

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE OF POLICY/PROCEDURE:	Independent Custody Visitors Scheme
NAME OF AUDITOR:	Nicola Hall
FIN OF AUDITOR:	13768
DATE COMPLETED:	December 2009

SECTION ONE – INITIAL ASSESSMENT TO BE COMPLETED BY (OR ON BEHALF OF) POLICY / PROCEDURE OWNER

Identify the aims and projected outcomes of the policy / procedure.

The Independent Custody Visitors Scheme is a requirement of the SPA. Under the Police Reform Act 2002 all Police Authorities must have recruited and trained sufficient volunteers to carry out random checks on the welfare of detainees held in police custody. These volunteers are arranged in panels according to the location of police custody centres (police stations) and must carry out at least one visit per week to the custody centre. The scheme is designed to offer independent monitoring of the conditions of detention and welfare of detainees under Home Office guidance, and to ensure that PACE is being followed. The SPA has a responsibility to report back to the community to offer reassurance that the processes and procedures are being correctly adhered to.

This assessment concentrates on the fair and equitable running and administration of the scheme, rather than its direct impact on those in custody.

Which individuals and organisations are likely to have an interest in or are likely to be affected by the policy / procedure?

Affected by the scheme are the Police Force, the volunteers themselves, the Police Authority and the general public.

SECTION 2 – IMPACT ON DIVERSITY

This policy / procedure must work towards eliminating discrimination, promoting equal opportunity and promoting good relations between the community and Surrey Police Authority.

Is there any reason why this policy / procedure would not achieve this? Please explain your justification below.

Please select: ~~YES~~ / NO

The scheme aims to recruit volunteers to be representative of the community it serves. It has only limited success in gaining application from young, BME and LGBT groups. The volunteers visit detainees of all kinds in the police cells and are given appropriate training to understand different cultures and their respective needs and requirements.

Is there any potential implication for differential / adverse impact on people based on the following. Please indicate no impact / low / medium / high

Gender	No impact
Sexuality	No impact

Disability	High
Age	High
Religion	No impact
Race	No impact

Is there any evidence that this policy / procedure will have an intentional impact, internally or externally, on people based on their:

Gender	No
Sexuality	No
Disability	Yes
Age	Yes
Religion	No
Race	No

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the above questions, please explain the evidence / reasoning behind your answers below:

Applications from potential ICVs with a disability are reviewed on an individual basis. Whilst reasonable accommodation would be made, restrictions on a volunteer's movement impacting on their ability to evacuate any part of the custody area quickly if the need arises, causes an unacceptable risk to the individual.

SPA is not allowed to recruit people under the age of 18 according to the Code of Practice.

SECTION THREE – CONSULTATION AND CONSIDERATION

Is there any evidence or reason to believe that some minority groups could be differently affected, either personally or negatively? (e.g. lower participation or success rates)

Please select: ~~NO~~ / YES

Please specify the reasoning / evidence behind your decision, including evidence of any consultation that has taken place.

There is a lower take up of recruitment from BME communities which does not ensure that the panel is fully representative of the community. The recruitment is carried out in all areas of the community but take up is lower.

Is there likely to be any public concern that functions / policies are being operated in a discriminatory manner (e.g. expressed in media / research papers etc)

Please select: NO / ~~YES~~

Please specify the reasoning / evidence behind your decision, including evidence of any consultation that has taken place.

As we are clear in our advertising that we are an equal opportunities employer this concern could not be evidenced.

Is there any opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity?

Please select: ~~NO~~ / YES

Please specify the reasoning / evidence behind your decision including evidence of any consultation that has taken place.

It might be possible to carry out targeted advertising of under-represented groups. However, the translation of material into other languages would be ineffective as the scheme stipulates that visits must be carried out in English.

What monitoring arrangements have been established for this policy or procedure?

As well as the provision of a steering group comprising ICVs, members of the SPA and officers from the Force, the scheme is monitored by regular reports being made to the Citizen Focus Panel of the SPA and an annual report to the SPA public meeting.

If the policy / procedure discriminates against certain groups, can it be justified because of the overall objectives?

Please select: ~~NO~~ / YES

If you have selected YES, please provide evidence of your reasoning below.

As noted previously the SPA is not allowed to recruit people under the age of 18, which could have an unintentional impact on young people.

List those who were consulted in carrying out this assessment.

Officers of SPA, SPA Link Members, and Custody Standards were re-consulted when this documents was up-dated in December 2009. Independent Custody Visitors were consulted when document was first compiled in April 2007.

List any changes that will be made as a result of this assessment / consultation

Exploration of more targeted recruitment in the future – e.g. use the IAG to access BME groups

Select the method of publication for this assessment.

Through the SPA website.