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work for you*

## Valuing our Volunteers - Monitoring and Evaluating the ICV Scheme

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are appointed by Staffordshire Police Authority to check on the welfare and conditions of people being held in custody by Staffordshire Police.

They are volunteers drawn from all sections of the community across the county of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent.

ICVs make unannounced visits to Custody Suites and report their observations to the Police Authority.

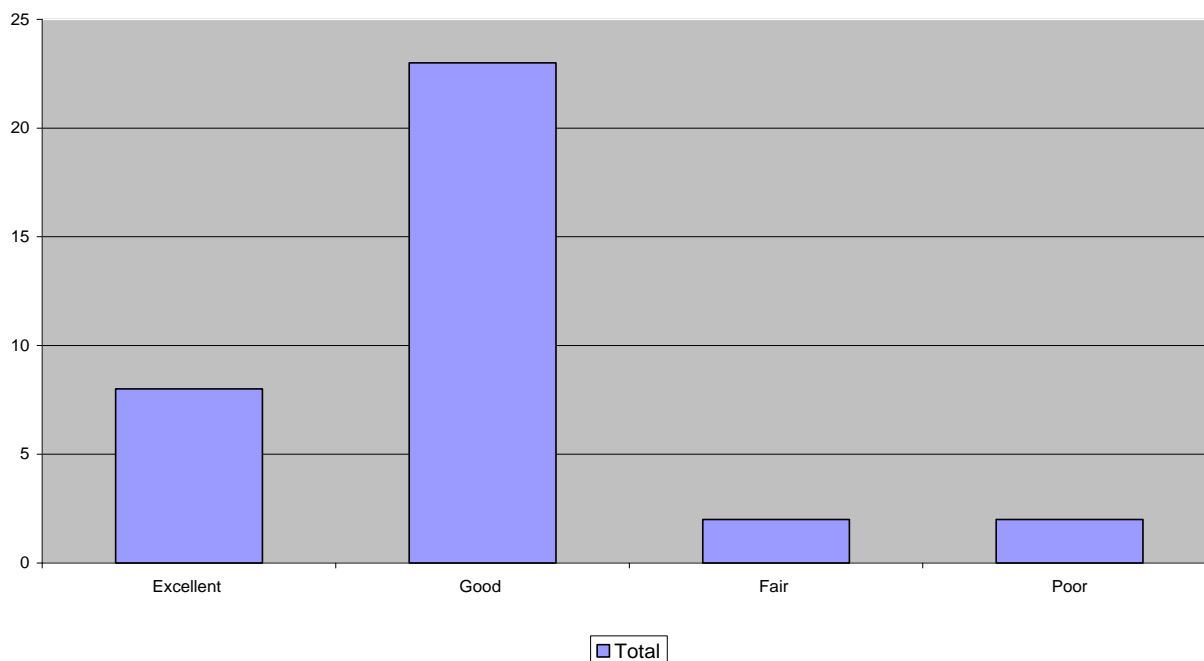
This report summarises the key findings of the Valuing our Volunteers questionnaire which focused on the following topics.

- Experience of being a custody Visitor
- Role and Responsibilities
- Support and Guidance
- Recognition and Reward
- Being kept informed

In total 54 questionnaires were sent out to Independent Custody Visitors. 35 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 64.81%

### Experience of being an Independent Custody Visitor

How would you rate your experience as a volunteer?



From those who responded 8 people (22.86%) of ICVs rated their experience as a volunteer as Excellent, 23 people (65.71%) rated their experience as Good, 2 people (5.71%) as Fair and 2 people (5.71%) as Poor.

The main reason people gave for having an Excellent or Good experience was that through volunteering they were able to give something back to the local community.

Those who found their experience Fair or Poor did not provide reasons for this.

When asked what they like most about being Custody Visitors the three main responses were

- The privilege of being able to reassure the community that detained persons are properly cared for whilst in Staffordshire Police custody.
- The satisfaction of knowing that you have done something good.
- Being able to meet lots of different people.

When asked what they liked least about being a Custody Visitor the common themes in responses were

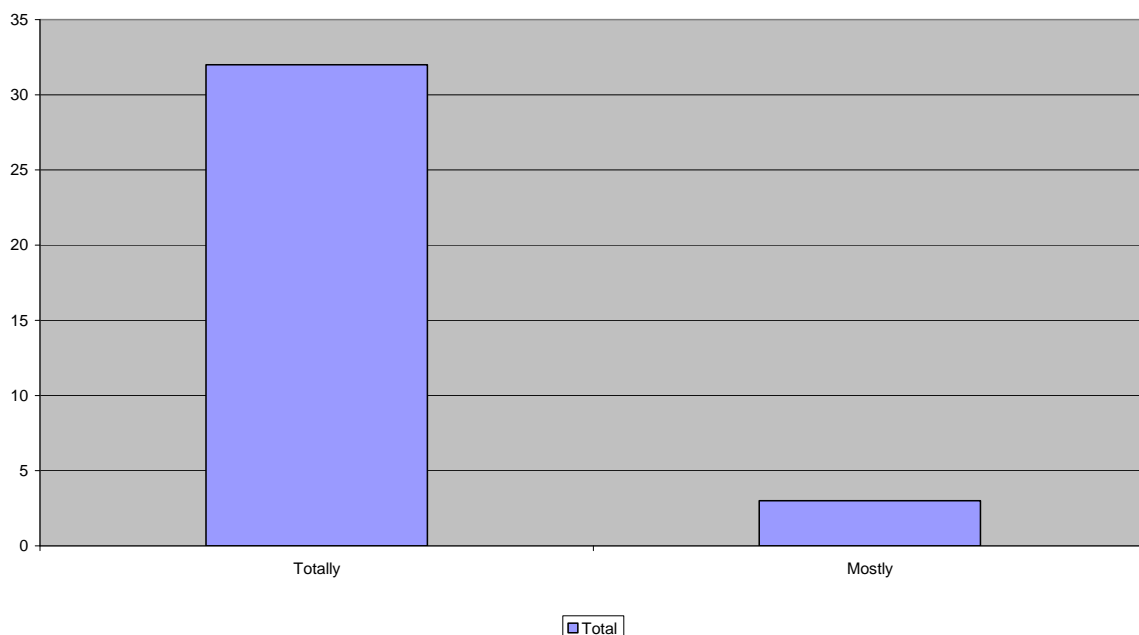
- That the ICV1 forms were confusing to complete
- Being treated as an inconvenience by Custody staff
- Not receiving feedback in a timely manner

When asked how the experience of being a custody visitor could be improved we were told

- From time to time reinforce by talks, letters and handouts the necessity for ICV work and its value to the community
- Provide more feedback on some of our visits
- Showing appreciation of us and keeping us updated of changes

## Role and Responsibilities

Do you understand the responsibilities of your role?



Of the respondents 32 or (91.43%) totally understand their role as an ICV. 3 respondents or (8.57%) mostly understand what is expected of them. No ICV only partially understood their role or did not understand it at all.

When asked how could we help you better understand your role?

- 22 people wanted Refresher Training
- 17 people would like an ICV News Bulletin
- 15 people would like Handouts
- 13 people wanted Courses

(People could choose as many of the above as they felt appropriate)

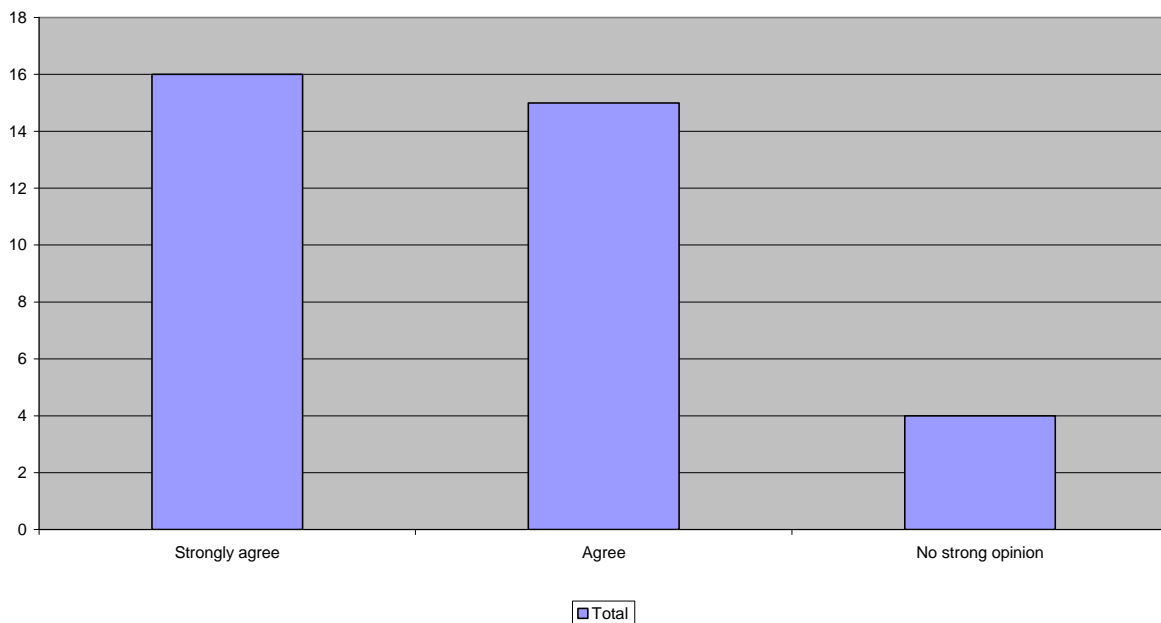
Other suggestions included attending panel meetings in other areas and shadowing Custody Sergeants and CDOs to get a better idea of the work that they do and how the ICV role impacts on them.

The Authority is happy to help arrange visits to custody suites in different panel areas and to arrange for those interested to go along to other panel meetings to share their ways of working and gain insight into how the different panels work.

The Authority is also working with Force trainer to update the topics covered during initial and refresher training for ICVs.

## Support and Guidance

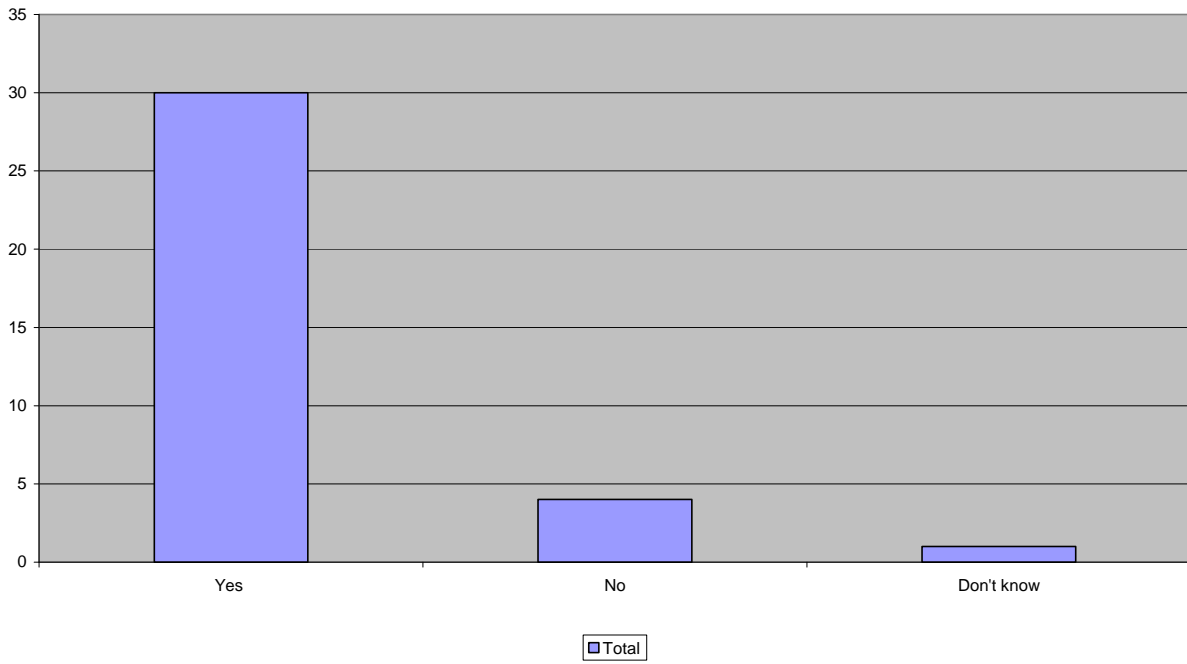
Do you think that the Memorandum of Understanding provides clear direction on what is expected of ICVs?



16 people (45.71%) strongly agreed that the Memorandum of Understanding provides clear direction on what is expected of custody visitors. 15 people (42.86%) agreed and 4 (11.43%) had no strong opinion.

It was suggested that to make the Memorandum of Understanding clearer it could have been written in less formalised terms.

**Do you feel that you have enough opportunities for training?**

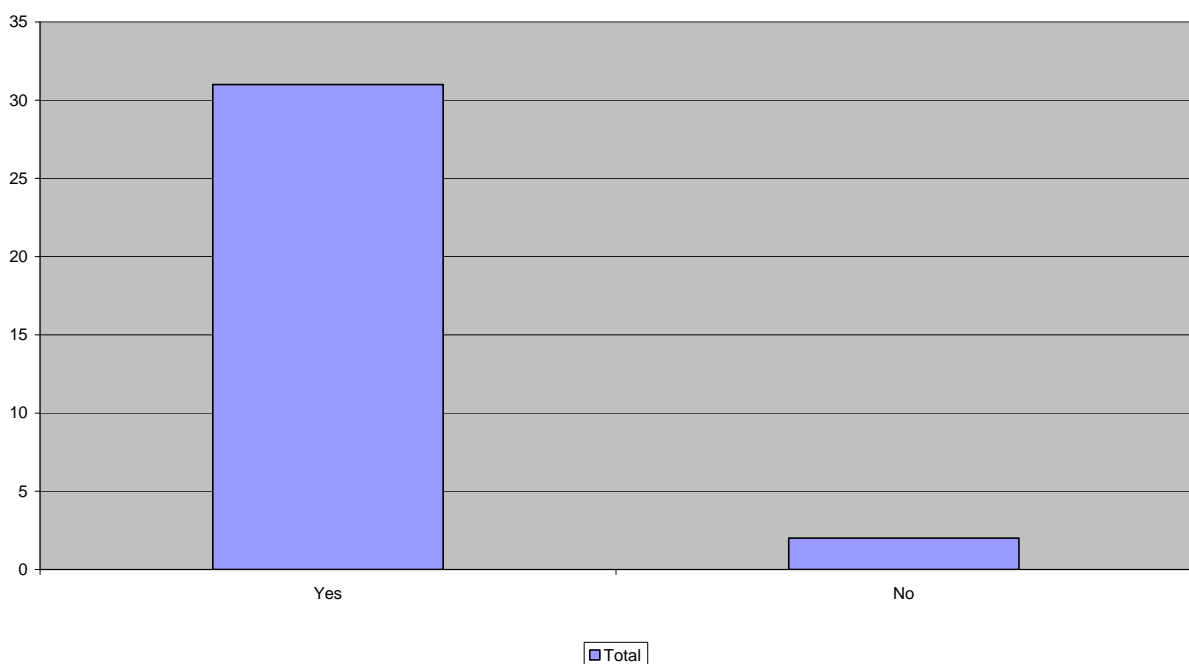


30 people (85.71%) feel they have enough opportunities for training. 4 people (11.43%) did not. 1 person (2.86%) did not know if they were provided with enough opportunities for training.

Those custody visitors who feel they did not have enough opportunities for training suggested the following

- Informal training to take place at Panel meetings
- Conference experience in order to network
- Have visiting speakers to Panel meetings
- Hold specialised training sessions for Panel co-ordinators

**Do you have the support and guidance you need to accomplish your voluntary role?**



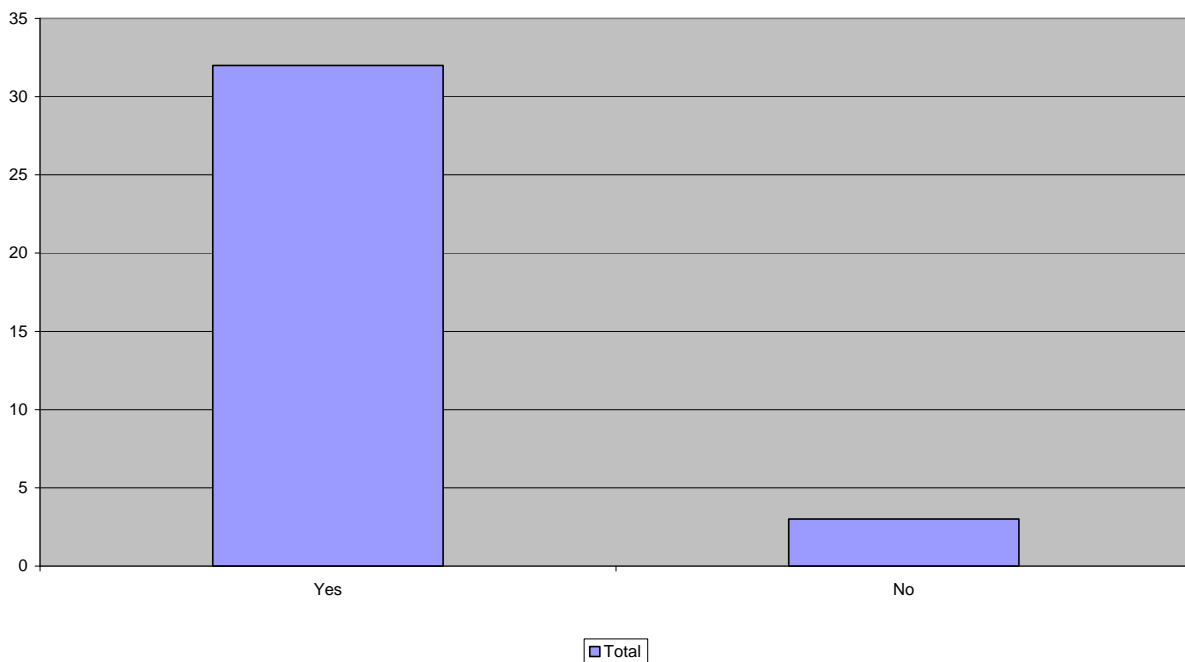
33 people (94.28%) feel they have enough support and guidance to accomplish their role. 2 people (5.72%) do not.

Those who did not feel they had the guidance they needed felt that some staff downplayed the importance of their role and would like the Police Authority to reinforce the responsibilities inherent in the work ICVs do to those who hold such opinions.

Since the questionnaire was completed the Authority has been working with the above training needs in mind. Person Escort Record (PER) forms will be discussed informally at Panel meetings with Custody Inspectors. The Regional Conference hosted by Staffordshire on 21 September 2011 provided the opportunity for delegates to network with ICVs from around the region.

## Recognition and Reward

Do you feel that the time you devote to Custody Visiting is recognised and rewarded appropriately?



32 people (91.43%) feel the time they devote to Custody Visiting is recognised and rewarded appropriately however 3 people (8.57%) feel it is not.

When asked what sort of recognition would you like to see/continue to see?

- 16 people wanted certificates
- 13 people wanted letters of appreciation
- 9 people wanted an awards evening
- 2 people wanted trophies

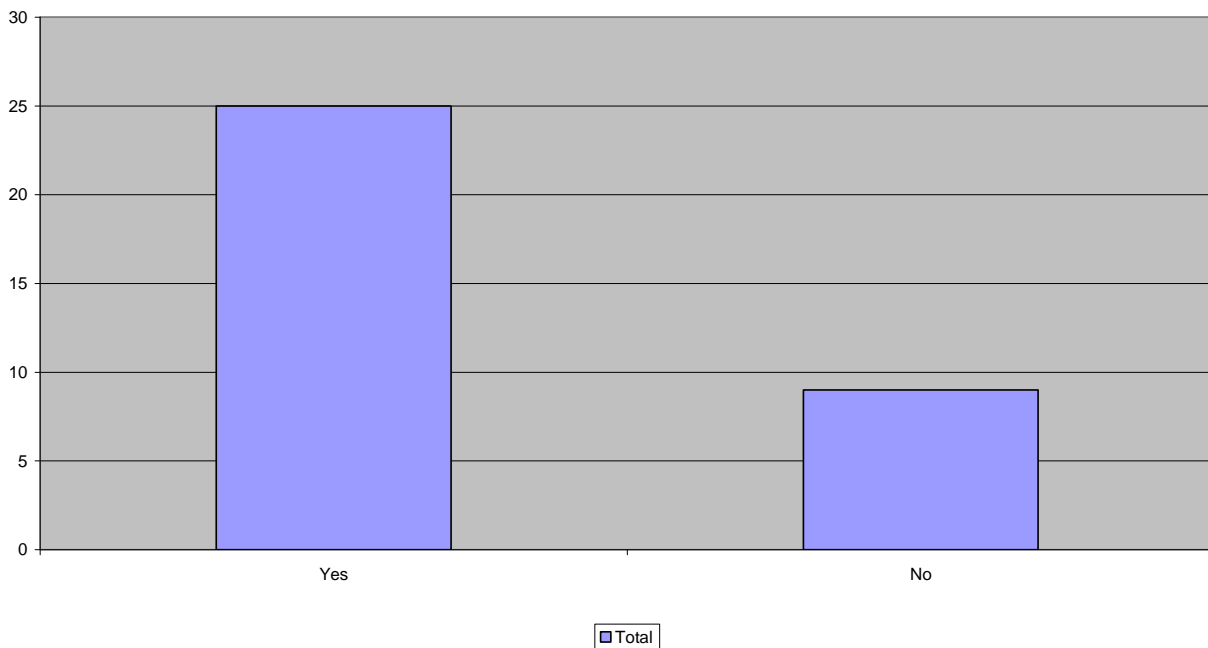
(People could choose as many of the above as they felt appropriate)

Many said they did not seek reward for their voluntary work and that Police Authority attendance at panel meetings would be reward enough - showing that the work of the ICVs is taken seriously and appreciated.

The Authority is also planning an Awards Evening to show it's appreciation of Custody Visitors and the work they do. Long Service and Special Awards will be handed out at this event which will be followed by a buffet and a chance to network with colleagues from other panels and Police Authority members.

## Kept Informed

Do you feel that you are kept up to date with the decision making processes that affect your voluntary role?



24 people (71.42%) feel they are kept up to date with the decision making processes that affect their role, 9 people (25.72%) do not. 1 person (2.86%) did not answer this question.

Those ICVs who feel they are not kept up to date with the decision making processes that affect their role told us how we can keep them better informed

- By receiving a regular newsletter or email to keep them updated on news and current events
- By having a Police Authority presence at every panel meeting
- By being told as soon as possible about Station, Wing or Cell closures/openings in advance or as soon as the Authority becomes aware.

The Authority is working to incorporate these suggestions into how it interacts with its custody visitors.

- A monthly newsletter of current issues will be produced and dispatched to all custody visitors on a monthly basis.
- From the end of August 2011 a member of Police Authority staff has been present at every panel meeting and this will continue into the future.
- Communication has been improved between Panel Co-ordinators and Custody Inspectors as Co-ordinators can now reach Inspectors via their mobile phones.
- Authority staff ensure that ICVs are aware of cell closures/station openings as soon as they become aware.

Overall the Authority has a positive relationship with its Independent Custody Visitors and is working with them to act upon the areas identified for improvement.