



Independent Custody Visiting Report



**April 2023 to
March 2024**



**Published
6 June 2024**



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Independent Custody Visiting Scheme was first established in 1991 by the Police Authority. The importance of an independent scheme which ensured the rights, health and wellbeing of the detainee and the facilities and conditions of detention was also recognised in 1999 by the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (the Patten Report). The Scheme was subsequently given a statutory footing by virtue of Section 73 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 which requires the Policing Board to make, and keep under review, arrangements for designated places of detention to be visited by lay visitors (now referred to as custody visitors).

The ICV Scheme is linked to the Police and Criminal Evidence Northern Ireland Order 1989 (PACE) and its revised codes of practice, 2007 edition and in particular Code C, which deals with the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers. In addition, the scheme also has a statutory duty to visit people detained in custody under the Terrorism Act (2000) (TACT). This is governed by PACE (Northern Ireland) Code of Practice H (Code of Practice for the Detention, Treatment and Questioning of Persons under Section 41 and Schedule 8 of the Terrorism Act 2000). TACT Custody Visiting takes place in Musgrave Police Station, within the Serious Crime Suite (SCS), with an overflow capability in Antrim.

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are impartial volunteers from across the community and are independent of the police and the criminal justice system.

This is the annual statistical report covering 12 months from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

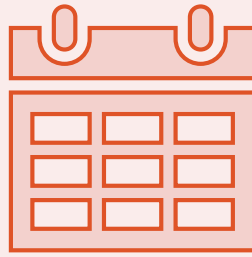
A publication schedule is available on the Northern Ireland Policing Board Website

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/statistical-release-schedules-and-policies>

2. KEY FACTS



There were 23 Custody Visitors (31 March 2024)



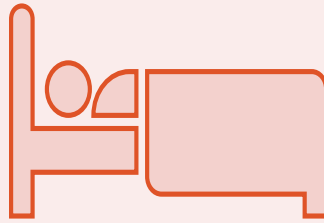
They made 470 visits



1,048 detainees were selected for interview and 480 were visited



15 detainees refused to be interviewed



The most frequent reason for detainees not being seen was that they were asleep (58%)



918 custody records were checked

3. CUSTODY VISITS - INTRODUCTION

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) make unannounced visits to police custody suites where they inspect and report on the rights, health and wellbeing and conditions of people being detained in custody, either by conversing with them and/or checking custody records.

The remit of the Northern Ireland Custody Visitor Scheme has been extended by the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 to include all stations in which people may be detained by the police, not just designated suites. Detention in a non-designated station is only permissible under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 in limited circumstances.

ICVs are divided into three Custody Visiting Teams and cover custody suites allocated to them based on the team's geographical remit. However, there are occasions when a team member/s may visit detainees in a custody suite outside of their regular team-area. The three team-areas are as follows;

North-West - Coleraine, Strabane, Strand Road and Waterside

South-East – Antrim, which is also used as a contingency Serious Crime Suite (SCS), Banbridge, Bangor, Musgrave and Musgrave SCS

Tyrone-Fermanagh – Dungannon, Lurgan and Omagh

Some ICVs are trained in visiting Serious Crime Suites (SCS) and will sometimes join with another team member, outside of their own ICV team, to visit detainees in the SCS. Visits to the SCS may be announced and unannounced.

ICVs carry out visits to check on

- The rights and entitlements of the detainee;
- Their health and wellbeing; and
- The conditions and facilities of detention

4. DATA AND OFFICIAL STATISTICS

User Information Data sources and validations

The Board's ICV Management System is a recording system used for the day-to-day management of custody visits. The key principle underlying its operation is that it relies on a small team of staff within Partnership Directorate (Engagement Branch) of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, to input and update information about the ICVs and custody visits made. Key aspects of the information recorded on the system are required for the successful day to day operation of the ICV Scheme and needs to be highly accurate to enable the effective monitoring of visits and in accordance with the Board's statutory function to administer the scheme.

The systems however weren't designed for the production of official statistics and therefore validation and cleansing is required to ensure that meaningful and accurate statistics can be provided from them. The data presented in this bulletin are derived from this Management System and are extracted using SPSS. These are validated and quality assured to ensure that the data is reliable and robust for use. Any inconsistencies are reported back to operational staff within Engagement Branch. If required, any necessary amendments are then made to the data

Rounding conventions

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place and, as a consequence, some percentages may not sum to 100.

Disclosure control

Where small numbers have the potential to disclose sensitive information, disclosure controls have been applied.

Official Statistics

These are 'Official Statistics' as defined in Section 6 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007. Statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are seconded to the NIPB and are responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

5. GUIDELINE VISITS

The guideline number of visits to each custody suite are agreed in April and kept under review throughout the year. Guideline number of visits are based on several factors including the size of the custody suite, the number of cells within the custody suite and the number of active Independent Custody Visitors within each team. This number is further adjusted during the year should there be a change to any custody suites, for example if one should close temporarily for maintenance, or if the numbers of available custody visitors change, such as an increase or a reduction in team members following recruitment or the end of tenure. Each designated suite is however, visited at least once every month.

During 2023-24 the guideline number of visits for all custody suites was 493. These visits were divided between the three ICV teams according to the basis outlined above, with North-West allocated 133, South-East allocated 216 and Tyrone-Fermanagh allocated 144.

Table 1: Guideline visits for 2023-24

Custody Suite	Number	Percent
Antrim	0	0.0%
Coleraine	42	8.5%
Strabane	15	3.0%
Strand Road	48	9.7%
Waterside	28	5.7%
North-West Total	133	27.0%
Antrim	60	12.2%
Antrim SCS Announced	0	0.0%
Banbridge	12	2.4%
Lurgan	0	0.0%
Musgrave	84	17.0%
Musgrave SCS Announced	48	9.7%
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	12	2.4%
South-East Total	216	43.8%
Dungannon	66	13.4%
Lurgan	54	11.0%
Omagh	24	4.9%
Tyrone-Fermanagh Total	144	29.2%
Guideline visits 2023-24	493	100.0%

6. VISITS IN 2023-2024

ICVs made 470 visits in accordance with guidelines of 493 visits in the year. The North-West team made 137 visits from guidelines of 133 visits, including two visits to Antrim custody suite. The South-East team made 199 visits out of a guideline number of visits of 216. Tyrone-Fermanagh team made 134 visits out of a guideline of 144 visits. The figure below shows the ICV team and actual visits made compared to guideline visits. Strabane, Waterside, Musgrave SCS (announced and unannounced), Dungannon and Lurgan custody suites had fewer visits than guidelines while all other custody suites had more than the guideline number of visits.

Figure 1: Actual and guideline visits for 2023-24

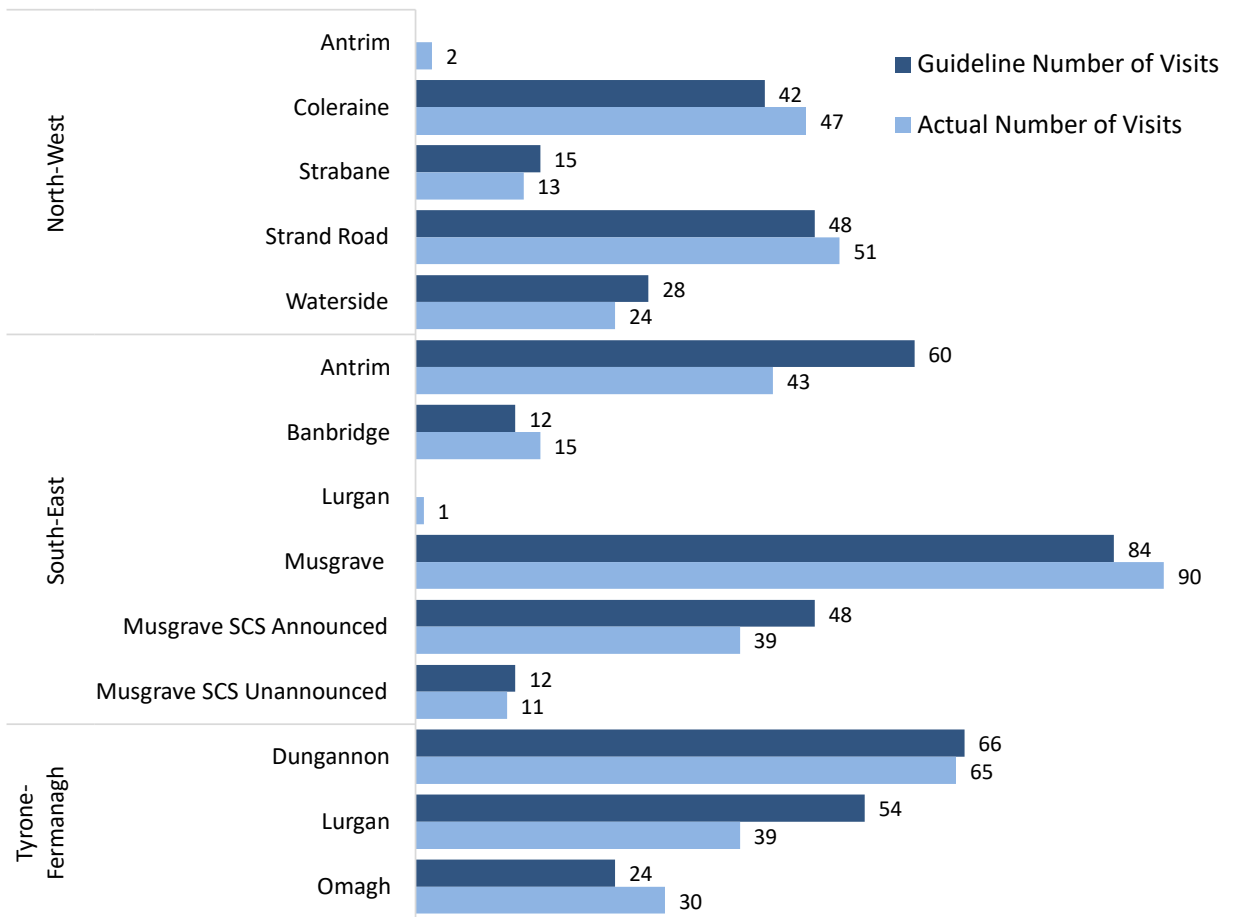


Table 2: Actual visits by team 2023-24

Team	Number	Percent
North-West	137	29.1%
South-East	199	42.3%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	134	28.5%
Total actual visits 2023-24	470	100.0%

7. VISITS – VALID AND INVALID

Visits to custody suites are classified as valid or invalid. Invalid visits may be the result of ICVs being unable to gain access to the custody suite because there were no staff available to allow entry, staff busy or under pressure, medical reasons or miscommunication between ICVs. Of the 470 visits made from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, there were 460 valid visits and 10 invalid visits.

Invalid visits represented a total of 2.1% of all visits. Musgrave custody suite (South-East team) had the largest number of invalid visits (5, 50%). During the year, the most frequent reason a visit was invalid was because the waiting time (over 10 minutes) had been exceeded (4), this was followed by visits where there were no available personnel, or the suite was busy (3).

Table 3: Total visits, valid and invalid with % of invalid visits

Team	Total Visits	Valid	Invalid	% Invalid
North-West	137	135	2	1.5%
South-East	199	191	8	4.0%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	134	134	0	0.0%
Total	470	460	10	2.1%

Table 4: Invalid visits by custody suite

Custody Suite	Invalid Visits	Percent
Antrim	2	20.0%
Coleraine	1	10.0%
Musgrave	5	50.0%
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	1	10.0%
Strand Road	1	10.0%
Total	10	100.0%

The reasons given for invalid visits were;

1. Medical reasons (1), where ICVs could not access the custody suite.
2. Suite busy/staff busy (1) where the custody suite was extremely busy and under pressure.
3. No staffing or personnel to allow entry and/or waiting time exceeded (6) which also includes where the visit is aborted after 10 minutes if no staff are available within that time to take ICVs into the custody suite.
4. Other reasons (2) which cover the custody suite being closed for planned routine maintenance and the miscommunication of arrangements between custody visitors.

7. VISITS – VALID AND INVALID

During 2023-24, there were 470 visits made to custody suites, of which 460 (97.9%) were valid visits.

Of the 460 valid visits made during the year, the largest number were made to Musgrave (85, 18.5%) and Dungannon (65, 14.1%) Custody Suites. There was a decrease of 19 in the number of visits made compared to the previous year, although the percentage of valid visits increased, from 96.7% in 2022-23 to 97.9%.

TACT detainees are held within Serious Crime Suites (SCS). There were 89 TACT arrests made during 2023-2024 and 21,980 arrests under PACE. Arrest figures are based on a count of detainees' custody numbers and relate to the period of original detention only (source PSNI).

Although arrest figures relate to initial detentions and may not include repeat arrests, where an individual may be held in custody suites on more than one occasion during the year, it is possible to have some indication of the proportion of detainees visited overall. Based on these figures, ICVs visited approximately 27% of those individuals arrested under TACT and 2% of those arrested under PACE.

Table 5: Valid visits by custody suite

Custody Suite	Valid Visits	Percent
Antrim	43	9.3%
Banbridge	15	3.3%
Coleraine	46	10.0%
Dungannon	65	14.1%
Lurgan	40	8.7%
Musgrave	85	18.5%
Musgrave SCS Announced	39	8.5%
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	10	2.2%
Omagh	30	6.5%
Strabane	13	2.8%
Strand Road	50	10.9%
Waterside	24	5.2%
Total	460	100.0%

8. WELLBEING OF DETAINEES

An ICV's role is to check on the welfare of detainees held in police custody, to ensure they are being treated in accordance with PACE Codes of Practice and therefore principles of human rights. Custody visiting provides an independent check on the treatment of people held in custody. Matters regarding health and safety procedures as well as general maintenance within custody suites are recorded by ICVs during their visits. ICVs will raise each matter with custody staff, however they are unable to wait in the custody suite for every resolution, such as where a detainee has requested a Health Care Professional (HCP), but the HCP had not arrived before the end of the visit.

The most frequent matters of wellbeing raised during the year related to medical attention, where there was a request by the detainee to see a health care professional (26), this was followed by detainees requiring an appropriate adult (20) or requiring to inform somebody of their arrest (11). There were 6 allegations or concerns expressed by detainees to ICVs during the year. These covered, assault/sexual assault (2), treatment prior to detention (1), treatment in custody (1) medical treatment requested but not noted in the custody record (1) and no response from staff when using the cell call button (1).

Table 6: Welfare matters raised by detainees

Category	Total
Medical attention	26
Requiring an appropriate adult	20
Informing somebody	11
Adequate food and drink	7
Allegations made/Concerns raised	6
Checks on detainees carried out	5
Access to loo/washing	3
Being told their rights	3
Exercise	3
Adequate bedding	2
Requiring an interpreter	2
Legal Advice	1
Parent/Guardian responsibilities	1
Eight hours rest in 24	1
Total	91

9. CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

The conditions of detainees, recorded by ICVs, are provided to the Board for monitoring purposes and to ensure PSNI meet their human rights responsibilities. Conditions of detention include cleanliness and general maintenance. The table below shows the categories of concerns recorded by ICV teams during the year. There were 54 concerns regarding conditions raised by detainees or by ICVs during their visit. In 25 of the 54 instances recorded, concerns over conditions related to faulty equipment and general maintenance. These included mattress or pillows requiring replacement, interview room recorders defective and toilets out of use or needing repair.

Conditions in medical rooms and health equipment (11) covered matters such as the medical room or cupboards in the medical room left unlocked. In one instance, the sharps box was not secured and in another a detainee's medical form was not stored appropriately. In both instances, the Area Commander subsequently reported that the sharps box was secured following the visit and reminders were issued to all staff around the importance of data protection and the storage of medical forms. Oxygen records are also checked by ICVs during their visits.

There were 13 safety/security hazards reported during the year. These included an open ballpoint pen lying in a medical room and a problem with the operation of the back door to the custody suite. There was one condition classified as 'other' recorded by the Custody Visitor, relating to the low stock of meals available.

If there should be no detainees in the custody suite at the time of arrival, ICVs can access all parts of the custody suite including cells, detention rooms, charging areas, washing facilities, medical rooms, kitchen and storage areas. All matters regarding conditions of detention are reported by ICVs to the custody staff during their visit. ICV reports on conditions are also submitted to the Board for monitoring.

Table 7: Conditions of detention raised by detainees and ICVs

Conditions	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Total
Cleanliness	0	3	1	4
Faulty Equipment and Maintenance	5	9	11	25
Medical Rooms/Health Equipment	3	5	3	11
Other	1	0	0	1
Safety/Security Hazards	3	7	3	13
Total	12	24	18	54

10. DAY OF VISITS

A visit to a custody suite will usually be unannounced and will not be made at regular or predictable times. The exception to this is for visits to detainees held under the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) in a Serious Crime Suite (SCS) where the visit can be either announced or unannounced. During the year to 31 March 2024, overall, most visits to custody suites were carried out on a Wednesday and Thursday and the fewest number of visits were carried out on a Monday. This has however, varied over the years as shown in the table below. There is no specification for visits to take place on a certain day of the week.

Table 8: Visits carried out by day of week by team

Day	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Number of Visits	Percent
Monday	23	19	15	57	12.1%
Tuesday	21	25	23	69	14.7%
Wednesday	28	32	16	76	16.2%
Thursday	14	35	27	76	16.2%
Friday	26	24	15	65	13.8%
Saturday	16	25	26	67	14.3%
Sunday	9	39	12	60	12.8%
Total	137	199	134	470	100.0%

Table 9: Visits carried out by day of week 2018-19 to 2023-24

Day	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Monday	14.9%	13.6%	8.0%	9.7%	12.5%	12.1%
Tuesday	13.0%	14.0%	16.4%	16.0%	15.7%	14.7%
Wednesday	14.7%	16.9%	20.1%	16.0%	17.2%	16.2%
Thursday	13.9%	18.0%	16.4%	18.7%	14.7%	16.2%
Friday	15.1%	17.8%	15.8%	17.1%	13.7%	13.8%
Saturday	14.1%	9.3%	12.6%	12.1%	18.0%	14.3%
Sunday	14.3%	10.4%	10.7%	10.5%	8.2%	12.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

11. TIME OF VISITS

At least 10% of visits made by ICVs should be undertaken during unsociable hours (outside of 9am to 6pm). During the year to 31 March 2024, just under one third of visits (32.1%) were in this category.

The North-West team carried out 35 visits during unsociable hours (25.5%), the South-East team 86 visits (43.2%) and Tyrone-Fermanagh team 30 visits (22.4%).

One invalid visit was made during the year which did not specify a time of arrival.

Table 10: Visits carried out by time of day by team

Time	North-West	South-East	Tyrone-Fermanagh	Number of visits	Percent
Midnight – 8.59am	0	0	3	3	0.6%
9.00am - 11.59am	23	6	18	47	10.0%
Midday – 2.59pm	35	55	37	127	27.0%
3.00pm – 5.59pm	44	51	49	144	30.6%
6.00pm – 8.59pm	35	82	23	140	29.8%
9.00pm – 11.59pm	0	4	4	8	1.7%
Not stated	0	1	0	1	0.2%
Total	137	199	134	470	100.0%

ICVs work in pairs and agree a suitable time to visit the custody suite, these visits will be unannounced with exception of visits to an SCS which can be announced or unannounced.

Table 11: Visits carried out by time of day 2018-19 to 2023-24

Time	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Midnight – 8.59am	3.1%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%
9.00am - 11.59am	12.0%	14.2%	18.0%	18.9%	12.9%	10.0%
Midday – 2.59pm	25.6%	24.1%	29.5%	22.0%	26.4%	27.0%
3.00pm – 5.59pm	25.4%	28.8%	29.2%	22.8%	30.9%	30.6%
6.00pm – 8.59pm	31.7%	27.7%	22.4%	32.7%	29.0%	29.8%
9.00pm – 11.59pm	1.7%	1.7%	0.2%	3.1%	0.4%	1.7%
Not stated	0.6%	1.3%	0.7%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

12. DETAINEES SELECTED - DEMOGRAPHICS

On arrival at the custody suite, ICVs will ascertain the number of detainees being held. They will then select either all or several detainees to visit. However, detainees must provide consent before an ICV interview can take place.

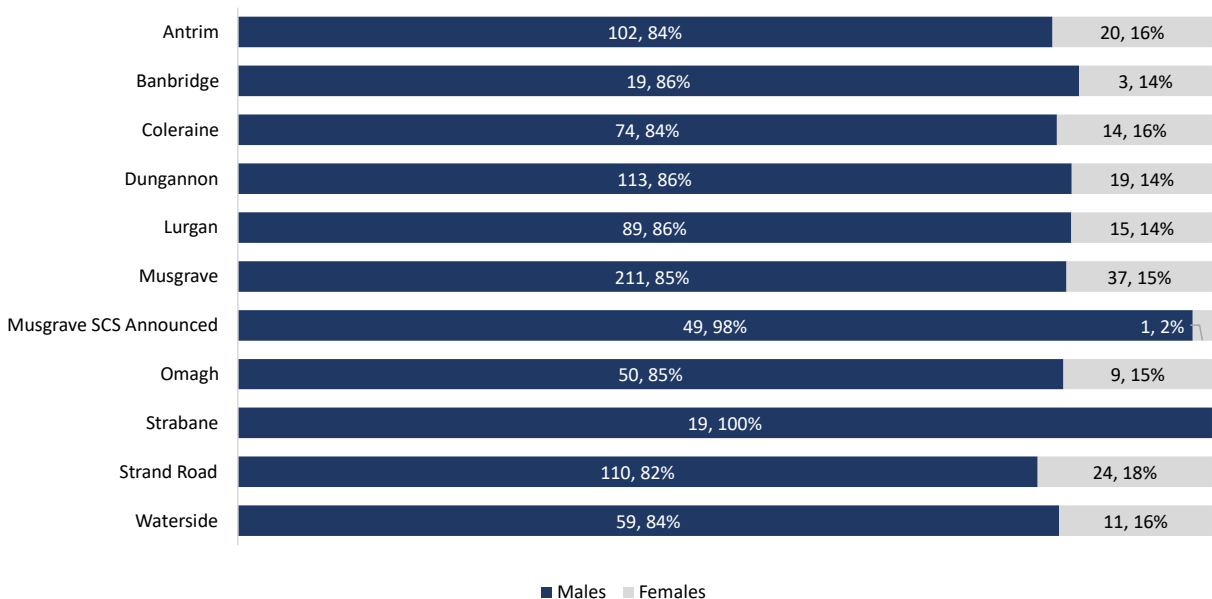
In 2023-24, 1,048 detainees were selected for interview by ICVs. Of these, 82.6% were adult males, 14.4% were adult females and 3.0% were under 18 years of age (juveniles).

Table 12: Detainees selected for interview by gender

	Number	Percent
Adult Males	866	82.6%
Adult Females	151	14.4%
Juvenile Males	29	2.8%
Juvenile Females	2	0.2%
Total	1,048	100.0%

During the year 2023-24, there were 22,069 individuals, both TACT and PACE detainees, who were held within custody suites in Northern Ireland (source PSNI). ICVs attempted to visit 1,048 individual detainees, 85.4% of whom were males and 14.6% were females. This compares to arrests under PACE and TACT of whom 81.4% were male and 18.4% were female (source PSNI)

Figure 2: Detainees selected for interview by gender and custody suite



13. DETAINEES VISITED - DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2023-24, of the 1,048 detainees selected, 480 (45.8%) were available for interview by ICVs while 568 (54.2%) were not. The majority of detainees not visited by ICVs were asleep (see section 14). Of those detainees interviewed, 82.3% were adult males, 15.6% were adult females and 2.1% were juveniles/under 18 years of age (juveniles).

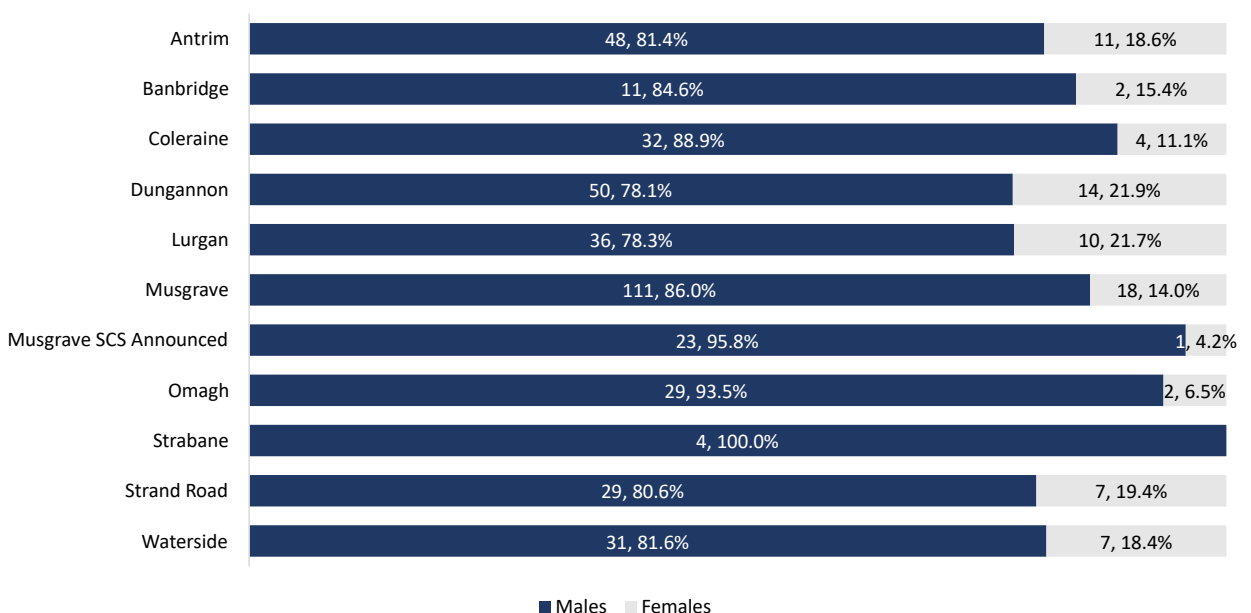
Table 13: Detainees visited by gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Adult Males	395	82.3%
Adult Females	75	15.6%
Juvenile Males	9	1.9%
Juvenile Females	1	0.2%
Total	480	100.0%

Females, both adults and juveniles, made up 18.4% of arrests (source PSNI), 14.6% of those selected for interview and 15.8% of those who were available for an ICV visit. The proportion of females visited during the year in custody suites, ranged from 4.2% (1 out of 24) of all detainees visited in Musgrave SCS to 21.9% (14 out of 64) of all detainees in Dungannon.

Males, both adults and juveniles, made up 81.4% of arrests (source PSNI), 85.4% of those selected for interview and 84.2% of those who were available for an ICV visit. The proportion of males visited in custody suites, ranged from 78.1% (50 out of 64) of all detainees visited in Dungannon to 100.0% of all detainees visited in Strabane custody suite (4 out of 4).

Figure 3: Detainees visited by gender and custody suite



13. DETAINEES VISITED - DEMOGRAPHICS

Just over one quarter of detainees selected for interview were held in Musgrave custody suite (26.9%), the largest of the custody suites in use, and just under one fifth (19.1%) of all visits took place there (see Table 2). Detainees visited in Dungannon (13.3%), Antrim (12.3%) and Lurgan (9.6%) custody suites made up another third of detainees visited by ICVs.

Table 14: Detainees visited by gender and custody suite

Custody Suite	Males	Females	Total	Percent
Antrim	48	11	59	12.3%
Banbridge	11	2	13	2.7%
Coleraine	32	4	36	7.5%
Dungannon	50	14	64	13.3%
Lurgan	36	10	46	9.6%
Musgrave	111	18	129	26.9%
Musgrave SCS Announced	23	1	24	5.0%
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	0	0	0	0.0%
Omagh	29	2	31	6.5%
Strabane	4	0	4	0.8%
Strand Road	29	7	36	7.5%
Waterside	31	7	38	7.9%
Total	404	76	480	100.0%

Figure 4: Percentage of detainees selected for interview by custody suite

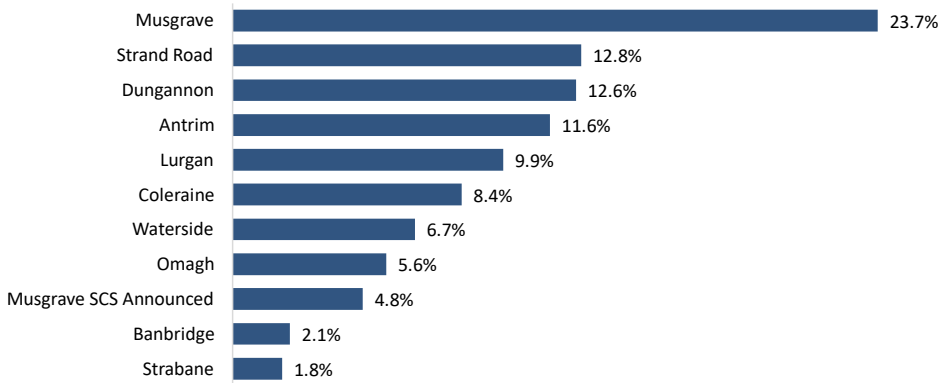
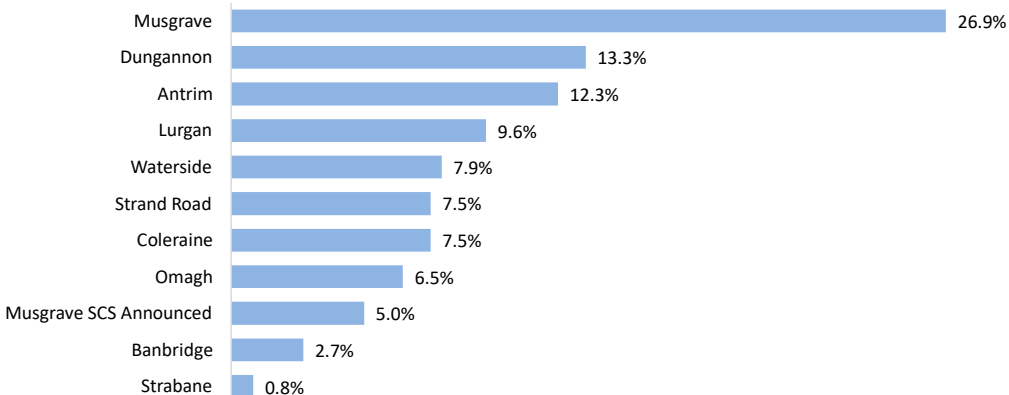


Figure 5: Percentage of detainees visited by custody suite



13. DETAINEES VISITED - DEMOGRAPHICS

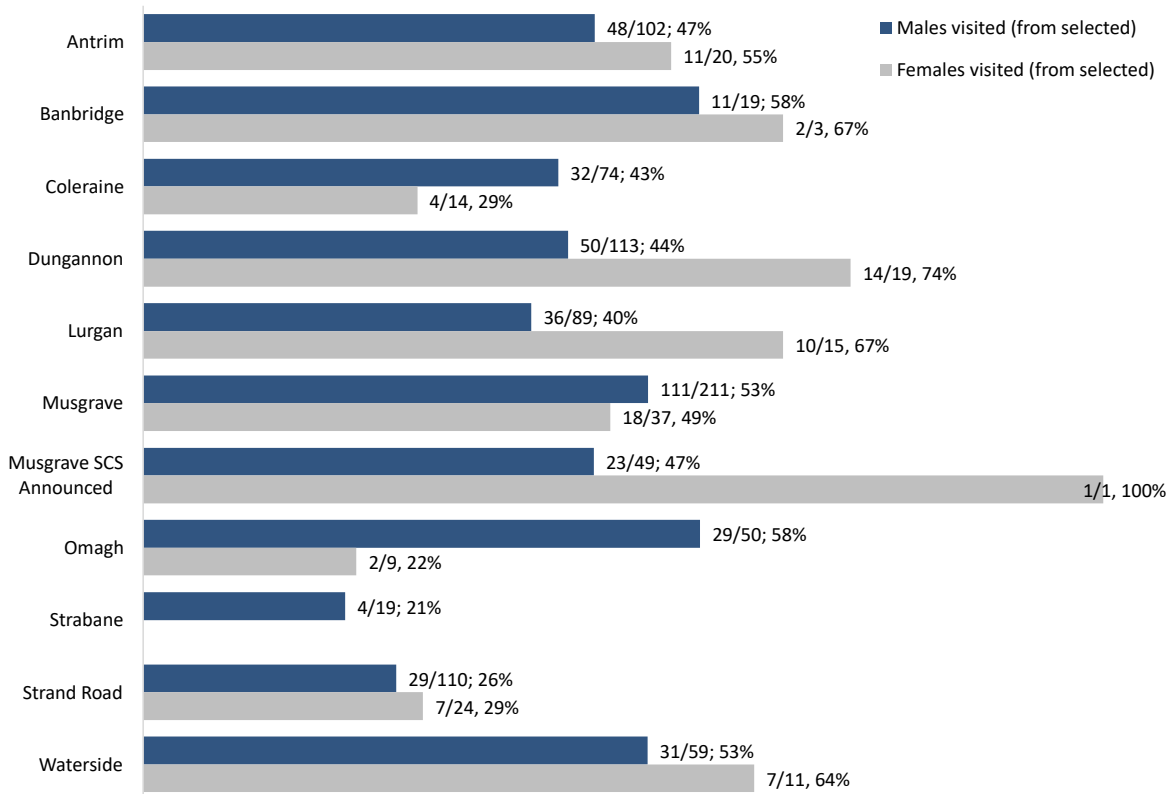
In 2023-2024, of those detainees selected for a visit by custody visitors, 45.1% of males and 49.7% of females agreed to a visit. The chart below shows the proportion of detainees visited from those selected for interview by custody suite.

There was one female detainee in Musgrave SCS when an announced visit took place. It should be noted therefore that the total for Musgrave SCS Announced is 100% and based on one individual female detainee who agreed to be seen by ICVs.

Although the lowest percentage of males visited (21%) was in Strabane Custody Suite, numbers were small with a total of 19 detainees selected and 4 seen.

Strand Road Custody Suite had the lowest percentage of both male (26%) and female (29%) detainees seen or visited by ICVs during the year. Of the total 134 detainees selected for a visit during the year, 36 were visited, 2 refused and 52 were asleep when ICVs entered the custody suite. A further 10 were regarded as abusive or dangerous, 13 were attending court or hospital, 15 were being interviewed or with a solicitor/appropriate adult or health care professional, and 6 were not seen for other reasons such as being processed or discharged.

Figure 6: Number of male and female detainees visited/selected and percentage visited from those selected for interview by custody suite



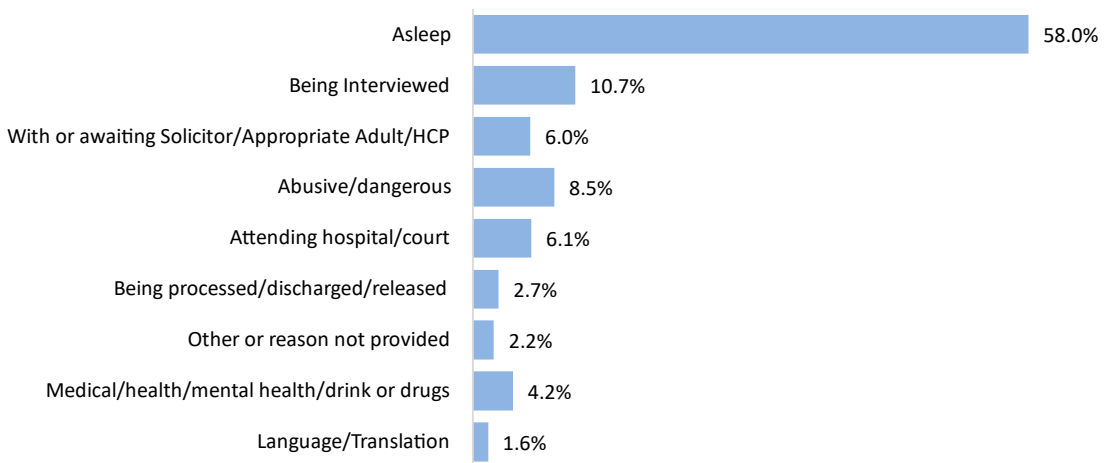
14. DETAINEES – NOT VISITED (EXCLUDING REFUSED)

During 2023-24, 568 (54.2%) of those who had been selected for interview were unavailable (see chart below for reasons detainees were not seen). Of the 1,048 detainees selected for interview, 15 (1.4%) refused consent and 553 (52.8%) were not interviewed for other reasons. The main reason detainees were not interviewed, other than refusal, was because they were asleep (321, 58.0%) or being interviewed by PSNI (59, 10.7%).

The custody suite with the highest rate of detainees not visited was Musgrave (114, 20.6%). This was followed by Strand Road (96, 17.4%) and Dungannon (66, 11.9%).

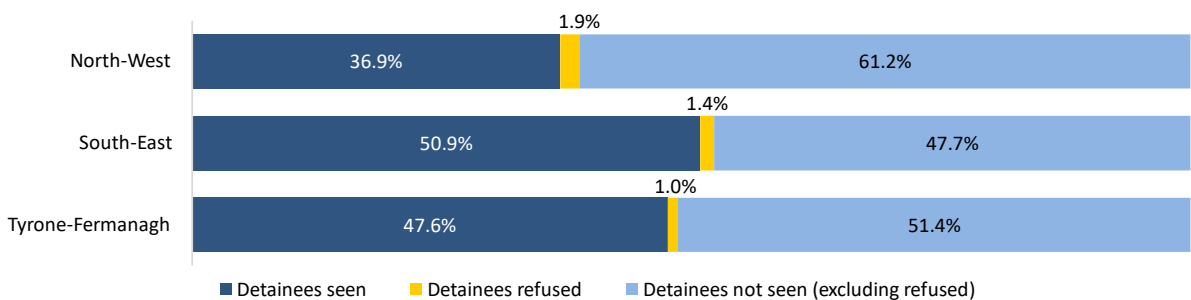
Almost two thirds of detainees unavailable for interview in Musgrave were asleep (85, 74.6%) and 13 (11.4%) were deemed by PSNI to be potentially abusive/dangerous. Over half of all detainees selected for interview in Banbridge, Musgrave, Omagh and Waterside Custody Suites gave their consent for a visit.

Figure 7: Reason detainees not seen (excluding refused)



South-East ICV team visited just over half of the detainees selected for interview (50.9%), Tyrone-Fermanagh team visited 47.6% and North-West team 36.9%.

Figure 8: Detainee availability by ICV Team



15. REFUSAL RATE BY CUSTODY SUITE

ICVs are allowed access to any person detained at a police custody suite, however detainees may only be spoken to with their consent. The number of detainees who refuse a visit as a proportion of those selected for interview is called the refusal rate. For 2023-2024 the refusal rate was 1.4%. The refusal rate for the previous two years was 1.5% in 2021-22 and 1.6% in 2022-23.

In 2023-24 there were 15 detainees who refused consent for an interview. The custody suite with the highest refusal rate was Waterside with 2 refusals out of 70 detainees selected for interview (2.9%) followed by Coleraine with 2 refusals out of 88 detainees (2.3%).

Table 15: Refusal rate 2020-21 to 2023-24

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
% Refusal Rate	2.2%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%

Detainees may also consent to ICVs seeing the custody record even if they do not wish to be interviewed and, in circumstances where the detainee cannot give consent, ICVs should be allowed access to examine the custody record. If access to the custody record is denied, ICVs record this along with the reason given. In 2023-24, 918 (87.6%) custody records were checked. This is an increase of 3.1 percentage points on the previous year. The percentage of custody records checked has increased each year since 2019-20.

Figure 9: Custody records checked 2018-19 to 2023-24

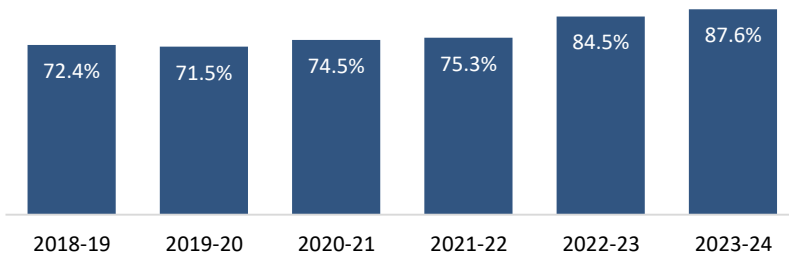


Table 16: Custody records checked

Team	Detainees Selected for Interview	Custody Records Checked	% Checked
North-West	312	257	82.4%
South-East	442	400	90.5%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	294	261	88.8%
TOTAL	1,048	918	87.6%

16. DELAYS TO VISITS

Delays of more than 10 minutes in accessing the custody suite are recorded on the ICV report. Should ICVs be unable to access the custody suite, the visit will be recorded as invalid. If ICVs are delayed by more than 10 minutes but subsequently gain access to carry out their visit, then the visit will be classified as a valid visit. Out of 10 invalid visits during 2023-24 seven were related to delays in access to the custody suite. There were also 10 valid visits made which had delays of more than 10 minutes in accessing the custody suite (see table below).

Table 17: Delays to visits of more than 10 minutes – valid visits

Custody Suite	Total
Dungannon	2
Lurgan	1
Musgrave	4
Musgrave SCS Announced	1
Waterside	2
Total	10

The most frequent reason ICVs experienced a delay in accessing the custody suite was because of limited staff availability as a result of the suite being busy. The longest wait was 60 minutes for a valid visit to Waterside Custody Suite where ICVs noted there had been a medical emergency. ICVs were able to complete the visit following this delay.

Table 18: Reason for delays to visits of more than 10 minutes by custody suite

Custody Suite	Time Delay (mins)	Reason for Delay
Dungannon	13	Custody busy
Dungannon	13	Custody busy
Lurgan	12	No reason given
Musgrave	20	Custody busy
Musgrave	15	Custody busy
Musgrave	16	Custody busy
Musgrave	15	No reason given
Musgrave SCS Announced	15	Custody busy
Waterside	60	Medical emergency
Waterside	14	No reason given

17. SERIOUS CRIME SUITES (SCS)

There is a statutory role for the Custody Visiting Scheme which includes visits to detainees held in custody under the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT). TACT detainees are held in Musgrave SCS with a contingency SCS suite in Antrim, if required. Visits to SCS are carried out by ICVs who have received specific TACT training. Since May 2013, visits to TACT detainees are normally announced, although there is the ability for ICVs to carry out unannounced visits.

Table 19: Valid visits to Serious Crime Suites (SCS)

	Number of valid visits	Percent
Musgrave SCS Announced	39	79.6%
Musgrave SCS Unannounced	10	20.4%
Total	49	100.0%

Of the 49 valid visits made to Musgrave Serious Crime Suite, the majority were announced visits (79.6%) with the remainder being unannounced (20.4%). There was 1 invalid visit made to Musgrave SCS when ICVs did not gain access as a result of the custody suite being busy at the time of their arrival. ICVs may wait for 10 minutes and if they are unable to wait, can leave the suite, leading to a visit being regarded as invalid.

ICVs selected 50 detainees for interview and were given consent to visit 24 detainees. The remaining 26 detainees were not seen. The main reasons for detainees in SCS not being seen was that they were being interviewed (46.2%) or with a solicitor, appropriate adult or health care professional (38.5%). Only one of the 26 detainees not seen by ICVs refused to be interviewed (3.8%).

Table 20: Reasons for SCS detainees not being seen

	Total	Percent
Asleep	2	7.7%
Refused	1	3.8%
Being Interviewed	12	46.2%
Being processed/discharged/released	1	3.8%
With Solicitor/Appropriate Adult/Health Care Professional	10	38.5%
Other	0	0.0%
Total	26	100.0%

18. CUSTODY VISITORS - DEMOGRAPHICS

There were 23 active custody visitors on 31 March 2024, that is 6 less than on 31 March 2023. The largest number of custody visitors were in the South-East Team and these account for almost half of the total number of visitors (11), North-West Team had 4 active visitors and Tyrone-Fermanagh Team had 8.

Table 21: Number of active custody visitors 31 March 2024

Team	Number	Percent
North-West	4	17.4%
South-East	11	47.8%
Tyrone-Fermanagh	8	34.8%
Total	23	100.0%

Of the 23 active custody visitors, 9 (39.1%) were male and 14 (60.9%) were female. During the year to 31 March 2024, there were 10 new visitors appointed, and of these, 6 were female and 4 were male. Five custody visitors declared a disability, making up 21.7% of all active custody visitors.

Figure 10: Percentage of custody visitors by gender

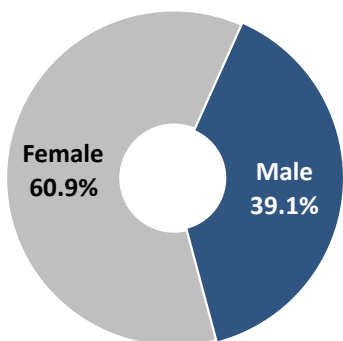
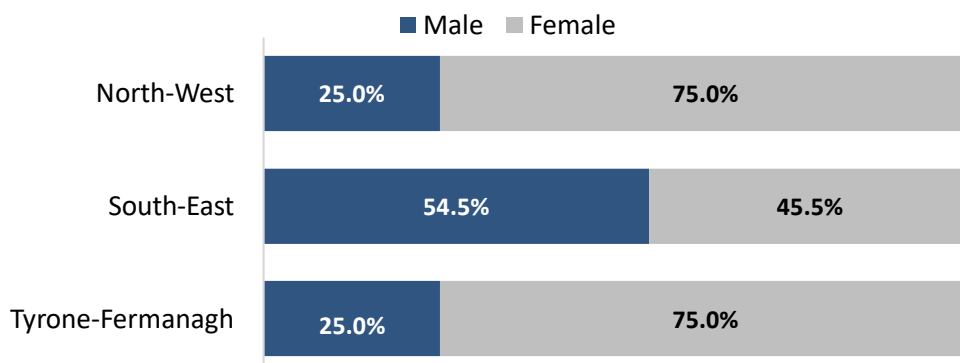


Figure 11: Percentage of active visitors by gender and team

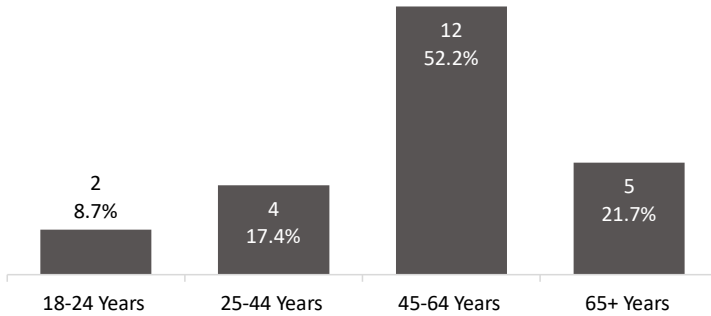


18. CUSTODY VISITORS - DEMOGRAPHICS

One quarter (26.1%) of custody visitors are aged between 18 and 44 years. The remainder (73.9%) are aged over 45.

Of the 23 active custody visitors, 15 (65.2%) were Protestant, 7 (30.4%) were Catholic and one identified as neither religious group.

Figure 12: Active visitors by age band (numbers and percentage) 31 March 2024



Note: Information on the gender, age and community background of Custody Visitors is based on information they provide voluntarily to the Northern Ireland Policing Board in the administration of the scheme.

A selection of custody visitors are further trained to visit detainees held under TACT (Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000) within Serious Crime Suites. During the year 2023-24 a total of 14 ICVs were trained to visit TACT detainees. On 31 March 2024, as a result of visitors reaching the end of their tenure or leaving the scheme, there were 5 active volunteers within the scheme who had been trained to visit TACT detainees.

Table 22: ICVs trained to visit SCS by team 2023-24

Team	Number
North-West	1
South-East	10
Tyrone-Fermanagh	3
Total	14

19. CUSTODY VISITORS – YEAR OF APPOINTMENT

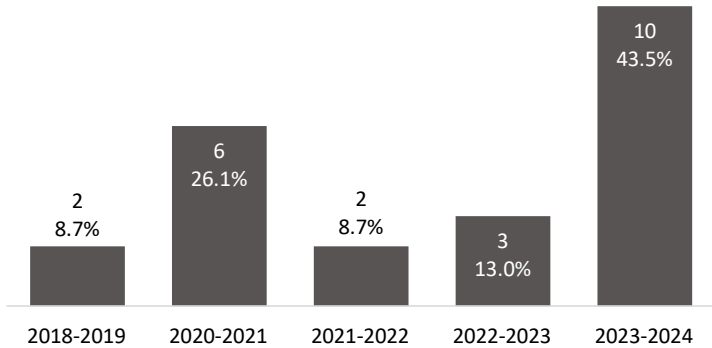
Changes in Independent Custody Visitor numbers takes account of those who have come to the end of their tenure and those who have newly started in their role. The usual tenure for a custody visitor is 3 years with the option of extending this for one further term to 6 years. In exceptional circumstances custody visitors may have this second term extended for one year to 7 years in total. Custody visitors can step down from the role at any time during the period of their tenure. During the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 there were 16 custody visitors who stepped down from their role, 6 of whom did so before the end of their tenure. Custody visitors do not need to provide a reason for stepping down from this voluntary role.

There were 10 new custody visitors appointed during the year 2023-24. There were no custody visitor appointments made in 2019-20.

Table 23: Movements in ICV numbers 2023-24

Active ICVs 31/03/2023	New starts 2023/24	Leavers 2023/24	Active ICVs 31/03/2024
29	10	16	23

Figure 13: Active visitors by year of appointment (number and percentage)



APPENDIX 1 – METHODOLOGY AND COUNTING RULES

The Analysis

The analysis of survey data was completed by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) working within the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Data Sources

The key administrative data sources used by the Board for the production of custody visiting official statistics are:

... Independent custody visiting returns (CV2 and CV4), paper forms detailing visits made by ICVs, the outcome of visits and PSNI Area Commander comments.

Data is sourced from CV2 and CV4 returns provided by Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) who are volunteers from across the community, independent of the police and criminal justice system. The administrative data they provide relates to monitoring of rights, health and wellbeing of detainees and the facilities and conditions of detention.

The system is designed to support the operational function of the Partnership Directorate. A by-product of the system is a variety of management information and official statistics sourced from them. These are used to inform internal management and the wider public about the operation of the Board and the Independent Custody Visitors Scheme in particular. The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is the result of statutory legislation requiring the Board to make, and keep under review, arrangements for designated places of detention. Previous reports have included the categories of satisfactory and unsatisfactory visits. These classifications have not been included from the 2023 report as sufficient validations of the parameters and definition could not be achieved.

This statistical report will remain subject to testing for quality and the ability to meet user needs. Feedback on this publication can be provided by completing a short [survey](#) or contacting the responsible statistician.

APPENDIX 1 – METHODOLOGY AND COUNTING RULES

Statistical Outputs – Designation and Key Measures

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Act 2007, statistical outputs can be assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics and, if found compliant, are then designated as National Statistics. This means that they meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value. The process of determining compliance with the Code and designation as National Statistics is known as Assessment.

The Independent Custody Visiting statistical publication has not yet been assessed and so is currently deemed ‘Official Statistics’.

Statistical Reference – PSNI data

Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Order Statistics 2023-2024 report (published 17 May 2024) can be found online [Police and Criminal Evidence \(PACE\) Order Statistics | PSNI](#)
Details of TACT arrests (under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000) in Northern Ireland during 2023-2024 provided by PSNI.

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We value your feedback using this link to a short survey:

[User Engagement Survey](#)

or

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/nipb-statistics-feedback/>

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