

CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME: ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To review the performance of the Custody Visiting Scheme.

PERIODIC REPORT

2. The reports from the Convenors of the three Panels on the operation of the scheme and the visiting statistics during the period October 2010 to March 2011 are attached as follows:-
 - (a) Eastern Panel – Appendix 1
 - (b) Northern Panel – Appendix 2
 - (c) Western Panel – Appendix 3
3. The combined statistics for the period are attached as Appendix 4.

ANNUAL REPORT

4. Details of the annual statistics for the Custody Visiting Scheme for 2010/11 and a comparison with the previous year, are attached as Appendix 5.
5. There are currently 58 Custody Visitors. Each Custody Visitor Panel is responsible for one custody suite which is visited twice a week.
6. In 2010/11, Custody Visitors made a total number of 295 visits compared to 290 visits in 2009/10. Of the 3182 persons being detained at the time of the visits, 872 were unavailable to accept a visit for a number of reasons including in interview, asleep, doctors' visit, or Custody Officer/Visitor refusal as detainee violent/drunken. Of the 1382 detainees who were available and selected to be seen, 1307 (94.5%) consented to meeting the Custody Visitors and 75 (5.5%) declined. In the previous year, of the 1451 detainees available and selected to be seen, 1390 (95.8%) consented to a visit and 61 (4.2%) declined.
7. Of the detainees seen, 559 detainees (42.7%) raised 868 issues which related mainly to food/drink, additional bedding, requests about their release/welfare of family members, medical issues and telephone calls. Last year, 707 (47.4%) detainees seen raised 1150 issues. The majority of issues raised by detainees were resolved at the time of the visit by the Custody Officer. Any issues, which cannot be resolved by the Custody Officer, are referred to the Chief Inspector responsible for custody for consideration and appropriate action. It is important to note, however, that the vast majority of reports received from Custody Visitors were complimentary about the conditions in the Custody Suites.
8. The Scheme continues to operate well in Cheshire with very few major issues being reported by Custody Visitors.

ANNUAL CUSTODY VISITORS TRAINING SEMINAR

9. The annual training seminar was held on Saturday 5 March 2011 at Constabulary Headquarters. Mrs Chapman chaired the event. Also in attendance were the Chief Executive; the Assistant Chief Constable (Neighbourhood) and the Chief Inspector who has responsibility for the operation of the custody suites. The Seminar was part of the ongoing training programme for Custody Visitors, and the three Panels had been consulted on what they wished to be included in the programme.
10. The event focused on raising awareness about adult abuse and the procedures for booking-in detainees including risk assessments, care plans, and the measures taken to prevent deaths in custody. Custody Visitors also received a presentation on the role and work of a Magistrate and discussed the local sentencing issues. The training was delivered by Julie Hunt, a Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator at Halton Borough Council, Chief Inspector Edgar and Mrs Chapman. Forty three of the current 58 Custody Visitors attended the training, with positive feedback being received about its content.
11. Following the seminar, a joint Panel meeting was held which provided an opportunity for all Custody Visitors to raise and discuss issues of a general interest.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL CUSTODY VISITORS CONFERENCE

12. Following the success of the last three year's regional conferences, it is planned to continue with this training as an annual event with the North West Regional Conference being held on Saturday 24 September 2011 at Greater Manchester Police's Training Centre at Sedgley Park. Representatives from the five North West police authorities and North Wales are currently considering and planning the programme for the day. It is hoped that presentations may include Human Rights; immigration and asylum detainees and the work of the Border Agency and on restrictive access within custody.
13. The Conference aims to provide an opportunity for Custody Visitors and Scheme Administrators to network with colleagues from around the region. It is proposed that up to 25 Custody Visitors from Cheshire will attend along with two representatives from the Engagement Committee.

APPENDIX 1

EASTERN CUSTODY VISITORS PANEL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2011

PERSONNEL

1. Following a recruitment drive last year, five new custody visitors joined the Eastern Panel in September 2010, making the Panel numbers up to twenty. The new custody visitors have been given additional visits over their first six months. These additional visits have had the benefit of concentrating the experience and insight of the new visitors and helped them bond into the Panel by meeting and mixing with more of the experienced visitors over the period. The new custody visitors have now completed their six month probationary period.

ORGANISATION

2. The Panel met last in November 2010 as an individual panel and are due to meet again in July. Contact between the Convenor and Panel members is successfully maintained by email and telephone.
3. The most recent Cheshire Custody Visitors training seminar was held on 5 March 2011 and attended by most of the Panel. A joint panel meeting is held at the end of these events and helps foster discussion across the three panels especially where particular occurrences are of interest.
4. Panel members continue to attend the 'Question Time' public meetings in the Eastern Panel area and the style and content of the meetings have received favourable feedback.

DATA

5. As can be noted from the attached statistics, during the above six month period there were 50 visits carried out (only 2 visits were missed). A total of 521 (486 adults and 35 juveniles) were shown as being in the suite from the lists taken from the custody board at Middlewich. 418 detainees (384 adults and 34 juveniles) were selected for a visit (80.2%); of these, 250 detainees (229 adults and 21 juveniles) were actually seen (59.8% of the 418 - or 48% of the 521).
6. The main reason detainees were unavailable to be seen were: - Asleep = 68 or they were in interview/with their solicitor = 34. In addition, Custody Sergeants advised that 6 detainees should not be seen, this was due to their violent, angry or unco-operative behaviour. Only 16 detainees directly declined a visit. This number is down as the last reporting period and equates to 6.02% of the 266 we asked if they would accept a visit. Our success rate of those we asked to accept a visit is 93.98%.
7. A number of the detainees seen made similar requests, or raised areas of concern (138 issues in total), during the custody visits. The main topics were: - asking for Food / drink / water = 25; Telephone contact = 23; Reading material = 17; See the nurse / need for medication = 16. These matters were brought to the attention of the custody sergeants/detention staff for action/consideration at the time of the visits. The full statistics relating to these issues have already been circulated to the panel and will be reported on at our next panel meeting.

8. At our last meeting it was suggested by a Panel member that we look at the visiting statistics at Middlewich, hour by hour. The table below gives a breakdown of our last six months of visits and is for information only.

Hour by Hour Visiting Numbers – 1 October 2010 to 31 March 2011

Time of Visit	No. Of Visits	Average Time Taken (Minutes)	Average Total No. of Detainees	Detainees Selected (Average)	Detainees Seen (Average)	Selection & Visit - Overall % Success
0001 - 0800	0					
0801 - 0900	2	33	11.5	8.5	5	59%
0901 - 1000	6	36	10.8	7.3	4	55%
1001 - 1100	7	37	12.9	8.7	5.7	66%
1101 - 1200	2	46	10.5	9	3.5	78%
1201 - 1300	1	30	18	10	4	40%
1301 - 1400	4	52	10.8	8.8	6	69%
1401 - 1500	9	47	10.1	7.7	4.8	62%
1501 - 1600	1	40	12	10	3	30%
1601 - 1700	6	57	11.2	8.3	5.2	63%
1701 - 1800	1	55	9	9	6	67%
1801 - 1900	2	68	10.5	9	6	67%
1901 - 2000	3	45	10.7	9.3	6	65%
2001 - 2100	2	52	4.5	4.5	3.5	78%
2101 - 2200	4	51	10.8	10	5.8	58%
2201 - 2400	0					

MATTERS ARISING

9. There were very few issues raised in the 'Matters for inquiry/ reply by the Police Authority section of the reporting form during this period. Those matters raised were relatively minor. They are mostly now resolved and are as follows: -
- Tea/coffee/sugar not in proper sealed containers - I understand that this has now been rectified
 - There was concern over how custody staff monitor their own response times to the bell in cells when activated by a detainee? (This follows a detainees concern over a lack of reply to pressing the bell to query the collection of a child from school). I am not aware that this has been actioned for reply.
 - Self closing fire door to kitchen wedged open – We have been advised that the 'Fire Door – Keep Closed' notice to this door has been removed following

consultation with the fire officer and health and safety staff. The room is just a food preparation area.

- Change of underwear for detainees – Question posed as to whether detainees are provided with a change of underwear if held for over 24 hours. This was a very recent inquiry. My understanding is that under normal circumstances detainees do not receive a change of underwear/socks/clothing automatically but, if the custody sergeant allows it, family members may bring in fresh clothing. Where there is no family available or an urgent need is raised, then the custody sergeants use their own discretion to resolve the matter – looking to provide whatever is necessary, as and when required.

10. Panel members continue to enjoy a good relationship with the custody staff at Middlewich, especially the detention officers. Most reports indicate the professional or courteous manner in which custody visitors are received, along with the helpful, efficient or prompt way they are dealt with and especially in the way they assisted the new visitors. Although detention staff and custody visitors are reasonably well known to each other, a professional work-like relationship is still maintained.

CONCLUSION

11. Once again the Panel has functioned well over the last six months and continues to enjoy a good response to our visits from the custody staff at Middlewich. The vast majority of matters raised are resolved at the time of the visit, planned for action when time allows or received a detailed and satisfactory response from the Chief Inspector. Another positive and effective period for the Eastern Panel.

BOB HODGSON
CONVENOR, EASTERN PANEL

CUSTODY VISITORS SCHEME

EASTERN PANEL

ANALYSIS OF VISITS - 1 OCTOBER 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2011

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS MADE

50

PACE	HOME OFFICE	OTHER	TOTAL
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TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES

(all persons held in custody at the time)

ADULT

462	18	6	486
35	-	-	35

JUVENILE

TOTAL NUMBER SELECTED FOR VISIT

ADULT

364	15	5	384
34	-	-	34

JUVENILE

TOTAL NUMBER SEEN

ADULT

213	12	4	229
21	-	-	21

JUVENILE

TOTAL NUMBER NOT AVAILABLE TO BE SEEN

ADULT

129	4	1	134
18	-	-	18

JUVENILE

TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES DECLINED A VISIT

ADULT

14	-	-	14
2	-	-	2

JUVENILE

CUSTODY VISITORS SCHEME

TIMING AND DAYS OF WEEK OF VISITS

TIME	NO. OF VISITS
00.01 - 06.00	0
06.01 - 09.00	2
09.01 - 12.00	15
12.01 - 15.00	14
15.01 - 18.00	8
18.01 - 21.00	7
21.01 - 00.00	4

MONDAY	6
TUESDAY	12
WEDNESDAY	6
THURSDAY	1
FRIDAY	14
SATURDAY	6
SUNDAY	5

APPENDIX 2

NORTHERN CUSTODY VISITORS PANEL REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2010 - MARCH 2011

PERSONNEL

- 1 Having recruited 7 new custody visitors in September, bringing our total to 19, we have recently been unfortunate to lose an experienced visitor due to ill health. The new custody visitors are progressing well and carrying out their visits in a professional manner, and all have completed a satisfactory period of probation.

ORGANISATION

- 2 There was one Panel meeting held in Warrington, on 8th November 2010 and the joint meeting took place at Police HQ on 5th March. Two Custody Visitors regularly attend the 'Police Question Time' meetings in Warrington and Runcorn.

DATA

- 3 There were 50 visits made during this period and a total of 526 detainees [506 adults and 20 juveniles] were recorded. 384 detainees were selected [364 adults and 20 juveniles] for a visit and of these 187 [175 adults and 12 juveniles] accepted. Only 2 detainees, all adults, refused a visit with the remainder being unavailable for the following reasons:-

In interview	67
Asleep	103
Discharged during the visit	14
With nurse	4
Advised against	7

- 4 The following number of requests were made during the visits:-

To see the nurse	19	Solicitor	4	reading material	1
Telephone/contact	20	Food/drink	16	exercise	2
Appropriate Adult	1	Prayer mat	0	shower	6
Blanket	14	Info re: detention	7		

MATTERS ARISING

- 5 A faulty fire alarm [intermittent ringing] was reported by custody staff. It was confirmed that the alarm still worked and nobody was put at risk. Replacement parts have been ordered.
- 6 Custody Staff could not find the CV questions booklet in translated form which is usually kept on site at the custody desk. Chief Inspector Edgar has made all staff aware of its location.
- 7 In conclusion, most issues are dealt with efficiently at the time of the visit and relationships between custody visitors and custody staff within the suite remain positive and effective to the benefit of all concerned.

KEITH BROWN,
CONVENOR, NORTHERN PANEL

CUSTODY VISITORS SCHEME

NORTHERN PANEL

ANALYSIS OF VISITS – 1 OCTOBER 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2011

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS MADE

50

PACE	HOME OFFICE	OTHER	TOTAL
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TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES

(all persons held in custody at the time)

ADULT

JUVENILE

462	18	26	506
20	0	0	20

TOTAL NUMBER SELECTED FOR VISIT

ADULT

JUVENILE

338	15	11	364
20	0	0	20

TOTAL NUMBER SEEN

ADULT

JUVENILE

161	7	7	175
12	0	0	12

TOTAL NUMBER NOT AVAILABLE TO BE SEEN

ADULT

JUVENILE

177	8	4	189
8	0	0	8

TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES DECLINED A VISIT

ADULT

JUVENILE

2	0	0	2
0	0	0	0

CUSTODY VISITORS SCHEME

TIMING AND DAYS OF WEEK OF VISITS

TIME	NO. OF VISITS
00.00 - 06.00	0
06.00 - 09.00	3
09.00 - 12.00	10
12.00 - 15.00	5
15.00 - 18.00	14
18.00 - 21.00	15
21.00 - 00.00	3

MONDAY	10
TUESDAY	2
WEDNESDAY	8
THURSDAY	6
FRIDAY	11
SATURDAY	7
SUNDAY	6

APPENDIX 3

WESTERN CUSTODY VISITOR PANEL REPORT FOR 1 OCTOBER 2010 – 31 MARCH 2011

PERSONNEL

- 1 The Panel currently has 20 visitors. After the resignation of one member, our reserve was called in to the Panel. The newly appointed visitors have proved to be an asset to the Panel and all have settled in very well to custody visiting.

ORGANISATION

- 2 Panel meetings held in December and following the training seminar in March have been well attended. The training seminar itself was very well received and all Panel members expressed their interest in the topics covering Safeguarding Adults and the Role of a Magistrate. Group work was also undertaken.
- 3 An afternoon before Christmas was held at my house for a social get together for all the visitors on the Panel.

DATA

- 4 There were 49 visits made in the period and a total of 337 adults and 23 juveniles were recorded. Of these:-

91.6% of detainees selected and available to be seen, accepted a visit.
8.4% of detainees refused a visit.
31.1% of detainees were not available to be seen.
- 5 Reasons for not being able to see detainees were mostly because they were in interview, asleep or being processed by the custody staff.

MATTERS ARISING

- 6 Blacon custody continues to be a well run suite. Any problems or issues are generally dealt with at the time of the visit and we continue to have a good rapport with all custody staff.

CONCLUSION

- 7 This is my last report as Convenor of the Western Panel. I have resigned from the post but will continue as a Custody Visitor. May I take the opportunity of thanking the Panel and the Authority staff, particularly Martin Eaton, for all the help and support I have received over the last eight years.

SELINA N. TAUNTON
CONVENOR, WESTERN PANEL

CUSTODY VISITORS SCHEME

WESTERN PANEL

ANALYSIS OF VISITS – 1 OCTOBER 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2011

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS MADE

49

PACE	HOME OFFICE	OTHER	TOTAL
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TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES

(all persons held in custody at the time)

ADULT

JUVENILE

329	5	3	337
23	0	0	23

TOTAL NUMBER SELECTED FOR VISIT

ADULT

JUVENILE

248	5	3	256
23	0	0	23

TOTAL NUMBER SEEN

ADULT

JUVENILE

157	2	2	161
15	0	0	15

TOTAL NUMBER NOT AVAILABLE TO BE SEEN

ADULT

JUVENILE

79	3	1	83
4	0	0	4

TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES DECLINED A VISIT

ADULT

JUVENILE

12	0	0	12
4	0	0	4

CUSTODY VISITORS SCHEME

TIMING AND DAYS OF WEEK OF VISITS

TIME	NO. OF VISITS
00.00 - 06.00	0
06.00 - 09.00	0
09.00 - 12.00	20
12.00 - 15.00	4
15.00 - 18.00	10
18.00 - 21.00	14
21.00 - 00.00	1

MONDAY	6
TUESDAY	4
WEDNESDAY	5
THURSDAY	9
FRIDAY	15
SATURDAY	3
SUNDAY	7

APPENDIX 4

ANALYSIS OF VISITS MADE BY ALL THREE PANELS
OCTOBER – MARCH 2011 COMPARED TO SAME PERIOD IN 2009/10

	2009/10	2010/11
NUMBER OF VISITS MADE	144	149
NUMBER OF DETAINEES <i>(all persons held in custody at the time of visit)</i>	1571	1407
DETAINEES NOT AVAILABLE FOR A VISIT	417	436
DETAINEES DECLINING A VISIT	38	34
DETAINEES CONSENTING TO A VISIT	675	613
DETAINEES NOT SELECTED FOR A VISIT	441	324
DETAINEES RAISING ISSUES	341	272
NUMBER OF ISSUES RAISED	587	410

TIME	NO. OF VISITS	
	2009/10	2010/11
00.00 - 06.00		
06.00 - 09.00	6	5
09.00 - 12.00	42	45
12.00 - 15.00	25	23
15.00 - 18.00	24	32
18.00 - 21.00	36	36
21.00 - 00.00	1	8

DAY OF WEEK	NO. OF VISITS	
	2009/10	2010/11
MONDAY	22	22
TUESDAY	21	18
WEDNESDAY	19	19
THURSDAY	14	16
FRIDAY	31	40
SATURDAY	21	16
SUNDAY	16	18

APPENDIX 5

ANALYSIS OF VISITS MADE BY ALL THREE PANELS

	2009/10	2010/11
NUMBER OF VISITS MADE	290	295
NUMBER OF DETAINEES <i>(all persons held in custody at the time of visit)</i>	3345	3182
DETAINEES NOT AVAILABLE FOR A VISIT	962	872
DETAINEES DECLINING A VISIT	61	75
DETAINEES CONSENTING TO A VISIT	1390	1307
DETAINEES NOT SELECTED FOR A VISIT	932	926
DETAINEES RAISING ISSUES	707	559
NUMBER OF ISSUES RAISED	1150	868

TIME	NO. OF VISITS	
	2009/10	2010/11
00.00 - 06.00	0	0
06.00 - 09.00	16	11
09.00 - 12.00	102	106
12.00 - 15.00	46	39
15.00 - 18.00	44	52
18.00 - 21.00	72	77
21.00 - 00.00	10	10

DAY OF WEEK	NO. OF VISITS	
	2009/10	2010/11
MONDAY	37	43
TUESDAY	44	35
WEDNESDAY	38	38
THURSDAY	33	32
FRIDAY	59	71
SATURDAY	45	41
SUNDAY	34	35