



POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
for Leicestershire

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Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Leicestershire

Annual Report – 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017



It is a statutory duty for a Police and Crime Commissioner to have in place an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. Such schemes exist to provide assurance to local communities that they can have confidence in how the police treat people who are held in their custody.

Independent Custody Visitors are volunteers who are recruited from the local community. They come from a variety of backgrounds and must be 18 years or over and have no direct involvement in the criminal justice system. At the current time there are 29 volunteers undertaking this role in Leicestershire. The role of the Independent Custody Visitor is to make unannounced visits to police custody suites, in pairs, to speak to individuals who are being detained by the police to check on their welfare. In addition to speaking to individuals detained by the police Independent Custody Visitors also inspect other areas of the custody suite for health and safety purposes.

At the conclusion of each visit Independent Custody Visitors complete a report on their findings which are forwarded to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Requests from detained persons are generally dealt with during the course of the visit but any other issues are taken forward by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and a response from the Force is sought in relation to all issues raised. The outcomes of all visits are reported to the Strategic Assurance Board.

Independent Custody Visitors visit each primary custody suite, based at Euston Street, Keyham Lane and Beaumont Leys, a minimum of one visit per week. During 2016/17 a total of 145 visits were made as follows:-

Beaumont Leys	40 Visits
Keyham Lane	52 Visits
Euston Street	53 Visits

Beaumont Leys custody suite was closed for 3 months of the year from January to March 2017 due to refurbishment.

Of the 145 visits undertaken during 2016/17 immediate access to the custody suite was provided on 131 occasions with only 13 visits incurring a wait of 6-15 minutes and only 1 visit incurring a wait for 16+ minutes. For those visits that did incur a wait for access explanations were provided to the visitors at the time and in most cases related to the custody suite being busy and a member of staff not being available to escort the visitors. On one occasion the custody staff were dealing with a violent detainee at the front desk therefore access to the custody suite was delayed.

To ensure a varied coverage of visits each week is divided into 35 timeslots for each custody suite. Over the year, apart from 3 time slots at Beaumont Leys custody suite, visits were undertaken across all times of the day and days of the week. This is crucial to ensure that visits do not become predictable and occur at regular and set times.

During 2016/17 a total of 1084 detainees were in police detention at the time of the custody visits – of these 436 (40%) were offered a visit from the Independent Custody Visitors and 495 (94%) agreed to be seen. Of the remainder 591 detainees were not available to be visited, for a variety of reasons e.g. in interviews/asleep, 23 refused to be seen. 55 were not offered a visit for a variety of reasons e.g. advised by custody staff not to visit or the Independent Custody Visitor chose not to visit and prioritised vulnerable detainees.

No major issues of concern were reported from the custody visits although a small number of health and safety issues were identified including:-

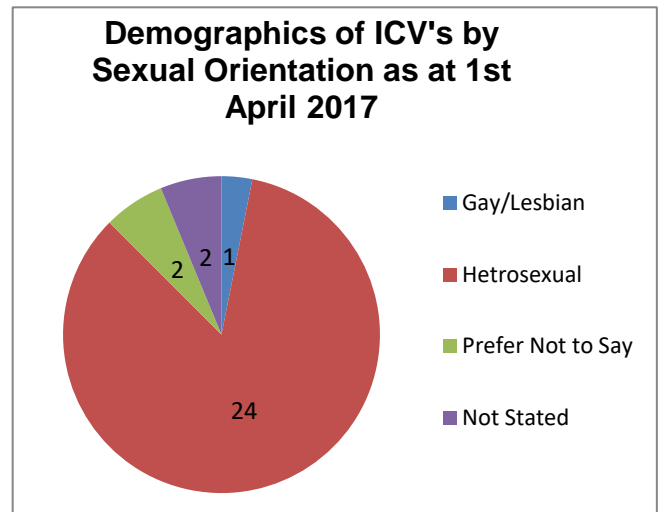
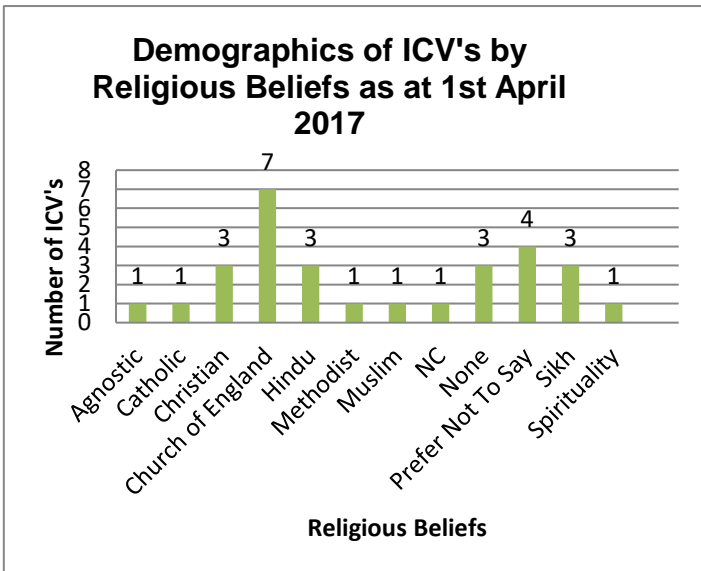
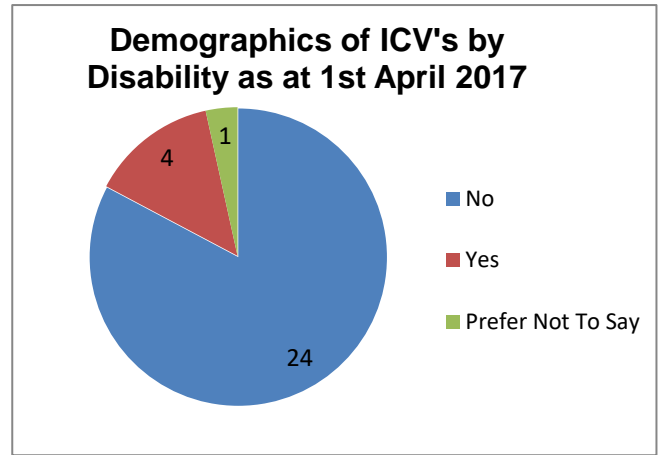
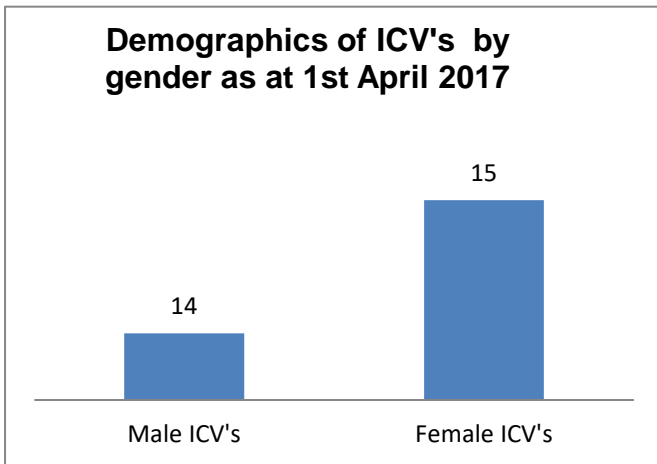
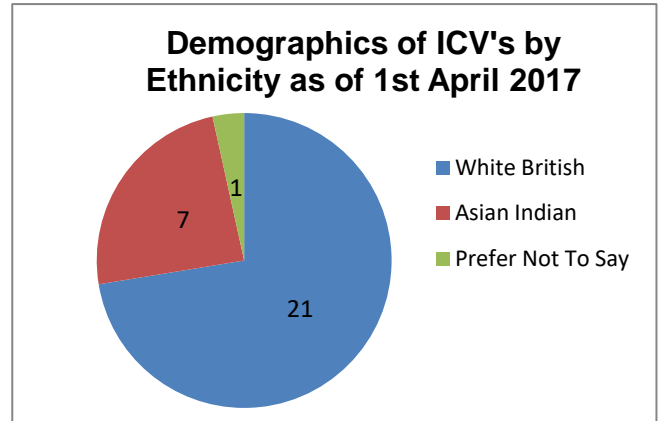
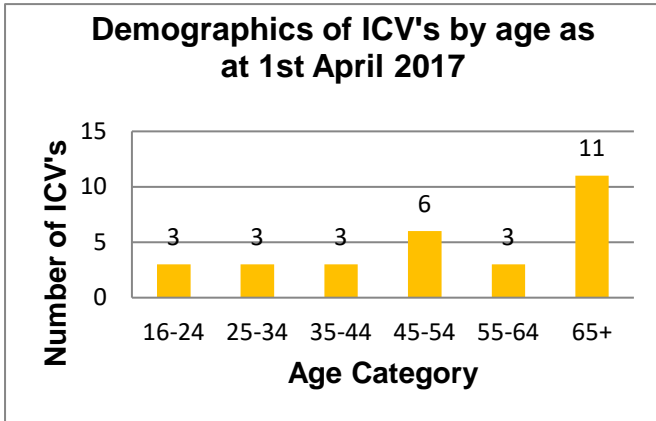
- A number of cells in which people were sleeping had used plates and cups that had not been removed.
OUTCOME - Such items are removed periodically. This would not automatically happen do when detainees were asleep to save disturbance into their Rest Period. Items are often removed on request or if they possess risk or are unsanitary or when the detainee leaves custody. It is to be expected that there will be some empty cups etc. in cells during a person's detention.
- Found excess water on floor of exercise yard. Possible blocked drain.
OUTCOME - Drainage issue confirmed and estates contacted to rectify
- Exercise yard – Door opposite kitchen – top few courses (vertical) need more mastic.
OUTCOME - Issue forwarded onto Estates for review and actioning.
- Blanket store – awaiting emptying of cages.
OUTCOME – Noted. Emptied thrice weekly - removal has taken place.
- Cell 5 waiting to be cleaned. Shower to be cleaned.
OUTCOME – Visit took place at 5am and cleaner starts at 7am. Cells since cleaned. Showers have had a professional clean as well.

From conversations with detainees held in police custody the following requests were received:-

Descriptions	Beaumont Leys	Euston Street	Keyham Lane	Total
Request for Doctor/ Nurse/ Medications	7	11	16	34
Request for refreshments or meals	7	26	10	43
Request for phone calls	4	7	7	18
Request for reading material	4	6	1	11
Request for blankets	2	7	7	16
Request for an update on their care	0	1	2	3
Request to see a solicitor	5	2	2	9
Request for exercise or fresh air	1	5	2	8
Request regarding cell conditions	0	2	1	3
Request for washing facilities	1	3	1	5
Request for religious texts	0	1	0	1
Enquiry if a family member informed	1	5	1	7
Total per suite and Grand Total	32	76	50	158

All requests were reported to the Custody Sergeant with the majority being dealt with at the time of the visit.

We have 29 current independent custody visitors. The demographics of the custody visitors are:-



Feedback from Independent Custody Visitors throughout the year has included a number of complimentary comments as a result of their visits, examples of which are as follows:-

“Friendly staff, smooth visit”

“Kitchen seen, very clean and well stocked – food in date”

“Exercise yard observed, no concerns”