

## SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

### 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

#### Independent Custody Visitor Scheme

#### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Independent Custody Visiting was introduced in England as a result of the recommendations from the Scarman Report into the 1981 Brixton riots.
- 1.2 The scheme is designed to ensure a greater understanding of, and confidence in the processes and rules governing a detained person's welfare. It also offers an extra level of mutual protection to both detained persons and police custody staff by providing independent scrutiny of the treatment of detained persons and the conditions in which they are held.
- 1.3 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the public recruited by the Police and Crime Commissioner on a voluntary basis to visit police stations at random to check on the treatment of people held in police custody and to ensure that their rights and entitlements are upheld in accordance with the Police and Criminal Act 1984 (PACE).
- 1.4 The role of an Independent Custody Visitor is to look, ask questions, listen and report on their findings. The role includes speaking to detainees and checking areas of the custody unit such as the kitchen, exercise yards, stores and shower facilities.
- 1.5 Any queries or actions requiring immediate attention are discussed on site with the custody staff. With permission, Independent Custody Visitors also have access to detainees' custody records to verify what they have seen and heard. In some circumstances, they also view CCTV footage. ICVs do not need to know why a person is being detained and they do not talk to those being held about alleged offences.
- 1.6 They produce a report which is then forwarded to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for analysis. Any serious areas for action that were not able to be addressed at the time of the visit are recorded and flagged to the custody Inspector or a more senior officer. If the Independent Custody Visitors are still not satisfied, they can take up the problems with the Commissioner or the Police Custody Chief Inspector at meetings held every two months.
- 1.7 Each year the OPCC produces an annual report setting out the work of the ICV scheme, and this is being presented to the Police and Crime Panel for information.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Police and Crime Panel is asked to note the content of the report and attached ICV Annual Report.

## **3. CONTACT INFORMATION**

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