Independent Custody Visiting Annual Report Northern Ireland

April 2025 to March 2026

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

As Chair of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) I am pleased to present the Independent Custody Visitors' Annual Statistical Report 2025 to 2026 which provides a comprehensive source of statistical data in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme.

Through unannounced visits to police custody suites, the Independent Custody Visitors provide effective and independent oversight of police custody in Northern Ireland by monitoring the rights, welfare and treatment of people being held in custody, and the conditions of detention. The Custody Visitors are impartial volunteers from across the community, independent of the police and the criminal justice system. Our scheme contributes to the overall responsibility of the UK to comply with the United Nations human rights treaty by ensuring that every place of detention is inspected or visited by independent monitors to check on the welfare of those detained and to prevent ill-treatment.

The Annual Statistical Report provides a comprehensive source of monitoring data in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme. In the 2025 to 2026 reporting year our 25 volunteer Custody Visitors carried out 454 visits and met with 456 detainees. Custody Visitors checked 45% of detainees' custody records which is a decrease of 23.3% percentage points compared to last year's 2024 to 2025 Independent Custody Visiting Report (68.3%).

The Board remains concerned about the significant decline in the number of custody records reviewed during the current reporting year compared with the previous year. This decrease is as a result of the identification of an anomaly in the scheme's legislative provisions under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. As a result, Custody Visitors have been unable to access the records of detainees who are unavailable or unable to provide consent.

Reviewing the custody records of detainees in police custody at the time of a visit is a vital part of independent custody visiting. It enables Custody Visitors to compare the information recorded with the account provided by the detainee. Where a detainee is unable to give consent at the time of the visit, access to the custody record also allows Custody Visitors to verify that the detainee has received their rights and entitlements under the Police and Criminal Evidence Order (PACE).

At the time of publication, it had not been possible to progress the necessary legislative amendment through the Justice Bill under consideration by the Northern Ireland Assembly. The NIPB will continue to work with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the PSNI to seek a resolution.

In conclusion, I would like to formally acknowledge and extend sincere thanks to our Independent Custody Visitors for their continued dedication and commitment to this vital oversight role which they undertake as volunteers.



Brendan Mullan
Chair
Northern Ireland Policing Board

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (hereby known as ICV) 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 ICV Scheme was subsequently given a statutory footing by virtue of Section 73 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 which requires the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) to make, and keep under review, arrangements for designated places of detention to be visited by lay visitors (referred to as custody visitors - ICVs).

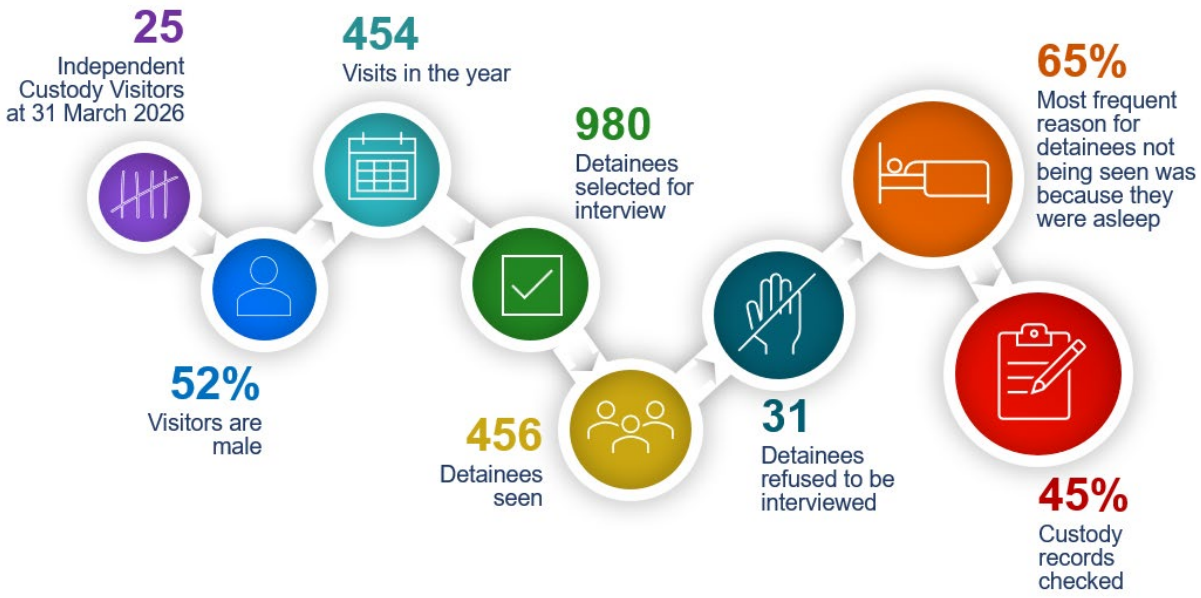
The ICV Scheme is linked to the Police and Criminal Evidence Northern Ireland Order 1989 (PACE) and its revised codes of practice, 2007 edition and in particular Code C, which deals with the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers. In addition, the scheme also has a statutory duty to visit people detained in custody under the Terrorism Act (2000) (TACT). This is governed by PACE (Northern Ireland) Code of Practice H (Code of Practice for the Detention, Treatment and Questioning of Persons under Section 41 and Schedule 8 of the Terrorism Act 2000). TACT Custody Visiting takes place in Musgrave Police Station, within the Serious Crime Suite (SCS), with an overflow capability in Antrim.

The remit of the Northern Ireland ICV Scheme has been extended by the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 to include all stations in which people may be detained by the police, not just designated suites. Detention in a non-designated station is only permissible under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 in limited circumstances.

ICVs are impartial volunteers from across the community and are independent of the police and the criminal justice system. This is the annual statistical report covering 12 months from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 which highlights the statistical information available in relation to the ICV Scheme.

The report includes figures in relation to all visits, 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).

KEY FACTS



- As of the end of March 2026 there were 25 active ICVs, of which 52% were male.
- There were 454 visits made by ICVs between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- There were 443 valid visits (97.6%) and 11 invalid visits (2.4%).
- 980 detainees were selected for interview and 456 were visited (46.5%).
- 31 detainees refused to be interviewed (3.2% of the selected detainees).
- The most frequent reason for detainees not being visited was that they were asleep (61.5%) or being interviewed (9.5%).
- The most frequent matters of wellbeing raised during the year related to adequate food and drink (22).
- There were 7 allegations of concern expressed to ICVs during the year, all claiming assault.
- Issues of conditions of detentions raised by detainees or by ICVs were mainly in relation to faulty equipment and general maintenance (13 out of 28 instances).
- The remaining concerns raised related to cleanliness, heating / lighting, the condition of medical rooms / health equipment, resourcing and ventilation issues.
- 441 custody records, 45.0% of the detainees selected for interview were checked during the year.

CUSTODY VISITS BACKGROUND

ICVs make unannounced visits to police custody suites where they inspect and report on the rights, health and wellbeing and conditions of people being detained in custody, either by conversing with them and / or checking custody records.

Some ICVs are trained in visiting Serious Crime Suites (SCS) and will sometimes join with another team member, outside of their own team, to visit detainees in the SCS. Visits to the SCS may be announced and unannounced.

ICVs are divided into three Custody Visiting Teams (hereby referred to as teams) and cover custody suites allocated to them based on the team's geographical remit. However, there are occasions when a team member/s may visit detainees in a custody suite outside of their regular team area. The three team areas are:

- **North-West** - Coleraine, Strabane and Waterside
- **South-East** – Antrim, which is also used as a contingency Serious Crime Suite (SCS), Banbridge, Musgrave and Musgrave SCS
- **Tyrone-Fermanagh** – Dungannon, Lurgan and Omagh

ICVs carry out visits to check on:

- rights and entitlements of the detainee
- health and wellbeing of detainee
- conditions and facilities of detention

ICVs work in pairs and agree a suitable time to visit the custody suite, these visits will be unannounced with exception of visits to an SCS which can be announced or unannounced.

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.

GUIDELINE VISITS

The guideline number of visits to each custody suite are agreed in April and kept under review throughout the year. Guideline number of 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 ICVs within each team.

This number is further adjusted during the year should there be a change to any custody suites, for example if one should close temporarily for maintenance, or if the numbers of available ICVs change, such as an increase or a reduction in team members following recruitment or the end of tenure. Each designated suite is visited at least once every month.

During 2025 to 2026 the guideline number of visits for all custody suites was 488 (table 1). These visits were divided between the three teams according to the basis outlined above, with North-West allocated 120, South-East allocated 240 and Tyrone-Fermanagh allocated 128. Omagh Police Station was closed during this period due to major refurbishment, thus is not included in the analysis.

Table 1: Guideline and Actual Visits

Team	Custody Suite	Guideline Visits (N)	Actual Visits (N)	Actual Visits (%)
North-West	Coleraine	0	7	1.5%
	Strabane	36	38	8.4%
	Waterside	84	78	17.2%
	Sub-total	**120**	**123**	**27.1%**
South-East	Antrim	48	50	11.0%
	Antrim SCS Announced	0	1	0.2%
	Antrim SCS Unannounced	0	0	0.0%
	Banbridge	36	36	7.9%
	Musgrave	96	99	21.8%
	Musgrave SCS Announced	48	9	2.0%
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	12	12	2.6%
	Sub-total	**240**	**207**	**45.6%**
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	64	63	13.9%
	Lurgan	64	61	13.4%
	Sub-total	**128**	**124**	**27.3%**
	Total Visits	**488**	**454**	**100%**

VISITS MADE

As shown in table 1, ICVs made 454 visits in accordance with guidelines of 488 visits in the year. The North-West team made 123 visits from guidelines of 120 visits. The South-East team made 207 visits out of a guideline number of visits of 240. Tyrone-Fermanagh team made 124 visits out of a guideline of 128 visits.

Custody suites with fewer than the guideline number of visits were Waterside, Musgrave SCS Announced, Dungannon and Lurgan. Part of the drop for Musgrave SCS is due to the drop in TACT arrests in 2025 to 2026. There were 18 TACT arrests made during 2025 to 2026 compared to 52 in 2024 to 2025 (Security Situation Statistics | PSNI Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics 2025 to 2026 Pdf)

VALID AND INVALID VISITS

Visits to custody suites are classified as valid or 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.

Invalid visits may be the result of ICVs being unable to gain access to the custody suite because there were no staff available to allow entry, staff busy or under pressure, medical reasons or miscommunication between ICVs.

Of the 454 visits made from 2025 to 2026, there were 443 valid visits (97.6%) and 11 invalid visits (2.4%). Of the 443 valid visits made during the year, the largest number were made to Musgrave (93, 20.5%) and Waterside (78, 17.2%) Custody Suites. (The percentages are based on the total visits of 454).

Table 2: Total visits, valid and invalid with %* of invalid visits

Team	Custody Suite	Invalid (N)	Invalid % (of 454 total visits)	Valid (N)	Valid % (of 454 total visits)	Total Visits
North-West	Coleraine	0	0.0%	7	1.5%	7
	Strabane	0	0.0%	38	8.4%	38
	Waterside	0	0.0%	78	17.2%	78
	Subtotal	**0**	**0.0%**	**123**	**27.1%**	**123**
South-East	Antrim	2	0.4%	48	10.6%	50
	Antrim SCS Announced	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	1
	Banbridge	1	0.2%	35	7.7%	36
	Musgrave	6	1.3%	93	20.5%	99
	Musgrave SCS Announced	0	0.0%	9	2.0%	9
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	0	0.0%	12	2.6%	12
	Subtotal	**9**	**2.0%**	**198**	**43.6%**	**207**
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	2	0.4%	61	13.4%	63
	Lurgan	0	0.0%	61	13.4%	61
	Subtotal	**2**	**0.4%**	**122**	**26.9%**	**124**
	Total	**11**	**2.4%**	**443**	**97.6%**	**454**

*The percentages are based on the total visits of 454.

As shown in table 3, the most frequent reason a visit was invalid was due to short staffed / suite busy (6) followed by the custody suite being closed (2), 1 due to contractors completing H&S work and 2 due to wait time exceeded acceptable timelines.

Table 3: Invalid visits by Reason

Team	Custody Suite	Date Visit	Reason for Invalid Visit
South-East	Antrim	19 Nov 2025	Wait time exceeded.
		27 Jun 2025	Custody closed for renovation. No notification received from PSNI.
	Banbridge	21 Jan 2026	Unable to enter due to contractors completing H&S work.
	Musgrave	30 Jul 2025	Suite busy.
		24 Jan 2026	Suite busy.
		06 Mar 2026	Suite busy.
		14 Mar 2026	Suite busy.
		06 Sep 2025	Short staffed & suite busy.
		28 Nov 2025	Medical emergency & short staffed.
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	13 Sep 2025	Wait time exceeded.
		11 Nov 2025	Custody suite closed.
Total	**11**		

COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

The total number of visits made during 2025 to 2026 (454) was comparable to the previous year (474 in 2024 to 2025), and the percentage of valid visits remained at 98%.

Table 4: Comparison Figures

	Total Visits	Valid Visits	Invalid Visits	Selected	Interviewed
2022/23	489	473	16	1,136	549
2023/24	470	460	10	1,048	480
2024/25	474	464	10	1,003	464
2025/26	454	443	11	980	456

WELFARE ISSUES

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 principles of human rights. 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 adequate food and drink (22), this was followed by allegations made / concerns raised (7), all related to allegations of assault.

Table 5: Welfare matters raised by detainees

Category	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Total
Access to an appropriate adult	0	3	0	3
Access to loo/washing	0	1	0	1
Adequate bedding	0	2	0	2
Adequate food and drink	10	9	3	22
Allegations made / concerns raised	0	7	0	7
Being told their rights	0	0	0	0
Checks on detainees carried out	0	3	0	3
Code of Practice	0	6	0	6
Dietary / personal requirements	0	0	0	0
Exercise	0	1	0	1
Informing somebody	0	1	0	1
Legal Advice	0	1	0	1
Medical Attention	0	6	0	6
Note only - action already taken	0	2	0	2
Parent / Guardian responsibilities	0	0	0	0
Replacement clothing	0	0	0	0
Requiring an interpreter	0	1	0	1
Strip Searched	0	4	0	4
8 hours rest in 24	0	0	0	0
Other*	1	1	0	2

*The Other category related to issues not being reported.

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

The conditions of detainees, recorded by ICVs, are provided to the NIPB for monitoring purposes and to ensure PSNI meet their human rights responsibilities. Conditions of detention include cleanliness and general maintenance.

If there are no detainees in the custody suite at the time of arrival, ICVs can access all parts of the custody suite including cells, detention rooms, charging areas, washing facilities, medical rooms, kitchen and storage areas. All matters regarding conditions of detention are reported by ICVs to the custody staff during their visit. ICV reports on conditions are also submitted to the NIPB for monitoring.

Table 6 below shows the categories of concerns recorded by teams during the year. There were 28 concerns regarding conditions raised by detainees or by ICVs during their visit. In 13 of the 28 instances recorded, concerns over conditions related to faulty equipment and general maintenance. Of these, five related to bathroom amenities not working, five to inadequacies with equipment in the interview rooms, the last three related to issues with the cells.

Table 6: Conditions of detention raised by detainees and ICVs

Conditions	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Total
Cleanliness	1	2	0	3
Faulty Equipment and Maintenance	2	11	0	13
Heating/Lighting	0	2	0	2
Medical Rooms/Health Equipment	0	0	1	1
Note only	2	1	1	4
Resourcing issues	0	1	1	2
Ventilation	0	0	3	3
Total	**5**	**17**	**6**	**28**

DAY OF VISITS

A visit to a custody suite will usually be unannounced and will not be made at regular or predictable times. The exception to this is for visits to detainees held under the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) in a Serious Crime Suite (SCS) where the visit can be either announced or unannounced.

During 2025 to 2026, most visits to custody suites were carried out on a Sunday, followed by Friday, then Thursday (table 7). The fewest number of visits were carried out on a Monday. This has varied over the years as shown in table 8. There is no specification for visits to take place on a certain day of the week.

Table 7: Visits carried out by day of week by team

Day	North-West		South-East		Tyrone-Fermanagh		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Monday	6	4.9%	28	13.5%	19	15.3%	53	11.7%
Tuesday	26	21.1%	19	9.2%	14	11.3%	59	13.0%
Wednesday	19	15.4%	25	12.1%	15	12.1%	59	13.0%
Thursday	12	9.8%	43	20.8%	10	8.1%	65	14.3%
Friday	24	19.5%	20	9.7%	22	17.7%	66	14.5%
Saturday	14	11.4%	27	13.0%	18	14.5%	59	13.0%
Sunday	22	17.9%	45	21.7%	26	21.0%	93	20.5%
Total	**123**	**100%**	**207**	**100%**	**124**	**100%**	**454**	**100%**

Table 8: Visits carried out by day of week 2020 to 2026

Day	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Monday	8.0%	9.7%	12.5%	12.1%	11.0%	11.7%
Tuesday	16.4%	16.0%	15.7%	14.7%	16.2%	13.0%
Wednesday	20.1%	16.0%	17.2%	16.2%	16.2%	13.0%
Thursday	16.4%	18.7%	14.7%	16.2%	14.3%	14.3%
Friday	15.8%	17.1%	13.7%	13.8%	15.4%	14.5%
Saturday	12.6%	12.1%	18.0%	14.3%	12.9%	13.0%
Sunday	10.7%	10.5%	8.2%	12.8%	13.9%	20.5%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

TIME OF DAY

There is a requirement for 10% of visits to be undertaken during unsociable hours (outside of 9am to 6pm). During 2025 to 2026, ICVs undertook 148 (32.6%) of visits during unsociable hours, as outlined in table 9.

The North-West team carried out 30 visits during unsociable hours (24.4%), the South-East team 99 visits (47.8%) and Tyrone-Fermanagh team 19 visits (15.3%).

Table 9: Visits carried out by time of day by team

	North-West		South-East		Tyrone-Fermanagh		Total	
Time	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%7**
Midnight – 8.59am	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
9.00am – 11.59am	32	26.0%	12	5.8%	8	6.5%	52	11.5%
Midday – 2.59pm	30	24.4%	55	26.6%	40	32.3%	125	27.5%
3.00pm – 5.59pm	31	25.2%	41	19.8%	57	46.0%	129	28.4%
6.00pm – 8.59pm	30	24.4%	96	46.4%	19	15.3%	145	31.9%
9.00pm – 11.59pm	0	0.0%	3	1.4%	0	0.0%	3	0.7%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**123**	**100%**	**207**	**100%**	**124**	**100%**	**454**	**100%**

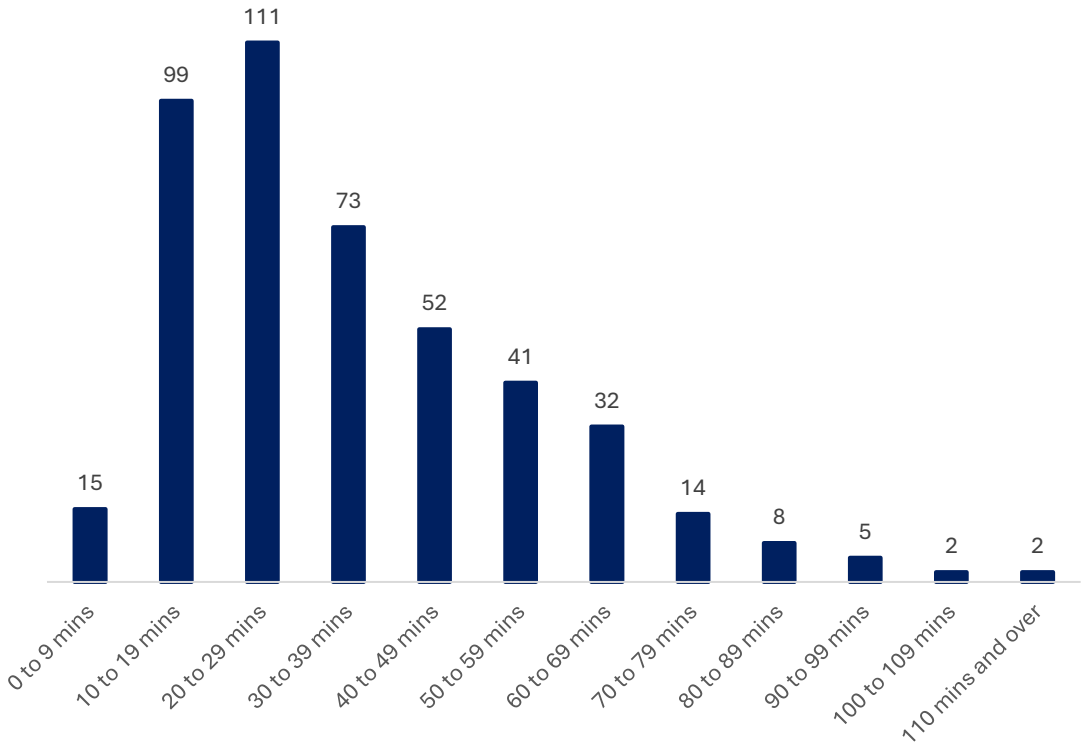
Table 10: Visits carried out by time of day 2020 to 2026

Time	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Midnight – 8.59am	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
9.00am – 11.59am	18.0%	18.9%	12.9%	10.0%	10.5%	11.5%
Midday – 2.59pm	29.5%	22.0%	26.4%	27.0%	23.4%	27.5%
3.00pm – 5.59pm	29.2%	22.8%	30.9%	30.6%	32.1%	28.4%
6.00pm – 8.59pm	22.4%	32.7%	29.0%	29.8%	31.9%	31.9%
9.00pm – 11.59pm	0.2%	3.1%	0.4%	1.7%	1.9%	0.7%
Not stated	0.7%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

DURATION OF ICV VISITS

The largest group of visits is 20 to 29 minutes (111), followed by 10 to 19 minutes (99 cases). Most durations fall between 10 and 69 minutes, with only 15 visits less than 9 minutes and 31 visits 70 minutes are more.

Figure 1: Duration of All ICV visits



DETAINEES SELECTED, INTERVIEWED AND REFUSED

On arrival at the custody suite, ICVs will ascertain the number of detainees being held. They will then select either all or several detainees to visit. However, detainees must provide consent before an ICV interview can take place. ICVs may see more than one detainee in a visit.

In 2025 to 2026, of the 980 detainees selected, 456 (46.5%) were available for interview by ICVs, while 524 (53.5%) were not. The majority of detainees not visited by ICVs were asleep (61.5%: Figure 2). In comparison during 2024 to 2025 ICVs saw a similar percentage of detainees (46.3%).

Table 11: Detainees Selected, Interviewed and Refused

Team	Custody Suite	Selected	Interviewed		Refusal Rate	
		N	N	%	N	%
North-West	Coleraine	14	12	85.7%	0	0.0%
	Strabane	44	17	38.6%	2	4.5%
	Waterside	141	87	61.7%	5	3.5%
South-East	Antrim	135	64	47.4%	4	3.0%
	Antrim SCS Announced	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Banbridge	75	36	48.0%	4	5.3%
	Musgrave	347	156	45.0%	14	4.0%
	Musgrave SCS Announced	15	4	26.7%	2	13.3%
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	95	35	36.8%	0	0.0%
	Lurgan	114	45	39.5%	0	0.0%
Total		**980**	**456**	**46.5%**	**31**	**3.2%**

During 2025 to 2026, there were 20,192 individuals, both TACT and PACE detainees, who were held within custody suites in Northern Ireland (Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics | PSNI Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics 2025/2026 PdF). ICVs attempted to visit 980 individual detainees, 82.9% of whom were males and 16.9% were females. This compares to arrests under PACE and TACT of whom 81.7% were male and 18.2% were female (0.1% was unknown).

REFUSAL RATE

ICVs are allowed access to any person detained at a police custody suite, however detainees may only be spoken to with their consent. The number of detainees who refuse a visit as a proportion of those selected for interview is called the refusal rate.

In 2025 to 2026 the refusal rate was 3.2% (31), higher than the refusal rate in 2024 to 2025 (2.8%, 28).

Table 12: Refusal rate 2020 to 2026

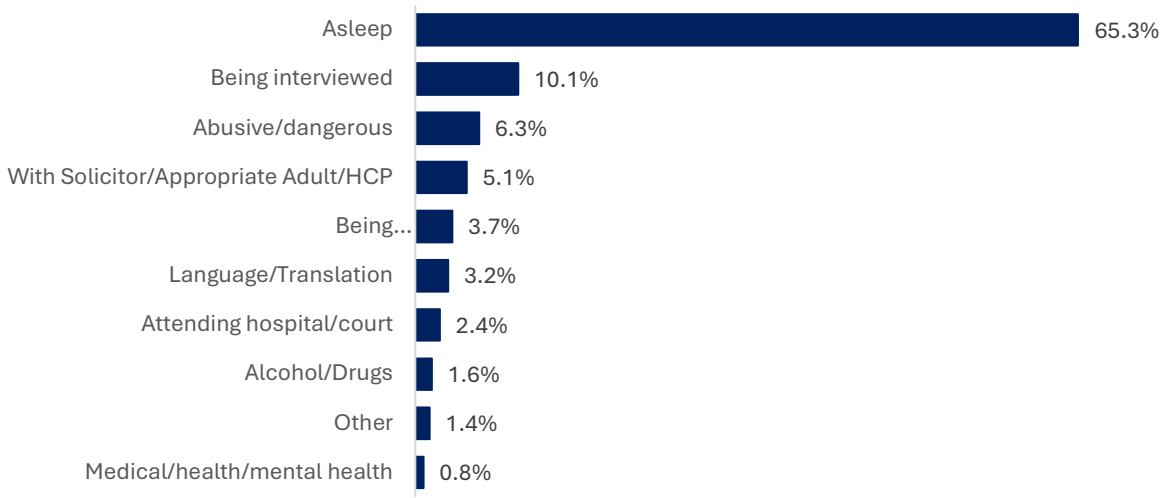
Refusal Rate %	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	2.2%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%	2.8%	3.2%

DETAINEES NOT VISITED

During 2025 to 2026, 524 (53.5%) of those who had been selected for interview were unavailable. Excluding refused, figure 2 below displays the reasons detainees were not seen for the remaining 493 detainees.

Of the 980 detainees selected for interview, just over half (493, 50.3% were not interviewed for other reasons (excludes refused). The main reason detainees were not interviewed, was because they were asleep (322, 65.3%) or being interviewed by PSNI (50, 10.1%).

Figure 2: Reason detainees not seen (excludes refused)



DETAINEES BY GENDER

In 2025 to 2026, 980 detainees were selected for interview by ICVs (table 13). Of these, 798 (81.4%) were adult males, 160 (16.3%) were adult females and 20 (2.0%) were under 18 years of age (juveniles). There were two detainees selected for interview whose gender were not provided by PSNI.

Of the 456 who were interviewed, 360 (78.9%) were adult male, while 85 (18.6%) were adult female.

Table 13: Detainees by gender

Gender	Selected		Interviewed		% of those selected who were interviewed
	N	%	N	%	
Adult Male	798	81.4%	360	78.9%	45.1%
Adult Female	160	16.3%	85	18.6%	53.1%
Juvenile Male	14	1.4%	7	1.5%	50.0%
Juvenile Female	6	0.6%	4	0.9%	66.7%
Unknown	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total	**980**	**100%**	**456**	**100%**	**46.5%**

As shown in table 14 (excluding SCS), the proportion of males selected in custody suites ranged from 1.0% (10) in Coleraine to 29.2% (286) in Musgrave. Whereas females selected ranged from 0.4% (4) in both Coleraine and Strabane, to 6.2% (61) in Musgrave.

The proportion of males interviewed ranged from 1.7% (8) in Coleraine to 26.9% (123) in Musgrave. No females were interviewed in Strabane, while 7.2% (33) were interviewed in Musgrave (this excludes SCS).

This is not surprising as Musgrave custody suite is the largest in use, and a fifth (20.5%) of all valid visits took place there (see Table 2).

Table 14: Detainees selected and visited by gender and custody suite

Custody Suite	Selected (980)				Interviewed (458)			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Antrim	13	1.3%	120	12.2%	7	1.5%	57	12.4%
Banbridge	16	1.6%	59	6.0%	6	1.3%	30	6.6%
Coleraine	4	0.4%	10	1.0%	4	0.9%	8	1.7%
Dungannon	19	1.9%	76	7.8%	9	2.0%	26	5.7%
Lurgan	16	1.6%	98	10.0%	7	1.5%	38	8.3%
Musgrave	61	6.2%	286	29.2%	33	7.2%	123	26.9%
Musgrave SCS Announced	0	0.0%	15	1.5%	0	0.0%	4	0.9%
Strabane	4	0.4%	40	4.1%	0	0.0%	17	3.7%
Waterside	33	3.4%	108	11.0%	23	5.0%	64	14.0%
Total	**166**	**16.9%**	**812**	**82.9%**	**89**	**19.4%**	**367**	**80.1%**

*Does not display the 2 detainees in Antrim whose gender is unknown.

CUSTODY RECORDS CHECKED

Reviewing the custody record of detainees is an important element of the ICV role in terms of protecting those in custody, ensuring the detainee's rights and entitlements have been adhered to.

When ICVs speak to a detainee they normally obtain their consent before reviewing the relevant custody record. In some instances, the detainee may be unable or incapable of providing consent as they may be asleep, affected by drugs or alcohol and have mental health issues. In cases such as these, ICVs would have previously been provided access to review the detainee's custody record in order to ensure that the detainee has been afforded their rights and entitlements as detailed under the applicable Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Codes.

In September 2024 the PSNI identified 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**.

Table 15: Custody records checked 2020 to 2026

Custody Records Checked %	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	74.5%	75.3%	84.5%	87.6%	68.3%	45.0%

As shown in table 15, in 2025 to 2026, 441 (45.0%) custody records were checked which is a decrease of 23.3 percentage points on the previous year. The NIPB believe that the decrease is a continued consequence of the anomaly identified in the Police (NI) Act 2000. The NIPB continues to work in conjunction with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and PSNI in order to seek a resolution.

Table 16 shows the highest percentage of records checked was in North-West (54.8%), in comparison to Tyrone-Fermanagh (71.5%) in 2024 to 2025.

Table 16: Custody records checked

Team	Selected	Custody records checked	% checked
North-West	199	109	54.8%
South-East	572	255	44.6%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	209	77	36.8%
Total	980	441	45.0%

DELAYS

Delays of more than 10 minutes in accessing the custody suite are recorded on the ICV report. Should ICVs be unable to access the custody suite, the visit will be recorded as invalid. If ICVs are delayed by more than 10 minutes but subsequently gain access to carry out their visit, then the visit will be classified as a valid visit.

Out of the 443 valid visits, 11 visits were classified as invalid visits during 2025 to 2026, two were related to delays in access to the custody suite. There were 22 visits delayed. When considering only valid visits this drops to 15 valid visits which had delays of more than 10 minutes in accessing the custody suite (table 17).

Table 17: Delays to visits of more than 10 minutes

Team	Custody Suite	All Visits	Valid Visits
North-West	Coleraine	0	0
	Strabane	1	1
	Waterside	0	0
South-East	Antrim	4	3
	Antrim SCS Announced	0	0
	Banbridge	1	1
	Musgrave	12	7
	Musgrave SCS Announced	0	0
	Musgrave SCS Unannounced	1	1
Tyrone-Fermanagh	Dungannon	2	1
	Lurgan	1	1
Total		**22**	**15**

As shown in table 18, the most frequent reason ICVs experienced a delay in accessing the custody suite was because of limited staff availability / suite being busy (15). The longest wait was 35 minutes for an invalid visit to Musgrave custody suite. The majority of the visits were completed (15) following the delay.

Table 18: Reason for delays to visits of more than 10 minutes

Custody Suite	N	Date	Time Delay (mins)	Reason for Delay
Antrim	1	06-APR-2025	12	Waiting time exceeded
	2	11-JUN-2025	15	Suite busy/staff busy
	3	20-JUL-2025	25	Suite busy/staff busy
	4	19-NOV-2025	15	Waiting time exceeded
	Subtotal	4		
Banbridge	1	08-JUN-2025	12	Suite busy/staff busy
	Subtotal	1		
Dungannon	1	13-SEP-2025	25	Waiting time exceeded
	2	25-FEB-2026	11	Suite busy/staff busy
	Subtotal	2		
Lurgan	1	11-MAY-2025	17	Suite busy/staff busy
	Subtotal	1		
Musgrave	1	30-JUL-2025	20	No staffing/personnel to allow entry
	2	12-AUG-2025	15	Suite busy/staff busy
	3	06-SEP-2025	15	Waiting time exceeded
	4	12-OCT-2025	12	Waiting time exceeded
	5	13-NOV-2025	17	Handover
	6	13-JAN-2026	18	Suite busy/staff busy
	7	24-JAN-2026	22	Suite busy/staff busy
	8	15-FEB-2026	15	Suite busy/staff busy
	9	20-FEB-2026	15	Suite busy/staff busy
	10	21-FEB-2026	17	Suite busy/staff busy
	11	06-MAR-2026	25	Suite busy/staff busy
	12	14-MAR-2026	35	Suite busy/staff busy
	Subtotal	12		
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	1	23-JUN-2025	27	Suite busy/staff busy
	Subtotal	1		
Strabane	1	21-NOV-2025	13	Suite busy/staff busy
	Subtotal	1		
Total		**22**		

PACE AND TACT VISITS (SERIOUS CRIME SUITES)

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, these detainees are held within Serious Crime Suites (SCS). The SCS is currently situated in Musgrave Police Station (Antrim Police Station is also used as an SCS contingency suite).

Visits to SCS are carried out by ICVs who have received specific TACT training. Since May 2013, visits to TACT detainees are normally announced, although there is the ability for ICVs to carry out unannounced visits.

There were 18 TACT arrests made during 2025 to 2026 (Security Situation Statistics | PSNI Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics 2025 to 2026 Pdf) and 20,192 arrests under PACE. Arrest figures are based on a count of detainees' custody numbers and relate to the period of original detention only (Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics | PSNI Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics 2025 to 2026 PdF).

Although arrest figures relate to initial detentions and may not include repeat arrests, where an individual may be held in custody suites on more than one occasion during the year, it is possible to have some indication of the proportion of detainees visited overall. Based on these figures, ICVs visited approximately 22.2% of those individuals arrested under TACT and 2.2% of those arrested under PACE.

In total, there were 22 valid visits to SCS during the year (table 19). Of these there were no detainees for 14 of the visits, for the remaining 8 visits there were 15 detainees in total, all selected for interview.

Table 19: Valid Visits to Serious Crime Suites (SCS)

Serious Crime Suites (TACT)	Valid Visit	Selected	Interviewed		Refusal Rate		% not Interviewed of those selected (excludes refused)	
	N	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Antrim SCS Announced	1	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Antrim SCS Unannounced	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Musgrave SCS Announced	9	15	4	26.7%	2	13.3%	9	60.0%
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	12	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**22**	**15**	**4**	**26.7%**	**2**	**13.3%**	**9**	**60.0%**

Of the 15 detainees, 4 were interviewed (26.7%), 2 refused to be interviewed (13.3%), while 9 were not interviewed for other reasons (5 were being interviewed, 2 were asleep and 2 were with a solicitor / appropriate adult / health professional, table 20).

This compares with 2024 to 2025, were ICVs selected 34 detainees for interview in SCS and were given consent to visit 8 detainees (23.5%).

Table 20: Reasons for SCS detainees not being seen (includes refused)

Reason	N	%
Asleep	2	18.2%
Being interviewed	5	45.5%
Refused	2	18.2%
With Solicitor/Appropriate Adult/Health Care Professional	2	18.2%
Total	**11**	**100%***

* Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and, as a consequence, may not sum to 100.

DEMOGRAPHICS ICVS

The information on the gender, age and community background of ICVs is provided voluntarily by ICVs to the NIPB in the administration of the scheme.

There were 25 active ICVs on 31 March 2026, 2 more than the same date 2025 (23). They were a mixed composition of gender, age and community background and are based in 3 teams regionally across Northern Ireland (North-West, the South-East, and Tyrone-Fermanagh).

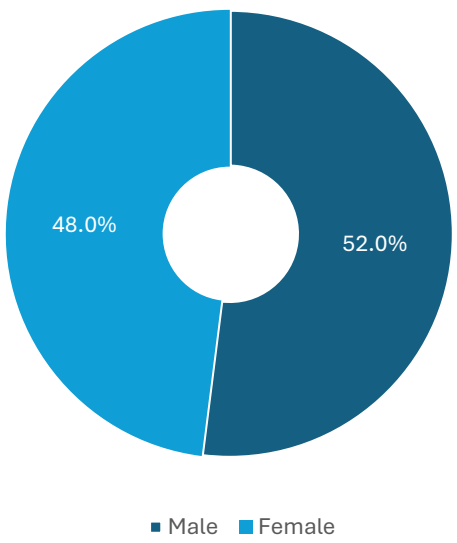
The largest number of ICVs were in the South-East team, accounting for over half (14: 56.0%) of the total number of ICVs, while North-West Team had five active ICVs and Tyrone-Fermanagh Team had six.

Table 21: Number of active ICVs 31 March 2026

Team	N	%
North-West	5	20.0%
South-East	14	56.0%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	6	24.0%
Total	**25**	**100%**

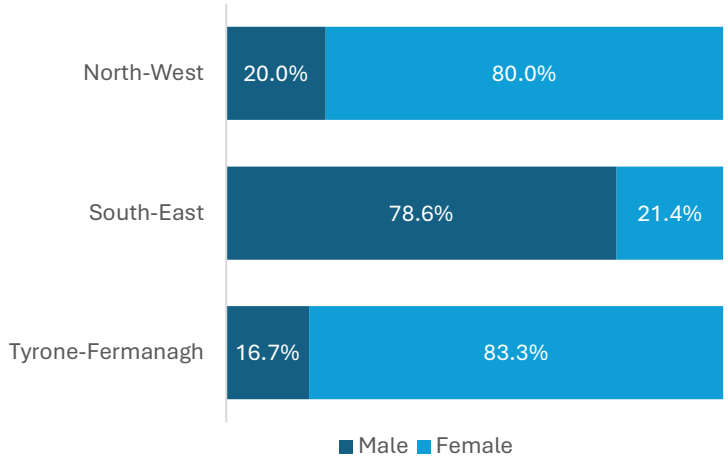
Of the 25 active ICVs, 13 (52.0%) were male and 12 (48.0%) were female.

Figure 3: Percentage of ICVs by gender



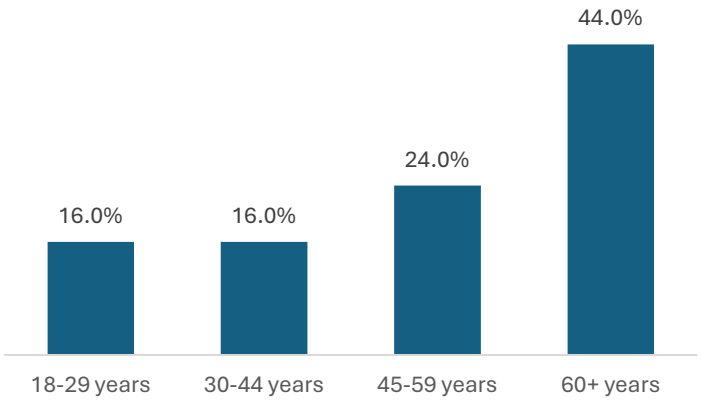
Within the teams four fifths of the North-West and Tyrone-Fermanagh teams were female. While the opposite was true for the South-East Team.

Figure 4: Percentage of active visitors by gender and team



Two ICVs declared a disability, making up 8.0% of all active ICVs. Almost one third (32.0%) of ICVs are aged between 18 and 44 years. While the remaining two thirds (68.0%) are aged over 45.

Figure 5: Active ICVs by age band 31 March 2026



Of the 25 active ICVs, 14 (56.0%) were Protestant, five (20.0%) were Catholic and six identified as neither religious group.

A selection of ICVs are further trained to visit detainees held under TACT (Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000) within Serious Crime Suites. During 2025 to 2026 a total of six ICVs were trained to visit TACT detainees.

Table 22: ICVs trained to visit SCS by team

Team	N
North-West	1
South-East	4
Tyrone-Fermanagh	1
Total	**6**

Changes in ICV numbers takes account of those who have come to the end of their tenure and those who have newly started in their role. The usual tenure for ICVs is 3 years with the option of extending this for one further term to 6 years. In exceptional circumstances ICVs may have this second term extended for one year to 7 years in total. ICVs can step down from the role at any time during the period of their tenure.

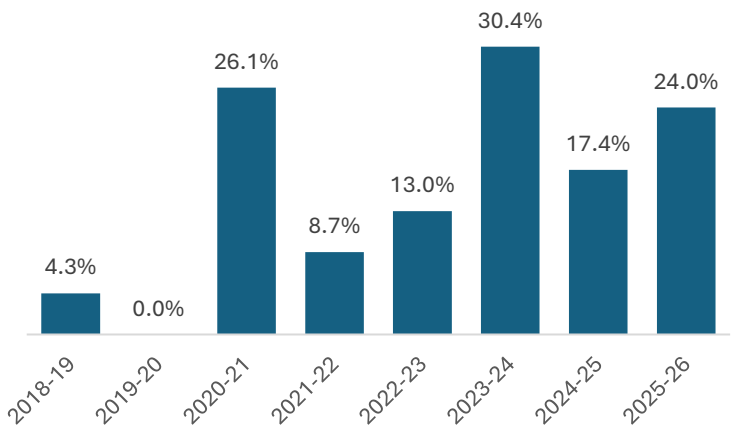
During 2025 to 2026 there were four ICVs who stepped down from their role. ICVs do not need to provide a reason for stepping down from this voluntary role. There were six new ICVs appointed, and of these, two were female and four were male.

Table 23: Movements in ICV numbers 2025 to 2026

Active ICVs	New starts	Leavers	Active ICVs
31/03/2025	**2025/2026**	**2025/2026**	**31/03/2026**
23	6	4	25

*Excludes an ICV Visitor on Sabbatical and did not conduct any visits.

Figure 6: Active visitors by year of appointment



APPENDIX 1 METHODOLOGY

User Information Data sources and validations

The NIPB's ICV Management System is a recording system used for the day-to-day management of custody visits. The key administrative data sources are Independent Custody visiting returns (CV2 and CV4), paper forms detailing visits made by ICVs, the outcome of visits and PSNI Area Commander comments. The administrative data they provide relates to monitoring of rights, health and wellbeing of detainees and the facilities and conditions of detention.

The key principle underlying its operation is that it relies on a small team of staff within Partnership Directorate (Engagement Branch) of the NIPB, to input and update information about the ICVs and visits made. Key aspects of the information recorded on the system are required for the successful day to day operation of the ICV Scheme and needs to be highly accurate to enable the effective monitoring of visits and in accordance with the NIPB's statutory function to administer the scheme.

The systems is designed to support the operational function of the Partnership Directorate and were not designed for the production of official statistics and therefore validation and cleansing is required to ensure that meaningful and accurate statistics can be provided from them. The data presented in this bulletin are derived from this Management System. These are independently validated and quality assured by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) working within the NIPB to ensure that the data is reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to operational staff within Engagement Branch. If required, any necessary amendments are then made to the data.

Users

This analysis and report is used to inform internal management and the wider public about the operation of the NIPB and the ICV Scheme in particular. The ICV Scheme is the result of statutory legislation requiring the NIPB to make, and keep under review, arrangements for designated places of detention.

This statistical report will remain subject to testing for quality and the ability to meet user needs.

Rounding conventions

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and, as a consequence, some percentages may not sum to 100.

Disclosure control

Where small numbers have the potential to disclose sensitive information, disclosure controls have been applied.

Official Statistics – Designation and Key Measures

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Act 2007, statistical outputs can be assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics and, if found compliant, are then designated as Accredited official statistics (called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2027). This means that they meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value. The process of determining compliance with the Code and designation as Accredited official statistics is known as Assessment.

The ICV statistical publication has not yet been assessed and so is currently deemed 'Official Statistics'.

Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the NIPB and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Statistical Reference – PSNI data

Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics 2025 to 2026 report (published 15 May 2026) can be found online Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics | PSNI Details of TACT arrests (under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000) in Northern Ireland during 2024 to 2025 provided by PSNI.

APPENDIX 2 GLOSSARY

DoJ	Department of Justice
HCP	Health Care Professional
ICV	Independent Custody Visitor Scheme
ICVs	Independent Custody Visitors
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
PSNI	Police Service Northern Ireland
SCS	Serious Crime Suite
TACT	Terrorism Act 2000

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