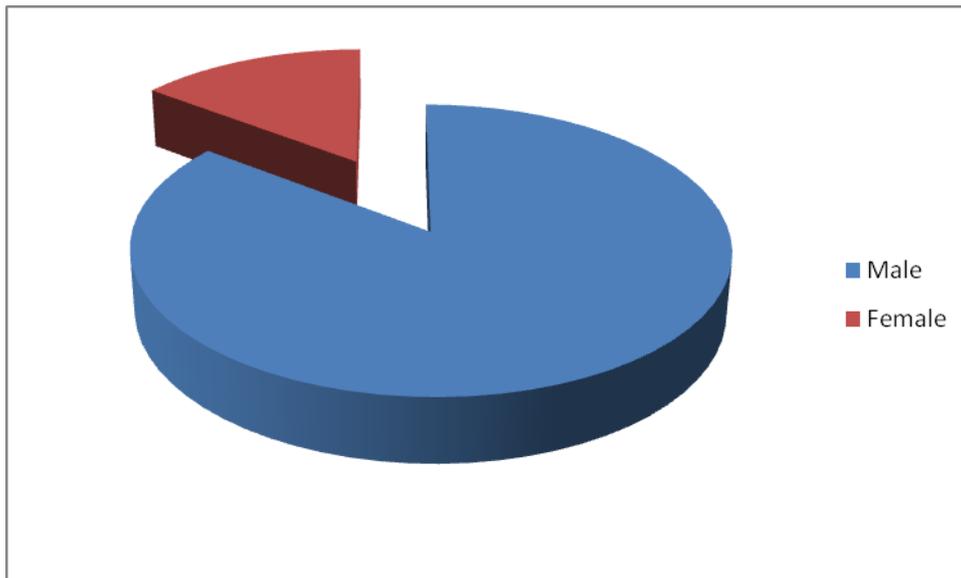
The graphs on this page show the visit figures for Havering only and as can be seen most visits were on Monday, and were carried out after midday until midnight.

4. Redbridge station time and day of visits

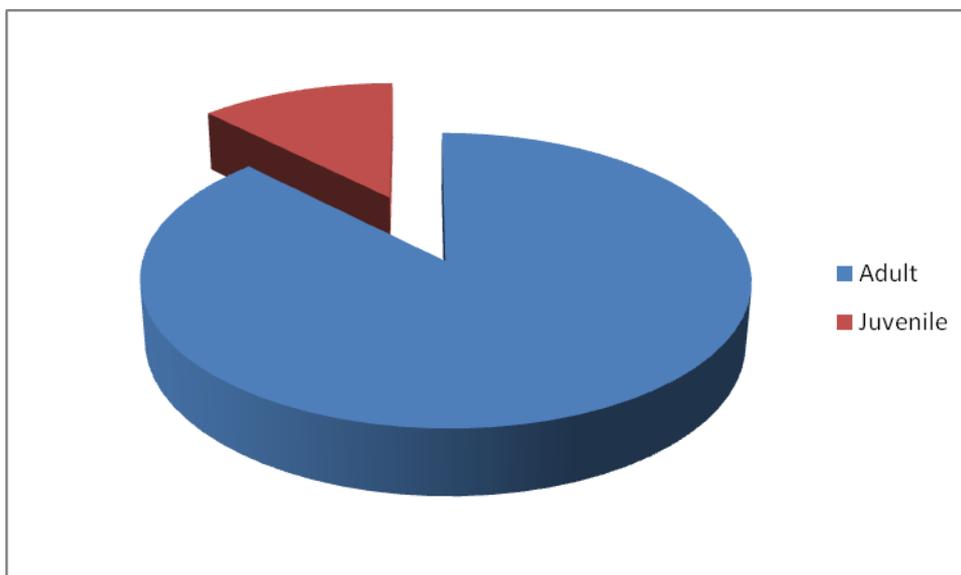


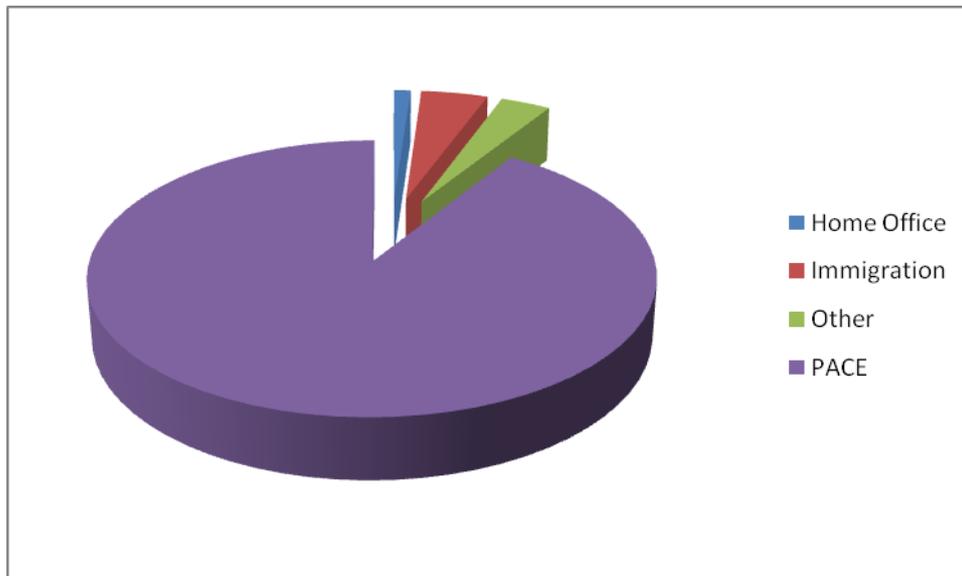
The graphs on this page show the break down for visits in Redbridge. Again a large number of visits were carried out early in the week, and the majority were after 6pm.

5. Demographics of detainees



As can be seen from the pie charts on this page, the majority of those held in custody in Havering and Redbridge were male adults (over the age of 18 years).





The pie chart above shows that the majority of detainees were held under PACE. Small numbers were held under Immigration or HO, meaning they were there from HM Prison, those held under “other” were being held on bail to return to the police station or wanted on a warrant.

Concerns.

The areas that were raised by the panel during 2009 concerned things such as blankets and food, there were also some health and safety issues raised about the custody area as a whole, but all of these were dealt with on the visits.

PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING **YEAR 2010**

Targets:

- To visit once per week to Ilford and Romford Police Stations.
- A monthly visit to Barkingside Station when it is in use.
- To maintain the current level of membership and possibly look to recruiting 2-3 more members towards the end of 2010.
- To carry out 1-2 refresher training modules during panel meetings over the course of the year.
- To improve links and feedback between the panel and the local Community and Police Consultative Committees in each borough.
- To raise the profile of the panel and scheme across the borough through wider circulation of the annual report and publicity materials.