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**POLICE & CRIME
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Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Annual Report 2024/2025

Report Date	7 th May 2025
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Security Classification	Official

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with the annual report of the Commissioner's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme 2024/25. The report covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Recommendation

1. Members are recommended to discuss and note the contents of the report.

Background

2. Custody visiting in Leicestershire commenced in 1983 as a voluntary scheme following a recommendation from the Scarman report into the Brixton disorders in 1981. One of Lord Scarman's recommendations was that a system be introduced whereby local community members could make independent, unannounced visits to police stations for the purpose of ensuring the welfare of persons detained in police custody. The purpose of this recommendation was to counter growing mistrust of the police at that time and to increase their accountability. Subsequently Section 51(1) to the Police Reform Act 2002 placed independent custody visiting on a statutory basis with responsibility for schemes lying with local policing bodies. As such, the Home Office produced a Code of Practice on the delivery of schemes and National Standards were introduced by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA).

Organisation of the Scheme in Leicestershire

3. The Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for the Scheme and receives regular reports on the performance and outcomes from custody visits. The Commissioner has also undertaken a number of custody visits himself during his term of office. The Scheme is overseen by the Executive Director with daily management undertaken by the Assurance Officer.
4. There are currently 28 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) in the Scheme. All are recruited from the local community through a recruitment process which includes an application form and an interview. All volunteers are vetted and complete a six-month probationary period during which time all induction training is provided.
5. Leicestershire Police has 3 custody suites located as follows:

Beaumont Leys	-	14 cells
Euston Street	-	36 cells
Keyham Lane	-	17 cells

Visits undertaken 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

6. The PCC has set the locally agreed target to visit each custody suite a minimum of once per week, this had been achieved and 100% of scheduled visits were completed.

During 2024/25 a total of 103 visits were made as follows:

Beaumont Leys	3 Visits
Euston Street	52 Visits
Keyham Lane	48 Visits

Closures

7. Beaumont Leys remained closed for most of the year, it opened when there was estates work being carried out at Euston Street and Keyham Lane. The primary custody suites were Euston Street and Keyham Lane.

Access to the custody suite

8. For each visit undertaken, a record is kept of the time that ICVs attended at the police station to the time they received admittance to the custody suite. Of the 103 visits carried out during the year, immediate access to the custody suite was provided on 90 visits (87%). ICVs experienced a delay of 6-20 minutes on 13 visits (13%). Below is a list which documents the rationale for delayed access.

Delayed Visits

List of reasons why a visit was delayed

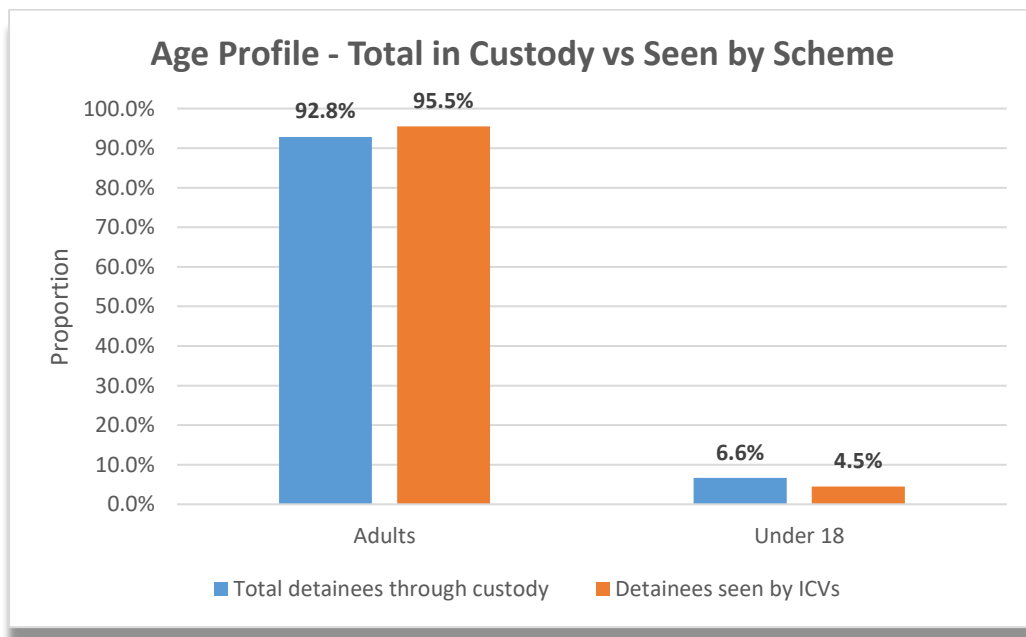
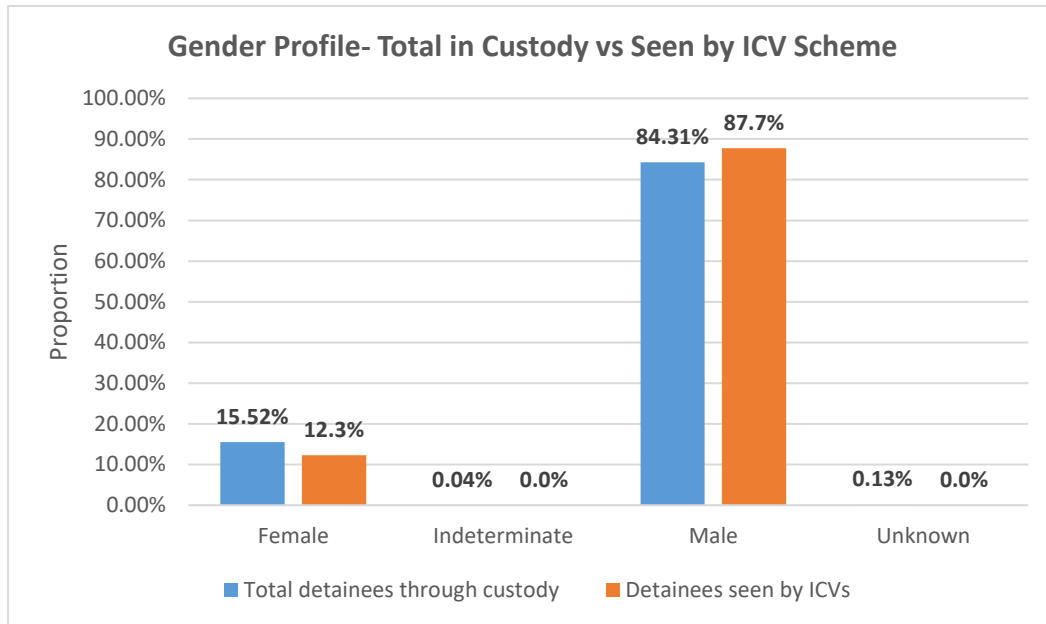
1 Apr 2024 to 31 Mar 2025

Suite	Delay Reasons
Leicestershire Euston Street	20 minutes
	Very busy booking detainees in and not much staff in
	No one answering the phone. Spoke to 2 officers to ask for someone to come out
	Busy shift
	Busy , booking in detainees. Saturday evening, football day
	6 minutes. No reason given can only assume that staff not available to pick up phone.
	8 min delay
Leicestershire Keyham Lane	6minutes
	Delay was in us being able to get through via phone to custody at the point of arrival. Access provided swiftly thereafter.
	Busy night
	Door closed and had to phone
	Busy custody suite and phone line engaged.
	7 minutes. Just waiting for someone to open door. Short staffed

Detainees seen, not seen or who refused a visit by Custody Visitors

9. During 2024/25, the total number of detainees in police custody was 16,546 of which 1060 were in police cells at the time of custody visits. Of these:-
 - 400 detainees (37%) were offered a visit
 - 359 detainees (90%) were seen
 - 41 detainees (10%) refused a visit
 - 43 detainees (3%) were not offered a visit on advice from the Custody Sergeant due to them being aggressive, intoxicated or health and safety concerns.
 - 190 detainees (20%) were not available to be visited due to being in an interview, at hospital, or out of cell for other reasons.
 - 427 detainees (40%) that were asleep, were observed through the spyhole or cell hatch.

The demographic breakdown of those detainees that were seen by visitors is shown below.



Day and Time of Visits

10. To ensure a varied coverage of visits each week is divided into 35 timeslots per custody suite. A varied spread of visits is crucial to ensure that visits do not become predictable. The below tables show the performance for 2024/2025

<u>Euston Street</u>	00:00 - 07:59	08:00 - 11:59	12:00 - 15:59	16:00 - 19:59	20:00 - 23:59	Totals
Monday	1	2	2	3	1	9
Tuesday	1	1	1	1	1	5
Wednesday	1	1	1	3	1	7
Thursday	1	2	1	2	1	7
Friday	1	2	2	2	2	9
Saturday	2	2	2	1	2	9
Sunday	1	1	1	2	1	6
Totals	8	11	10	14	9	52

<u>Keyham Lane</u>	00:00 - 07:59	08:00 - 11:59	12:00 - 15:59	16:00 - 19:59	20:00 - 23:59	Totals
Monday	1	1	2	2	1	7
Tuesday	1	1	1	1	1	5
Wednesday	1	2	1	2	2	8
Thursday	1	1	1	2	3	7
Friday	1	1	2	1	1	6
Saturday	1	2	1	1	1	6
Sunday	1	4	1	1	1	8
Totals	6	12	9	10	10	48

<u>Beaumont Leys</u>	00:00 - 07:59	08:00 - 11:59	12:00 - 15:59	16:00 - 19:59	20:00 - 23:59	Totals
Monday						0
Tuesday					1	1
Wednesday						0
Thursday						0
Friday		1				1
Saturday						0
Sunday			1			1
Totals	0	1	1	1	1	3

Requests raised by detainees

11. From conversations with detainees held in police custody, the following requests were received at the time of visits and were resolved in the presence of the ICV's. All requests were reported to the Custody Sergeant.

Issues Log Reported

Issues Resolved During Visit

List of Issues that were resolved during a visit

1 Apr 2024 to 31 Mar 2025

Leicestershire Euston Street

Tag	ICV Comments
Adequate drink not offered	
Adequate drink not offered	Cup of water being provided
Adequate food not offered	
Adequate food not offered	Staff advise food offered
Appropriate Adult (waiting 2+ hours)	
Not offered to have someone notified of arrest	Checked custody record copy and someone has been informed of his arrest
Notice of Rights and Entitlements not received	
Other	Would like to go through his property that the staff have kept of his. Police staff say they do not know much about this but will ask staff. Checked custody record copy and staff have kept it in safe keeping and will give it back to him.
Phone call requested but not provided	Staff said they would deal with this issue
Solicitor not offered	Sergeant said that she has tried to call solicitor and is waiting for a call back. Custody record evidences attempt call made to solicitor.

Leicestershire Keyham Lane

Tag	ICV Comments
Adequate drink not offered	Drink will be provided
Adequate food not offered	Food and tea requested. Informed sergeant.
Adequate food not offered	DP requested food (chicken) and drink. Escorting officer will arrange
Adequate food not offered	Staff confirmed now fed. Log states food refused earlier.
Blanket not provided	Blanket requested, informed sergeant.
Cell too cold	Awaiting a Heating engineer
Female hygiene pack not offered	Detainee thought that she wasn't asked about being provided with menstrual products, checked the custody record and she was indeed asked, may Have been lost in translation
Medication not received/requested	Medication needs to be given later in evening. it is available but there no nurses at the moment to administer. Subsequently advised that nurse booked to attend
Phone call requested but not provided	
Toilet pixelation not explained	

12. A full list of all issues raised by detainees throughout the year is documented at 'Appendix 1' of the report.

Current Custody Visitors

13. At the start of April 2024, there were 16 ICVs appointed with the Scheme. Following a successful recruitment campaign in August 2024 13 new ICVs were recruited, bringing the total to 29 ICVs. 1 ICV left during the year due to a conflict of interest with another role she signed up for.
14. Feedback from the ICV leaver was as follows:

Comments from ICV Leaver

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to volunteer as an Independent Custody Visitor and have truly enjoyed my time in the role. It has been a valuable and rewarding experience.

Meetings

15. The Quarterly team meetings took place, which are chaired by the Assurance Officer and are attended by the Force Custody Inspector and team of Independent Custody Visitors. Since April 2023, the meetings have been taking place in a hybrid format. These meetings took place on:

- 16 April 2024
- 25 June 2024
- 3 September 2024
- 13 December 2025
- 13 March 2025

16. Items discussed in the last 12 months included outcomes from custody visits and Force response, developments within the scheme and custody, legislative changes and system and staff updates within custody.

Developments during 2024/2025

Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel (CDSP)

17. The CDSP was launched in May 2025. The panel is currently made up of Ethics and Transparency Panel members and Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs). There is a representative from Leicestershire Police in attendance. The format of the meeting includes scrutinising approximately 20 unredacted custody records, that have been randomly selected. Custody records are reviewed in person supervised at a police site with an OPCC representative present throughout for the duration of the session. The themes of the custody records reviewed are mental health, children and use of strip search. In 2024/2025 a total of 54 custody records were reviewed and recommendations were provided to Leicestershire Police.

Below is a list of some of the recommendations that were provided:

- Document rationale for delay from arrival to booking in.
- Improve evidence log of food and drink offered to detainees.
- Document delays for appropriate adults/solicitors and feedback to appropriate providers.

18. The OPCC have facilitated 'on-boarding' sessions both in person and virtually for new CDSP members to provide some background and context on detention environments, introduce members to custody records and provide guidance on how to effectively scrutinise the treatment of the detainee and the custody record reviewed.

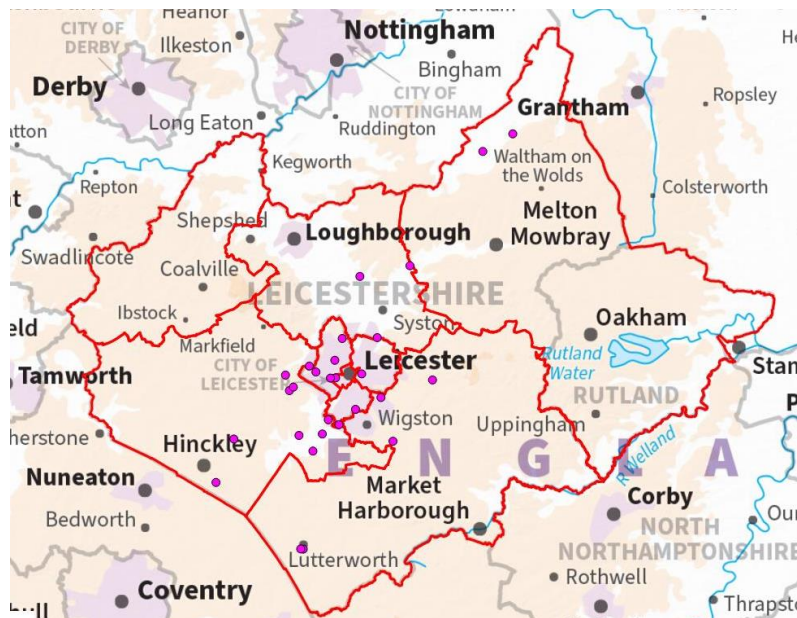
Regional Collaboration

19. Volunteer Managers from Schemes within the East Midlands meet on a quarterly basis. The group discuss:

- Matters arising
- Key Performance Indicators – monitored around frequency and coverage of visits, access to custody suites and the number of detainees visited
- Recruitment updates
- East Midlands Criminal Justice Service (EMCJS) Custody Operational Leads
- Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) updates
- Risk Assessment Documents
- ICV Advanced Regional Training
- Electronic reporting
- Further developments within Schemes such as the Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel
- National Experts Forum (NEF) ICVA updates

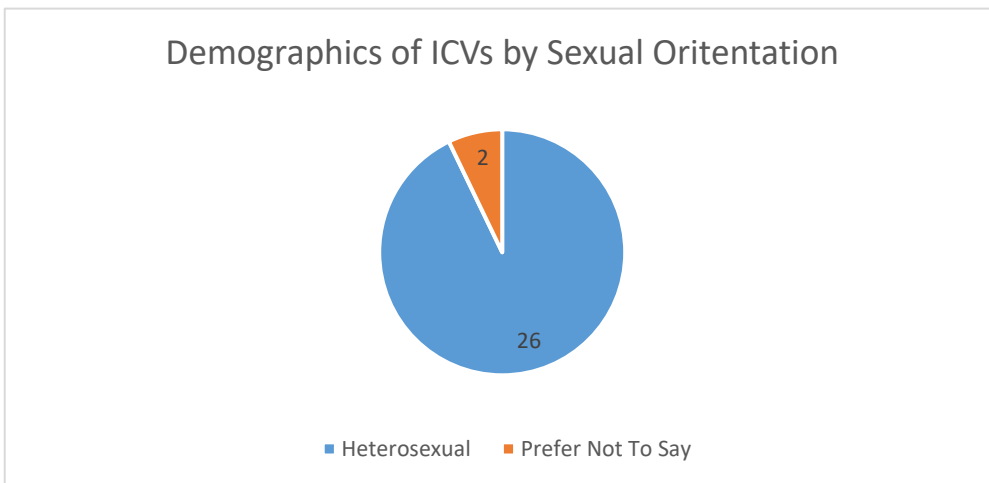
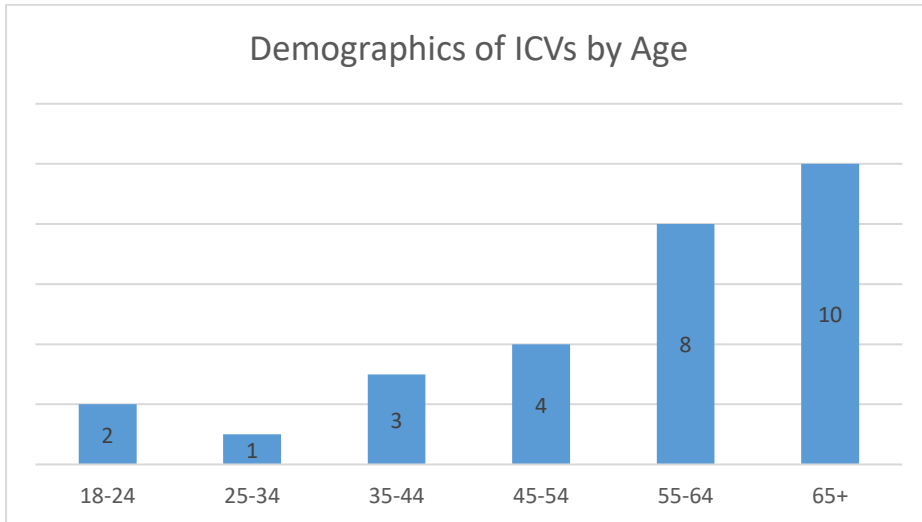
20. The meetings provide an opportunity to share good practice with each other and discuss any new developments in the Scheme. Opportunities are also identified for future collaboration.

21. The map below shows the current geographical reach of the 28 volunteers. 20 (71%) volunteers are from the County and 8 (29%) volunteers from the City. There are no volunteers currently from Rutland. Due to the custody suites all being located centrally within Leicestershire, it is difficult to attract volunteers from Rutland. This will be addressed at our next recruitment campaign.



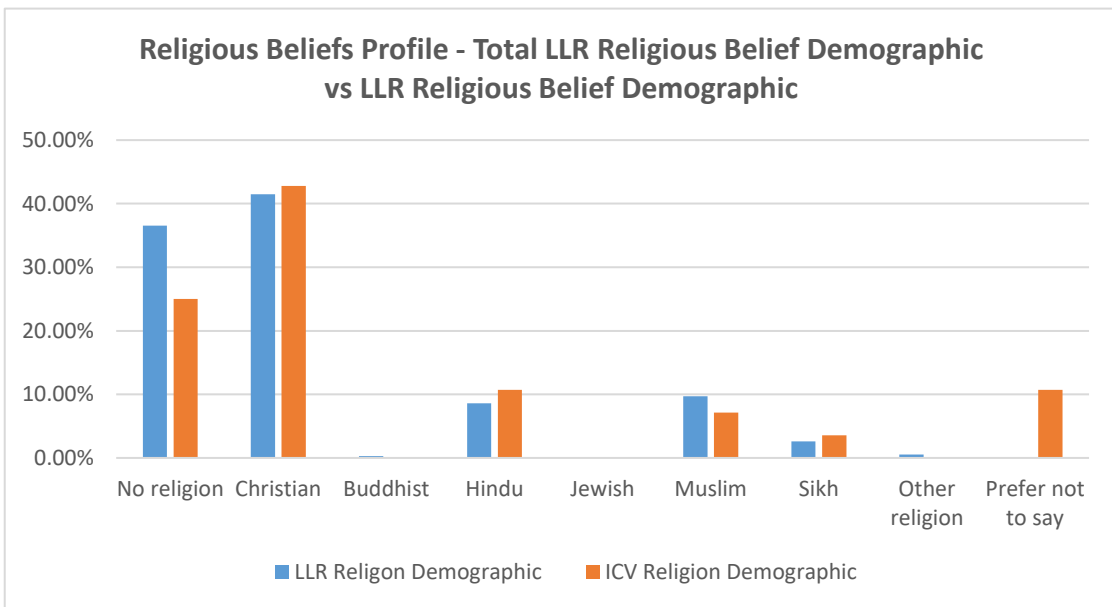
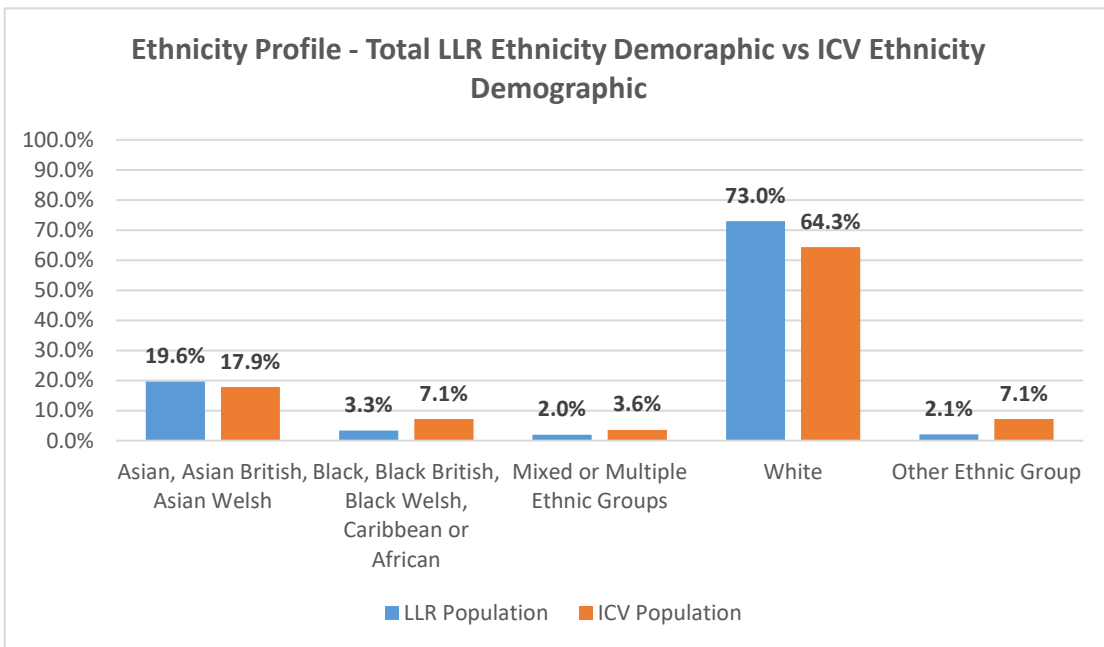
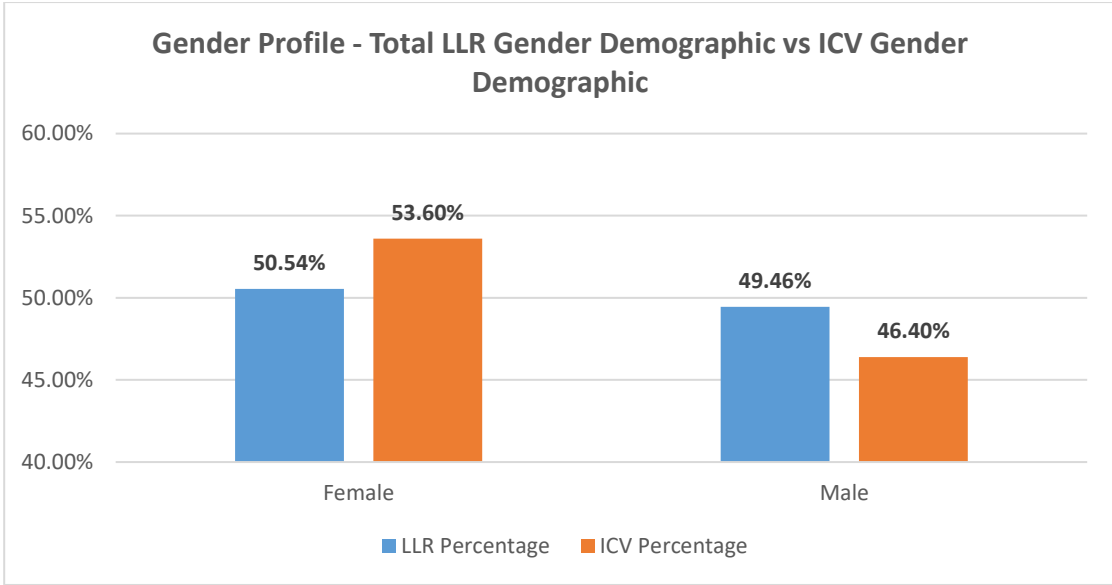
Equality monitoring data as of 31 March 2025

22. The demographics of the ICVs as of 31st March 2021 are shown in the charts below: Total number of ICVs – 28.



The OPCC strives to have a pool of volunteers that are representative of the local communities and the following information details how the volunteers in Leicestershire compare to the communities.

- The Gender, Ethnicity and Religion profiles of the ICV volunteer cohort compared to the population of LLR can be seen below. This demonstrates the cohort of ICVs is roughly in line with the demographic profile of LLR.



Positive feedback from ICVs to Custody Staff

23. Feedback from ICVs during the year has included a number of complimentary comments as a result of their visits to custody suites. A full list of positive comments documented by independent custody visitors is attached at 'Appendix 2' to the report.

Conclusion

24. The Independent Custody Visitors contributed an impressive 870.17 hours of their time volunteering for the OPCC throughout the year.
25. The volunteers carry out, on behalf of the PCC, independent scrutiny of those detained in custody, which is a statutory function, this scheme being carried out by volunteers saves the PCC employing staff/workers to carry out the scheme. The total economic value of the ICV Volunteered hours for the past 12 months stands at a saving of £16,238.64 to the taxpayer's purse (compared to staff equivalent + shift allowance).
26. ICV's reported issues viewing custody records on the screen for many visits due to IT issues. Leicestershire Police provided alternative measures to view custody records to enable the ICVs to carry out their function. This will be continued to be monitored in 2025/2026.
27. Team meetings with the Force Custody Inspector for Criminal Justice have been particularly informative and productive and have provided the OPCC with the opportunity to discuss issues arising and developments within the Scheme. ICV commitment and contribution has been outstanding.
28. Detainees looked after well in custody, further requests for meals and drinks promptly actioned, dietary requirements met and religious requirements met.
29. Rights and entitlements provided; solicitors contacted in a timely manner.
30. Female detainees provided female officer and hygiene products offered on most occasions and promptly actioned if reported by ICVs. Fantastic to see the enhanced support with the menopause awareness checklists.
31. ICVs noted improved offer of distraction materials and access to the Discreet Booking in Room for vulnerable detainees.
32. Some delays in the notification/arrival of Appropriate Adults, this has been reported back and will continue to be monitored as part of the ICV Scheme and the Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel.

Implications

Financial:	Expenses relating to the ICV Scheme are contained within the OPCC budget.
Legal:	It is a statutory requirement under Section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002 for Police and Crime Commissioners to have a Custody Visiting Scheme in place.
Equality Impact Assessment:	The ICV scheme is constantly monitored to ensure those involved in the scheme are representative of the local community. Equality impact assessment is undertaken prior to recruitment to ensure that recruitment is targeted.
Risks and Impact:	Link to Police and Crime Plan: The maintenance of the ICV Scheme is a statutory requirement of the PCC.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - List of issues raised in 2024/25 and Force Response

Appendix 2 – Visit summaries including Positive comments from custody visits

Person to Contact

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