



**Independent Custody Visiting Scotland (ICVS): Key activity for Q3 2023 (October – December)**

When a person is arrested by the police, they are usually taken to a custody suite where they are detained. Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the local community who visit these individuals to ensure their care, welfare, rights and entitlements and dignity are upheld. They speak with them whilst they are in their cell and provide valuable oversight on how that person has been treated and the conditions of the detention.

This report provides a summary of the oversight activities conducted by the ICVs which is facilitated by Independent Custody Visiting Scotland (ICVS).

**Key activity for Q3 2023 (October – December)**

Between October-December 2023 a total of 24,674 people were held in Police Scotland custody. Of these, 290 were under the age of 16.

During this period a total of 256 custody visits were attempted by ICVs with a total of 347 people in custody accepting to speak to one of our volunteers.

The table below summarises custody throughput across the three ICVS regions (North, East and West) and outlines the number of independent custody visits that were conducted.

Region	Throughput	Visits	No of persons in custody at time of visit	Persons in custody not available	Persons in custody offered	Persons in custody seen
North	5308	61	175	40	74	54
East	6356	91	386	84	194	131
West	13010	104	533	90	225	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,674</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>1094</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>347</b>

## **ICVS Q3 in numbers**

- A total of 256 visits to custody centres were attempted.
- 1094 persons were in custody at the time of these visits.
- 45% of those in custody at the time of the visit were offered to speak to a custody visitor (92 were female and 394 male, 6 were older children and 1 was a younger child).
- 7 visits had to be abandoned, 2 of which were carried out via telephone and 5 were face to face. ICVS did not receive any advance notice that one centre had been closed and at other centres visits were abandoned due to staff shortage and where centres were too busy and could be more than 40 minute delay before they could give access.
- 4 visits were reported as unsatisfactory. 3 of these relate to visits being abandoned following unsuccessful calls being made to try get access to the custody suite. The other visit did not go ahead due to the custody suite experiencing an extremely busy period and the IVC felt staff and officers were under pressure.
- 238 (93%) of visits were reported by ICVs as being successful.
- 252 (98%) of these visits ICVs recorded/commented on positive feedback regarding custody staff/ officers.
- 1 Legalised Police Cell (LPC) activation was reported and recorded.

## **Independent Custody Visitor Observations**

ICVS Regional Coordinators continue to analyse visitor reports to determine themes and areas that would benefit from improvement activity.

In this reporting period, the most frequently recorded observation by ICVs related to detainees either indicating that they had not been issued with their letter of rights or did not understand their rights. This observation was recorded on 56 occasions. In 52 of these occasions any issues were resolved at the time of the visit following discussion with custody staff.

The most frequent welfare matter, which was raised on 48 occasions, was in relation to medical attention. This broad category includes observations such as detainees not having immediate access to prescriptions/ medication and the timeframe when they are seen by a healthcare practitioner after arriving at custody.

Custody healthcare is the responsibility of the local NHS board, police will make the referral to health (where there is an identified need or where someone advises) but have no influence over how quickly a person in custody is seen or what medication is given and therefore any delay is based upon this clinical decision.

**OFFICIAL**

45 of these matters were able to be resolved by ICVs speaking with the detainee and highlighting medical needs/ information to the officers/staff.

In this reporting period ICVs continue to record issues relating to conditions and general maintenance of police custody facilities and faulty equipment. A number of concerns were raised regarding custody cells being out of order, with custody staff advising that repairs were taking longer than anticipated.

No concerns with regards to the Optional Protocol for the Prevention against Torture, inhumane or degrading treatment were raised during the visits.

**OFFICIAL**