



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER  
FOR THAMES VALLEY

# INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR SCHEME (ICVS)

## Annual Report 2024-2025

### Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (ICVS) across Thames Valley Police from April 2024 to March 2025. Over the year, ICVs conducted 295 visits across six custody suites, consistently demonstrating professionalism and vigilance. No incidents were identified that could lead to reputational harm or public concern, and there were no findings of disproportionality or mistreatment of detainees—reinforcing public confidence in Thames Valley Police’s custody practices.

**Looking Ahead**, the scheme will focus on:

- Enhancing training to reflect evolving legal and procedural standards
- Increasing statistical reporting for robust analysis and accountability
- Continuing commitment to safeguarding detainee rights and transparent oversight

### Recommendation:

**This report should be formally endorsed as evidence of the PCC’s compliance with statutory duties under the Police Reform Act 2002.**



## Introduction & Background

The ICVS was established following unrest in 1981, with Lord Scarman's report recommending Lay Visitors to ensure detainee rights were upheld. These rights include:

- Notification of arrest
- Access to legal advice
- Private consultation with a solicitor
- Access to PACE Codes of Practice
- Interpretation and translation services
- Communication with consulates
- Clear information about offences
- Support from an appropriate adult (if under 18 or vulnerable)

The Police Reform Act 2002 made custody visiting a statutory requirement. Oversight was transferred to PCCs under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

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## Scheme Organisation

The Thames Valley ICV Scheme operates across six custody suites, supported by trained volunteer panels:

- **Oxfordshire:** Banbury, Abingdon
- **Buckinghamshire:** Milton Keynes, Aylesbury
- **Berkshire:** Maidenhead, Loddon Valley

**High Wycombe** is used occasionally and visited when operational.

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## Volunteer Update:

- **New volunteers:** 11 (Milton Keynes: 1, Banbury: 4, Aylesbury: 2, Abingdon:3, Loddon Valley: 1)
- **Departures:** 13 (due to relocation, health, new roles, or no contact)



- **Total active ICVs: 60**

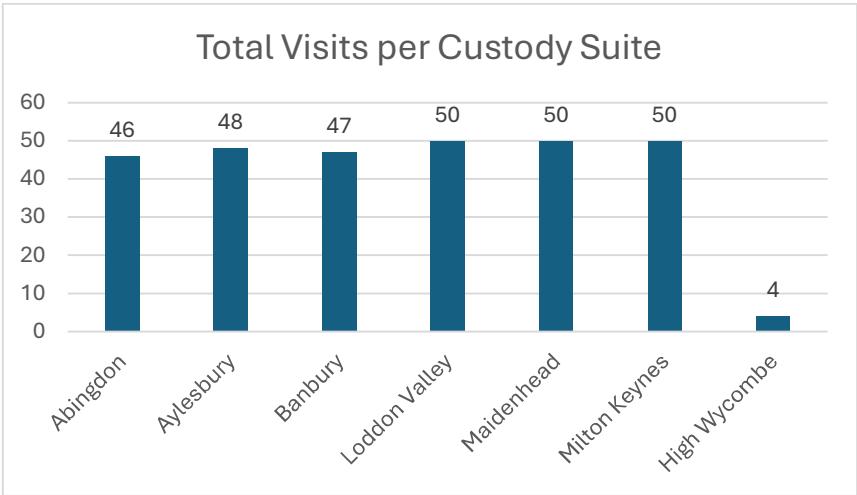
All ICVs complete induction and probation, with annual training. Flexible formats are being explored to improve accessibility.

### Visit Frequency and Timing Overview

**Total Visits Conducted:** 295

Each suite was visited approximately once per week bearing in mind periodic suite closures for cleaning and repairs.

### Custody Suite Visit Totals

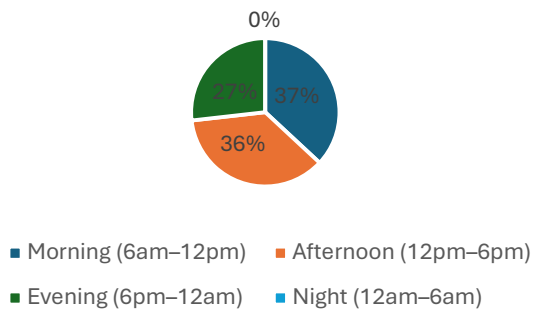


### Visit Timing Distribution

Time of Day	Number of Visits
Morning (6am–12pm)	109
Afternoon (12pm–6pm)	107
Evening (6pm–12am)	79
Night (12am–6am)	0

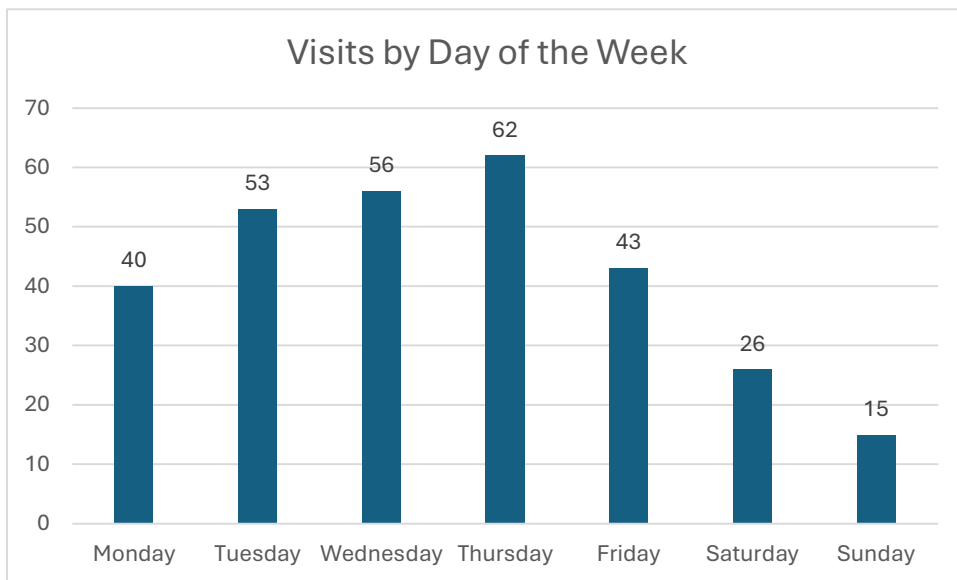


### Visit Timing Distribution



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### Day of Week Distribution



### Notes:

- Visits are unannounced and varied in timing
  - High Wycombe is used occasionally and visited when operational
  - Late-night visits are rare due to detainee sleep patterns
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## Matters Logged Overview

### Facilities

- **Occurrences:** 97
- **Issues recorded:** CCTV faults, broken sinks/toilets, cleanliness, temperature, out-of-use cells, evidence bags in fridges

### Health & Well-being

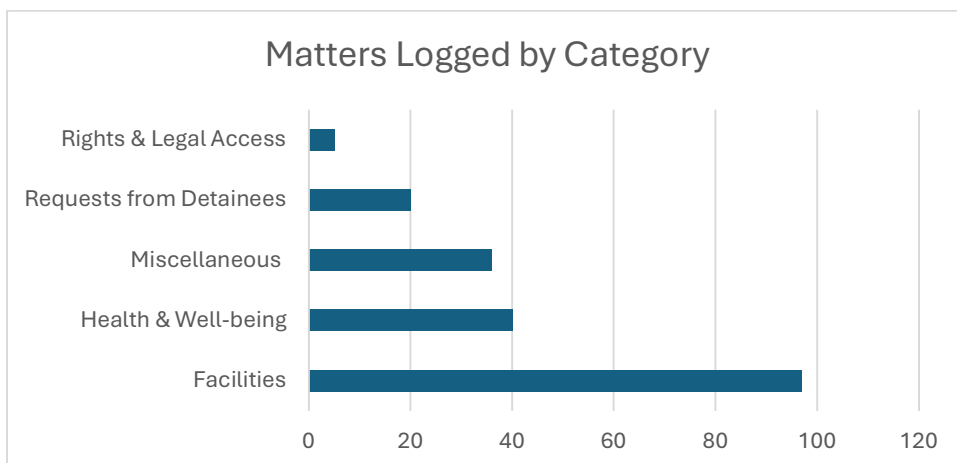
- Health: 9
- Well-being: 24
- Advice: 3
- Healthcare Professional (HCP): 1
- Vulnerable: 3

### Rights & Legal Access

- Rights: 2
- Delayed access: 1
- Check: 2

### Miscellaneous

- Misc: 36





## Strategic Developments

- **Menopause care:** New Authorised Professional Practice guidance led to care packs and policy development.
  - **Religious text storage:** Improved following ICV concerns and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection.
  - **Smart Card access:** Issues for HCPs resolved through collaboration with Mountain Healthcare.
  - **Staff conduct:** Detention Officers praised for professionalism and empathy.
  - **Vulnerability definitions:** National discussions ongoing, especially around mental health.
  - **Rights & Entitlements:** Trials of simplified materials and tablets for neurodiverse and non-English-speaking detainees.
  - **Post-custody suicide prevention:** Engagement with national bodies.
  - **Operational adjustments:** Suite closures managed via cross-panel support.
  - **Report scanning:** Fully implemented for improved timeliness and accuracy.
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## Emerging Monitoring Areas

ICVs began monitoring:

- Shoe removal practices
  - Religious item storage
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## Closing Statement:

The Independent Custody Visitor Scheme remains a cornerstone of public trust in police custody practices. Through the dedication of volunteers and support from the Office of the PCC, the scheme ensures humane treatment and rights protection for all detainees. We thank our ICVs for their service and encourage public engagement with this vital work.

## Statement of Acceptance

***As Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, I formally acknowledge and accept this Annual Report of the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme for 2024–2025. The findings and observations contained herein reflect the dedication of our volunteers and the continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and the safeguarding of detainee rights. I commend the work of all involved and reaffirm our support for the scheme’s vital role in maintaining public trust in police custody practices.***

**PCC Signature:**

A handwritten signature in green ink, likely belonging to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley.

**Date:** 26 January 2026