



**POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**  
For Leicester,  
Leicestershire & Rutland

Your Communities - Your Commissioner

## **Police and Crime Panel for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland**

***18<sup>th</sup> June 2024***

### ***Annual Report for the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme***

<b>Report Date</b>	18 June 2024
<b>Report Author</b>	Lizzie Starr, Director of Governance and Performance Dharmista Dave, Volunteers Manager
<b>Security Classification</b>	Official

## **Purpose of Report**

1. In his role as the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) the Commissioner is required as per Section 51 of the Police Reform Act 2002 to manage a custody visiting scheme ensuring the rights of those detained in police custody are met.
2. The PCC brings this report to outline for the Police and Crime Panel how he is fulfilling his duty by discharging this function through a cohort of volunteers. This report summarises the work of the volunteers in this respect for the period April 2023 – March 2024.

## **Request of the Panel**

3. In their role to scrutinise the actions and decisions of the PCC, the Commissioner requests that the panel examines the contents of this report. He would specifically like to ask the panel their opinion on the following questions;
  - a. Is the Panel content in the way in which the PCC has discharged his duties?
  - b. Is the Panel satisfied of the work of the volunteers for this period?
  - c. Would the panel like to make any recommendations to the PCC in relation to this matter?

## **Summary**

4. It is the opinion of the PCC that the volunteers provide an excellent independent service and work well with the Force to ensure those in Custody have their rights met. The PCC is extremely satisfied with the management of the scheme locally, which is enabled by an experienced, dedicated cohort of volunteers which without their commitment, the assurance to the public, PCC and Force that the rights of those detained in custody are met would not be possible.

## **Background, Relevant Data and Trends**

5. Custody visiting in Leicestershire commenced in 1983 as a voluntary scheme following a recommendation from the Scarman report into the Brixton disorders in 1981. One of Lord Scarman's recommendations was that a system be introduced whereby local community members could make independent, unannounced visits to police stations for the purpose of ensuring the welfare of persons detained in police custody.
6. The purpose of this recommendation was to counter growing mistrust of the police at that time and to increase their accountability. Subsequently Section 51(1) to the Police Reform Act 2002 placed independent custody visiting on a statutory basis with responsibility for schemes lying with local policing bodies. As such, the Home Office produced a Code of Practice on the delivery of

schemes and National Standards were introduced by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA).

### Organisation of the Scheme in Leicestershire

7. The Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for the Scheme and receives regular reports on the performance and outcomes from custody visits. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have undertaken a number of custody visits during the term of office. The Scheme is overseen by the Director of Performance & Governance with daily management undertaken by the Volunteer Manager.
8. At the start of April 2023, there were 18 ICVs registered with the Scheme. At the end of the year 2 ICV's had left the scheme. Exit interviews are undertaken with each volunteer leaving the scheme and the reasons for leavers this year were
  - Decided to leave the scheme after one year of service, when she went on maternity leave. She was given the option to return to the scheme following maternity leave but stated would reconsider in the future.
  - The second volunteer left the scheme after 8 years of service due to a conflict of interest professionally and the OPCC policy around independence of the scheme.
9. There are currently 16 Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) in the Scheme.
10. All are recruited from the local community through a recruitment process which includes an application form and an interview. All volunteers are vetted and complete a six-month probationary period during which time all induction training is provided.
11. Approximately 25 ICVs is considered appropriate to provide the required level of resilience to ensure visits take place and to maintain the interest of the visitors. A review of ICV numbers has recently taken place considering our 2023 numbers and therefore a recruitment campaign for new ICVs was undertaken in 2023/2024.
12. A total of 15 further ICV's were successful and are currently going through pre-employment checks. This will bring our total cohort of ICV volunteers to 31. Training for all new volunteers is due to be completed before they become operation in September 2024.
13. The map below shows the current geographical reach of the 16 volunteers. Currently 38% of the ICV volunteers are from Leicester and 62% are from Leicestershire. There are no volunteers currently from Rutland. Due to the custody suites all being located centrally within the City, it is difficult to attract volunteers from Rutland.



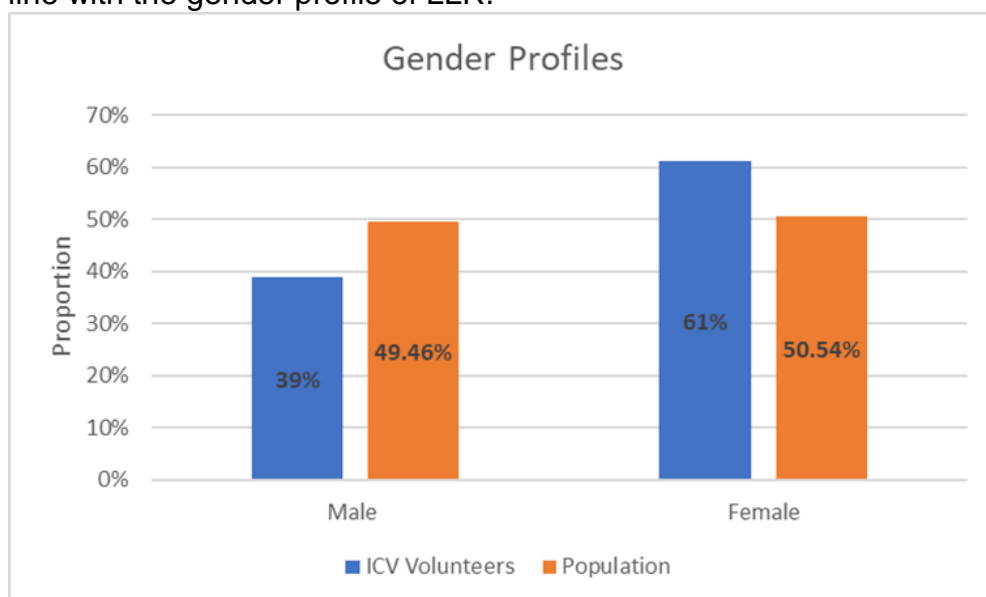
14. The ICV Scheme in Leicestershire has fantastic retention rates with over 69% of ICV volunteers having over 5 years' service in the role. There is also a number of volunteers with over 20 years' service, Volunteers will receive long service certificates after a block of 3 years of service with the scheme, such as 3, 6, 9 years and continued. These awards are presented by the PCC at an annual volunteer recognition event.



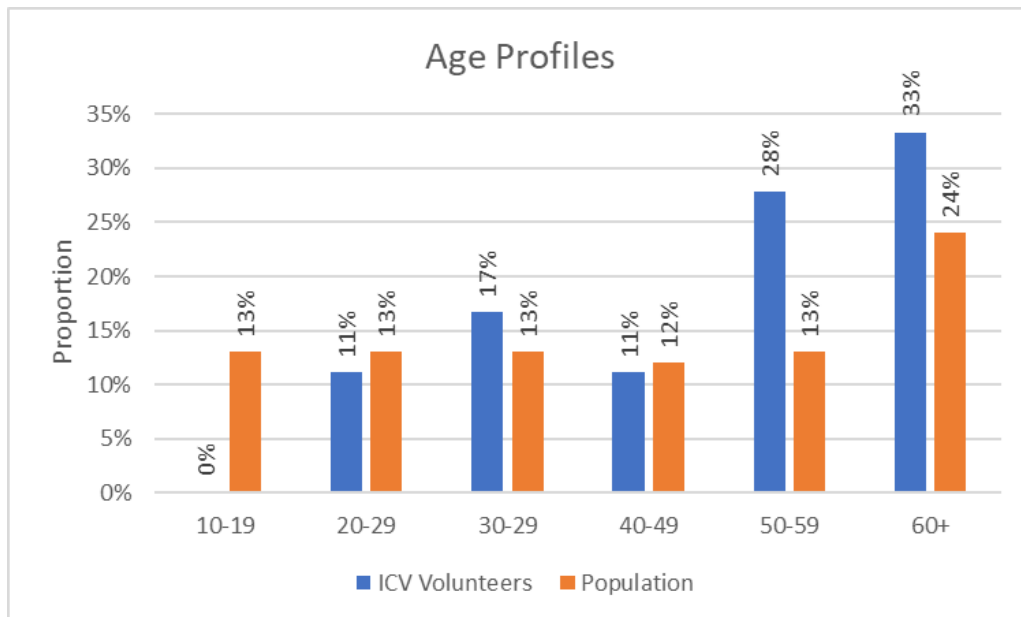
15. The experience of the volunteers is invaluable when training and recruiting new members to the scheme as we operate a buddy system in which each new volunteer is paired with an experienced visitor to gain experience and insights.

16. The OPCC strives to have a pool of volunteers that are representative of the local communities and the following information details how the volunteers in Leicestershire compare to the communities.

17. The gender profiles of the ICV volunteer cohort compared to the population of LLR can be seen below. This demonstrates the cohort of ICVs is roughly in line with the gender profile of LLR.



18. The age profiles of the ICV volunteers cohort can be seen below compared to that of the population of LLR. The chart shows that whilst the scheme is lacking representation from young people (18-19 year olds) as there are currently no volunteers in this age group, the volunteers age profile is roughly in line with the remainder of LLR.



19. Leicestershire Police has 3 custody suites located as follows:

- a. Euston Street - 36 cells
- b. Keyham Lane - 18 cells
- c. Beaumont Leys - 14 cells (Currently not being used)

20. Euston Street and Keyham Lane are the primary custody suites and Beaumont Leys is a secondary custody suite. Beaumont Leys was closed most of the year and only open when there was demand or when there were refurbishment works taking place at Keyham Lane Custody Suite.

21. Quarterly team meetings take place, which are chaired by the Volunteers Manager and are attended by the Force Custody Inspector and team of Independent Custody Visitors. These meetings took place on;

- a. 7 June 2023,
- b. 12 September 2023,
- c. 13 December 2023 and;
- d. 16 April 2024.

22. Items discussed in the last 12 months included outcomes from custody visits and Force response, developments within the scheme and custody, legislative changes and system and staff updates within custody. Since April 2023, the

team meetings have been conducted in a hybrid format both face to face and also on MS Teams.

#### Visits undertaken 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

23. ICVs have the locally agreed target to visit each custody suite a minimum of once per week.
24. During 2023/24 a total of 101 visits were made as follows;
  - a. Euston Street - 51 Visits
  - b. Keyham Lane - 50 Visits
25. This equates to 97.1% of visits completed when compared to the locally agreed target.
26. The Independent Custody Visitors contributed an impressive 442.43 hours of their time volunteering for the OPCC throughout the year.
27. The volunteers carry out, on behalf of the PCC, independent scrutiny of those detained in custody, which is a statutory function, this scheme being carried out by volunteers saves the PCC employing staff/workers to carry out the scheme. The total economic value of the ICV Volunteered hours for the past 12 months stands at a saving of £8,119.32 to the taxpayer's purse (compared to staff equivalent + shift allowance).

#### Access to the custody suite

28. For each visit undertaken, a record is kept of the time that ICVs arrived at the police station to the time they received admittance to the custody suite, times over 5minutes are classed as non-immediate access and recorded as such.
29. Of the 101 visits carried out during the year, immediate access to the custody suite was permitted on 91 occasions (90%).
30. ICVs experienced a delay of 6-15 minutes on 1 occasion, and a delay of more than 15 minutes on 9 occasions. Delays in access were mainly due to suites being very busy and staff shortages, and one while a staff handover was taking place.

#### Detainees seen, not seen or who refused a visit by Custody Visitors

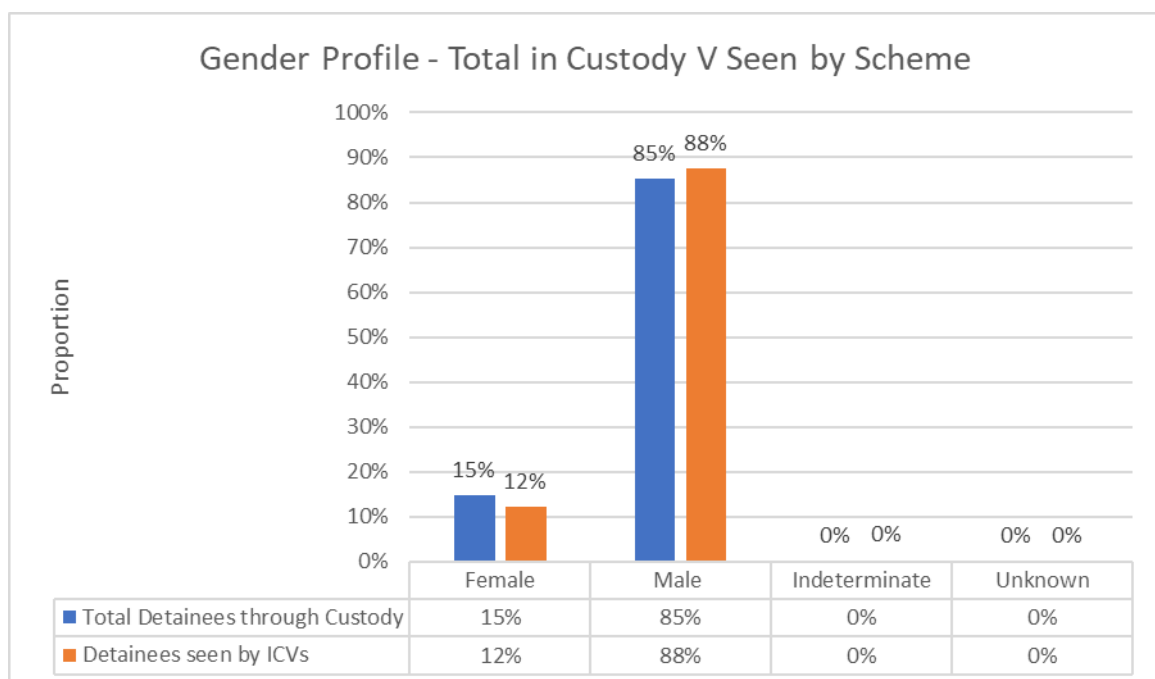
31. During 2023/24, the total number of detainees in police custody was 15,475 of which 1,096 were in police cells at the time of custody visits.

32. Of these:

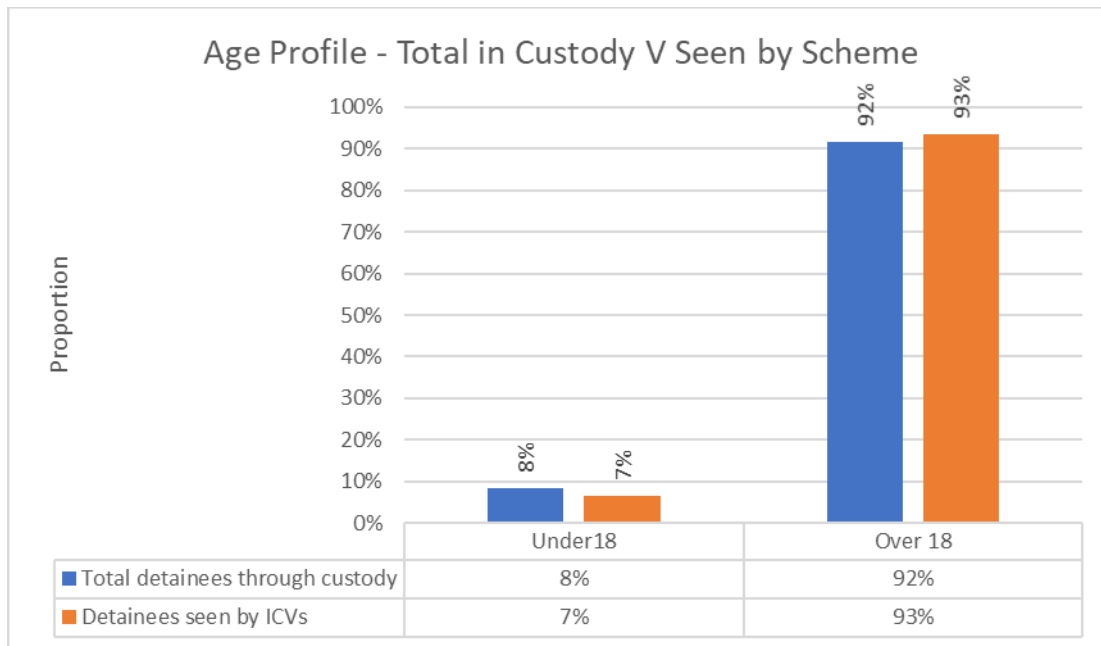
- a. 407 detainees (37%) were offered a visit
- b. 72 detainees (7%) were not offered a visit on advice from the Custody Sergeant due to them being aggressive, intoxicated or health and safety concerns.
- c. 222 detainees (20%) were not available to be visited due to being in an interview, at hospital, or out of cell for other reasons.
- d. 395 detainees (36%) that were asleep, were observed through the spyhole or cell hatch.

33. Of those 407 detainees that were offered a visit, 365 (90%) agreed to be seen. 42 (10%) of those offered a visit refused to be seen.

34. The demographic breakdown of those detainees that were seen by visitors is shown below.







### Day and Time of Visits

35. To ensure a varied coverage of visits each week is divided into 35 timeslots per custody suite. A varied spread of visits is crucial to ensure that visits do not become predictable. The below tables show the performance for 2023/24.

36. The performance is monitored at the ICV team meetings with a view to target those areas of 'green' in which we haven't had any visits within custody during that time slot. The numbers on the chart indicate how many visits have taken place during that time slot and therefore no more visits are required if they are coloured 'red'. This ensures the visits remain unpredictable.

### Euston Street

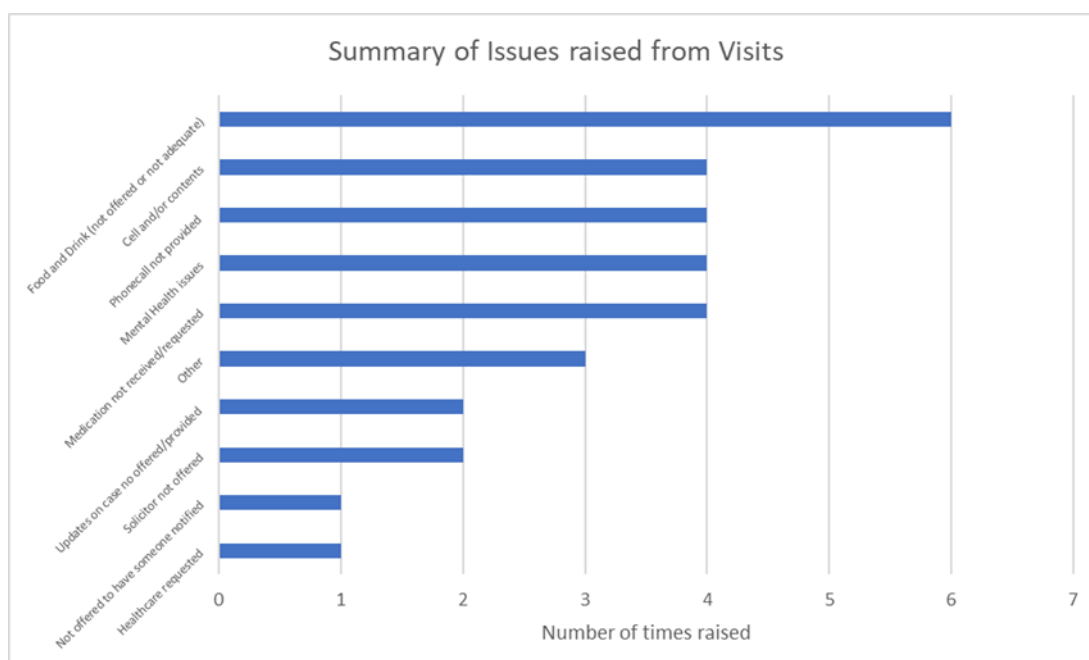
	00:00 - 07:59	08:00 - 11:59	12:00 - 15:59	16:00 - 19:59	20:00 - 23:59	Totals
Monday	1	2	2	2	3	10
Tuesday		1	1	2	1	5
Wednesday	1		1	2	2	6
Thursday	1	1	1	1	3	7
Friday	1	1	2	2	2	8
Saturday	1	2	1	1	1	6
Sunday	1	3	2	2	1	9
Totals	6	10	10	12	13	51

### Keyham Lane

	00:00 - 07:59	08:00 - 11:59	12:00 - 15:59	16:00 - 19:59	20:00 - 23:59	Totals
Monday		3	2	3	2	10
Tuesday		1		4	1	6
Wednesday	1	2		1	2	6
Thursday	1	1	1	2	2	7
Friday	1	3	1	1	1	7
Saturday	1	3	1	2	1	8
Sunday	1	1	2	1	1	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>50</b>

### Issues Reported

37. All issues raised by detainees to the ICV visitors are recorded on the app and the custody inspectors and sergeants are notified. These are reviewed by the Volunteer manager to pick out themes and trends to escalate at the team meetings.
38. The chart below shows the groupings of the types of issues recorded by the volunteers. The OPCC and volunteer manager follow up on all these issues directly with the custody team and ensure any outstanding issues are completed.



39. The above chart indicates that the most reported issue raised by the volunteers across the year was the category of Food and Drink, this either

being not offered or not being adequate. The force response is documented below:

*'We provide every detainee with suitable optional dietary foods when in custody and in line with PACE. We have contingency in place to provide more specific dietary requirements where in rare cases, we cannot provide this within the custody range. Our range of food is adequate for the vast majority of detainees.*

*Custody staff are required to record on a custody record food offered and given, however, on rare occasion, a custody log entry covering this may be missed. To mitigate, we routinely audit custody records and identify instances where a detainee appears to not have been offered food/drinks, these are investigated and reasons identified, which are then recorded for organisational memory and learning'.*

40. The next most reported category is relating to the cell and or its contents, this ranges from issues such as toilet paper not being available, blankets not available to toilets being broken all of which were resolved during the visits.

#### Developments during 2023/24

##### Investing in Volunteers Award

41. Investing in Volunteers (IiV) is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management.
42. The Scheme in Leicestershire is accredited and has achieved the Investing in Volunteers Award for the fourth consecutive time and has held this award since 2012. This provides assurance to the panel, PCC and Volunteers that the scheme provides an outstanding volunteer experience and enhances the effectiveness of the work.

##### Independent Custody Visitors Association (ICVA)

43. The ICVA is a Home Office, PCC funded membership organisation set up to lead, support and represent the ICV schemes, promoting the effective provision of the ICV schemes in Police forces.
44. ICVA has developed a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for schemes to be recognised for the work they are undertaking enabling OPCCs to benchmark against each other and enhance the legitimacy of the schemes.
45. The Scheme in Leicestershire has been accredited to the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and has achieved Platinum Status which is the highest achievable award. The Scheme is one of only 6 nationally to have been accredited platinum status.

## Regional Collaboration

46. Volunteer Managers from Schemes within the East Midlands meet on a quarterly basis. The group discuss:
- a. Matters arising
  - b. Key Performance Indicators – monitored around frequency and coverage of visits, access to custody suites and the number of detainees visited.
  - c. Recruitment updates
  - d. Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) updates
  - e. Risk Assessment Documents
  - f. ICV Advanced Regional Training
  - g. Electronic reporting
  - h. National Experts Forum (NEF) updates
47. The meetings provide an opportunity to share good practice with each other and discuss any new developments in the Scheme. Opportunities are also identified for future collaboration.

## Conclusion

48. In conclusion the key findings from the scheme over the year can be summarised below:
- a. Cells, kitchen and yard generally kept well during all visits.
  - b. Kitchen well stocked with a good range of food and drinks. Dates of food and drink checked. Any out-of-date food was removed immediately.
  - c. Female detainees provided female officer and hygiene products offered on most occasions.
  - d. Staff and duty and escorting officers are generally friendly and welcoming, even during busy periods. Good communication.
  - e. Prompt access provided on most occasions.
  - f. There had been rare occasions where access to custody suites were delayed due to staff handovers taking place. Volunteers have been informed that they should avoid making their way to a custody visit during the handover times 6.30am - 7.15am and 18.30 to 19:15. OPCC are working out a process to carry out some visits during the handover period to ensure that all days and times are covered throughout the year.
  - g. Future development for the Leicestershire ICV Scheme is to develop an in-house electronic visit report form to record custody visits.

## Animal Welfare Scheme

49. The PCC launched the Animal Welfare Scheme (AWS) on 1 April 2022. The operation of the AWS is the responsibility of the Office of the Police and Crime

Commissioner (OPCC) and is exercised in consultation with the Chief Constable.

50. Once a month AWS visitors make an unannounced visit in pairs to the Leicestershire Police Dog Unit. They check on the conditions in which the dogs are housed, trained and transported. They will also observe dog training in progression and will provide feedback on all visits via an electronic visit report form. Feedback from their visits will be shared with the OPCC Volunteers Manager and the Sergeant of the Dog Unit.
51. The AWS visitors, all members of the public who have volunteered to dedicate their time to the scheme, have received training and upon visiting the kennels have been impressed with the variety of enrichment activities on offer for Leicestershire's canine cops which include a sandpit, pool and open space to explore.
52. The AWS volunteers are existing ICV volunteers. The newly recruited ICV's will have the opportunity of joining the scheme once they have completed their probationary period. Existing ICV's can join the scheme.
53. To ensure a varied coverage of visits each month is divided into 12 timeslots. A varied spread of visits is crucial to ensure that visits do not become predictable. The below tables show the performance for 2023/24.

March 2024	7am – 1pm	3pm – 8pm	Totals
Monday	1	1	2
Tuesday	1	1	2
Wednesday	1	1	2
Thursday	1	1	2
Friday	1	2	3
Saturday/Sunday		1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>

54. Examples of good practice observed by the volunteers over the year;

- a. Helpful staff, everything is good and clean. Volunteers are always made to feel welcome.
- b. Food is in date.
- c. All external fencing is being replaced.
- d. Records for each dog seen is checked.
- e. Dogs are observed in kennels and vehicles.
- f. Training for dogs has been observed.

55. Future development, Animal Welfare Visitors to observe off-site dogs training and provide reassurance and feedback on training methods.

----- **End of Report** -----