

**Hammersmith & Fulham  
Independent Custody Visitors Panel**

**Annual Report  
2010**

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# Introduction

Welcome to the annual report of the Hammersmith and Fulham Independent Custody Visiting Panel.

The report covers a period from January 2010 to December 2010

The purpose of the report is to:

- Evaluate the panel's performance
- Provide the local community and the 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 2011

The Metropolitan Police Authority (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. Since April 2007 the MPA has overseen custody visiting arrangements in Hammersmith and Fulham as part of the London ICV scheme. The scheme has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Borough Commander for Hammersmith and Fulham, but is independent of the police. The MPA holds overall responsibility for the scheme's management and administration and a member of MPA staff is responsible for supporting the panel.

Prospective custody visitors are volunteers from within the community. The panel and the MPA are responsible for recruiting all custody visitors and try to ensure that the panel is as diverse as the community it represents. 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.

# Chairperson's report

Welcome to the annual report of Hammersmith and Fulham Independent Custody Visitors Panel.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteers from the local community who monitor the situation of people in police custody. They have a general right of unannounced access to custody areas of police stations at anytime of the day or night.

The scheme was introduced in the mid-1980s following a recommendation in Lord Scarman's report into the 1981 Brixton riots. Since then panels have evolved throughout the United Kingdom as an important means of securing accountability of the police to the local communities they serve, bringing police and communities closer together and enhancing public perception of police procedures and practices. It is now mandatory for each Police Authority in the country to have a Custody Visiting Scheme in place.

Visits are always made in pairs and Custody Visitors speak to detainees out of earshot but within sight of the escorting officer. All detainees are offered the opportunity to speak with the Custody Visitors but can choose not to. Before leaving the Custody Area visitors compile a report on their findings which will draw attention to any matters which need addressing. Very minor issues can be dealt with there and then simply by speaking with Custody Staff. The Panel holds regular meetings with the Custody Inspector. This is an opportunity for him to respond to any queries Visitors may raise in connection with their visits to stations.

This report of the Hammersmith & Fulham Independent Custody Visiting Panel covers the period January to December 2010. Regrettably several panel members have left the scheme during the course of the year and we miss their enthusiasm, experience & commitment. On a positive note two new volunteers have joined us and we are actively looking to recruit more. We are currently being assisted by members of the Richmond Panel for which I am very grateful.

Due to the commitment & hard work of panel members-which at times has meant undertaking extra visits, we have largely been able to fulfil our obligation of weekly visits to both Hammersmith & Fulham (and Shepherds Bush when open) police stations. We also undertook visits to the British Transport Police Station until the closure of the custody suite in November.

As a consequence of the reduction in the ICV Scheme budget at the end of last year vital Panel meetings are now just quarterly.

We were fortunate in October when Dr Meng Aw-Yong, Forensic Medical Advisor, gave a very interesting presentation of his work and the FME role in general. Training opportunities have also been reduced & yet another year without a London-wide conference. The Panel continues to be represented on the borough Community Safety Board where we have given presentations of our work.

My thanks to all Panel members for their hard work.

Thank you to Ed Fotheringham, a very supportive Vice-Chair. My thanks to Custody Manager Inspector Peter Capewell who works with us to ensure any matters of

concern are investigated quickly & effectively. Thanks also to Jennifer Ankrah from the MPA who co-ordinates the Panel.

Finally custody visitors carry out an unglamorous but highly valuable & crucial role on behalf of Londoners. I hope that in 2011 we can further promote our work thus strengthening public confidence in procedures at police stations.

**Carol Bailey**

# Aims and achievements

The aims and objectives of the panel are laid out in the Home Office Codes of Practice (PACE), the National Standards governing Independent Custody Visiting and the MPA ICV Handbook. The primary objective of the panel is to check and report on the treatment of detainees in custody and to ensure that their rights and entitlements are being observed. This is achieved by:

- Making one visit per week to the operational custody suites
- Holding panel meetings and
- Increasing public awareness of the London ICV scheme

In the previous annual report the following specific aims and objectives were set out for 2010:

**To make a total of 52 visits to each of the custody suites at Hammersmith and Fulham, totalling 104 visits.**

*The panel made a total of 94 visits throughout 2010 to Hammersmith & Fulham custody suites against a target of 104 visits; this represents an achievement of 90% of the annual target.*

*The panel also made 10 visits to the British Transport Police station on Fulham Palace Road.*

**To continue to vary the time of visits in order to provide a better spread**

*A better spread of visits was achieved during the year in 2010 compared with 2009, though less visits took place on Mondays and Sundays. The spread of visits over a 24 hour period was also varied, however, the majority of visits were carried out between 08:00 – 11:59 and 16:00 – 19:59. More visits need to take place between 00:00–07:59, and also between 20:00-23:59.*

**To maintain and improve upon the level of communication with Hammersmith and Fulham police, the custody manager during panel meetings and with custody staff during visits**

*During the year the panel maintained ongoing dialogue with the police, with attendance by police representatives at panel meetings, to provide responses to queries raised from visits and updates on custody matters; this was again a stated aim for the year in the last annual report.*

*The meetings were also an opportunity to listen to hear about the work of others who work in custody; Dr Meng, an FME (Forensic Medical Examiner), was invited to speak to the panel at one of the meetings. Inspector McGinty from Hammersmith BTP was also invited to give a short talk on the British Transport Police.*

**To continue to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees are upheld and to raise concerns promptly and effectively with the local police or the MPA as appropriate**

*The Panel raised a number of issues on their ICV reports (see page 9), but there were no significant issues that required the intervention of the MPA. The majority of*

*detainees seen had no concerns, however, a few detainees required medical attention or had language difficulties that required the services of an interpreter. Concerns over the temperature of the cells were raised on several occasions as well as implementation of detainees' entitlements and basic practical needs, especially in the case of foreign detainees.*

*A written report with police responses are sent to all ICVs on a six weekly basis, in between meetings and before each panel meeting. This is circulated in advance for panel members to consider; this not only allows for a more effective meeting, but it allows improved scrutiny of police responses.*

**To recruit an additional three members to the panel and maintain panel membership at a minimum of 17 members.**

*An additional 2 members were recruited to the panel, the panel maintained a membership of 15 ICVs for the majority of the year.*

**To ensure that all new recruits receive local and MPA training and that existing members of the panel undertake refresher training at least once during their three-year tenure**

*The MPA provided new panel members with initial training to enable them to carry out their role. A refresher training module was also delivered at one of the panel meetings.*

**To increase engagement with other panels, through attendance at shared training sessions, conferences and providing resources if appropriate**

*There have been occasions in the year to increase engagement with other panels; The Chair and Vice Chair attended the MPA London ICV Chairs meetings. In December a Christmas social and awards evening was held for Independent Custody Visitors; several members of the panel attended this event.*

**Together with the MPA, to continue to promote and raise awareness of the work of Independent Custody Visitors locally**

*During the year various initiatives to recruit new members and raise public awareness of the scheme took place; the Chair and Vice Chair attended the Community Safety Board meetings, and there was an opportunity to give a presentation on the work of ICVs at one of their meetings. Members of the panel also attended the Crime Summit.*

**To attempt, through the application of an equal opportunities recruitment policy, to ensure that the panel continues to reflect the diversity of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.**

*The panel has used different mediums to recruit from different sections of the community. Leaflets and posters were sent to the libraries and several voluntary organisations in the borough as well as displaying these at the front desk of the police stations, and other places of interest. The use of adverts in the Metro and Evening Standard also proved to be a successful mechanism for recruiting from London's diverse community.*

# Panel membership

ICV panels adhere to recruitment and interviewing guidance provided by the MPA, as well as the MPA's equal opportunities policy; new panel members are recruited from all sections of the community and good relations are actively fostered between people of different, faiths, races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

## **Members**

As stated earlier, two new members were appointed in 2010, however, two members left the panel during the year. At the end of 2010 the Hammersmith & Fulham panel had fourteen accredited members. It is hoped that three new members will be appointed in 2011.

## **Diversity**

The borough of Hammersmith & Fulham is home to a diverse population. As of December 2010, the Hammersmith & Fulham panel comprised of four men and ten women with varying diversity in age and ethnicity, though not precisely representative of the borough.

Application packs sent to potential new ICVs contain a diversity monitoring form but, as in all public bodies, disclosure of such information is voluntary.

# Visits to MPS Police Stations

There are three custody suites in the borough owned by the Metropolitan Police Service; Hammersmith, Fulham and Shepherds Bush. Shepherds Bush does not operate full time however being used for overflow purposes, when either of the main stations are shut.

The majority of visits have not raised many significant issues that required the attention of the MPA, however, there have been some issues:

*The main issues raised by ICVs on behalf of detainees were:*

- Requests for blankets due to the cold temperature in the cells
- Request for medical needs
- Language difficulties requiring the services of an interpreter
- Request for phone calls
- Request for toiletries

An ongoing concern raised by the panel has been the temperature of the cells in the custody suite.

Some improvement to the general quality of the cleaning of custody suites has been observed, but is still variable. Cleaning standards continue to be monitored in order to maintain standards

The panel is pleased to report that the problem with the taste of the drinking water at Hammersmith has been addressed. This was raised by ICVs in 2009, and also highlighted in a local inspection report.

The data below is for visits to the MPS (**Metropolitan Police Service**) stations

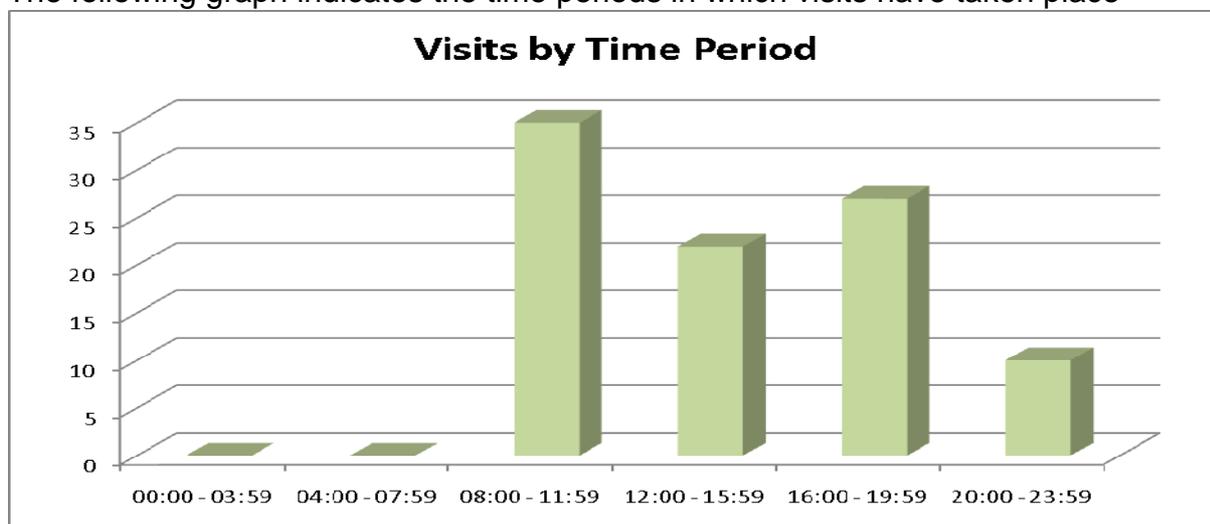
**1. Annual number of Visits**

Station	Annual no. of visits	
Hammersmith	48	
Fulham	46	<b>% of Annual Target</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>90%</b>

\*Annual Target is 52 visits per 24/7-custody suite.

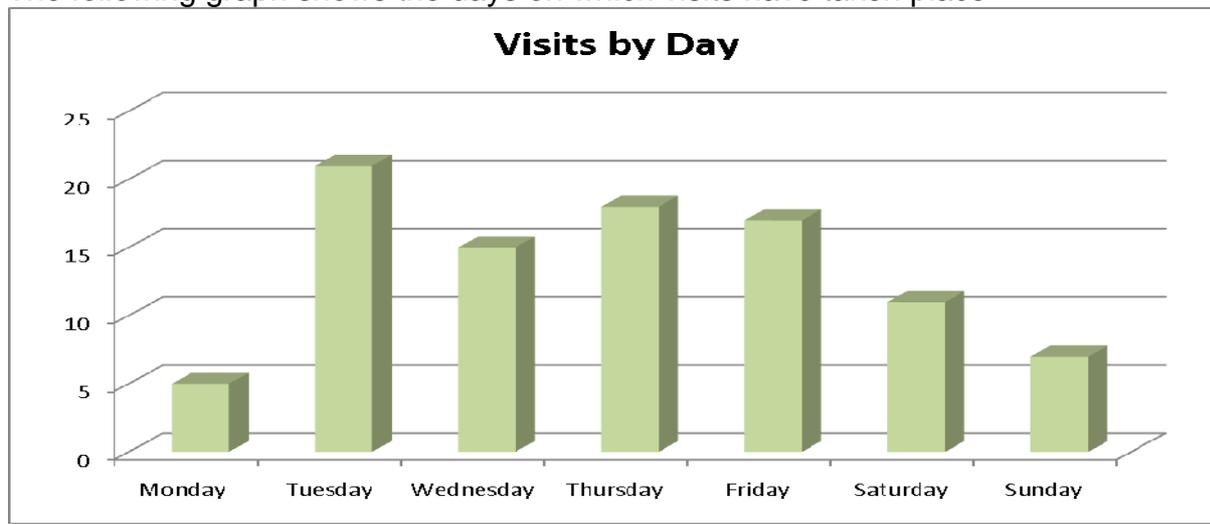
**1. Time of Visits**

The following graph indicates the time periods in which visits have taken place



**2. Day of Visits**

The following graph shows the days on which visits have taken place

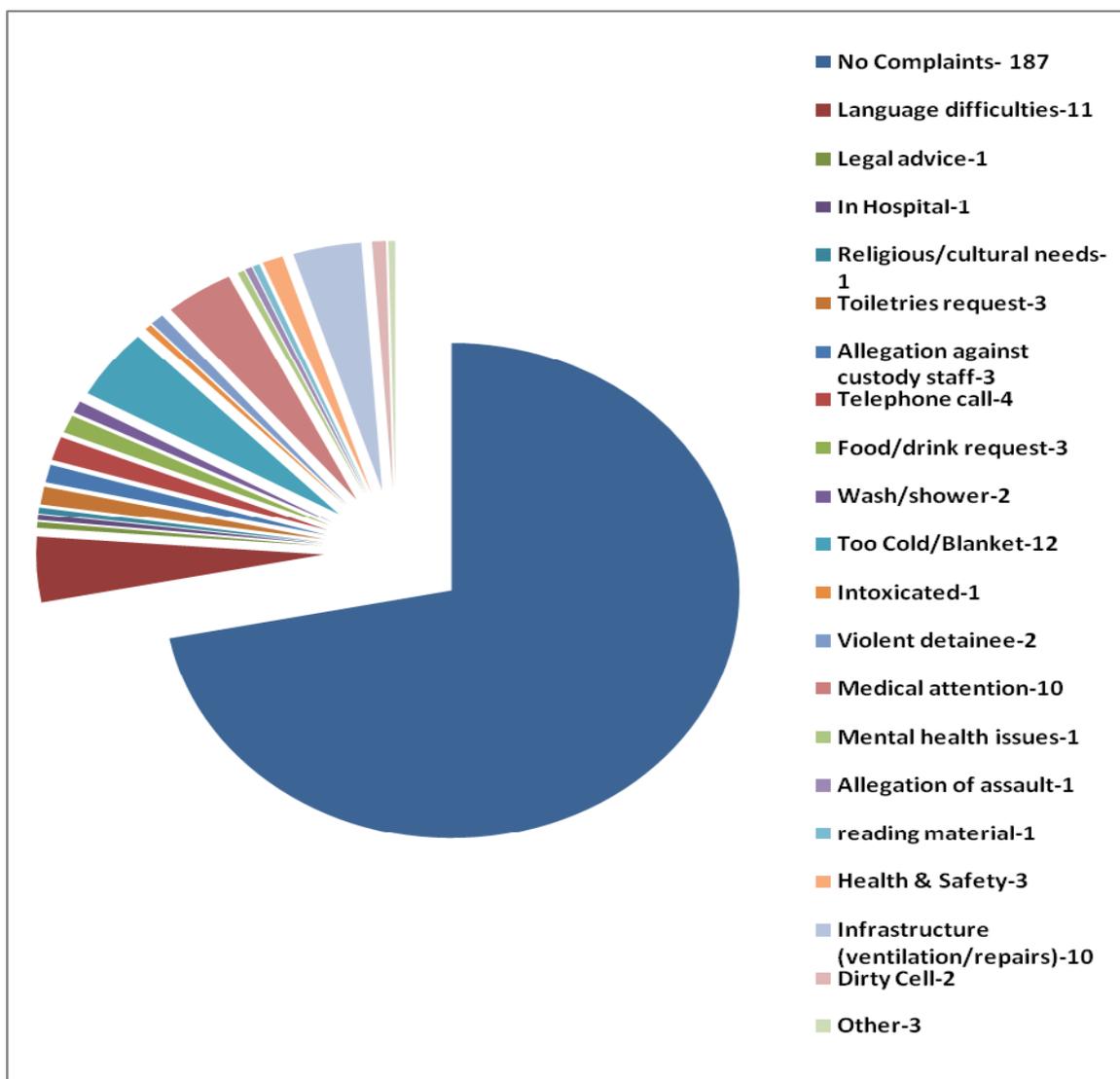


### 3. Numbers and categories of detainees

Number of detainees accepted visit by ICVs	227
Number of detainees refused ICV visits	71
Number of detainees not seen due to other reasons (out of cell at time of visits, interview etc)	93
Pace detainees in custody at time of visits	381
Immigration detainees in custody at time of visits	19
Other	4

### 4. Details of detainees' and panel concerns/issues:

The chart below illustrates the main issues raised



# Visits to BTP Police Station

*There were no matters raised by ICVs on behalf of detainees, however the panel raised concerns regarding:*

- Fire exit door drafty-near shower area
- Upgrade of food preparation area
- Potential fire hazard-storage blankets
- Repairs

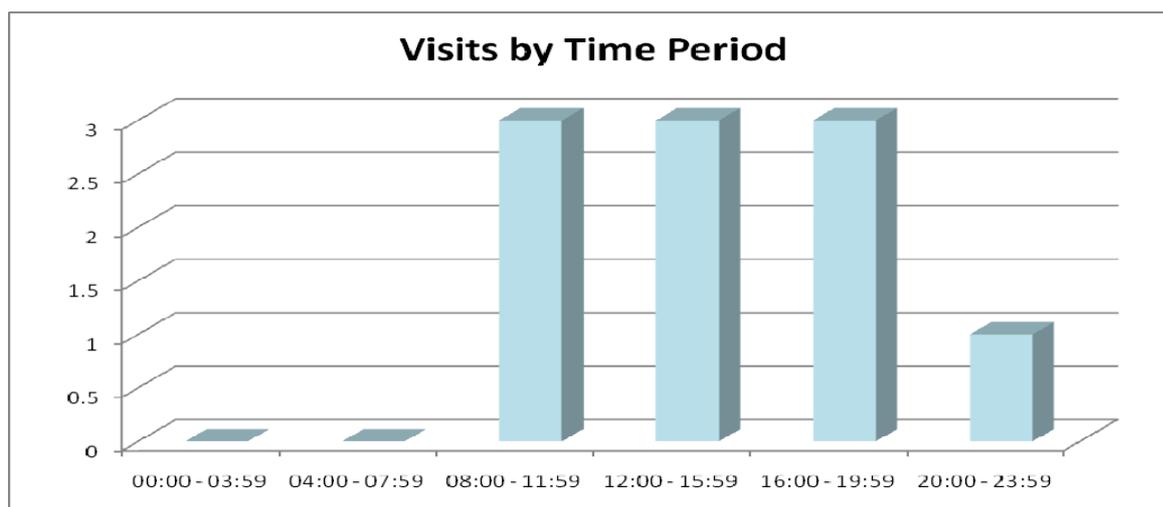
*The data below shows information on visits to Hammersmith British Transport Police for the period January to October 2010*

## 1. Number of Visits

Station	No. of visits
Hammersmith BTP*	10

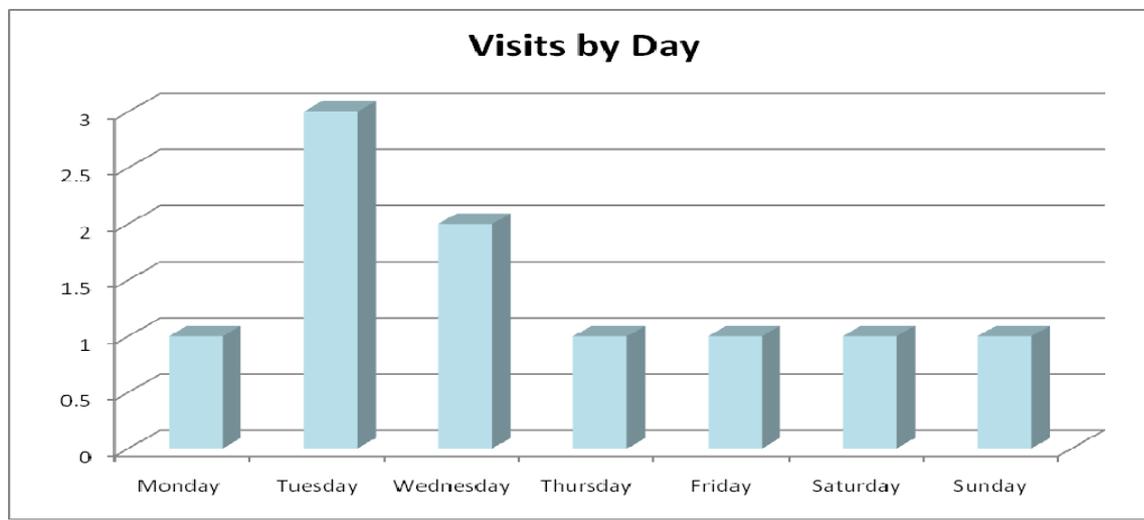
## 2. Time of Visits

The following graph indicates the time periods in which visits have taken place



### 3. Day of Visits

The following graph shows the days on which visits have taken place



### 4. Numbers and categories of detainees

Number of detainees accepted visit by ICVs	5
Number of detainees refused ICV visits	2
Number of detainees not seen due to other reasons	0
Pace	5
Immigration detainees in custody at time of visits	0
Other	0

# Plans for 2011

The Panel's aims and objectives for 2011 are as follows:

- To make a total of 52 visits to each of the custody suites at Hammersmith and Fulham
- To continue to vary the time of visits in order to provide a better spread
- To maintain and improve upon the level of communication with Hammersmith and Fulham police, the custody manager during panel meetings and with custody staff during visits
- To continue to ensure that the rights and interests of detainees are upheld and to raise concerns promptly and effectively with the local police or the MPA as appropriate
- To recruit an additional three members to the panel and maintain panel membership at a minimum of 17 members.
- To ensure that all new recruits receive local and MPA training and that existing members of the panel undertake refresher training at least once during their three-year tenure
- To increase engagement with other panels, through attendance at shared training sessions, conferences and providing resources if appropriate
- Together with the MPA, to continue to promote and raise awareness of the work of Independent Custody Visitors locally
- To attempt, through the application of an equal opportunities recruitment policy, to ensure that the panel continues to reflect the diversity of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham