



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg yn ogystal â Saesneg.

This document is available in Welsh as well as English.

July – September 2024

Independent Custody Visiting Quarterly Update:

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Total number of Adult detainees through custody	Total number of juvenile detainees through custody	Total number of detainees through custody	Number of ICV visits	Total number of detainees in custody at time of ICV visits	Total number of detainees unavailable	Number of detainees observed	Total number of detainees visited
1696	87	1783	23	89	13	47	29

Due to the migration of a new computer database system called Niche from May 2023, the data for the total number of detainees cannot be exact as this currently includes additional arrests linked to the custody record system. This issue is currently being revised by the technical team.

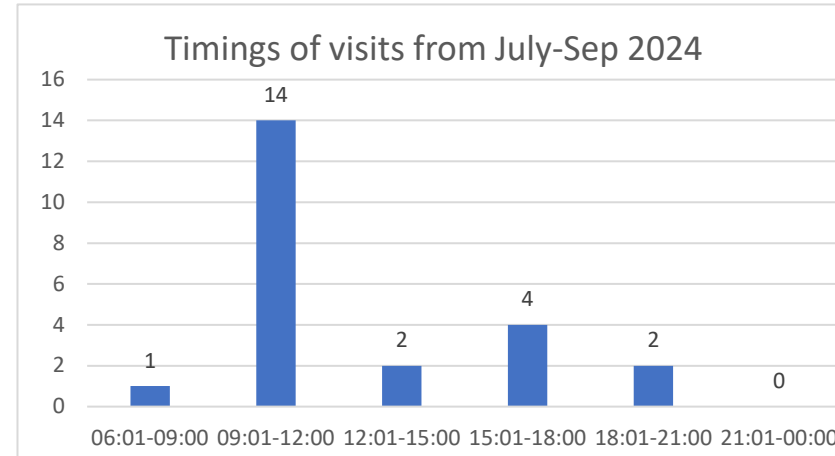
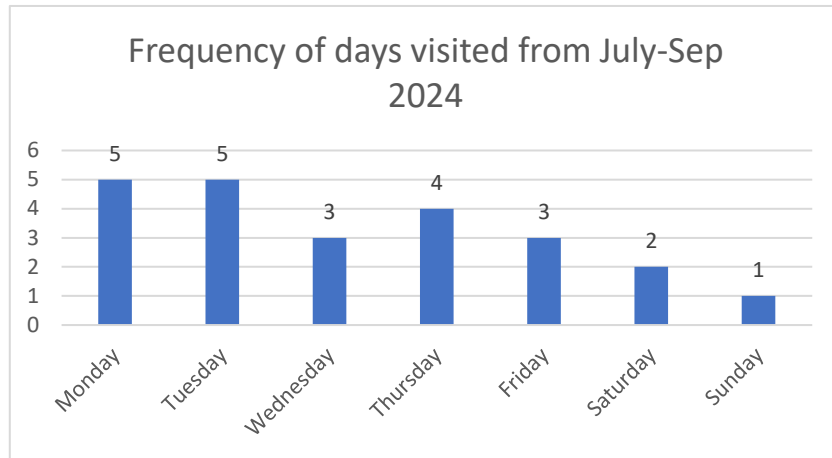
Active ICVs: 13

- Pembrokeshire: 3
- Powys: 3
- Ceredigion: 3
- Carmarthenshire: 4

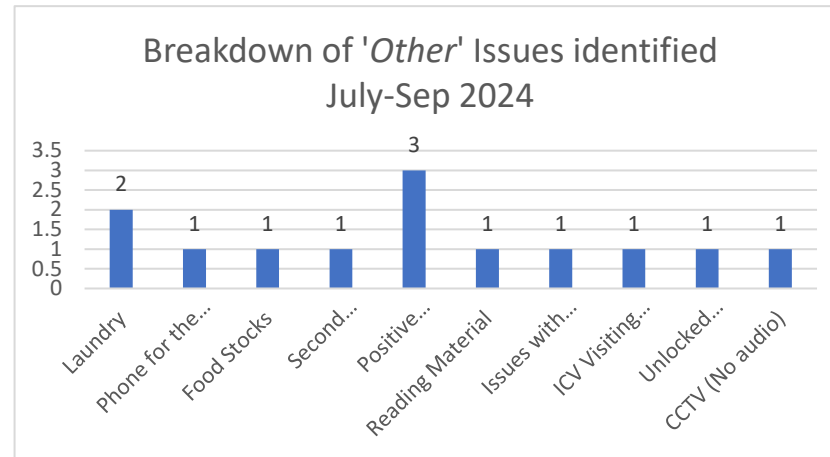
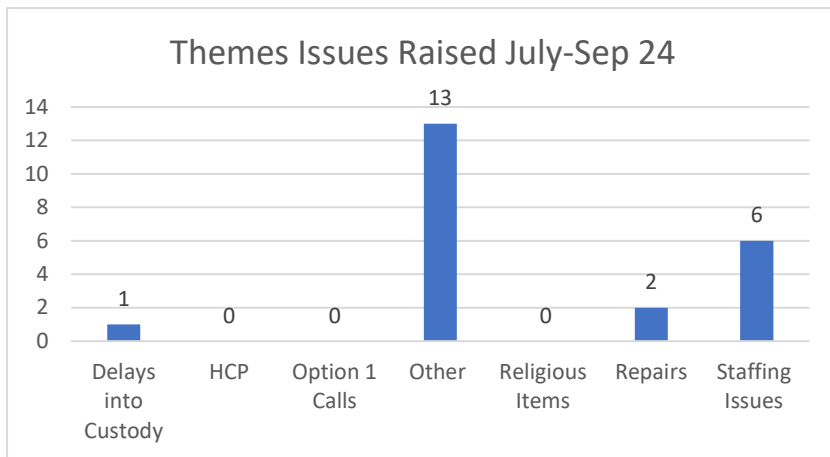
Currently there are four new applicants that are in the process of being vetted. There are also three volunteers taking a temporary break from the scheme.

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Timings of Visits:



Scheme Update:



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Staffing Issues

- Staffing issues has been highlighted as the main concern this past quarter, with the number of issues doubled since the last quarter. Areas noted as being affected by the panel include:
 - 1) 2 from Newtown 27/08/24 & 09/09/24;
 - 2) 5 from Haverfordwest 28/07/24, 31/07/24, 27/08/24, 07/09/24 & 16/09/24;
 - 3) 1 from Dafen 16/09/2024.

ICVs have stressed that the impact of under staffing cannot be understated to the wellbeing of custody staff, upholding the detainees' rights and also in the integrity of the ICV scheme. During one visit, there were no members of staff to allow ICVs to gain entry from the custody door resulting in ICVs contacting the scheme manager to facilitate through the Chief Inspector of custody to radio a member of staff to grant them entry. Once ICVs had been granted entry, they were unable to visit any detainees as there was anyone available to be with them.

During other visits, ICVs noted that:

- 1) One custody suite had 8 vulnerable detainee and none of them were able to access hygiene due to no staff available to escort them to the shower facilities.
- 2) The shortage of staff has resulted in the closure of a custody suite meaning that any detainees arrested in this area would be forced to be driven for over an hour to reach custody.
- 3) Limited opportunity for female detainees to access same sex assigned officers.
- 4) The training of response officers in helping reduce the demand on custody, is depleting numbers in operational policing response.
- 5) The result of shortages of staff has meant the increased risk of ICVs experiencing delays into custody.

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Delays into Custody

- Despite the concerns raised by ICVs in relation to staff shortages leading to delays into custody, only one was recorded out of 23 visits and this was as a result of staff shortages. This is a decrease from the number of delays experienced in the last quarter which was 4. This is a welcome improvement from the Force.

Health Care, Option 1 Calls and Religious Items

- This is the first quarter where Healthcare Professionals (HCP) has not been flagged as a concern by ICVs. Whilst an ICV visit has raised concerns associated with the security of a medical cupboard, the facilitation and access to HCP for detainees was not raised in the last quarter. In addition, there have been no concerns raised in relation to receiving calls into custody from members of public who are dialing the 101 service or any issues associated with the upkeep of religious items during this past quarter.

Repairs

- ICVs noted that the following repairs during their visits:
 - 1) Aberystwyth custody gates were not closing properly.
 - 2) Dafen's intercom outside was not operational.

Breakdown of Other issues

- ICVs recorded a number of other issues over the past quarter that included phone for the custody (landline has been removed from Aberystwyth custody and not replaced), food stocks, staff wanting a second computer monitor, reading material, reading glasses, issue with external partners, unlocked medical cupboard and CCTV with no audio. The only recurring issue was with laundry at both Aberystwyth and Newtown that specified concerns with:
 - 1) Supplied returns not consistent with what was being taken away.
 - 2) Laundry supplier had left the custody suite without any towels.

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Positive Feedback

- ICVs reported a number of positive experiences during their visits to custody this quarter. Here is a snapshot of some of the comments made:

1) Custody staff have been very approachable and friendly towards ICVs. One ICV reported:

“The communication and support of the team on duty was commendable. Each was multitasking calmly and whilst abuse being thrown at them. All detainees had plans but custody let down by other agencies. The team had 9 detainees, a custody sgt, a DO, and a nurse. 8 of the 9 detainees were vulnerable. Amazing good teamwork”.

2) Detainees being complimentary about custody staff during ICV visits.

3) Standard of the custody suites, exercise yard and kitchen have been reported as being well kept, clean and tidy.

Custody Independent Scrutiny Panel (CISP)

- Since the commencement of CISP in March 2024, the panel has looked at Children in Custody (CIC), Use of Force, and Vulnerabilities/Appropriate Adults. In August, the panel (consisting of ICVs and QAP volunteers) re-focused on CIC due to the recent report from the [Childrens Commissioner](#) report specifying that DPP were conducting the highest number of strip searches on juvenile detainees; although, the Force have since confirmed that the data provided to the Childrens Commissioner report were incorrect. The report has yet to be published; however, in conjunction with this report, the report of CIC in March, and the ICV visits, this has provided reassurance that strip searches and the use of Safety Risk Clothing (formerly known as Anti-Harm Suite) conducted are being monitored.

ICV members assisting in Newtown and Brecon Open Day

- To support the [ICV recruitment](#) and the [Police and Crime Plan](#), scheme managers from the OPCC Assurance team and ICVs attended to public open days at [Brecon](#) and [Newtown](#) police stations.

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PCC Visit to Brecon Custody



The Police and Crime Commissioner visited Brecon custody on the 26th September 2024 alongside an ICV visit to get an update on the scheme and to assess the daily function of the custody suite. The PCC stated: *"It was a very positive visit to the Brecon Custody Suite, and I was pleased to see first-hand how well the team is managing the daily operations. The input from the Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) was invaluable in assessing the welfare of detainees, and I remain committed to ensuring that our facilities continue to meet the highest standards."*

Recruitment

- We have three new ICVs who have received their vetting clearance and are awaiting their induction training. Two of these volunteers will be based in Brecon and the other in Pembrokeshire.
- We have four awaiting vetting clearance. Two of those will be based in Carmarthenshire and the other two will be based in Pembrokeshire.
- During the last quarter, we had three volunteers take a break from the scheme. One has since returned to the scheme with the other due to return in the next quarter.

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Force Response:

In relation to the observations above, these are the thoughts of Chief Inspector Jenna Jones who is commenting on behalf of Dyfed Powys Police with regards to her reflection over the past quarter:

“It is pleasing to see the partnership working continuing between ICVs and Custody staff and is promising to see the decrease in the number of visits where there has been a delay in the ICVs accessing the custody units, I am aware this has previously caused challenges for ICVs to carry out their role. Access to the units has been addressed with the Custody Inspectors during the monthly performance meetings as a standard agenda item, so I am pleased to see the improvement and I will continue to monitor this.

Staffing issues have been raised and have been further raised with the OPCC and Chief Officers. Some of the staffing challenges have been as a result of long-term sickness, failure of Public Personal Safety Training (which is mandatory to operate in Custody) and restricted duties, all of which have been unavoidable. However, it is recognised that there is a need to review the operating model for Custody to offer more resilience and to revert away from using response staff to cover gaps. Custody forms part of the current operating model, rotas and supervision review. Engagement events have taken place to understand the perspective of staff and this will be communicated to Chief Officers in November.

The new medical contract has transitioned to the new provider which will see an uplift of HCPs into Newtown Custody and an overall more professional feel to the service provided. We will monitor the transition with the new provider as it embeds and welcome any updates from ICV colleagues on how the contract is serving the units.

The estates matters have been reported, Aberystwyth gates are being fixed during the current renovations.

The CISP panel is proving to be a valuable resource to custody, ensuring learning is being identified and current areas of national interest are reviewed and we are able to benchmark ourselves against these; for example, with the recent Dame Vera Baird report around our treatment of Females in custody and strip searches. The CISP is providing a transparent and honest overview of the areas where we need to improve and the areas where we are doing well.

I would like to thank the ICVs for the time they give to ensure we are transparent in our treatment of detainees and their continued feedback and support of our Custody Units.”

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