Nottinghamshire
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Independent Custody Observers Pilot

Nottinghamshire continues to play its part in raising the standards of custody scrutiny nationwide, recently becoming the focus of a new national trial.

The county is one of five areas across England and Wales taking part in a pilot involving the retrospective review of police custody records concerning vulnerable detainees including young people and those with mental health needs.

The move signals the start of a more holistic approach to inspection processes aimed at improving welfare and wellbeing and is being managed by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA), backed by the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).

ICVA
The Independent Custody Visiting Association

Since September 2019, Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) have been given access to the redacted custody records of vulnerable people to review the detainee's journey from arrest to booking in, through to release – sometimes over a 24-hour period or more.

Reviews are completed using questions which have been agreed nationally and focus on legal rights and entitlements of detainees as well as detainee wellbeing and dignity.

ICVs create a report for each custody record review which includes details on:

- General detention and Rights and Entitlements.
- Access to Appropriate Adults.
- Solicitor provision.
- Care of female detainees.
- Liaison and diversion provision.

These reports will be published through the Joint Audit and Scrutiny Meeting on a six-monthly basis.

The Future

We are proud to be supporting this pilot and believe our work has the potential to influence positive change across the country.

The pilot is due to end during February 2020 and a formal evaluation will take place to measure its impact in March. It is at this stage the ICVA and its Board will decide if they wish to make recommendations to the Home Office to adopt the changes nationally. It is anticipated that a decision will be made in the late summer/autumn of 2020.

In the meantime, Nottinghamshire has decided to continue with CRR to allow more time to assess the potential of custody record reviewing.

Kayt Radford, Volunteer Manager, Nottinghamshire