

VOLUNTEERS
CUSTODY SUITES
VOLUNTEERS CHECKING ENTITLEMENTS
INDEPENDENT
DETENTION REPORTING
OBSERVING AND EVALUATING
HUMAN RIGHTS
CUSTODY SUITES CONDITIONS
INDEPENDENT HEALTH
HEALTH CUSTODY MONITORING
CHECKING SUITES VOLUNTEERS
ENTITLEMENTS CONDITIONS
INSPECTING FACILITIES
WELFARE HUMAN RIGHTS WELFARE
OBSERVING AND EVALUATING VISITING
INDEPENDENT
MONITORING INSPECTING
VOLUNTEERS FACILITIES
WELLBEING CUSTODY

ANNUAL CUSTODY VISITORS REPORT

APRIL 2024 -
MARCH 2025

GLOSSARY

Board	Northern Ireland Policing Board
ICVs	Independent Custody Visitors
HCP	Health Care Professional
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
PCSPs	Policing Community Safety Partnerships
PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
Scheme	Independent Custody Visiting Scheme
SCS	Serious Crime Suite
TACT	Terrorism Act 2000

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1. CHAIR'S FOREWORD

As Chair of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) I am pleased to present the Independent Custody Visitor's Annual Report 2024-2025 which provides a comprehensive source of monitoring data in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is responsible for the oversight and running of the Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme which involves impartial volunteers from across the community fulfilling a key function in ensuring the protection of the human rights of detained people in custody. The ICVs are independent of the police and the criminal justice system. Our system is part of the overall responsibility of the UK state in complying with the duty required by the United Nations human rights treaty to ensure that every place of detention anywhere in the four countries is inspected or visited by independent monitors to check on the welfare of those detained and to prevent ill-treatment.



This Annual Report provides a comprehensive source of monitoring data in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme. It highlights statistical evidence including:

- the number of detainees arrested under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE) and detained under the Terrorism Act (2000) (TACT) who were interviewed by an ICV; and
- the number of valid and invalid visits

The Board is concerned about the significant decrease in the number of custody records reviewed during the current reporting year compared to the previous year. This has resulted from the identification of an anomaly within the legislative provisions for the scheme, as detailed in the Police (NI) Act 2000, which means Independent Custody Visitors have been unable to access custody records for detainees who are unavailable or unable to provide consent.

A vital part of the role of custody visiting is the ability to review custody records of all individuals being held in police custody at the time of the visit. This enables ICVs to check the information detailed on the custody record against what they have been told by the detainee. For those who, at the time of the visit, are not able to give their consent, reviewing the custody record allows ICVs

to verify that the detainee has been afforded their rights and entitlements under the Police and Criminal Evidence Order.

The Board has raised the issue with the Justice Minister and it is hoped that a legislative amendment to remedy this issue can be made in the Justice Bill currently being considered by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

In conclusion, I would like to formally acknowledge and extend sincere thanks to our Independent Custody Visitors for their continued dedication and commitment to their volunteering roles. This commitment has been maintained despite the recent challenges affecting custody record access, and their perseverance has ensured the continuation of this vital oversight function.

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Mukesh Sharma".

Mukesh Sharma MBE DL

Chair

Northern Ireland Policing Board

2. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Independent Custody Visiting Scheme was first established in 1991 by the Police Authority. The importance of an independent scheme which ensured the rights, health and wellbeing of the detainee and the facilities and conditions of detention was also recognised in 1999 by the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (the Patten Report). The Scheme was subsequently given a statutory footing by virtue of Section 73 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 which requires the Policing Board to make and keep under review arrangements for designated places of detention to be visited by lay visitors (now referred to as Custody Visitors).

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are impartial volunteers from across the community and are independent of the police and the criminal justice system.

As of the end of March 2024 there were 23 active ICVs. They were a mixed composition of gender, age and community background and are based in 3 Custody Visiting Teams regionally across Northern Ireland, namely; the North West; the South East; and Tyrone/Fermanagh (Tyfer).

3. SCHEME ACCREDITATIONS 2024-2025

The Board is responsible for the oversight, management and implementation of the Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme as detailed in the Police (NI) Act 2000. In order to ensure the effective operation of the scheme and to demonstrate our commitment to our volunteering roles, the Board seek accreditations to ensure best practice in managing the Scheme and to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice, in line with the rest of the UK ICV Schemes.

Investing in Volunteers (liV)

Investing in Volunteers (liV) is the UK quality standard for excellence in volunteer management for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work; and provides the framework for high quality volunteering from the perspective of both the Volunteer and the organisation.

The Investing in Volunteers (liV) accreditation independently assesses the ICV Scheme against six criteria namely:

- Vision for volunteering
- Planning for volunteers
- Volunteer inclusion
- Recruiting and welcoming volunteers
- Supporting volunteers; and
- Valuing and developing volunteers

The Board was first awarded the liV accreditation in October 2010, being the first ICV Scheme in the UK to achieve the award. The Board have subsequently been in receipt of this accreditation since 2010 with each accreditation lasting 3 years. The Board plan to seek reaccreditation in November 2026.



Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

The ICV Scheme is linked to a wider UK framework of organisations, one being the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA), a Home Office, Policing Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) funded membership organisation set up to promote and support the

effective provision of custody visiting and represent PCC and Policing Authority led schemes nationally.

ICVA are also members of the UK National Preventive Mechanism (UKNPM) as required by the Optional Protocol against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) – an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen the protection of people deprived of their liberty.

ICVA developed a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to assess how well ICV schemes comply with the code of practice that governs custody visiting. This accreditation allows schemes to reflect on how they comply with the Code of Practice, the legislation that underpins custody visiting, drive performance, increase sharing of good practice and recognises the value of the work in managing the ICV Scheme.

The Quality Assurance Framework contained more than 25 criteria covering key areas such as:

- Recruitment and training;
- Managing volunteers;
- Communications;
- Holding the Force to account;
- Transparency and public reassurance; and
- Detainee welfare



Within the 2023/24 reporting year, the Board was assessed under this framework and awarded their first Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) accreditation on 29 November 2023. This accreditation lasts for two years and as such, the Board plan to seek reaccreditation in November 2025.

4. DEFINITIONS

The majority of visits carried out by ICVs will be to detainees held under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, known as a **PACE** arrest. ICVs are also required to visit the Serious Crime Suite in Musgrave Police Station and visit those detained under the Terrorism Act (2000) known as **TACT** detainees.

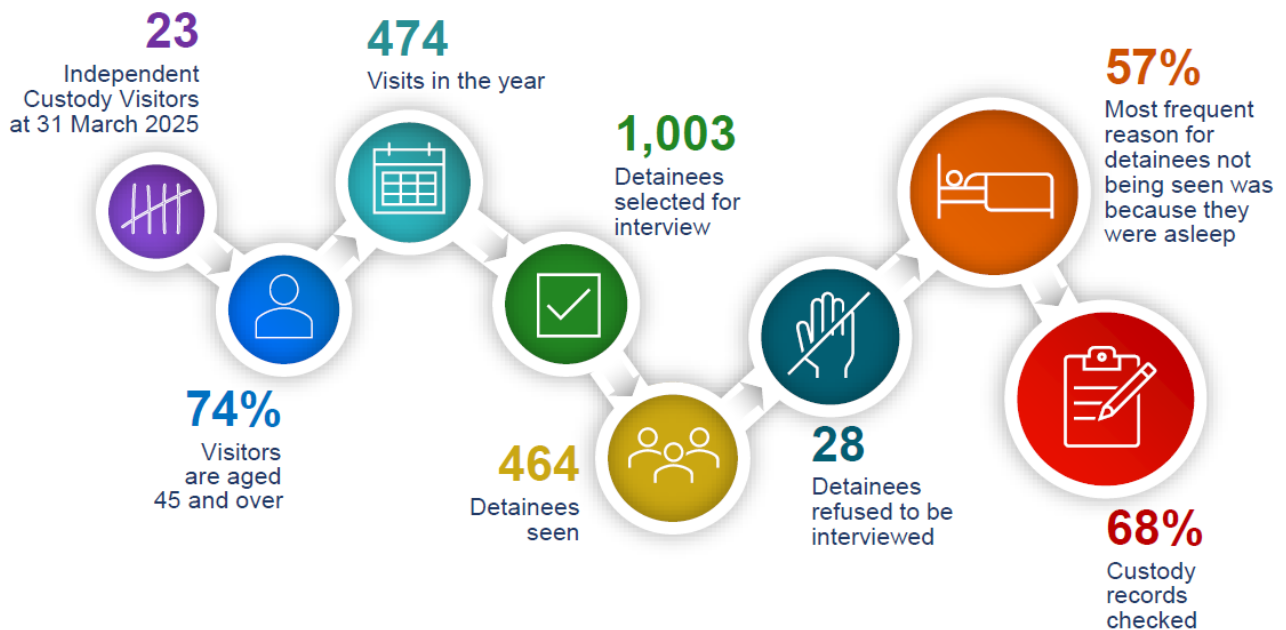
Custody visits are categorised by two types, namely **Valid** and **Invalid**. A Valid visit is where ICVs gain entry to a custody suite and carry out a visit. An Invalid visit is where ICVs are unable to gain entry to a custody suite to carry out a visit for an identified reason.

5. OVERVIEW OF ANNUAL PERFORMANCE

This Annual Report is for the period April 2024 - March 2025 and highlights the statistical information available in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme. It includes figures in relation to all visits, including those defined in the previous section. The report also provides information in relation to detainees in custody, the review of custody records and provides a breakdown of those detained in the Serious Crime Suite (SCS) at Musgrave Street Station (Antrim Police Station is also used as an SCS contingency suite).

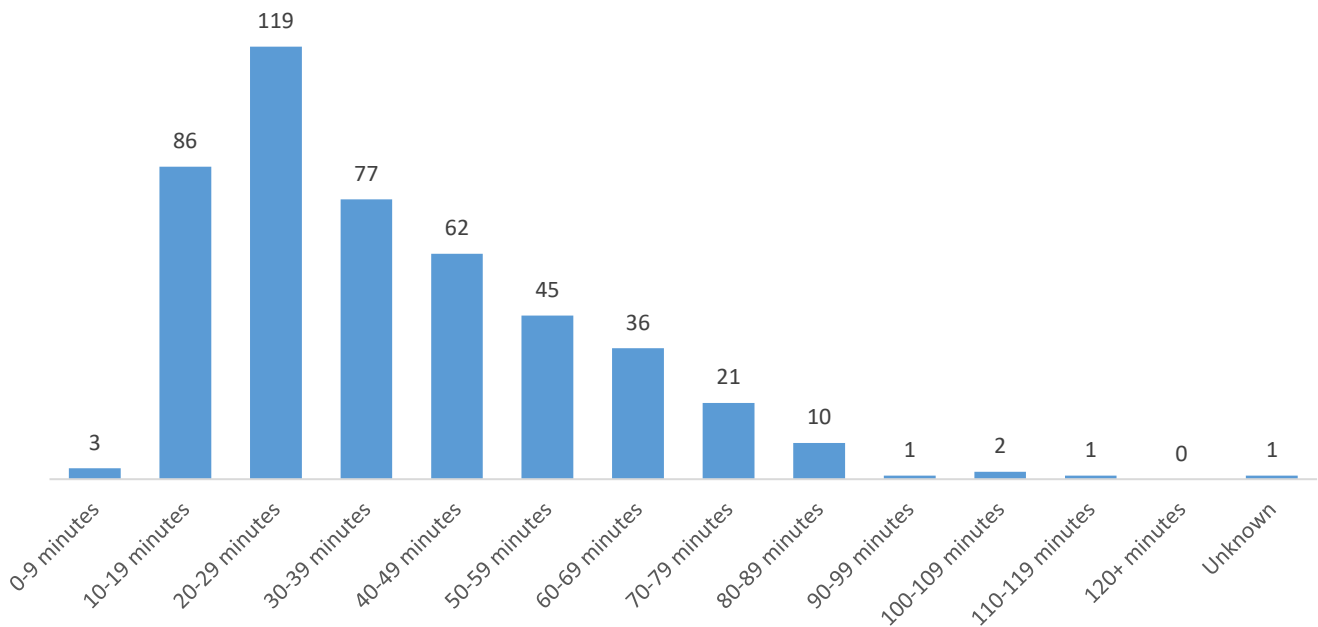
Figure 1 – Annual ICV Data Summary

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING REPORT 2024-2025



For the full report: <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/independent-custody-visiting-reports>

Figure 2 – Frequency chart of the total duration of ICV visits



Key Facts

- There were **20,100** PACE detainees and **52** TACT detainees held within custody suites in Northern Ireland (source PSNI), with a total of **1,003** detainees selected at the time of the ICV visits;
- There were a total of **474** visits made by ICVs between April 2024 – March 2025; and
- **10** visits (2%) were not completed (invalid), thus there were **464 valid visits**.

Overall Visits Analysis

- The length of visits ranged from 5 minutes to 1 hour 55 minutes, with the median length of time spent on a visit being 45 minutes (PACE 45 minutes and TACT 60 minutes);
- The highest number of visits were made on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (16%);
- The highest number of visits were made between 3pm and 6pm (32%); and
- There were 19 occasions when ICVs were delayed for more than 10 minutes when gaining entry to a custody suite, with these delays being between 12 and 26 minutes.

Detainees

- At the time of ICV visits, a total of 1003 detainees were selected for interview and ICVs spoke to 464 detainees (46%), which is the same percentage as the 2023/24 uptake rate of 480 detainees (46%);
- The most common reasons for detainees not being seen was 'asleep' (57%);
- The overall refusal rate for April 2024 - March 2025 was 2.8% which is a 1.4% increase of that recorded in the 2023/24 report; and
- During the visits 68.3% (685) of Custody Records were inspected to check on the rights, health and wellbeing of detainees and conditions of detention which was a 19.3% decrease from 2023/24 report (87.6%).

TACT Visits Analysis

- There were 38 visits made to detainees held under the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT), 1 visit was **invalid**;
- There were 34 detainees held during this period, compared to 50 in the previous year, ICVs saw 8 detainees (24%), which is a 24% decrease from that recorded in the previous year's report;
- The Custody Records of 16 of the 34 detainees were checked by ICVs representing (47%); and
- The Custody Records of 18 of the 34 detainees were not checked (53%)

Longitudinal Data

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total Visits	489	470	474
Valid Visits	473	460	464
Invalid Visits	16	10	10
Detainees selected	1,136	1,048	1003
Detainees seen	549	480	464

6. ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section outlines the data collected on the Custody Visiting Scheme. Information is predominantly presented in table format and covers the three main areas of treatment, effectiveness and the Serious Crime Suite.

PACE and TACT Visits

The majority of detainees visited by ICVs are held under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 known as a PACE arrest. However, ICVs are also required to visit detainees arrested under the Terrorism Act (2000) known as a TACT detainee. The Serious Crime Suite is currently situated in Musgrave Police Station (Antrim Police Station is also used as an SCS contingency suite).

As highlighted in table 1 below, ICVs carried out a total of 474 visits during the reporting year. 10 visits were not completed so deemed invalid, hence there were 464 valid visits. These include 38 visits to detainees held under TACT. The invalid visits for this reporting year represent 2.1% of the total visits which is the same as the previous year.

Table 2 which follows shows the breakdown of the 10 invalid visits across stations with table 3 highlighting the reasons for the visit being deemed invalid.

Table 1 - Breakdown of Valid/Invalid Visits by Team

Team	Total Visits	Invalid Visits	% of Invalid Visits
North-West	121	3	2.5%
South-East	218	3	1.4%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	135	4	3.0%
Total Visits	474	10	2.1%

Table 2 - Breakdown of Invalid Visits by Custody Suite

Team	Station	Invalid Visits
North-West	Coleraine	0
	Strabane	2
	Strand Road	0
	Waterside	1
	Sub-total	3
South-East	Antrim	0
	Antrim SCS Announced	1
	Banbridge	1
	Bangor*	0
	Musgrave	1
	Musgrave SCS Announced	0
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	0
	Sub-total	3
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	2
	Lurgan	2
	Omagh	0
	Sub-total	4
TOTAL INVALID VISITS: 10		

* South-East visit Bangor as a contingency suite

Table 3 - Reasons For Invalid Visits

Date	Custody Suite	Reason	Conditions Comments
3 May 2024	Musgrave	Suite busy/staff busy	ICVs not collected by staff
6 June 2024	Lurgan	No staffing/personnel to allow entry	ICVs not collected by staff
8 Aug 2024	Strabane	Custody suite closed	Custody suite was closed (Please note this was not on the planned closures list)
15 Aug 2024	Banbridge	No staffing/personnel to allow entry	ICVs not collected by staff
30 Sept 2024	Waterside	No staffing/personnel to allow entry	No reason provided – waiting time exceeded
21 Dec 2024	Strabane	No staffing/personnel to allow entry	ICVs not collected by staff
31 Jan 2025	Lurgan	Other	No access to custody suite due to a fire

Date	Custody Suite	Reason	Conditions Comments
8 Feb 2025	Dungannon	Custody suite closed	No access to custody suite due to power outage
3 March 2025	Dungannon	Custody suite closed	Custody suite was closed (Please note this was not on the planned closures list)
27 March 2025	Antrim SCS Announced	Custody suite closed	Contingency suite closed and moved back to Musgrave – ICVs and Board not made aware
TOTAL VISITS NOT CARRIED OUT		10	

Wellbeing of Detainees

An ICV's role is to check on the welfare of detainees held in police custody, to ensure they are being treated in accordance with PACE Codes of Practice and therefore, human rights principles. Custody visiting provides an independent check on the treatment of people held in custody.

Matters regarding health and safety procedures as well as general maintenance within custody suites are recorded by ICVs during their visits. ICVs will raise each matter with custody staff, however they are unable to wait in the custody suite for every resolution, such as where a detainee has requested a Health Care Professional (HCP), but the HCP had not arrived before the end of the visit.

The most frequent matters of wellbeing raised during the year related to medical attention, where there was a request by the detainee to see a health care professional (23), this was followed by requiring to inform somebody of their arrest (13). There were six allegations made or concerns expressed to ICVs during the year. These covered, assault (3), sexual assault (1) and treatment in custody (2).

Table 4 - Categories of Treatment and Welfare Matters Raised by Detainees

Category	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Grand Total
8 hours rest	0	0	0	0
Access to toilet/washing facilities	0	3	0	3
Adequate bedding	0	1	0	1
Adequate food and drink	0	6	0	6
Allegations made/concerns raised	2	3	1	6
Being told rights	0	1	0	1
Checks on detainees	0	6	0	6
Code of Practice	0	0	0	0
Dietary/personal requirements	0	2	0	2
Exercise	0	0	0	0
Informing somebody	4	9	0	13
Legal advice	0	3	0	3
Medical attention	1	20	2	23
Note only - action already taken	0	4	0	4
Other	0	1	0	1
Parent/Guardian responsibilities	0	0	0	0
Replacement clothing	0	1	0	1
Requiring an Appropriate Adult	1	1	0	2
Requiring an Interpreter	0	0	0	0
Strip Search	0	4	0	4
Total	10	64	3	76

Table 5 which follows provides a breakdown of other reasons for concern, with regards to the conditions of detention, which are provided to Board Officials for monitoring purposes.

Table 5 - The Reasons for Concern Regarding the Conditions of Detention of Detainees

Conditions	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	TOTAL
Alarm	0	0	0	0
Cleanliness	0	1	0	1
Faulty Equipment and Maintenance	5	32	6	43
Heating/Lighting	0	1	1	2
Medical Rooms/Health Equipment	0	3	1	4
Safety/Security Hazards	3	3	0	6
TOTAL	8	40	8	56

7. MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHEME

Visits Made

ICVs made 474 visits (valid and invalid) during April 2024 - March 2025.

Table 6 shows a contrast of the number of actual visits made to each station during this period, compared to the number of guideline visits as set by the Board. The number of guideline visits are based on several factors including the size of the custody suite, the number of cells within the custody suite and the number of active Independent Custody Visitors within each team.

Table 6 - Comparison of Guideline Visits Against Actual Visits Carried Out

Team	Station	Guideline Number of Visits ¹	Actual Number of Visits
North-West	Coleraine*	0	7
	Strabane	36	36
	Waterside	84	78
	Sub-total	120	121
South-East	Antrim	59	50
	Antrim SCS Announced*	0	3
	Antrim SCS Unannounced*	0	1
	Banbridge	36	36
	Bangor ²	0	0
	Musgrave	102	94
	Musgrave SCS Announced	27	25
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	12	9
	Sub-total	236	218
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	72	71
	Lurgan	72	64
	Omagh ³	0	0
	Sub-total	144	135
TOTAL VISITS		500	474

*North-West team visit Coleraine as a contingency suite and South-East team visit Antrim SCS as a contingency suite.

1 Guideline Number takes into account any station closures including closures due to maintenance and also the resources within each ICV team

2 Bangor is used as a contingency suite

3 Omagh has been closed for a major refurbishment since October 2023

There is a requirement for 10% of visits to be undertaken during unsociable hours (outside of 09:00-18:00). During the reporting period, April 2024 - March 2025 ICVs undertook 160 (34%) of

visits during unsociable hours, as outlined in table 7 which follows. There was one visit made during the year which did not specify a time of arrival at the custody suite, which related to an invalid visit.

Table 7 - Visits Carried Out by Time of Day

Time	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Number of visits	%*
Midnight – 8.59am	0	0	0	0	0%
9.00am - 11.59am	19	5	26	50	10.5%
Midday – 2.59pm	19	62	30	111	23.4%
3.00pm – 5.59pm	54	43	55	152	32.1%
6.00pm – 8.59pm	29	104	18	151	31.9%
9.00pm – 11.59pm	0	4	5	9	1.9%
Not stated	0	0	1	1	0.2%
TOTAL	121	218	135	474	100%

As highlighted in table 8 below, the majority of visits were carried out on a Tuesday and Wednesday (16.2% each); with the fewest visits (11%) carried out on Monday.

Table 8 - Days On Which Visits Were Carried Out

Day	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Number of Visits	%*
Monday	18	23	11	52	11%
Tuesday	20	30	27	77	16.2%
Wednesday	38	28	11	77	16.2%
Thursday	10	45	13	68	14.3%
Friday	15	30	28	73	15.4%
Saturday	11	18	32	61	12.9%
Sunday	9	44	13	66	13.9%
TOTAL	121	218	135	474	100%

Detainees Seen by ICVs

Table 9 below highlights that there were 1,003 detainees selected for a visit, of which ICVs saw 464 detainees (46%). In comparison during April 2023 - March 2024 ICVs saw the same percentage of detainees (46%) equating to 480 out of the 1,048 selected for a visit.

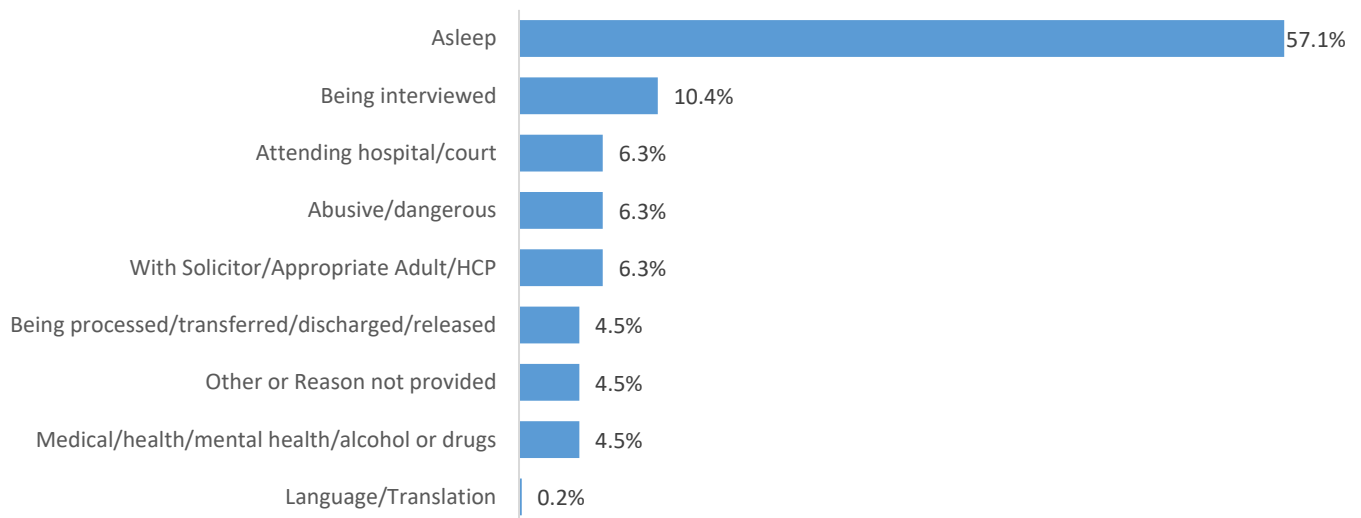
Table 9 - Details of Detainees Interviewed / Not Interviewed

Team	Valid Visits	Detainees selected for a visit	Detainees Seen	Detainees Refused	Detainees Not Seen – Other Reason
North-West	118	246	90	3	153
South-East	215	511	273	23	215
Tyrone-Fermanagh	131	246	101	2	143
TOTAL	464	1,003	464³	28	511

3 ICVs may see more than 1 detainee in a visit

Only 2.8% of detainees refused to be seen, which is a 1.4% increase than the 2023/24 reporting year. There were 511 detainees not seen for other reasons as outlined in table 9 above, in comparison to 553 in the previous year.

Figure 3 - Reasons For Detainees Not Being Seen (Excluding Refused)



Detainee Refusal Rate

As highlighted in table 10 below, 2.8% (28) of detainees refused to be seen/interviewed, which is 1.4% percent higher than the 2023/24 reporting year. The following table provides a breakdown of the 28 detainees across stations.

Table 10 - Refusal Rate by Station

Team	Station	Valid Visits	Detainees Selected for Visit	Detainees Refused to be interviewed	% Refusal Rate
North-West	Coleraine	7	13	2	15.4
	Strabane	34	48	0	0.0%
	Waterside	77	185	1	0.5%
	Sub-total	118	246	3	
South-East	Antrim	50	126	5	4%
	Antrim SCS Announced	2	5	1	20%
	Antrim SCS Unannounced	1	0	0	0.0%
	Banbridge	35	51	1	2.0%
	Bangor*	0	0	0	0.0%
	Musgrave	93	300	11	0.4%
	Musgrave SCS Announced	25	27	5	18.5%
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	9	2	0	0.0%
	Sub-total	215	511	23	
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	69	120	2	1.7%
	Omagh*	0	0	0	0.0%
	Lurgan	62	126	0	0.0%
	Sub-total	131	246	2	
TOTAL		464	1003	28	2.8%

*South East team visit Bangor as a contingency suite

*Omagh has been closed for a major refurbishment since October 2023

Custody Records Checked

Custody records are checked to ensure that detainee's rights and entitlements have been adhered to for example, detention review times. ICVs checked 685 of the 1,003 custody records (68.3%). ICVs checked 918 custody records in the 2023/24 reporting year and based on the number of detainees held it equated to 87.6% of records checked. Therefore, the percentage of custody records checked in this reporting year shows a decrease of 19.3% on the previous year. This decrease specifically relates to the second half of the 2024/25 reporting year and resulted from the identification of an anomaly in the legislative provisions for the ICV Scheme as detailed in the Police (NI) Act 2000. This anomaly has resulted in ICVs being unable to view the Custody Records for detainees who are unavailable and/or unable to provide consent. The Board is

working in conjunction with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and PSNI around a proposed legislative amendment in order to help remedy this issue.

Table 11 - Custody Records Checked

Team	Valid Visits	Detainees Selected	Custody Records Checked	% Checked
North-West	118	246	162	65.9%
South-East	215	511	347	67.9%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	131	246	176	71.5%
TOTAL	464	1,003	685	68.3%

Delay to Valid Visits

On occasion ICVs can be delayed entry to a custody suite. If the delay is greater than 10 minutes, but upon waiting the ICVs do gain access and carry out a visit, the visit is classed as a valid visit and also recorded against our statistics as a delayed visit.

Of the 464 valid visits made there were 19 occasions when ICVs were delayed entry to a custody suite, compared to 10 in the previous reporting year.

Table 12 which follows provides a breakdown of these delays across the teams. The longest recorded delay was 26 minutes, which is shorter than in the previous reporting year, where the longest delay was 60 minutes. Table 12 provides an overview of any delays by team and station and Table 13 outlines the reason/s and the time delay/s.

Table 12 - Delays to Valid Visits by Team and Station

Team	Station	Total Number of Delays Greater than 10 mins
North-West	Coleraine	0
	Strabane	0
	Strand Road	0
	Waterside	2
South-East	Antrim	1
	Antrim SCS Announced	0
	Banbridge	2
	Bangor*	0
	Musgrave	7
	Musgrave SCS Announced	3
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	1

Team	Station	Total Number of Delays Greater than 10 mins
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	1
	Lurgan	2
	Omagh*	0
TOTAL valid visits (which were delayed):		19

*South East team visit Bangor as a contingency suite

*Omagh has been closed for a major refurbishment since October 2023

Table 13 - Time Delay Details and Reason/s

Date	Custody Suite	Time Delay (mins)	Reason for Delay
09 April 2024	Dungannon	12	Suite busy/staff busy
14 April 2024	Musgrave	20	Suite busy/staff busy
14 April 2024	Banbridge	22	Handover
16 April 2024	Musgrave SCS Announced	17	Suite busy/staff busy
22 May 2024	Musgrave SCS Announced	12	Suite busy/staff busy
24 May 2024	Musgrave	18	Suite busy/staff busy
28 May 2025	Waterside	17	Medical reasons
4 June 2025	Lurgan	20	No staffing/personnel to allow entry
14 June 2024	Musgrave	15	Suite busy/staff busy
05 July 2024	Musgrave	20	Suite busy/staff busy
30 July 2024	Musgrave	15	Suite busy/staff busy
02 August 2024	Musgrave SCS Announced	14	Handover
14 August 2024	Musgrave	26	Suite busy/staff busy
22 August 2024	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	15	Suite busy/staff busy
18 September 2024	Waterside	15	Suite busy/staff busy
19 November 2024	Musgrave	12	Suite busy/staff busy
11 January 2025	Lurgan	17	Medical reasons
21 February 2025	Antrim	24	No staffing/personnel to allow entry
02 March 2025	Banbridge	18	Suite busy/staff busy

8. MONITORING THE SERIOUS CRIME SUITE (SCS)

This section provides a breakdown of statistics captured in relation to those detainees held in Musgrave Serious Crime Suite. As highlighted in table 14 below, 37 valid visits to the SCS were recorded across the reporting year with 34 detainees. ICVs interviewed 24% of detainees (8), which is 24% less compared to the 2023/24 reporting year.

Six out of 34 detainees refused an interview with ICVs (18%), which is an increase of 16% compared to 2023/24 which saw 1 of 50 (2%) detainees refusing to speak to ICVs.

Table 14 - Details of Detainees Interviewed/Not Interviewed in the SCS

Team	Valid Visits	Detainees Selected for Interview	Detainees Seen	Detainees Refused	Detainees Not Seen – Other Reason
SCS	37	34	8	6	20

Table 15 – Reasons for SCS Detainees Not Being Seen

Reason	Total	%
Asleep	0	0.0%
Attending hospital/court	2	7.7%
Refused	6	23.1%
Being Interviewed	9	34.6%
Being processed/transferred/discharged/released	2	7.7%
With Solicitor/ Appropriate Adult/ Health Care Professional	7	26.9%
Other	0	0.0%
TOTAL	26	100%

9. CONCLUSION

The Board is committed to ensuring that the human rights of those detained in custody is maintained to the highest standard by the PSNI.

The Board is concerned about the significant decrease in the number of custody records reviewed during the current reporting year compared to the previous year. As highlighted previously, this has resulted from the identification of an anomaly within the legislative provisions for the scheme, as detailed in the Police (NI) Act 2000, which means Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) have been unable to access custody records for detainees who are unavailable or unable to provide consent.

The Board is working in conjunction with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and PSNI around a proposed legislative amendment in order to help remedy this issue.

Summary Analysis

- Statistical analysis in relation to invalid visits remains unchanged from the previous reporting period (2.1%)
- 16% increase in the TACT refusal rate (2% in 2023/24)
- 24% decrease in the number of TACT detainees seen (48% in 2023/24)
- 19.3% decrease in the number of custody records being viewed (87.6% in 2023/24)
- 1.4% increase in the overall refusal rate

Considering the above it is evident through the data provided in the ICV reports that there continues to be a high standard and high volume of monitoring taking place by very committed volunteers. This commitment has been maintained despite the recent challenges affecting custody record access, and their perseverance has ensured the continuation of this vital oversight function.



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DOCUMENT TITLE

Annual Custody Visitors Report April 2024 – March 2025

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