



# INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME

2022 Annual Report



## Foreword

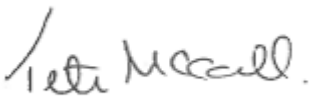
I am pleased to be able to present our Annual Independent Custody Visiting Report for 01/01/2022 – 31/12/2022.

Independent Custody Visitors are my eyes and ears, ensuring that the rights and entitlements of any detained person in Cumbria are observed; and the conditions in which they are detained are satisfactory and safe. I am extremely grateful for the work that they do as volunteers, giving up their time to ensure that the Scheme is effective, and I would like to extend my personal thanks to each of them for their commitment to this vital role.

It has been another exceptionally busy year for custody visiting, and I am very proud of the dedication our volunteers have shown whilst carrying out visits.

Thank you all once again and I look forward to working with you all in the forthcoming year.

Kindest regards



Peter McCall  
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cumbria



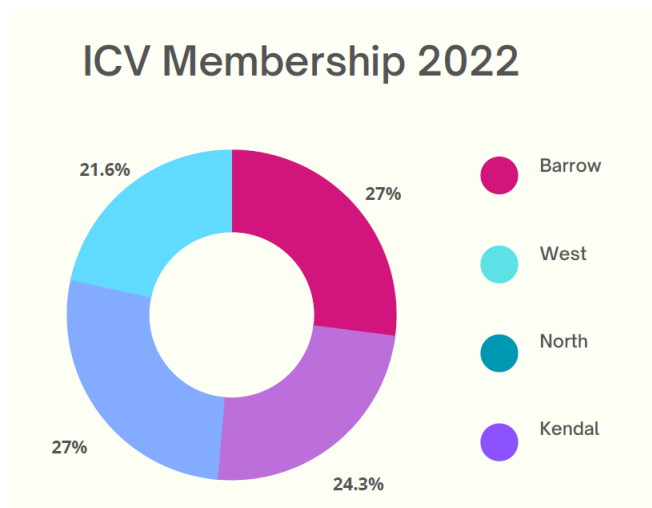
## Introduction & Background

The Police and Crime Commissioner is required by statute to operate an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (Section 51(1) of the Police Reform Act 2002, as amended) and such a scheme operates within Cumbria. This report covers the activities of the scheme for the operating period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is made up of volunteers who live or work in Cumbria. They make unannounced visits to Police Stations to check on the welfare and wellbeing of people in police custody. There are currently four panels of up to 12 volunteers each across Cumbria, in Barrow, Kendal, North and West Cumbria.



## Scheme Information



### ICV Membership

Panels	Members	Male	Female	Retired
Barrow	10	4	6	1
Kendal	9	5	4	0
North	10	3	7	2
West	8	6	2	1

Data as of 31 December 2022

## Recruitment

In early 2022, a new recruitment campaign was launched which received a significant number of applications from across the county. Following all the necessary induction training and observational visits, 13 new ICVs were appointed to the Scheme as follows:

- Barrow – 4
- Kendal – 1
- North – 5
- West – 3

As a result of this recruitment the demographic of the volunteers changed to show a greater gender balance across the four panels and a number of younger volunteers joined the scheme.

Thank you very much to all ICVs that have assisted with induction training, observational visits and helped make our new visitors feel welcomed and supported in the role.



## Visits and Statistics

Each panel aims to undertake one unannounced visit every week to the designated police station within their area. These targets are agreed following consultation with the Chief Constable. Custody visitors are only concerned with the custodial welfare of the detainee and must always remain impartial. When speaking to detainees the custody visitors will look to see if:

- The detainee understands why they are being detained and are aware they can get free legal advice
- The detainee is under 17 or a vulnerable adult, that they have been provided with appropriate adult support
- They have been provided with food/drink and have medical assistance if they are feeling unwell

The custody visitors will aim to visit all detainees who are in custody at the time of the visit. There are several reasons why visitors may not see detainees including:

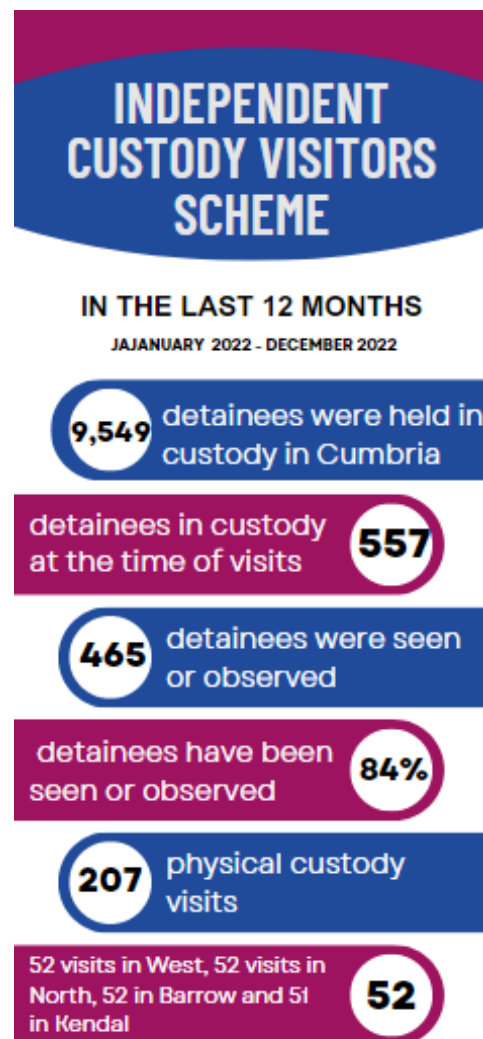
- The detainee may be in interview or with an Appropriate Adult at the time of the visit
- The detainee may have been admitted to hospital or being seen by the medical practitioner within custody
- The detainee is asleep and within their continuous period of eight hours of rest
- The detainee is violent or presents a risk to the safety of the custody visitor, staff, or themselves.

Wherever possible, all detainees are observed through the cell hatch if they are unable to go into the cell. Whilst the visitors must be provided with access to all detainees, detainees do not have to consent to speak with the visitors. To assist the custody visitors to speak to and interact with detainees who do not speak English, a translation booklet has been developed. The booklet provides a translation in 36 languages to enable the custody visitors to ask their questions during a visit. Also included within the book is a copy of British Sign Language to assist in interacting with any detainee who is deaf.

## Issues Raised

No serious issues were raised by any detainee during the visits covered by this report. Concerns that were raised generally related to estate issues, such as faults with the sinks, toilets, walls, and floors. Any significant or reoccurring issues are raised with the Constabulary and/or the Estates Department. Continued monitoring by the Custody Visitors and Scheme Administrator have insured appropriate action has been taken to rectify any issues. Where these cannot be rectified the Scheme Administrator has an escalation process with the Constabulary's Criminal Justice Unit or Custody Forum.

In addition to checks carried out with the detainees, the custody visitors also carry out regular checks within all the custody suites. These include:



- Ensuring reading materials are available for detainees
- Checking detainee meals and preparation area
- Ensuring cells are clean and up to standard
- Ensuring that the exercise yard is clean and hazard free
- Ensuring that detainees have been offered or received medical assistance if required
- Ensuring that sanitary protection is available in custody suites

When issues were raised by detainees, the custody visitors discussed them with the custody sergeant during the visit. In most cases the matter could be rectified immediately. In cases where it was not, the custody visitors were satisfied that the Custody Sergeant had given a valid explanation and had the matter in hand. Should ICVs not be satisfied following an explanation from the Custody Sergeant, issues can then be raised with the Scheme Administrator to progress.

In general, ICVs were very satisfied with the conduct of visits and often made complimentary remarks in their reports about the staff they met. Regular feedback has been provided regarding the professional and caring attitude they encounter when observing the way detainees are treated.

## Custody Inspectors

Inspector Nils Robinson took over the central custody role in February 2022 and retired from the Constabulary later in the year. Inspector Paul Latham succeeded him and has recently been promoted. Insp Robinson and Insp Latham were both extremely supportive of the scheme and the work that ICVs carry out. During their time in this post, positive changes and additional scrutiny has put in place throughout custody. Following a Constabulary review, the following Inspectors now have responsibility for custody:

- North & West – Inspector Sarah Hodgkinson
- Kendal and Barrow – Inspector Lucy Skilling
- Central – Inspector Georgina Bell

A very positive working relationship has been formed with the Inspectors above, and we look forward to working together in the future. Insp Hodgkinson and Insp Skilling attend the regular panel meetings for their area's and their attendance is very much appreciated by the Scheme Administrator and custody visitors. In addition, there is regular liaison between all the Custody Inspector's and the Scheme Administrator, with the Scheme Administrator attending the full meetings of the Custody Governance Board on a quarterly basis, and the monthly Custody meetings.

## Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA)

Cumbria remains a member of the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA). ICVA represents custody visiting on a national level at the Home Office and provides support to custody visiting schemes in a variety of ways, including updates, guidance on national practices, any changes to legislation and online training packages.



## ICVA Training

A training plan has been put together by the Scheme Administrator, with a training session being set and circulated approximately every 6 weeks. These sessions utilize the ICVA bitesize training packages. To date, the following sessions have been completed:

- Introduction to Dignity
- Vulnerability
- Learning Disability and Neurodiversity
- Mental Health
- Use of Force
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Children and Young People in Custody – Treatment and Conditions
- Physical Disabilities in Custody



## Cumbria Conference 2022

Thank you to everyone who attended the Cumbria Annual Conference, held in October 2022. It was fantastic to be back together in one room again having had no conferences in 2020 or 2021 due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

We enjoyed talks from Paul Cavagin, about County Lines and how it impacts on the lives of those who become involved. It also provided information on what ICV's can look for when carrying out their custody visits. Insp Kim Brown from the Cumbria Dogs Section provided an update on work being carried out by the Dogs Section and in relation to the Animal Welfare Scheme. We also had two representatives from Cumbria Deaf Association, Caroline and Karen. They explained how being in custody could affect detainees who were deaf or hard of hearing and provided some basic sign language for the ICV's to use when carrying out visits.



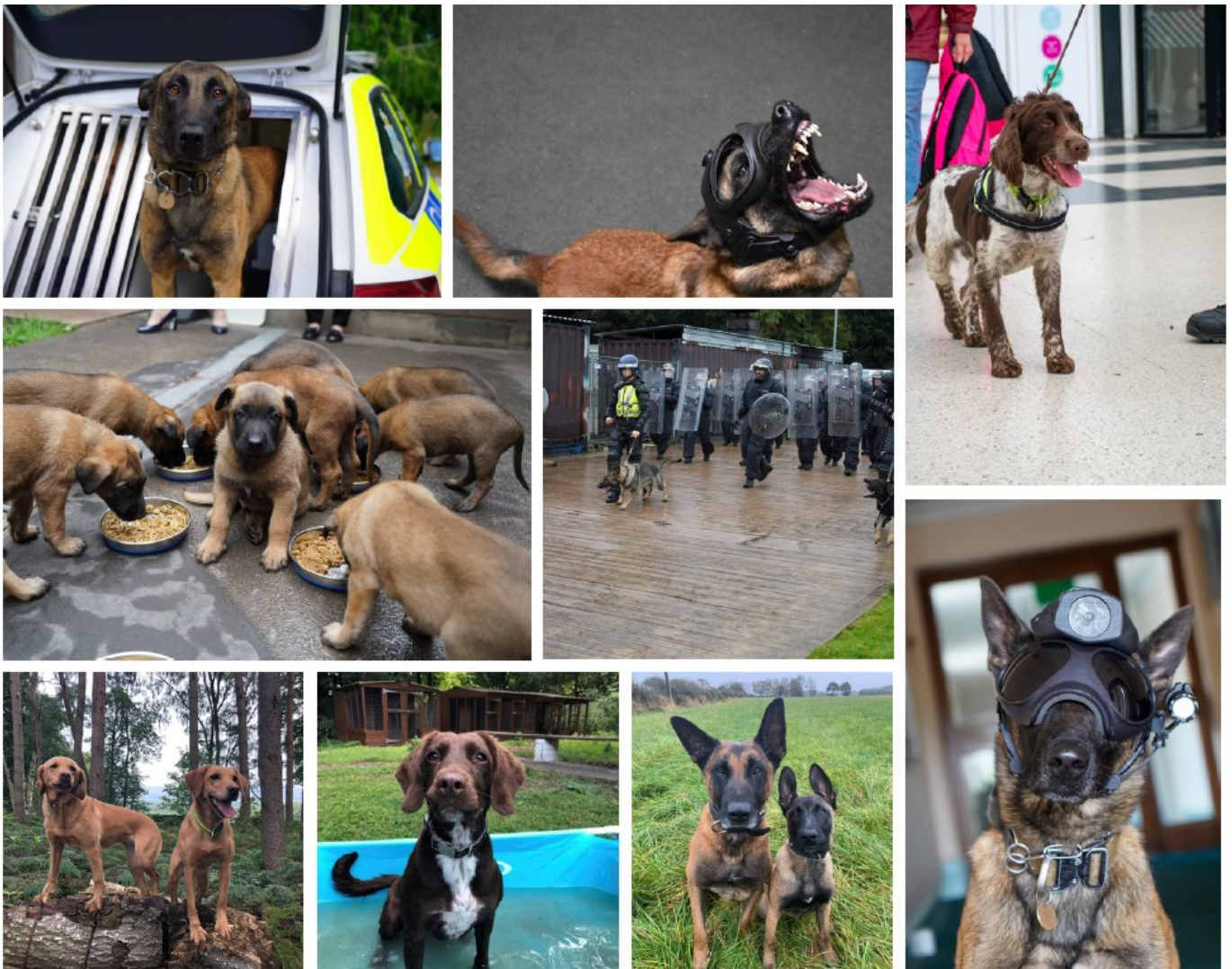


## Animal Welfare Scheme

In 2006 the Animal Welfare Act brought in a responsibility for police forces to provide for the needs of police dogs. The Police and Crime Commissioner also runs an Animal Welfare Scheme, although there is no statutory requirement to do so. An Animal Welfare Panel, currently made up of eight volunteers make visits to the dog section at Police Headquarters and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary dog section kennels at Sellafield. Although the Animal Welfare visitors for CNC are the same as those for the OPCC scheme, the CNC scheme is operated independently. Induction and ongoing training and useful information is provided throughout the year by the Dogs Trust.

The role of our Animal Welfare Visitors is to check on the welfare of police dogs and the facilities which are provided for them. During 2022 12 visits were carried out to each site and I am pleased to report that there have been no welfare concerns raised regarding any of our dogs within Cumbria, positive feedback is always received about how well the dogs are cared for.

An overview was provided at the 2022 conference by Inspector Kim Brown about the different types of dogs within the force, the tasks they carry out and their training. Our AWS visitors have been able to take part in training exercises when 'new recruits' have been going through their passive drugs training, and some AWS visitors assisted the dogs section at Kendal Calling, where dogs were searching at entrance gates. We look forward to observing and assisting in future training and exercises.



## Thank you

We would like to say a sincere thank you to all the visitors for another successful year of custody and animal welfare scheme visiting. Without your dedication the scheme would not be able to operate, and the Police and Crime Commissioner would not fulfil his statutory duty.

We are fortunate to have a fantastic and dedicated team of custody visitors and are very grateful of the work you carry out.

*Lisa Hodgson*  
ICV Scheme Administrator

*Joanne Head*  
Governance Manager



# THANK YOU





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