



Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

Annual report 2018/19

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Foreword from the PCC Matthew Scott

It is my pleasure to introduce the ICV Annual Report for 2018-19. Firstly, I'd like to say thank you to all ICVs, experienced and newly recruited, for their hard work this year. The work you do is incredibly valuable to Kent Police and to the members of society who may find themselves in a police cell. I am very proud to have such a skilled and dedicated team of volunteers and your work certainly has not gone unnoticed, as well as professional support from Jade and Laura.



This has been a fantastic year for the Kent ICV Scheme and I'm thrilled to announce that your hard work has gained national accreditation, not once, but twice.

This year, we worked towards gaining the Investing in Volunteers accreditation and I am pleased to confirm that we passed with flying colours. I would like to thank each ICV and those who work alongside the scheme, in both the OPCC and Kent Police, for helping us achieve this. The OPCC was also working simultaneously to complete the ICV Association (ICVA) Quality Assurance Framework, and we have been awarded the Bronze Award. These two achievements show just how much work has been put into custody visiting here in Kent and we aim to maintain a high quality standard for the future.

I am also pleased to announce that, following my increase in the precept, Kent Police now has 180 extra officers, and 2019-20 should see another 200 recruited, as well as more police staff, which will provide the best support to Kent Police, including Custody. I have also continued the Mental Health and Police Fund, providing nine organisations with around £110 000 to support mental health projects in the community, an area that I know ICVs care deeply about.

Kent Police also received recognition for their good work, with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) grading Kent Police as 'Outstanding' for the fourth consecutive year. This is for the way it treats the public and how it uses its resources. This is an incredible achievement, as Kent Police is the only force in the UK to receive an 'Outstanding' grading for 'Legitimacy' four years in a row. Of course, the role of the ICV feeds into this, ensuring that the service provided in custody is of a high standard.

Again, I would like to thank each of our ICVs for their commitment to the scheme and for helping me hold Kent Police to account. I'm pleased that your hard work is being recognised nationally and I am incredibly grateful to you for contributing your time and skills to help protect the people of Kent.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Scott', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Scott
Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner

About Independent Custody Visiting

All Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are required to run an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, whereby members of the public check on the welfare of people detained in police custody. The scheme aims to enhance public trust in the police and assists PCCs in holding local police forces to account.

In Kent, Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) make unannounced visits to custody suites around the county to check on the welfare of detained persons, ensure they have received their rights and make sure they are being held in conditions that are up to standard.

Volunteers in Kent visit the following stations:

- North Kent
- Medway
- Bluewater
- Maidstone
- Tonbridge
- Margate
- Folkestone
- Canterbury

Each visit to a police station cell is undertaken by two volunteers who then submit a report to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The information is monitored regularly by the PCC's staff and Kent Police to ensure any important issues are dealt with swiftly.

ICVs are expected to visit custody suites as often as once a month and attend training sessions, between two and four panel meetings per year, and an Annual General Meeting.

Although Independent Custody Visitors are voluntary (unpaid members of the local community) they do receive traveling expenses (mileage/parking) when undertaking visits.

Number of ICVs and Recruitment

Panel	No. of ICVs visiting*
North and West Kent	23
East Kent	27
Total no. of ICVs	50

*As of end of March 2019

At present, Kent's ICV Scheme has 50 volunteers, which is the same number as last year. This includes 10 new recruits and several resignations.

During the summer of 2018, the OPCC launched a successful recruitment campaign to gain more volunteers for the east Kent panel. The scheme manager and a number of volunteers attended recruitment events, including The Blue Light Jobs Fair and the Stronger Kent Community Fair, to help raise awareness of the scheme and find potential recruits. Leaflets were also sent to local medical practices, places of worship, universities and colleges, and local volunteer bureaux.

The application process was open for two months and the OPCC received 21 applications. In November, the OPCC offered 10 applicants positions on the scheme and all successfully completed the training and passed vetting. All successful applicants will visit stations in east Kent, which includes Canterbury, Margate and Folkestone.

A training session took place in November, run internally by an experienced custody officer, the OPCC's Head of Standards and Regulation and ICV co-ordinators. The sessions also included a practical demonstration, which took place in the mock custody suite at Kent Police College. Long-standing ICVs also attended the training as a refresher course, and to give advice and guidance to new recruits.

A number of new ICVs expressed a keen interest in visiting multiple stations after they passed their probationary period. This gives the scheme a lot more flexibility and allows for more visits to take place to each of the stations.

The OPCC wishes each of our ICVs a long and successful appointment.

ICV Visits (April 2018 to March 2019)

Panel	Custody	No. of visits	No. of DPs in Custody	No. of DPs seen	No. of DPs not seen	No. of DP refusals	Self Intro (per visit)	% DP take-up*
North & West Kent	North Kent	44	283	116	162	5	41	98.2%
	Medway	48	504	213	273	18	47	96.4%
	Bluewater	18	1	1	0	0	1	100%
	Maidstone	48	212	104	101	7	41	96.7%
	Tonbridge	45	216	104	104	8	40	96.3%
East Kent	Canterbury	45	289	129	152	8	39	97.2%
	Margate	31	155	70	78	7	23	95.5%
	Folkestone	43	318	163	150	4	41	98.4%
Total		322	1978	900	1020	57	273	97.1%

An analysis of the figures shows that the success of the scheme has remained stable over the past year.

In the last report from April 2017 to March 2018 there were 319 visits to custody suites, with 1095 detainees visited. This financial year there have been 322 visits to custody suites, a slight increase, with 900 detainees visited. Whilst there is a decrease in detainees spoken to, the number of refusals has decreased from 73 to 57. The number of DPs not seen can be attributed to DPs being out of their cells for interviews, showers, being asleep etc. ICVs will not rouse a sleeping DP for an interview.

*Detained person (DP) take-up rate identifies the percentage of those who have not refused an ICV visit, to help prove the effectiveness of self-introduction. This percentage is calculated by taking the number of individuals that have not refused a visit from ICVs, dividing by the total number of DPs present, multiplying by 100. In the last report the take up rate was 97.1%. This year it has remained at 97.1%. The continuing use of self-introduction is helping to maintain an excellent take up rate. It is worth noting that where ICVs are unable to talk to any DPs during a visit they will mark down that self-introduction did not take place.

Issues for each area

The following is a summary of the main issues that have been identified by ICVs in each area throughout the year, and subsequently addressed with Kent Police's Custody Team and the PCC via quarterly reports.

North Kent

Overall, feedback from North Kent was largely positive and most issues were rectified promptly. North Kent Police Station is governed by PFI (Private Finance Initiative) and any facilities issues are rectified by the PFI team.

- ICVs reported that they felt the custody suite was understaffed and had a direct impact on delays in processes being carried out i.e. authorising detention and late Inspector/sleeping reviews. On few occasions, it directly impacted on ICV visits, in that there were delays. However, custody staff were always accommodating and helpful to ICVs.
- On a number of occasions, ICVs identified that some DPs were not made aware of their sleeping reviews.
- The microwave and food temperature probe were often reported as unclean.
- ICVs reported that there were only two halal meal options available. At the time of this report, a new contract for meals was being finalised by the procurement team.
- A lack of available Appropriate Adults had an impact on the length of time DPs were held in custody, particularly juveniles. As a result of a lack of AAs, some DPs were not able to sign for their rights.
- One cell was out of action due to there being some sharp edges within the cell.

Medway

Overall, feedback from Medway was largely positive and most issues were rectified promptly. Medway Police Station is governed by PFI (Private Finance Initiative) and any facilities issues are rectified by the PFI team.

- ICVs reported that the kitchen areas were dirty on the majority of visits, with emphasis on the microwave and food temperature probe. The custody suite manager advised that reminders had sent out to staff about keeping the kitchen clean.
- ICVs reported that the food temperature was not always tested once a week as required. The probe also was reported broken in December and was not replaced until February.
- ICVs reported that the suite was often busy and unable to cope with demand. This lead to delays in authorising detention, nurse visits, observations etc. However, custody staff were always accommodating and helpful to ICVs.
- ICVs reported a number of times that the mattresses overhung the bed base. Custody staff removed these mattresses immediately each time and new mattresses were ordered.
- ICVs reported that on a number of occasions, stock for various items was depleting fast. Items included sporks, food and clothing.

- On a number of occasions, ICVs were unable to identify from the custody records if sleeping reviews took place or whether DPs were made aware of them.

Bluewater

As Bluewater is a non-designated custody suite, ICVs visit approximately every two weeks, and only if there is a member of staff available. ICVs will ring the suite beforehand to ensure they can access. Otherwise, the visit is not carried out. As a result, fewer visits are taking place. The OPCC and ICVs are keen to ensure this suite receives some level of oversight, but appreciates that the site is not always staffed.

- ICVs reported that the suite, in particular the kitchen and shower areas, were dirty on the majority of visits. This included the microwave and food temperature probe, which was not always tested regularly.
- ICVs reported that drink items were out of date on each Quarterly Report throughout the year.
- An internal inspection took place in July which identified a number of minor facilities issues, which were addressed during a mini-refurbishment in October.

Maidstone

Overall, feedback from Maidstone was largely positive and most issues were rectified promptly.

- ICVs reported that the food temperature was not always tested once a week as required and was sometimes dirty, as was the microwave.
- ICVs reported low supplies of blankets, towels and clothing on a few occasions.
- ICVs reported that the custody suite was busy on a number of occasions, which contributed to delays in authorising detention, Inspector reviews and, on one occasion, led to a truncated ICV visit. However, custody staff were always accommodating and helpful to ICVs.
- On two occasions in April 2018, ICVs had concerns about the lack of response from the outside call bell into custody in order for them to start their visit. On these two occasions, a member of staff walking by helped them gain entry to the custody suite. The OPCC raised these concerns with the force and it has not happened again since.

Tonbridge

Overall, feedback from Tonbridge was largely positive and most issues were rectified promptly.

- ICVs reported that the custody suite was busy on a number of occasions, leading to problems in several areas;
 - ICVs provided several examples of observations not complying with observation levels and delays in Inspector reviews taking place. On one occasion, an Insp review was delayed due to no review officer being readily available.

- ICVs noted that there had been delays in obtaining Appropriate Adults (AA) from the Young Lives Foundation AA Scheme. This was due to a number of reasons, including a shortage of volunteers to meet demands. On one occasion, a DP was not given their Rights and Entitlements for 9 hours.
- One ICV visit was truncated due to the demand in custody and another visit was aborted after an hour waiting for it to begin.

Despite this, custody staff were always accommodating and helpful to ICVs.

- ICVs noted in May that the intercom system was intermittently working. In June, it took ICVs some time to gain entry to the suite as the intercom was not ringing through to custody. This was reported for repair by custody staff and has not since been raised as an issue.
- There were two instances where female DPs told ICVs they were not offered a hygiene pack, and on one occasion one DP told ICVs they were not aware they could ask for toilet paper.
- ICVs reported that the food temperature was not always tested once a week as required and was sometimes dirty, as was the microwave.
- ICVs noted clothing stocks were low on a number of occasions.

Canterbury

Overall, feedback from Canterbury was largely positive and most issues were rectified promptly

- The biggest concern raised by ICVs related to staffing. There were a number of issues which could be attributed to the levels of staffing and an increase in demand. Examples include;
 - One DP complaining of long wait times when ringing the cell bell and their first review being 24 minutes late.
 - Out of date meals not being disposed of in a timely manner, with ICVs noticing food four months out of date on one occasion.
 - Cells and exercise yards not being cleared of rubbish in a timely manner.
 - It took 2.5 hours for one DPs detention to be authorised.
 - On one particular visit, almost every DP was requesting something via the ICVs (food, drink, access to exercise yard etc.), and one DP told ICVs they were not made aware they could access a shower.
 - On one occasion, ICVs had to be escorted around the suite by a police officer as there were no available custody officers.

Despite this, ICVs reported that custody staff were always accommodating to ICVs.

- ICVs noted their concerns about cleaning levels in general, stating; *“Cleaning not suitable, one mop and bucket used for all whereas other stations have 2 coloured different types of fluid, some cells not cleaned before another DP put in if released after cleaners have left.”* The Custody Sgt responded; *“Cells are cleaned after each DP although no facilities to provide deep clean, they are fit to be used.”* The Custody Inspector

later confirmed that *“Action complete. The cleaning company were spoken to and addressed the cleaner issues, new cleaning items (mops and chemicals) have been ordered and staff reminded of the cleaning of the cells.”* The cleaning company were also spoken to after ICVs noted that the bins in the suite had been overflowing.

Folkestone

Overall, feedback from Folkestone was overwhelmingly positive. Between July and December, there were no recurring issues,

- On a number of occasions, ICVs were unable to identify from the custody records if sleeping reviews took place or whether DPs were made aware of them.
- ICVs had been told by custody staff that there was *“inadequate staffing”*. A number of comments were made to support this;
 - The exercise yard and cells were sometimes building up with rubbish. Custody staff often told ICVs that they did not have time to tidy the rubbish away.
 - On another occasion, ICVs were waiting over an hour for their visit to begin before aborting the visit entirely.
 - ICVs were told on one occasion by a DDO that showers were not being offered to DPs as they could not accommodate them.
 - One DPs review was delayed by 132 minutes but there was no justification as to why.
 - On one occasion, a DDO told ICVs there was only one member of staff working from 1500hrs to 1700hrs. They told ICVs they felt that this was dangerous and they were unable to accommodate virtual court.

Despite this, ICVs were complimentary of staff for their treatment of ICVs, particularly during busy periods.

A virtual Court Officer has now been appointed at Folkestone to ease the staffing issue.

- ICVs reported that stocks of porridge pots were depleting quite quickly and the suite was often out of stock during visits.

Margate

Overall, feedback from Margate was largely positive and most issues were rectified promptly

- The call bell in the exercise yard was reportedly not working. The Custody Sgt was unsure why this has not yet been addressed. It was later reported that this was unable to be mended due to an ongoing issue with the

wiring. Insp Bassant stated that *“this will not be sorted without a full rewire. I will look at this during the next closure but the cost could be high.”*

- ICVs main concerns at Margate were infrastructure related and included poor water pressure in the showers, noisy air-con and a loosely mounted TV in the virtual court room. These issues, and other minor facilities issues, were remedied during the annual closure in September.
- On a number of occasions, ICVs were unable to identify from the custody records if sleeping reviews took place or whether DPs were made aware of them.
- Stocks of clothing, food and drink items were reportedly low on a number of occasions.

County-Wide Issues and Recurring Themes

Appropriate Adults

ICVs reported a number of concerns around obtaining Appropriate Adults (AAs). This included delays in obtaining a suitable AA, not being able to identify in the CR that an AA was sought for a DP, and a shortage of AAs to meet demand.

Food Temperature Probe

Across a number of suites, ICVs noted that the food temperature was not recorded at the frequency required. There were also issues with probe breaking and there being some time before a new one was delivered.

Sleeping Reviews

ICVs identified a trend of DPs not being made aware of their sleeping reviews, or they were unable to identify this had happened within the DPs CR. This is a recurring issue that was highlighted throughout each of the quarterly reports for the year. This has been identified as a training need by the custody Inspectors and the OPCC was assured this would be addressed.

Catering to Diabetics

A recurring concern ICVs have is regarding food catered towards diabetics. The following update was received from Cressida Ball, Custody Performance Co-ordinator;

“I have introduced porridge to the menu as this is a slow release carbohydrate which is useful for anyone who is diabetic. Unfortunately, there are many stages of diabetes and we would not be able to cater for everyone but are happy that we stock the basics. Beans and wedges are also deemed a suitable meal for anyone who is diabetic dependant on their blood sugar level at the time. The nurses have been advised that if they have any real concerns they should have a discussion with the Custody Sergeant who will make a decision based on the information provided

as to whether it is reasonable to allow food to be brought in from outside. I just wanted to reassure you that we do cater for diabetics and many other dietary needs within our custody suites.

Athena

Athena was launched in November. As anticipated, there have been some technical difficulties and delays as staff get used to the new system, but overall it has been well received by staff and ICVs.

As with any new system, there will be issues and the OPCC is collating feedback from the ICVs to provide to the Force, which will include suggestions for improvement.

Feedback from the OPCC

The OPCC would like to extend its thanks to the custody management team and custody staff for their continued support of the ICV scheme, their prompt responses to issues raised and for using ICV feedback to improve the service provided to detainees.

Healthcare Questionnaire

In July 2014, the ICV Scheme worked with Kent Police’s Head of Custody and Healthcare to help produce and launch a healthcare questionnaire that can be used to gain information from DPs on their experiences with the healthcare in custody. ICVs were asked to use the questionnaire once per visit with one detainee at random. This information is collated by the OPCC and then fed back to Kent Police’s Head of Custody and Healthcare. The aim is to help improve healthcare for detainees in police custody.

This exercise has proved to be very useful to Kent Police, and helps feed back into the health care service to improve arrangements for detainees, and so it is now a permanent arrangement.

Below are the results from the questionnaire from April 2018 until March 2019. Please note that due to some answers on the questionnaire not being completed at the time of the visit, there are inconsistencies in the response totals.

	Variable	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Tot
Gender	Male	11	10	13	9	13	8	16	13	9	11	7	9	129
	Female	4	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	7	1	26
Has DP needed to see nurse?	Yes	9	7	15	6	7	7	8	8	8	6	10	10	101
	No	6	5	1	4	7	3	6	6	6	6	5	1	56
If Yes, have you been able to see the nurse?	Yes	7	6	14	7	7	3	6	8	7	6	10	7	88
	No	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	3	10
If no are you aware that you can see the nurse if you need to?	Aware	7	6	1	3	5	3	5	4	3	6	4	1	48
	Unaware	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	0	1	0	0	9
How was the treatment on a scale of 1 - 10 (Average from the month)	Average	6.3	8.6	7.2	9.3	8	5	9.1	8.6	8	6.2	8	6.7	7.6

A positive point to note is that the majority of detainees interviewed were aware that they could see a nurse if they needed to, and that the majority of those who made a request were seen by the nurse during their detention.

The overall rating of health services in custody was 7.6/10, which is slightly lower than last year’s score of 7.7/10, but still very positive.

Healthcare and Mental Health Issues in Policing and Custody

Healthcare in custody

The Kent Police Custody Healthcare Team has one head of department (who is also responsible for Mental Health and Wanted Persons Bureau) and two managers, whose work is roughly divided into the East and West of the county. Kent Police currently has four teams of nurses and paramedics.

- Canterbury covering Margate
- Folkestone covering Maidstone
- Medway
- North Kent covering Tonbridge

Kent Police's Custody Healthcare Team establishment is 23 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE). It is 3.6 staff under establishment at this current time due to long term sick, maternity leave and one Forensic Nurse Practitioner (FNP) awaiting their start date. However, from the end of June they will be short due to maternity leave.

The service covers from 0730-0500hrs each day; therefore between 0500 – 0730hrs each morning there is no cover in the county.

Total number of detainees in custody = **25186**. Total number of detainees seen by an FHP = **8688**.

This represents **34.5%** of detainees are seen by an FHP. The below table outlines the number of DPs per suite, per month, that were seen by an FNP.

	North Kent	Medway	Maidstone	Tonbridge	Canterbury	Margate	Folkestone	Force
Apr	156	228	59	67	112	82	109	813
May	333	52	106	61	155	106	123	936
Jun	182	230	135	31	150	94	105	927
Jul	134	219	156	65	63	144	123	904
Aug	151	222	87	65	111	99	98	833
Sep	58	253	87	79	145	39	109	770
Oct	107	219	88	69	117	83	101	784
Nov	89	154	83	57	136	72	57	648
Dec	93	174	84	78	140	68	76	713
Jan	94	179	72	45	109	78	75	652
Feb	54	69	33	32	60	39	45	332
Mar	52	88	38	18	52	73	55	376
TOTAL	1503	2087	1028	667	1350	977	1076	8688

Mental Health Care, Diversion, and Detention in Custody

“People suffering mental ill health need the right care from the right person” has consistently been a guiding principle in the PCC’s Safer in Kent plan. It is sadly the case that there is an increasing reliance on the police to assist those with poor mental health; in fact, it is estimated that more than a third of Kent Police’s time is now spent dealing with individuals and cases involving mental health issues. This clearly isn’t always best for the individual, but equally it is not fair on police officers, who are not healthcare professionals. That is why the PCC has continued to invest a significant amount of time engaging with Kent Police, health and other partners, and provided funding to improve both the care individuals receive and help reduce the demand on policing.

With senior representation from partner organisations including Kent Police, Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT), South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the PCC chaired Mental Health & Policing Oversight Board has met regularly during the year. In addition to improving communication and building stronger relationships, the Board has considered practical opportunities to reduce demand through triage services, better management of “frequent presenters” and improved mapping of mental health services. However, following a review of the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat governance arrangements – a national agreement between services and agencies involved in the care and support of people in crisis - it was agreed that the PCC’s Oversight Board would be refreshed and become the strategic decision making body for Kent and Medway. The inaugural meeting was held in early March; re-invigorated and re-defined structures and processes are currently being developed.

The Kent Police Mental Health Team, introduced in September 2017, are locally based and embedded within mental health establishments across the county. In addition to reducing the incidents of violence/aggression and absconding from establishments, the team engages with those who have mental health issues and regularly go missing or are “repeat presenters”, manage an investigative caseload providing continuity across NHS sites, and provide advice and guidance to their colleagues including within the Force Control Room and the Office of the PCC. The aim of the team is to apply a consistent approach across the county, and to reduce demand by more effectively managing service users either through the involvement of partner agencies or effective application of legislation.

Under changes introduced in December 2017 by the Policing and Crime Act, it is now unlawful to use a police station as a section 136 place of safety for anyone under the age of 18, and a police station can only be used for adults in specific circumstances. Whilst Kent Police and the PCC support these changes, the impact continues to be monitored; when health based places of safety are at capacity, officers continue to have no option but to take individuals in crisis to Accident & Emergency Departments.

Through the PCC’s Mental Health and Policing Fund, bids were invited for projects seeking to deliver outcomes ranging from raising awareness and delivering training on mental health issues, to the provision of alternative places of safety. In total, nine organisations were awarded just over £107,000, including:

- Talk It Out, Deal – well-being café
- Tunbridge Wells Mental Health Resource – Serenity Café out-of-hours support
- Dover Outreach Centre – cognitive behavioural therapy nurse for homeless people

- Improving Mental Health Provision CIC – Overnight provision of mental health services in Medway for those in crisis

In addition, the PCC has provided on-going funding for:

- The Hope Café (Maidstone) and The Solace Café (Tonbridge) which provide free, out of hours mental health support.
- The Medway Safe Haven Bus which offers a safe place for late night revellers who may be suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs to recover or wait for emergency help.
- Mental health counsellors in the Force Control Room who provide telephone support, advice and guidance to callers with mental health issues, reducing the need for officer attendance.

The PCC also presented at a Federation of Small Businesses mental health in the workplace event held in Maidstone, and subsequently provided funding for a number of small business owners to attend Mental Health First Aid training to help them identify, understand and assist those who may be experiencing a mental health issue.

As well as working across the county, the PCC is the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner’s (APCC) lead on Mental Health and is therefore well placed to engage with colleagues around the country and Government. For example, in October 2017 the Prime Minister commissioned an Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983 to address concerns about use of the legislation.

The PCC was invited to sit on the Advisory Panel chaired by Professor Sir Simon Wessely, and also chaired the Police Role Topic Group – one of 18 groups set-up to inform the review. The Police Role Topic Group submitted a number of recommendations, all of which were accepted and on 6 December 2018 the Independent Review’s final report was launched. Key recommendations include:

- police cells being removed altogether as a place of safety by 2023/24
- changing the Act so it specifies the preferred place of safety under sections 135 and 136 are defined as a ‘health based place of safety’ or ‘section 136 suite’
- amendments to allow a police officer to end detention where it is clear a full assessment is unnecessary
- provision of healthcare for people in custody being commissioned to NHS England

In due course the Government is expected to formally respond to the report.

The PCC has represented the APCC at a range of meetings including with the Policing Minister, Nick Hurd MP, and with colleagues from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and National Fire Chiefs Council. In addition, he has presented at a number of national events, including the NPCC Excellence in Policing Conference, the NPCC Mental Health and Policing Conference and APCC/NPCC Joint Partnership Summit, where he jointly chaired a ‘break out’ session on the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act and the mental health of serving and retired officers.

Awards and Plans for the Future

Investing in Volunteers

The OPCC has been awarded the Investing in Volunteers accreditation from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). The OPCC have spent the past year working towards this, ensuring the Scheme is professional and that it meets the ICV Code of Practice as well as the indicators set out by the NCVO. The initial review of the Scheme was very positive, with around 66% compliance, most of the areas identified for minor improvements relating to administrative or policy matters. A number of volunteers and staff were interviewed as part of the assessment. Those interviewed included fifteen ICVs (selected from an anonymous list at random), the ICV Scheme Manager, the Head of Standards and Regulation, the Chief Executive, and two members of staff from the OPCC with no direct involvement with the ICV scheme. The final report was overwhelmingly positive, with just a few suggestions on how we can improve. The OPCC extends its thanks to all who took part in the process, and hopes that every ICV can feel that this is independent assurance of excellent work they carry out.

ICVA's Quality Assurance Framework

The OPCC has also received the Bronze Award for Code Compliance under ICVA's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). The ICV Scheme Manager and Head of Standards and Regulation were invited to the House of Lords to receive their award, amongst other ICV schemes across the county. Again, the OPCC would like to extend its thanks to all those who took part in the process and to the ICVs for maintaining a high quality service.

Improved Reporting

The OPCC is working with the IT service team to introduce an electronic reporting system. This will eliminate paper records and enable ICVs to complete reports using tablets. We are currently in the early stages of planning but we hope to have the new system up and running by the end of the year. Mandatory training for all ICVs will be provided to ensure we maintain a high standard of reporting.

Independent Custody Visiting Association

The Scheme Administrator, Jade Stanford, is the South East Representative for ICVA, covering Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Thames Valley. The region meet at least twice a year to discuss latest developments from ICVA and share good practice and resources. As South East Representative, Jade attends ICVA's National Experts Forum each quarter, providing a regional update and support for ICVA's national initiatives. This year's focus was vulnerability, including learning difficulties, disabilities, gender issues and feminine care. ICVA provided scheme managers with bite-size training materials, which can be used during meetings, as well as putting on a national conference on the topic. As well as this, ICVA's previous campaign on feminine hygiene products was successful, and the Home Office has now changed the law to ensure all menstruating women, and others with personal health and hygiene needs, are treated with dignity whilst in custody. Whilst sanitary care in Kent custody suites was good, there is room for improvement and this is something we will continue to work on with Kent Police.

Report Ends