ESSEX

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME



ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Police custody in Essex	4
Essex Independent Custody Visiting Scheme	7
Governance of the Essex ICV Scheme	15
Custody visiting data	17
Essex ICV scheme findings	22
Other areas of note / special events	24
Future plans	25
Further information and contact details	26

ANNUAL REPORT FOREWORD

Since Police and Crime Commissioners first assumed responsibility for the oversight of police custody suites, the Essex Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme has consistently fulfilled the requirements set out in the Police Reform Act 2002. Over the years, the scheme has played a vital role in safeguarding the rights and welfare of detainees, influencing legislative change and ensuring that dignity and standards are upheld across custody environments.

More than a decade on, I am proud to see the Essex ICV Scheme continuing to thrive. In 2024/25, the team not only met but exceeded the ambitions outlined in the previous year's report.

One of our key commitments was to recruit and train five new volunteers. I'm delighted to report that nine new Independent Custody Visitors were successfully recruited and trained, strengthening our capacity and reach.

We also increased the number of weekend visits—times when custody suites are often at their busiest and most stretched. These visits are crucial in assessing how detainees are treated when resources may be under pressure and they provide valuable insight into the resilience of custody operations.

This year also saw the introduction of a mandatory one-day refresher training for all ICVs. This ensures our volunteers remain equipped with up-to-date knowledge and best practices, reflecting the evolving landscape of police custody both locally and nationally.

The Essex ICV Scheme continues to demonstrate its commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. I extend my sincere thanks to all our volunteers for their dedication and to our partners for their ongoing support. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of those who find themselves in police custody.



POLICE CUSTODY IN ESSEX

Across Essex, there are six operational custody suites located in Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Southend, Grays, and Harlow. As of April 2024 Basildon custody suite has been permanently closed but some information throughout this report might still refer to Basildon custody suite being used as an ad hoc suite.

Each suite is staffed by a dedicated team of Custody Sergeants, Detention Officers, and Custody Inspectors. The overall responsibility for custody in Essex lies with a Custody Commander Chief Inspector. These suites are well-equipped with provisions for food and drink, clothing, blankets, as well as religious and reading materials. The figure below illustrates the total number of cells available in each custody suite.

Figure 1. Number of custody cells available in each custody suite in Essex.

District	Police Station	Number of cells
Chelmsford	Chelmsford	15
Tendring	Clacton	10
Colchester	Colchester	14
Basildon	Basildon	20
Southend	Southend	30
Thurrock	Grays	17
Harlow	Harlow	12
	Total	118

In the fiscal year 2024/25, several custody suites were temporarily closed to facilitate planned renovations and refurbishments. Additionally, some suites experienced intermittent closures due to staffing shortages or unforeseen technical issues, such as malfunctioning CCTV systems. Each suite is subject to 24 hours closure as required for routine deep cleaning.

The figure on the following page details the custody suites that were closed for planned works. This project was part of a broader initiative aimed at upgrading the CCTV systems across all custody suites. Chelmsford and Southend custody suites have both recently undergone significant refurbishments works.

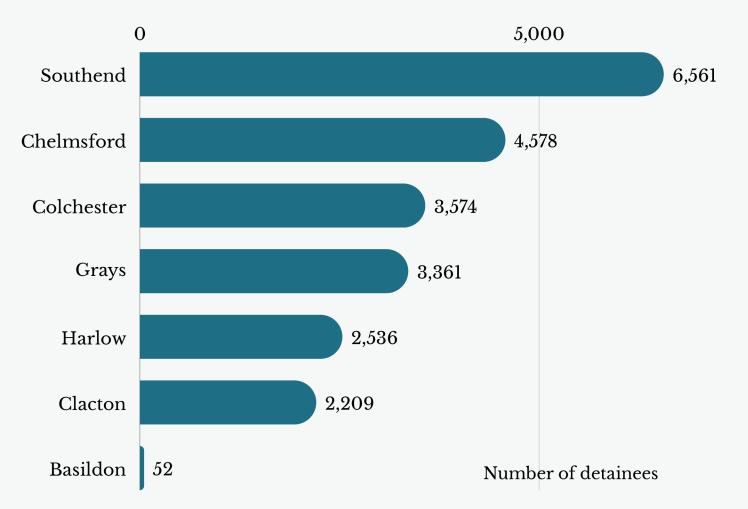
Figure 2. Essex custody suites closing and opening times for refurbishment and renovation in 2024/25.

Month / Suite	Basildon	Grays	Chelmsford	Clacton	Colchester	Harlow	Southend
April 2024	CLOSED	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
May 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	CLOSED	OPEN
June 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN
July 2024	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	CLOSED
August 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED
September 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED
October 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
November 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN
December 2024	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN
January 2025	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN
February 2025	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN
March 2025	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN

In total, 22,871 detainees went through Essex Police custody between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. This is a 0.63% increase compared to 22,728 in 2023/24 and 3.83% decrease compared to 23,781 in 2022/23.

The figure below shows the volume of detainees that went through each Essex Police custody suite.





Southend custody proved to be the busiest suite with 6,561 detainees booked in between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 and Basildon being the least busy with only 52 detainees booked in.

It does need to be explained though that Basildon custody suite was closed for most of the year with a periodic opening in July 2024 and then closed again. After a number of occasions where Basildon custody suite had to be closed either due to CCTV malfunction, delayed maintenance issues and staff coverage, a consultation was launched to discuss changes in custody in Essex overall. As part of the consultation it was proposed for Basildon to close permanently and after Command Team agreement, it was decided Basildon will remain closed for the remainder of the Custody Change Programme.

ESSEX INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex's Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Scheme appoints volunteers from the public to visit police custody suites to check on the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held, that their rights and entitlements are being observed, and that their detention is compliant with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984 Code C (Pace Code C 2019) and is in line with Detention and Custody Authorised Professional Practice (APP). It offers protection and confidentiality to both detainees and the police and reassurance to the community at large.

The scheme introduced by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2012 is based on the <u>Home Office Code of Practice on Independent Custody Visiting published</u> pursuant to Section 51(6) of the Police Reform Act 2002. The scheme was last significantly updated in 2013, following the issue of the Code of Practice on Independent Custody Visiting by the Home Office in March of that year.

The scheme is supported by, and compliant with, more detailed national standards that expand the relevant procedures and set out established good practice. The <u>national standards</u> set out the general guidelines under which the Essex ICV scheme operates.

The scheme enables appointed volunteers to visit police station custody suites unannounced at any time of the day or night, to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. Each Independent Custody Visitor is required to commit to carrying out a minimum of three visits to custody suites per month and completes and submits a standard report after each visit.

Visits must be undertaken in pairs for health and safety reasons and generally last no more than an hour. It is important that ICVs are able to compare different custody suites and the standards within them, so they visit more than one suite in their relevant geographical cluster and at varying times of the day and of the week wherever possible.

WE SAID, WE DID

In last year's report we committed ourselves to a number of objectives around recruitment, promotion of the scheme and performance management. The figure below summarises what we said we would do and how we have achieved it.

Figure 4. A summary of the Essex ICV schemes objectives for 2023/24 and the subsequent action taken to ensure successful delivery.

We Did We Said Increase awareness across the We have attended two career events in 2024, attended an internal conference where the Essex ICV Scheme was county of the scheme and discussed and delivered ICV input to one of the local volunteering opportunity that it Probus clubs. provides. Two training sessions were held in 2024/25, one in May Recruit and 2024 and the other one in January 2025. In total, nine new train at least five new ICVs. ICVs were recruited and trained. More balance was achieved when compared to previous year. Day visits moved from 83% last year to 76%, weekend Encourage more weekend and visits moved from 2% last year to 11% this year and night night visits. visits moved from 15% last year to 13% this year. Actively participate in custody The Custody Independent Advisory Group has been independent action group established and Essex ICV Scheme is an active member of meetings and support any the group. Custody Scrutiny Panels are being established further development of and are currently undergoing consultation with the PFCC. potential scrutiny panels. Establish and incorporate ICV Online reporting system has been set up and following a

online reporting system.

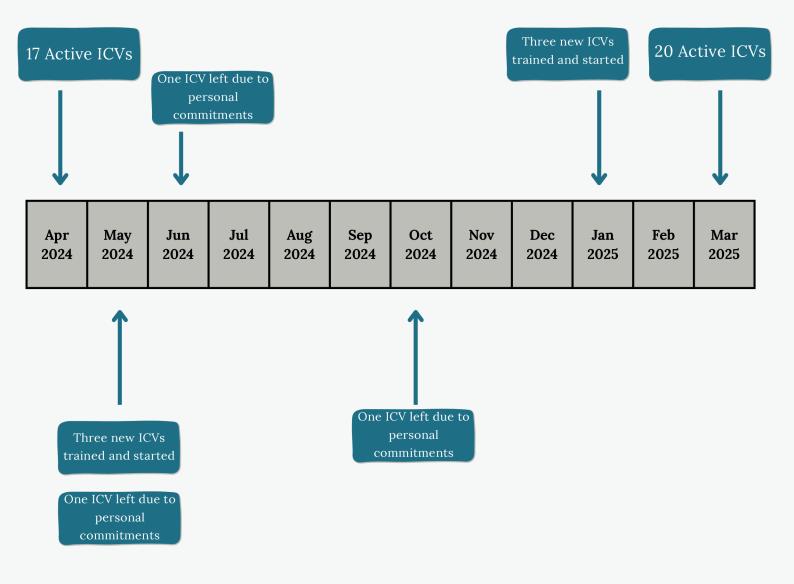
successful pilot, is due to launch on 1st April 2025.

Over the last year, we have received 31 email enquiries about the role. Of those 10 applications which were received, 10 interviews took place, and 10 new applicants were successfully recruited to the scheme.

Of these some are still awaiting vetting or training. This increased the total number of active ICVs in Essex to 23.

However, through 2024/25, three ICV left the role due to personal circumstances and commitments. This reduced the total number of active ICVs in Essex to 20 as of March 2025. This is an increase from 17 active ICVs in 2023/24 and 16 active ICVs in 2022/23. The figure below shows the timeline of ICV recruitment in more detail.

Figure 5. Timeline of the Essex ICV recruitment in 2024/25.



Demographic Profile

Ethnicity

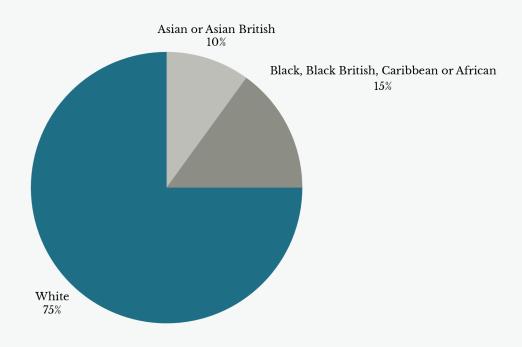
In line with the composition of the county, the ethnicity of ICVs is predominantly White British, but our recruitment in 2024 successfully attracted more diverse members to the scheme.

As of March 2025, 25% of the Essex ICV Scheme volunteers are from minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2023/24, the Essex ICV Scheme consisted of 21% of members from a minority ethnic background.

The figure below shows the current ethnic representation of the Essex ICV volunteers.

According to the 2021 census, 11.2% of the Essex population were from a minority ethnic background.

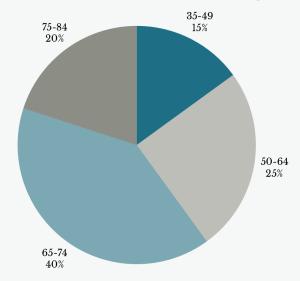
Figure 6. Ethnic groups representation in the Essex ICV Scheme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.



Age

Of the Essex ICVs, 60% are within the age range of 65-84 years old, although the recent recruitment and advertisement attracted more candidates from younger age groups. The figure below shows the age representation for the Essex ICV Scheme.

Figure 7. Age representation in the Essex ICV Scheme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.



According to the 2021 census, the average age in Essex was 42. In the 2024/25 financial year, the average age of Essex ICV was 64.5 years old up from 57.9 years old in the previous year.

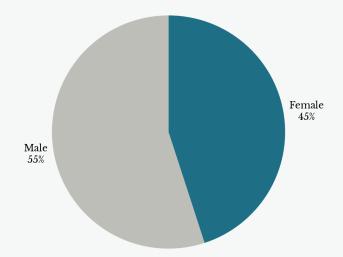
We will seek to attract candidates from a variety of age groups through future recruitment campaign.

Gender and Sex

Nine of the Essex ICV volunteers are female and 11 are male.

The figure below provides a breakdown of the gender of the members of the Essex ICV Scheme. According to the 2021 census, the Essex population was 51.3% female and 48.7% male

Figure 8. Gender and Sex representation in the Essex ICV Scheme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.



Training

A new induction training package for the ICVs in Essex has been developed in 2022/23 to ensure all new ICVs are sufficiently equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to complete ICV visits successfully. New ICVs are now required to participate in this two – day training which includes the history of the ICV Scheme, legislation around the scheme, detainee's vulnerability, a tour of a custody suite and data protection training. All new ICVs are required to pass the assessment at the end of the training.

In 2022/23 when the training was first established, first session saw four new ICVs trained. In 2023/24, two sessions were held (one in June 2023 and then again in November 2023) which saw six new ICVs trained.

In 2024/25, two sessions were held (one in May 2024 and then again in January 2025) which saw nine new ICVs trained.

After successfully passing the induction training, all new ICVs enter a probation period of six months. ICV Mentors (the most experienced ICVs) will accompany the new ICVS during the probationary period. 2024/25 also saw a development of a one-day Refresher training which all ICVs must complete annually. This ensures that all visitors are trained to the highest standards and kept updated on the current and relevant issues across the UK as well as any changes in the custody environment.

The Essex ICVs are also receiving regular newsletters from the ICV Manager, which also includes any information provided by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA). Our ICVs also attend other training events and are encouraged to complete online courses, which are provided as part of ICVA's bitesize training plan.

The training of our ICVs completed during 2024/25 included:

- Arrivals and Booking in process
- A whole day at the local Fire Station
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community
- Custody Record Reviewing
- Speaking to detainees with mental ill health
- National Preventative Mechanism
- Custody Detention Clocks
- Suicide Awareness
- Detainees Rights Policing Overview
- Immigration Detention
- Use of Force
- Human Rights Overview
- Visit to Contact Management Command
- Children in Custody the Law

Volunteer Appreciation

To say 'thank you' to our volunteers, the PFCC organises a series of events to express his gratitude for the work and support given.

In December 2024, volunteers met together for a Christmas lunch which was an opportunity for the group to socialise and strengthen the relationship.

The annual PFCC Volunteer Appreciation event took place on Saturday 6 July 2024, when volunteers were invited to participate in a day full of activities and enjoy talks from guest speakers. As part of the annual event, volunteers are awarded for special contributions towards the scheme. In 2024, five Essex ICVs received awards in categories such as PFCC Volunteer of the year, Special Mention and Long Service award.

Our ICVs have also been recognised externally with one of our volunteers being nominated and shortlisted in the Volunteer of the Year award by Essex Police. The ICV Coordinator has also been nominated, shortlisted and won the very prestigious national Lord Ferrers Award in the PFCC Volunteer of the Year category. You can read more information about the award here.

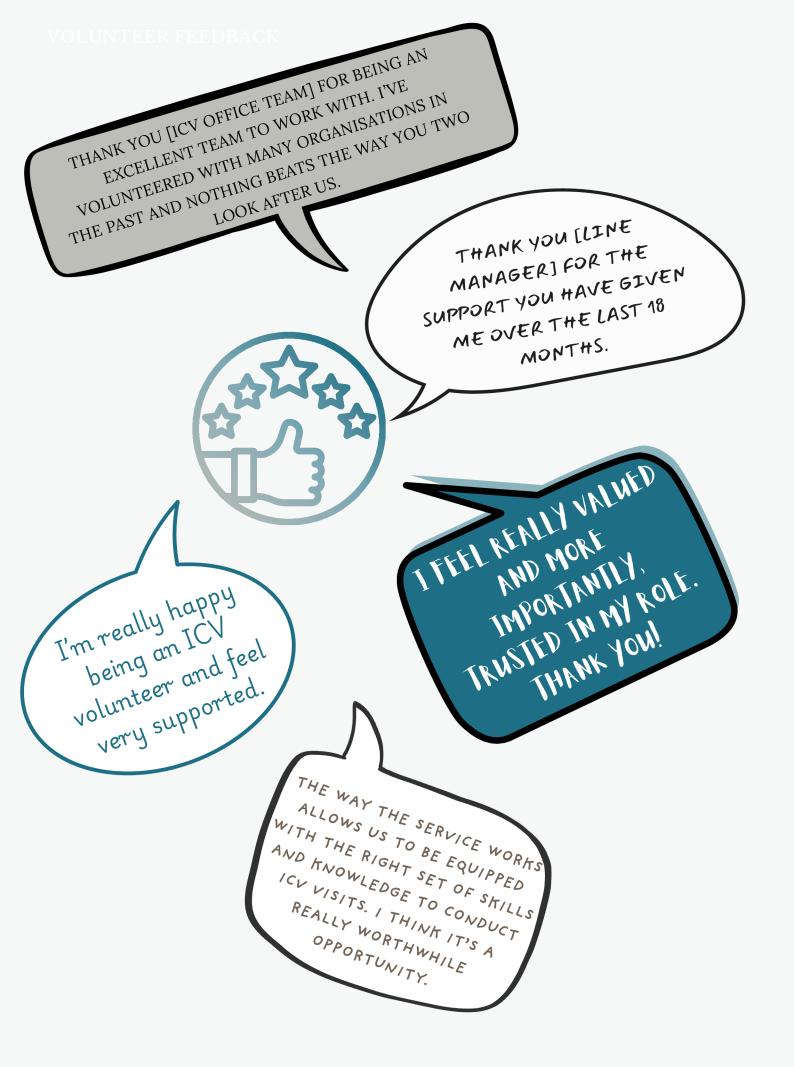
Volunteer Feedback

As part of our annual Volunteer Feedback survey, we asked our volunteers how they feel about the role and their volunteering experience.

A summary of their responses:

- When asked if they found the work interesting, challenging and rewarding, 87.5% responded YES and 12.50% responded DON'T KNOW
- The ability to help others, acting as an oversight, learning more about police processes and making contribution to the society were most often cited when asked what volunteers like best about the role,
- 87.5% of volunteers said that the training was either very good or good,
- 100% of volunteers said that the support they receive was either good or very good.

Finally, the next page summarises how our volunteers responded when asked how they feel whilst volunteering with Essex ICV Scheme:



GOVERNANCE OF THE ESSEX ICV SCHEME

The Chief Executive to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex holds overall responsibility for the administration of the scheme, with day-to-day management undertaken by the ICV Scheme Manager. The ICV Scheme Manager reports to the Chief Financial Officer and Strategic Head of Performance and Resources, who also oversees the Essex ICV Scheme.

The ICV Manager is responsible for monitoring and administrating the scheme to ensure the effective organization and running of the programme. They are also responsible for the recruitment, appointment, training, management, supervision, and reaccreditation of ICVs. An ICV Volunteer Coordinator acts as the first point of contact for volunteers and supports the ICV Manager with administrative tasks related to the scheme's daily management.

In 2023, three ICV Mentors were appointed to act as buddies to new visitors, responsible for their practical training during their six-month probation. At the end of the probation period, ICV Mentors meet with the ICV Manager to discuss the probationers' performance. Feedback from these assessments forms the basis for the end-of-probation evaluations held with the ICV Manager.

After each custody visit, ICVs complete a report detailing the current state of the custody suite and any issues related to facility maintenance standards and detainee rights and welfare. Systems are in place to ensure the output from visits is immediately available to the ICV Manager. The ICV Scheme Manager consolidates issues and identifies trends from visits, addressing these with relevant police representatives. Monthly reports are shared with ICVs, the PFCC's Chief Executive, the PFCC's Chief Financial Officer, Essex Police's Criminal Justice Command team, Custody Managers, and the Essex Police Estate & Facilities department to enable regular monitoring and sharing of information, facilitating a quick and efficient response to any concerns raised by ICVs.

Monthly online meetings are held with the Custody Chief Inspector, Estates lead manager, and Criminal Justice Command Officer to monitor areas of concern and strengthen the relationship between the Essex ICV Scheme and Essex Police. Internally, the Essex ICV Scheme holds four team meetings each year, allowing all ICVs to discuss progress, custody trends, and further developments. A representative from Essex Police custody command is always present to share updates and address inquiries. Guest speakers may also be invited to provide insights into behind-the-scenes work, such as maintenance concerns raised by ICVs.

Escalation Process

The Essex ICV Scheme has adopted ICVA's escalation process for concerns or complaints received by ICVs. The scheme identifies four levels of escalation:

- ICV Visit (level 1)
- ICV Manager (level 2)
- PFCC (level 3)
- ICVA (level 4)

The full escalation process is detailed in the Essex ICV Policy, accessible here. This process provides a clear understanding of how concerns raised by ICVs are addressed and resolved. It is also part of the ICV induction training, ensuring all new ICVs understand expectations and how their concerns will be actioned.

CUSTODY VISITING DATA

A total of 209 custody visits were completed last year (210 in 2023/24 and 181 in 2022/23). Taking the account of number of suites and planned closures, a minimum of three visits per suite per month would be 165.

The Essex ICV Scheme made, on average, a total of 17.4 visits to Essex Police' custody suites per month during 2024/25, (18 in 2023/24 and 16 in 202/23).

Southend's custody suite received the most visits, with 44 during the year. Grays received the fewest, with 27. A full breakdown of the visits can be seen in the figure below.

It is also worth noting that some custody suites were closed for necessary refurbishment and maintenance work and visits did not take place during custody closure.

Please see Figure 2. For more information. Each custody suite should be visited at least three times a month, at different times of day and different days of the week.

Figure 9. Number of ICV visits completed between April 2024 and March 2025 and their comparison to previous years.

Month / Suite	Grays	Chelmsford	Clacton	Colchester	Harlow	Southend	Total
Apr 24	2	4	3	3	3	4	19
May 24	3	3	3	2	CLOSED	3	14
Jun 24	3	2	3	3	CLOSED	3	14
Jul 24	4	3	3	4	CLOSED	4	18
Aug 24	3	4	2	2	3	4	18
Sep 24	3	3	3	3	1	4	17
Oct 24	4	4	2	3	4	3	20
Nov 24	2	4	4	2	4	4	20
Dec 24	3	3	1	2	3	3	15
Jan 25	CLOSED	4	3	3	4	4	18
Feb 25	CLOSED	3	3	3	3	4	16
Mar 25	CLOSED	4	4	4	4	4	20
2024/25	27	41	34	34	29	44	209
2023/24	33	39	27	26	22	38	210*
2022/23	26	22	25	28	22	30	181*

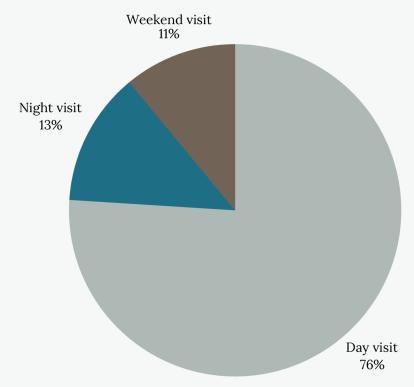
^{*}includes Basildon custody suite

Visiting times

All ICVs are expected to follow a visiting rota which is compiled by the ICV Coordinator. ICVs are allocated a custody suite, the number of visits required and a co-visitor to complete visits with. They are asked to log their visits on the team calendar to ensure visits take place throughout the whole months and at various times of a day.

The time visited is recorded as either 'day visit', 'night visit' or a 'weekend visit'. The figure below provides a breakdown of the 209 visits completed in relation to the time when the visit was completed.

Figure 10. Custody visiting times by the Essex ICV Scheme volunteers between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.



The trend of visits indicated that day visits are preferable to the ICVs. One area for development from last year was to encourage more weekend and night visits. When compared to last year, the day visits decreased from 83% in 2023/24 to 77% this year, weekend visits have increased from 2% last year to 11% this year and night visits have decreased from 15% last year to 13% this year.

Although an improvement has been seen in weekend visits, this is still an area for development in the next year along with night visits.

Visits Profile

During the 209 visits completed, ICVs saw 1,390 detainees in total, and spoke directly to 526 of them. This is an increase from 2023/24 where 1,274 detainees were seen.

36 detainees declined the offer to speak to an ICV. The continued work of the ICVs in being able to introduce themselves and build a rapport with detainees is a key aspect to creating a comprehensive dialogue and to understanding how detainees feel about their time whilst held in custody.

476 detainees were sleeping at the time of an ICV visit. Generally, the detainees are not expected to be woken for an ICV visit (unless there is a concern for their welfare).

Although ICVs did not speak to the sleeping detainees observations were made and the visits were recorded.

The remainder of detainees were unavailable for an ICV visit, for a number of reasons including being in hospital, in an interview, or a meeting with their solicitor. Figure below shows a full overview of the visits completed.

Figure 11. Detainee's visits profile recorded by ICVs between April 2024 and March 2025.

Details	Number
Spoken to	526
Asleep (but observed)	476
Refused the visit	36
Not seen (operational reasons) / cell observed	253
Not seen (detainee away) / cell observed	99
Total	1,390

'Not seen (operational reasons)' includes those detainees who were either at an interview or meeting their solicitor at the time of the ICV visit. 'Not seen (detainee away)' means that detainee was either in hospital or in court at the time of the ICV visit. On both occasions, ICVs observed the cells and reported findings accordingly.

Terrorism Act Custody (TACT) detainees

We have a special group of ICVs who are qualified to visit Terrorism Act (TACT) Custody facilities and speak to suspected terrorist detainees.

Unlike mainstream custody visits, TACT visits tend to be pre-arranged as there are relatively few TACT detainees and random visits are unlikely to result in visiting them. When a TACT detainee is booked into Essex custody, Essex Police will contact the ICV Scheme Manager as soon as practicable and an ICV visit will be arranged . TACT suspects can remain in detention for up to 14 days and ICVs will visit throughout this time (sometimes every day).

TACT qualified ICVs are experienced visitors who have completed at least 18 months of regular visiting. They have additional security clearance and attend additional specialist training.

Due to the security and confidentiality of those TACT detained, we are unable to provide more details around Essex ICV visits to TACT detainees.

ESSEX ICV SCHEME FINDINGS

Between April 2024 and end of March 2025 our ICVs raised a total of 189 issues relating to custody environment (in comparison, 262 issues were raised in 2023/24).

Concerns raised by the ICVs related to matters such as estate maintenance (71%), IT issues in respect of custody (26%) and custody provision (2%). Examples of the issues raised include taps leaking, faulty door looks, computer screen breaking down, faulty intercoms and flaky paint.

Along with the above reporting, a number of other concerns were raised through the course of the year, mainly relating to the general management of the custody and observations made by the ICVs. These included matters such as detention officers not being fully aware of the role of ICVs in the custody suites or reporting data.

All issues identified were collated into themes which are presented in the figure on the next page, along with the subsequent action taken.

All issues reported were discussed with Head of Custody and a new system of reporting and monitoring has been put in place, where the ICV Manager meets every month with a designated representative from the Custody Command, IT and Estate Maintenance teams to address each concern raised. This has led to 70% of issues being resolved within the first week of raising them.

All of the issues raised on the next page have been resolved.

Figure 12. A summary of the issues identified and subsequent action taken.

Matters raised by ICVs and the subsequent action taken				
Theme	Matter indetified	Action taken		
ICV awareness	Despite implementing and delivering ICV input to all new custody staff, officers and sergeants to increase awareness, a small number of concerns raised indicated that those working in the custody suite are still not fully aware of the role and remit of the ICVs.	Discussed with the Custody Managers and reasons identified for lack of awareness were new custody change programme and high turnover of staff. As a result, ICV input is now included in any custody training and Essex ICV Scheme representative is attending to deliver the session.		
Custody provision	A small number of reports mentioned limited or low supplies in the custody suites, mainly around clothing equipment.	Discussed with the relevant Custody Managers who explained low stock was due to either the order being delivered later or items being destroyed by the detainees. Each item has been promptly replaced.		
IT	Concerns relating to IT were mentioned in 51 reports (66 reports in 2023/24). These included fire alarms not working, CCTV not operating correctly or computer screens not working.	Concerns relating to CCTV issues were part of the bigger consultation which led to each custody suite being refurbished with the new CCTV system installed. The reports received were from locations where the CCTV implementation programme has not yet been completed. Other IT issues were raised internally as part of regular meetings.		
Estate Maintenance	Most of the issues (135) raised by the ICVs relate to maintenance concerns in custody suites. These issues include showers out of use, taps leaking, flaky paint, toilets out of use, faulty intercoms and locks not working.	These issues are concerns that due to the state of Essex Police custody suite are due to be raised. A dedicated team in the Maintenance Estate department is aware of every issue and addresses each issue efficiently.		

OTHER AREAS OF NOTE AND SPECIAL EVENTS

ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Essex ICV Scheme has also been represented at a number of community events to increase the presence and the profile of the scheme. We have attended various career events to promote the role of our ICVs (such as the Social Spark event in May 2024, the Towards Excellence Conference in June 2025 and the career fair in Basildon in July 2024).

We've also been invited to deliver a talk about the Essex ICV Scheme to a Halstead Probus Group in May 2024.

ICV TRAINING TO CUSTODY

In 2024/25 we also focused on delivering ICV training to custody staff and custody officers. With the highly successful Essex Police recruitment campaign, a significant number of new applicants joined the force. We have worked with Essex Police to ensure that as part of their induction training, information is provided about the ICV scheme, the role of the ICVs and their responsibilities. We have held five training sessions and trained 15 detention officers and 21 custody sergeants.

LOCAL & NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Essex ICV Coordinator won the national Lord Ferrers Award for contributing to PFCC's Essex Independent Custody Visiting Scheme work.

Richard Wicks, ICV Coordinator with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Independent Custody Visitor Scheme, was named PFCC Volunteer of the Year Award at the national Lord Ferrers Awards last month. The Lord Ferrers Awards recognise outstanding contributions to volunteering in policing from across the UK and Richard received his award at a ceremony held at the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms in London.

One of our long standing ICVs has also been nominated and shortlisted for the Volunteer of the Year award hosted by Essex Police and attended a celebratory event in November 2024 where he received a recognition for his outstanding contribution to the Essex ICV Scheme.

FUTURE PLANS

Our main objectives for the year 2025/26 are



FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

AIM TO RECRUIT AT LEAST FIVE NEW ICVS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS INCLUDING YOUNGER GROUPS, TO ENSURE ESSEX ICV SCHEME REFLECTS THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES.

ENHANCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

DEVELOP ADVANCED TRAINING MODULES FOR EXISTING ICVS TO IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE, FOCUSING ON AREAS LIKE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND HANDLING VULNERABLE DETAINEES.





GREATER VISIBILITY

INCREASE VISIT FREQUENCY TO AT LEAST FOUR VISITS PER CUSTODY PER MONTH, ESPECIALLY DURING PEAK TIMES TO ENSURE CONSISTENT MONITORING OF CUSTODY CONDITIONS.

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

FOSTER STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER OVERSIGHT BODIES AND ADVOCACY GROUPS TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES AND ENHANCE THE IMPACT OF THE ICV SCHEME.





ICVA QAF ACCREDITATION

ACHIEVE AT LEAST SILVER STATUS IN THE UPCOMING ICVA QAF ACCREDITATION.

If you would like to know more about the scheme, please contact us on:



Essex Independent Custody Scheme Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex Kelvedon Park London Road Rivenhall

Witham

Essex

CM8 3HB



01245 261600



ICV.Scheme@essex.police.uk



http://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk



@EssexPFCC

Useful websites:

- ICVA (Independent Custody Visiting Association)
- National Preventative Mechanism
- Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation