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# Annual Report 2015-16

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**Bedfordshire  
Independent  
Custody Visiting  
Scheme**

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# Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Annual Report 2015-16

## Introduction

Independent Custody Visiting is a well established scheme whereby volunteers attend police stations to check on the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The scheme offers protection and confidentiality to detainees and the police, as well as providing reassurance to the wider community.

In November 2012, the statutory requirement to organise and oversee the delivery of Independent Custody Visiting transferred from police authorities (abolished under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011) to the elected Police and Crime Commissioner for each policing area.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Mrs Kathryn Holloway was elected as Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire and she has delegated responsibility for the Scheme to her Compliance Officer.

## Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visitors 2015-16

Bedfordshire has an effective and efficient scheme of 32 dedicated volunteer Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) who were appointed from the community. ICVs kindly give their time to visit and check on the health and welfare of detainees in police custody. They provide reassurance to the community that people detained in police custody are looked after appropriately and in accordance with national standards and guidance.

Over the past few years, ICVs have made an impact on behalf of detainees and custody staff by raising concerns on a number of health and safety and maintenance issues such as poor standards of cleanliness to potential Self-harm risks etc.

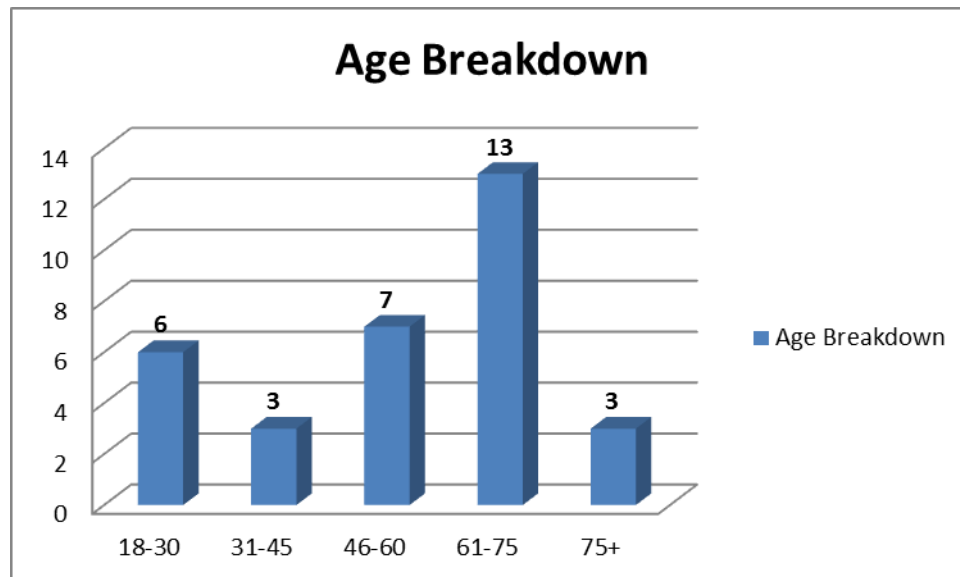
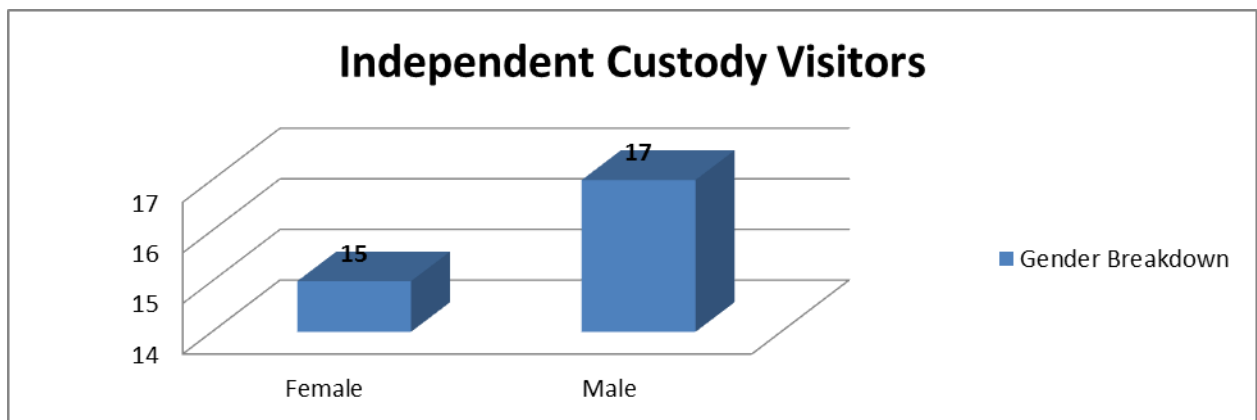
ICVs are able to bring knowledge from their professions and life experiences, as well as their training, to challenge standards and processes in custody and help improve matters for all within the custody environment.

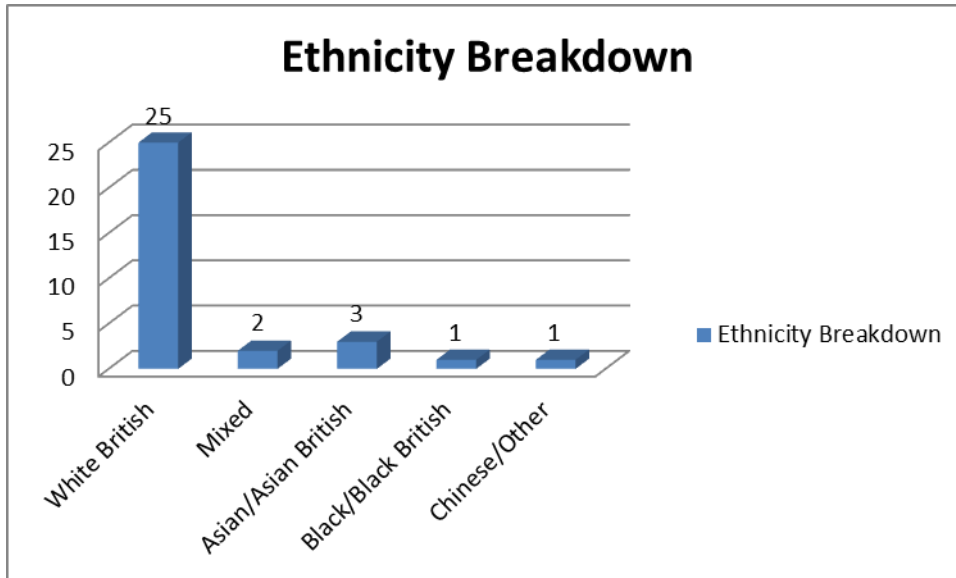
The Scheme seeks to be representative of the local community, including ethnicity, gender and age – please see diversity data table below. There has been a big push

on recruitment since November 2015 with appointing 8 new Independent Custody Visitors from November to April.

(There have been no disabilities declared by ICVs)

Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visitors Diversity Data 1 <sup>st</sup> April 15- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 16								
Gender			Age			Ethnicity		
Female	15	47%	18-30	6	19%	White British	25	78%
Male	17	53%	31-45	3	9%	White Other	0	0
			46-60	7	22%	Mixed	2	6%
			61-75	13	41%	Asian/Asian British	3	9%
			75+	3	9%	Black/Black British	1	3%
						Chinese/Other	1	3%





## Annual Report of Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme 2015-16

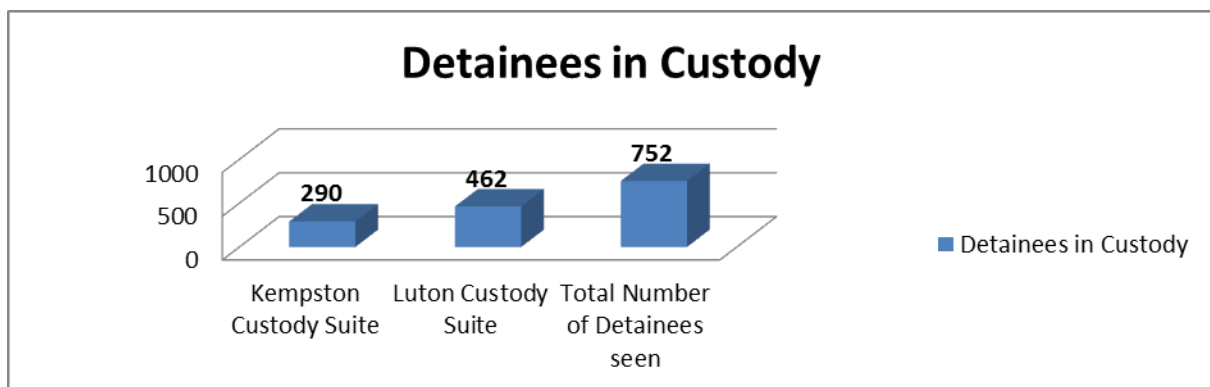
This report details the activity of Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme from 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016. During that time 12,314 people were arrested and detained in police custody in Bedfordshire, which is 769 less than the previous year. 752 (6.1%) of those detainees were in custody whilst an Independent Custody Visit was carried out.

### Comparison with previous years:

<b>2015-16</b>	<b>12,314 people in custody</b>	<b>752 (6.1%) in custody when custody visit took place</b>
<b>2014-15</b>	<b>13,083 people in custody</b>	<b>897 (6.9%) in custody when custody visit took place</b>
<b>2013-14</b>	<b>13,894 people in custody</b>	<b>870 (6.3%) in custody when custody visit took place</b>
<b>2012-13</b>	<b>15,502 people in custody</b>	<b>808 (5.3%) in custody when custody visit took place</b>
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>16,834 people in custody</b>	<b>857 (5.1%) in custody when custody visit took place</b>
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>18,152 people in custody</b>	<b>870 (4.8%) in custody when custody visit took place</b>

Of the 752 detainees in custody whilst a visit was taking place:

- 290 were at the Kempston Custody Suite
- 462 were at Luton Custody Suite



## Visits

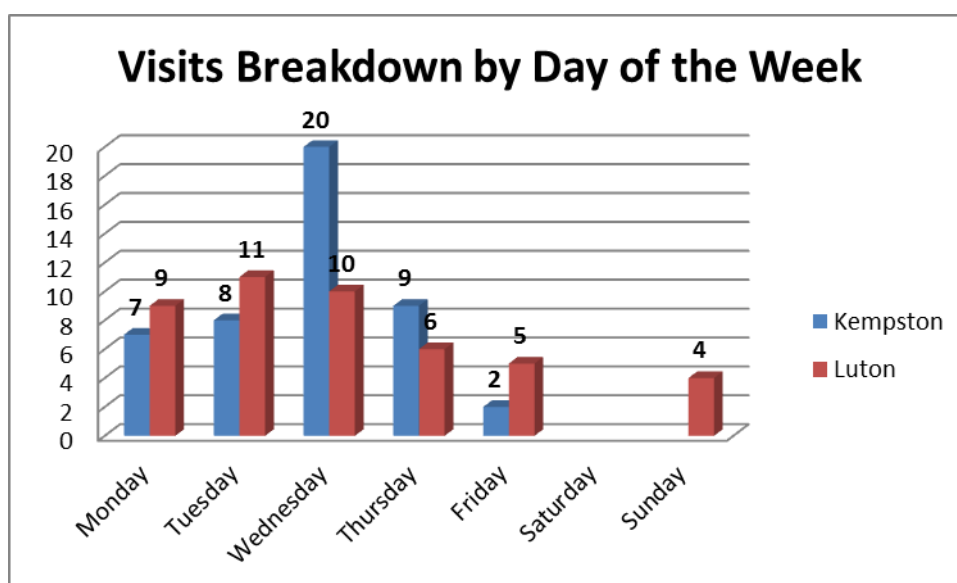
ICVs arrange their visits through the Volunteer Scheme Co-ordinator and are reminded to arrange visits over all days of the week and times of the day.

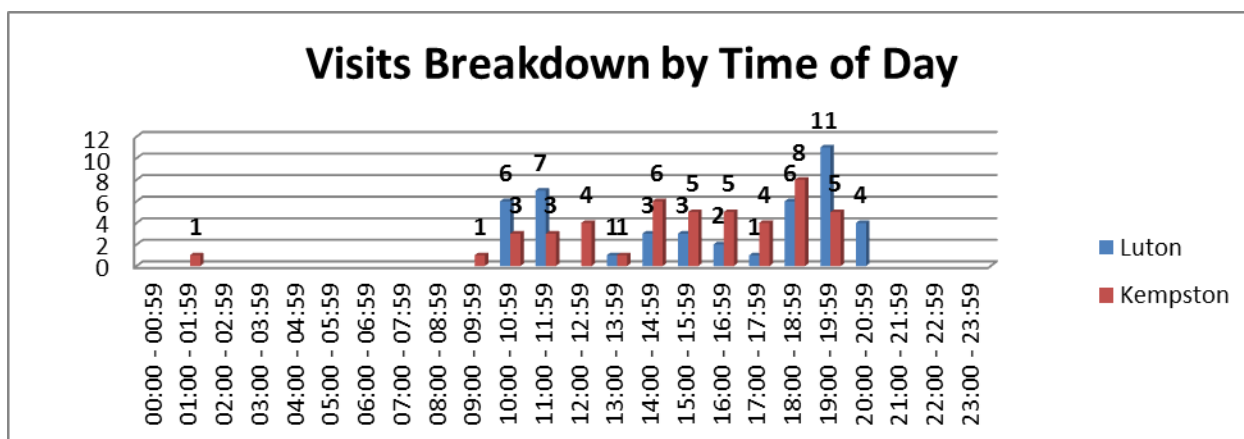
For more information on all visits carried out from 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016 please refer to the table below.

### VISITS

The table below details visits undertaken by ICVs, including days of the week and times of the day, from 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016.

Custody Visits 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016										
	Number of visits	Day of week							Time	
Custody Suite	Visits carried out	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	6am - 6pm	6pm - 6am
Kempston	46	7	8	20	9	2	0	0	31	15
%	51%	15%	17%	44%	20%	4%	0	0	67%	33%
Luton	45	9	11	10	6	5	0	4	24	21
%	49%	20%	25%	22%	13%	11%	0	9%	53%	47%
Total	91	16	19	30	15	7	0	4	55	36
%	100%	18%	21%	33%	17%	8%	0	3%	60%	40%





## Outcomes of Visits

Of the 752 people in custody when visits were undertaken from 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016, 592 (79%) were interviewed and 172 (23%) were not visited for reasons as detailed in the table below.

Custody records of detainees incapable of giving their verbal permission were checked to provide reassurance to ICVs about their health and welfare.

### *Detainees Capable of Consent*

*Para. 65 of the Codes of Practice/ National Standards refer to the term “Incapable”: The ordinary meaning of the word applies - incapable concerns the person’s capacity to make an informed decision as to whether they want to allow their custody record to be inspected by the ICVs at the point at which they would be asked for their consent. This will ensure that the welfare of persons who fall into the following categories can be monitored by ICVs; those who are drunk or under the influence of drugs, those who do not speak any English, and those who display mental health concerns.*

### Reasons why Detainees were unable to be seen by ICVs

Unavailable for Custody Visit 2015-16	Kempston	Luton	Total	% of 752
In interview / solicitors	26	51	77	10.2%
Detainee asleep	7	13	20	2.6%
Released/transferred during visit	5	21	26	3.5%
With doctor/medic/at hospital/custody medical centre	3	15	18	2.4%
Declined interview	5	2	7	1.0%
Not seen- no reason given	1	1	2	0.3%
Detainee demonstrating bizarre behaviour	0	1	1	0.1%
Making phone call	0	1	1	0.1%
Out of Cell	2	3	5	0.7%
Being processed/fingerprints/photographs	1	3	4	0.5%
Detainee on cell watch	1	1	2	0.3%

Viper Capture	1	0	1	0.1%
Mental Health Assessment being conducted	0	1	1	0.1%
Viewed through Hatch – No Reason Given	0	5	5	0.7%
Using facilities – Toilet/Shower	0	2	2	0.3%

## Issues and Concerns of ICVs

ICVs check on the treatment of detainees and the conditions that they are held in. A number of issues were raised by ICVs on the conditions within custody. All major issues were forwarded to the Inspector of the custody suite and have been rectified.

ICVs check all areas of custody including cells, kitchen areas, interview rooms, store cupboards, medical rooms, corridors, shower and toilet facilities etc.

ICVs should have immediate access to custody but it is accepted that a short wait might be acceptable for certain reasons such as health and safety issues or ICVs arriving at handover. ICVs should always expect an explanation and can escalate a concern to the Custody/Duty Inspector if they feel it necessary.

The Custody Visiting reports are monitored by the Force to ensure that issues are reported to and addressed by the relevant department.

Persistent maintenance issues that come to the attention of the Scheme Administrator whilst inputting data from custody report forms are passed to the Head of Estates to ensure they are addressed in a timely manner and rectified.

The Inspector of Custody values the ICV scheme and has named the visitors his critical friends, ICVs have carried out their duties in an efficient and sensitive manner, holding the Chief Constable to account in regards to Custody.

## Comments About Custody Staff

Overall, ICVs rated the professionalism and conduct of custody officers and staff very highly, and on numerous occasions commented on the staff being extremely helpful.

## Comments and Concerns of Detainees

ICVs reported that a significant number of detainees had commented positively on their treatment in Bedfordshire Police Custody.

## Diversity Data Recording of Detainees

Diversity data of detainees is collected and monitored to ensure that any matters of concern or trends relating to protected characteristics of detainees identified during the custody visiting process are able to be addressed.

Data categories recorded are gender, age (adult or juvenile), and ethnicity as defined by the detainee and detention category. This is the data as collected on the custody record and is transferred to the custody visiting report. Disability is not recorded but this is picked up in the dignity and risk assessment carried out as each detainee is booked into custody and ICVs would be informed if appropriate.

No specific issues relating to gender, age or detainee category have been reported in 2015-16. Detainees who do not speak English but are able to read in their own language are communicated with by the use of flash cards available in the 18 most used languages within the Eastern Region.

Full details of diversity data of the 752 persons in police custody during custody visits can be found below.

## Diversity Data of Detainees 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

### Gender

	Kempston	Luton	Total	%
<b>Female</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>94</b>	<i>12.5%</i>
<b>Male</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>658</b>	<i>87.5%</i>
<b>Not Stated</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<i>0</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>752</b>	

### Age

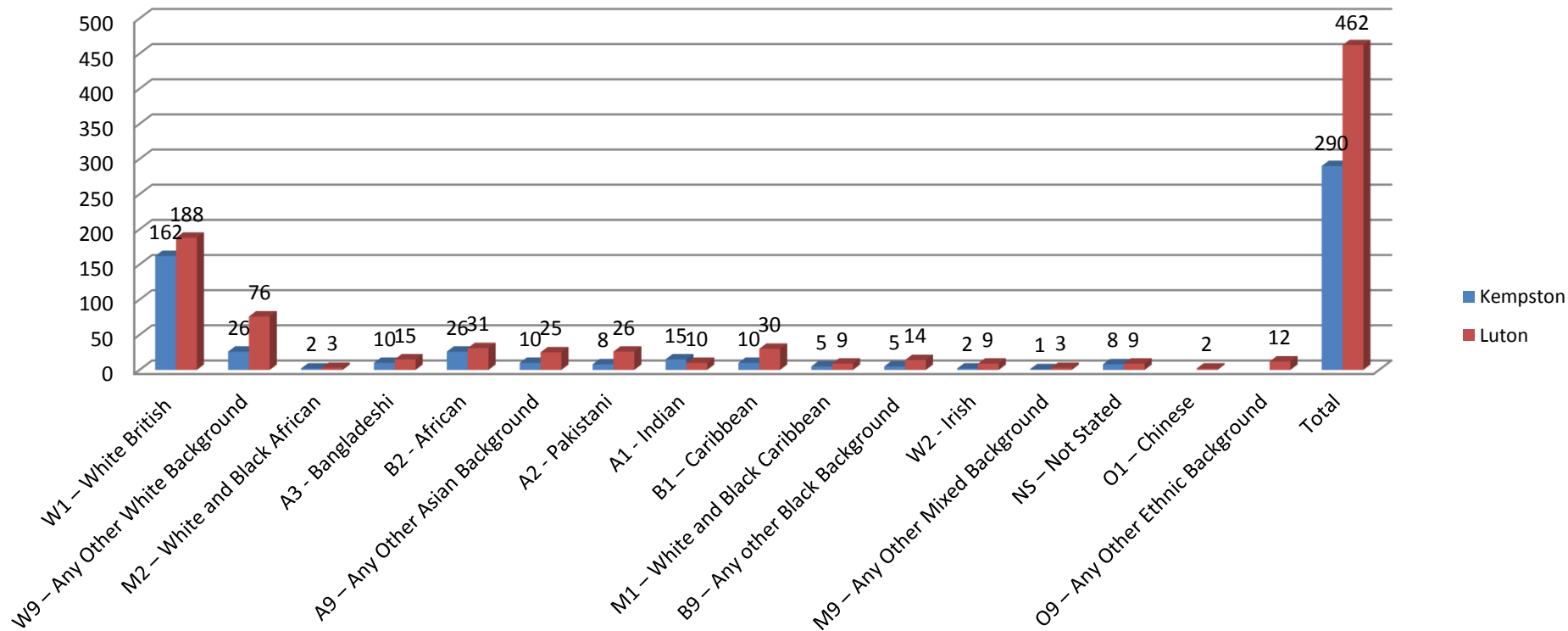
	Kempston	Luton	Total	%
<b>Adult</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>695</b>	<i>92.4%</i>
<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>57</b>	<i>7.6%</i>
<b>Not Stated</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<i>0</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>752</b>	



<b>Ethnicity Code of Detainees</b>	<b>Kempston (290)</b>	<b>Luton (462)</b>
<b>W1 – White British</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>W9 – Any Other White Background</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>M2 – White and Black African</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A3 - Bangladeshi</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>B2 - African</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>A9 – Any Other Asian Background</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>A2 - Pakistani</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>A1 - Indian</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B1 – Caribbean</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>M1 – White and Black Caribbean</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>B9 – Any other Black Background</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>W2 - Irish</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>M9 – Any Other Mixed Background</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NS – Not Stated</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>O1 – Chinese</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>O9 – Any Other Ethnic Background</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>462</b>



## Ethnicity Codes - Detainees



## **Panel Meetings**

All ICVs are invited to attend quarterly panel meetings where matters discussed include an update from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, updates from Bedfordshire Police Custody, performance monitoring of the scheme and national and regional update information. Panel meetings are chaired by the Compliance Officer. These meetings are attended by the Chief Inspector of Custody and one or two Custody Inspectors who provide reports to ICVs and keep them up to date with activity within custody.

Moving forward with meetings in 2016, training is being incorporated into each Panel meeting ensuring ICVs are continually refreshed and enhancing their skills.

## **Scheme Volunteer Co-ordinator**

Bedfordshire Independent Custody Scheme has a Scheme Co-ordinator Mike Rudd, who has held this role for a number of years and was reappointed in 2013 to 2015, however after this time Mike has made the decision to stand down as the coordinator. Bedfordshire scheme would like to thank Mike sincerely for all his hard work.

The Coordinator is appointed on a two yearly cycle, who works to oversee all visits to ensure they are carried out and monitors that all ICVs are meeting their target of 6 - 12 visits per year. They work closely with the Scheme Administrator to ensure that the scheme runs as smoothly as possible and has responsibility to mentor new recruits. The co-ordinator role is considered of great value by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Expressions of interests have been received and this will be discussed at the May 2016 Panel Meeting.

## **Retention and Recruitment**

No ICVs have left the Scheme during the year. There have been 8 new people who have been recruited in 2015-16. We will continue to advertise and recruit ICVs until maximum levels of ICVs are reached.

## **Regional and National Independent Custody Visiting Association**

Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme sits within the Eastern Region with Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The six scheme administrators meet quarterly to discuss their experiences and share best practice.

## **Conclusion**

Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visitors continue to be committed and dedicated to their role and work hard to reach agreed targets for visiting detainees in Police Custody and meeting their individual visiting requirements.

Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme continues to share a supportive and effective working relationship with Bedfordshire Police. Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme provides reassurance that:-

- (a) detainees in Bedfordshire Police Custody are treated fairly and in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and associated codes of practice;
- (b) the conditions detainees are kept in are clean and safe and any matters of concern are recorded and dealt with effectively, and;
- (c) the rights and entitlements of detainees in Bedfordshire Police Custody are observed and adhered to.

The Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is the Police and Crime Commissioners statutory duty and is an example of how members of the community can become involved in policing to really make a difference and be able to promote confidence and reassurance in policing in Bedfordshire.

The success of the Bedfordshire Scheme is due to the commitment and dedication of the ICVs and the professional working relationship that has developed between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Custody.

The Police and Crime Commissioner would like to thank all Bedfordshire Independent Custody Visitors for their generous gift of time and their hard work.

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire**  
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