

OFFICIAL / SWYDDOGOL



**Comisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddu  
Dyfed-Powys  
Police and Crime Commissioner**

# **INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

April 2024 - March 2025

**Independent Custody Visiting Annual Report Update:**

**April 2024 - March 2025- Data from Custody**

Total number of adult detainees through custody	Total number of juvenile detainees through custody	Total number of detainees through custody
6682	372	7054

**April 2024 - March 2025- Data from ICVs**

Number of ICV visits	Total number of detainees in custody at time of ICV visits	Total number of adult detainees	Total number of juvenile detainees	Total number of detainees unavailable	Number of detainees observed	Total number of detainees visited
130	396	364	32	84	136	176

Comparing the figures from the previous year, ICVs conducted one extra visit this year.

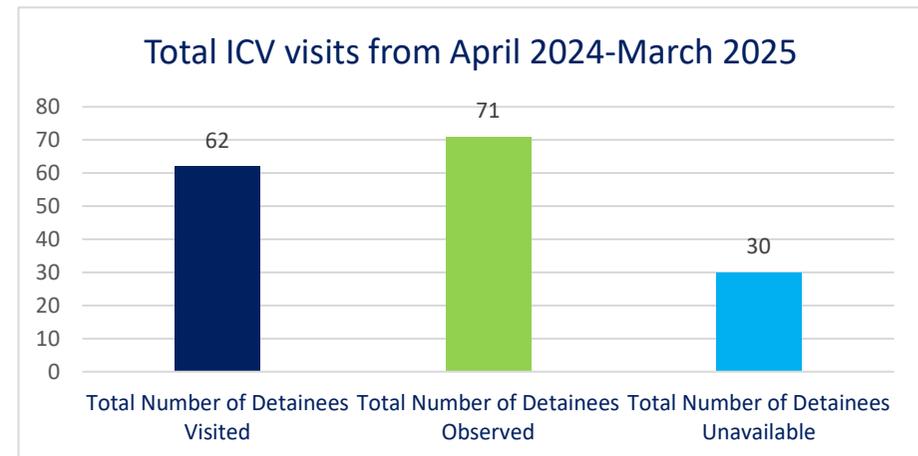
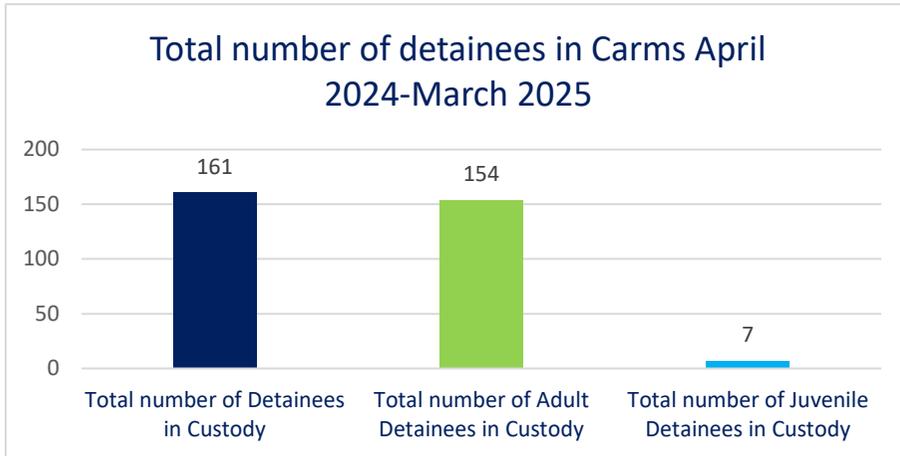
There were 19 more detainees in custody when ICVs visited this time last year which is an increase of 4.8%.

ICVs visited 8 more detainees compared to last year and observed 30 more.

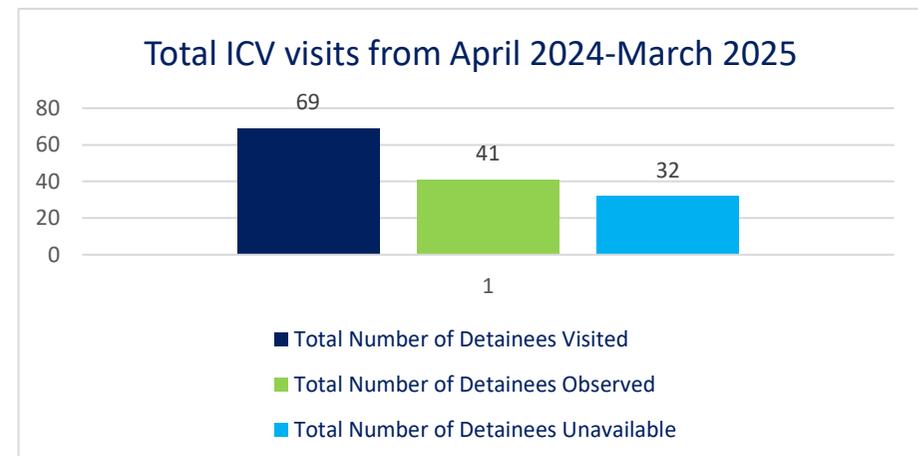
April 2024 – March 2025

**Breakdown of visits conducted from each region**

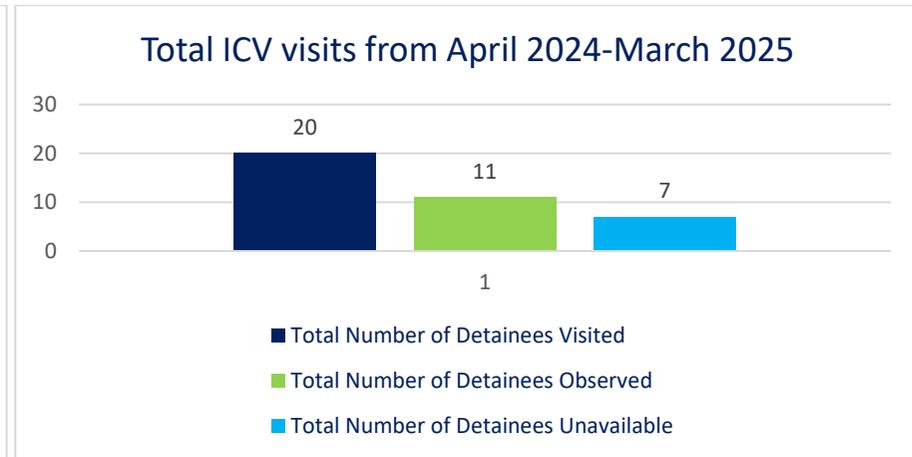
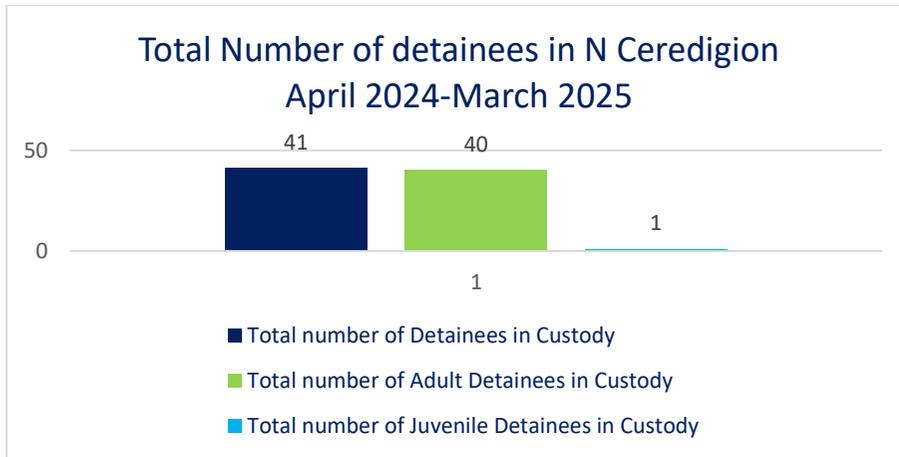
**Dafen- Carmarthenshire**



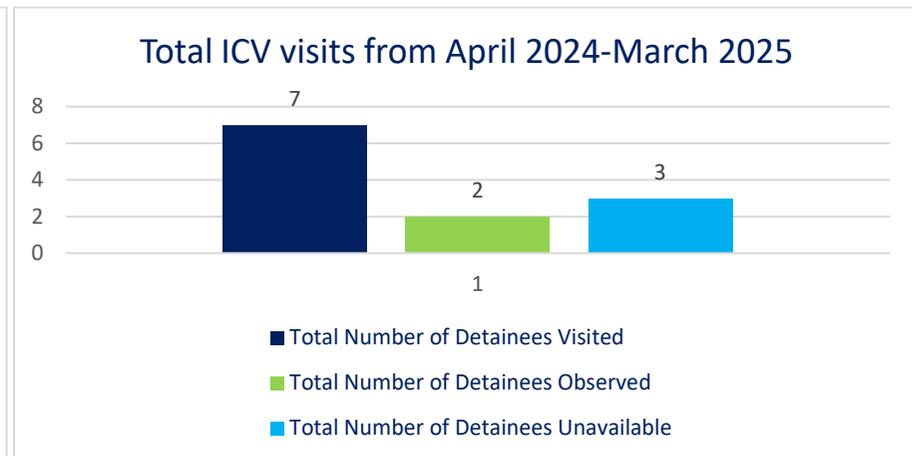
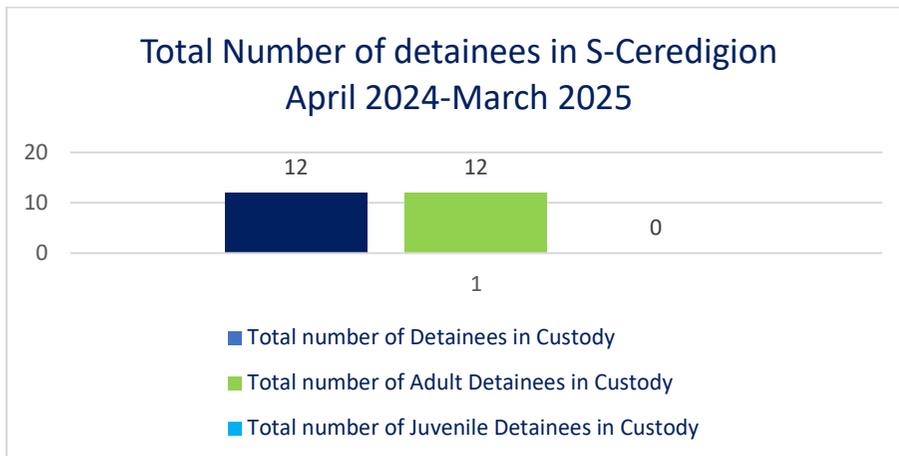
**Haverfordwest- Pembrokeshire**



April 2024 - March 2025  
**Aberystwyth- Ceredigion**

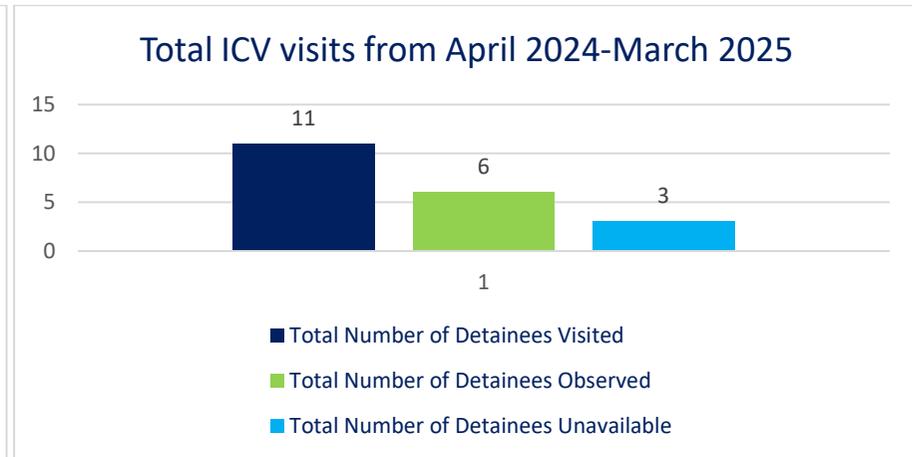
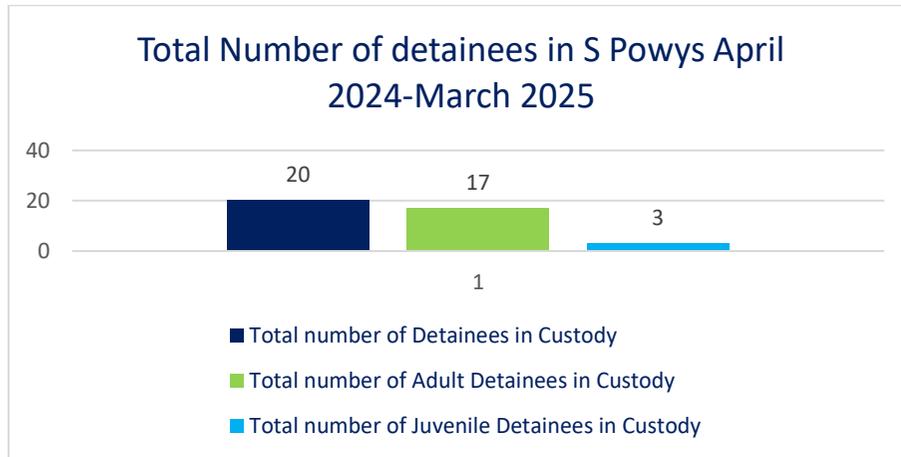


**Cardigan- Ceredigion**

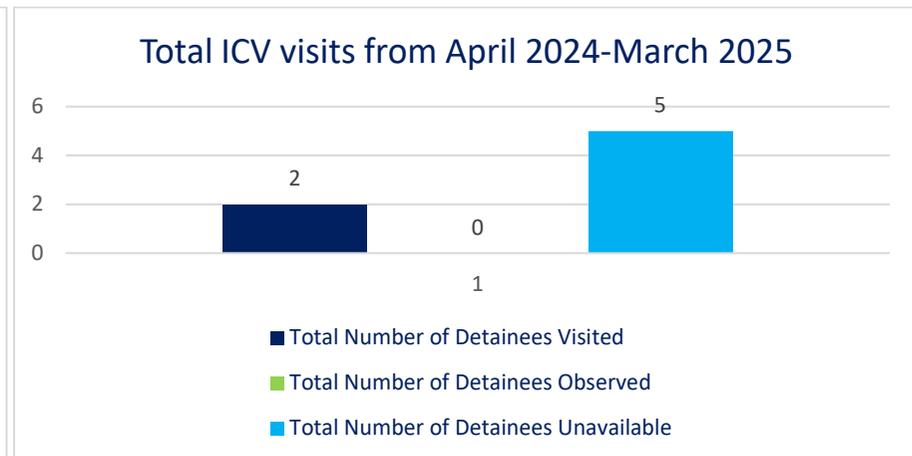
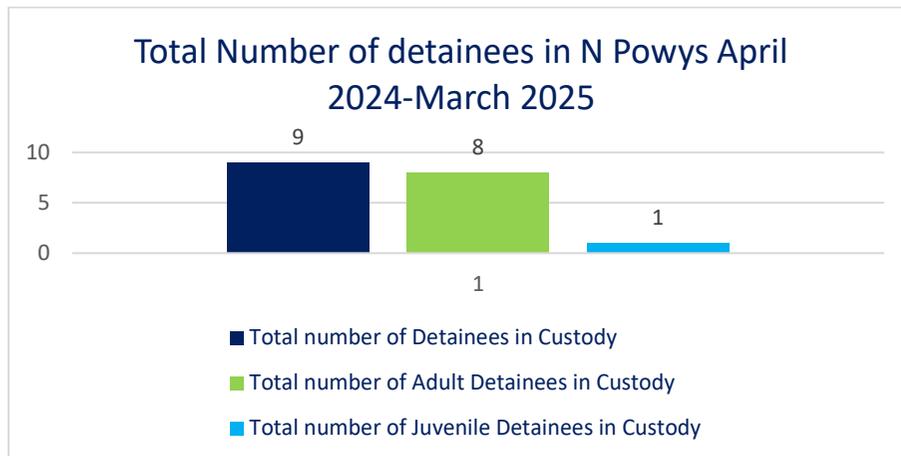


April 2024 – March 2025

**Brecon- South Powys**

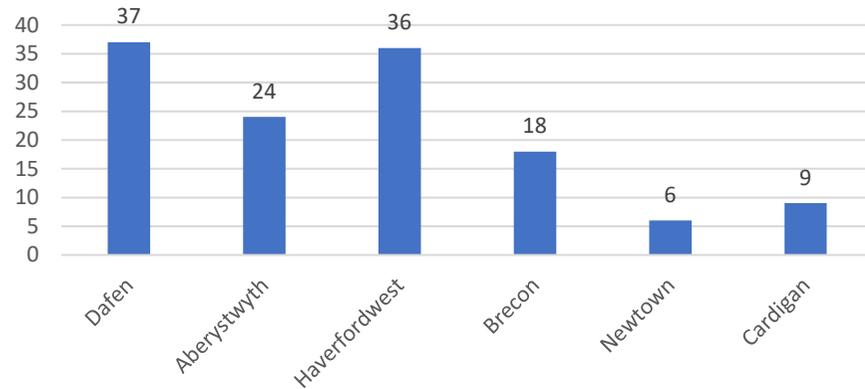


**Newtown- North Powys**

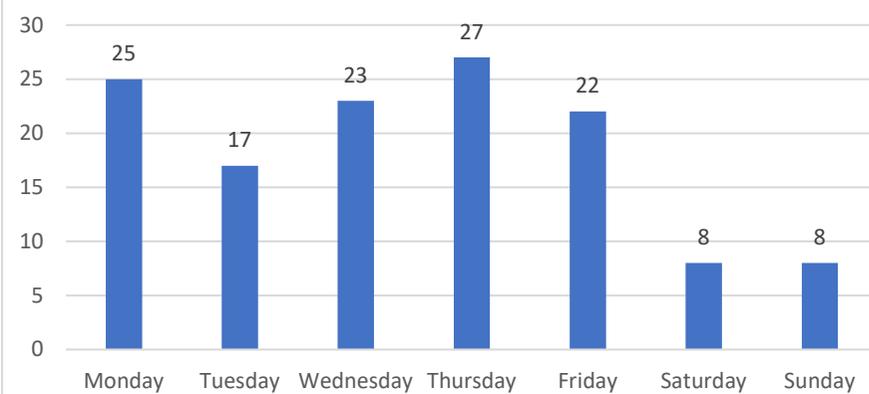


April 2024 - March 2025

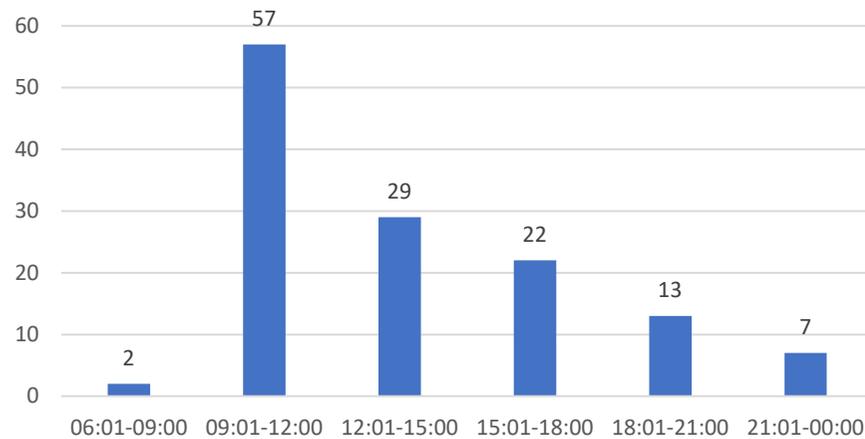
Total Number of Visits Carried Out April 2024-  
March 2025



Frequency of visits conducted from April 2024-  
March 2025



Timings of visits from April 2024-March 2025



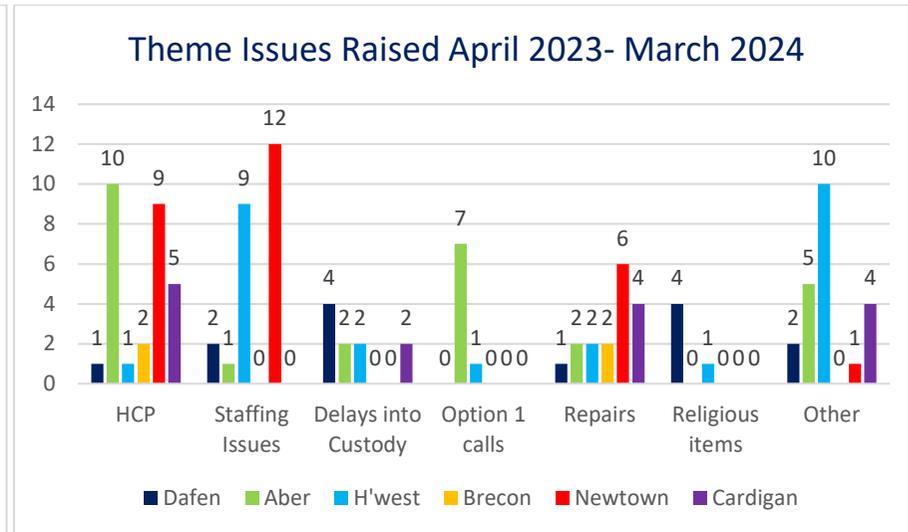
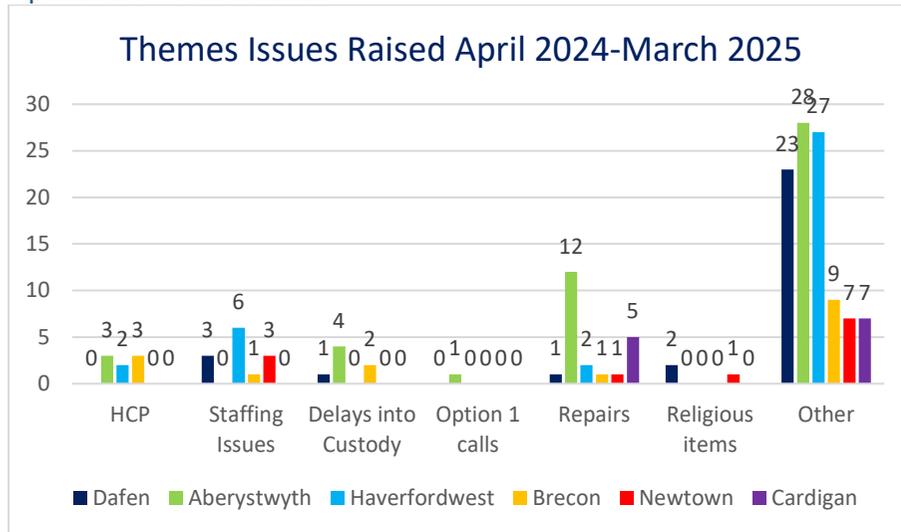
A number of visits were influenced by custody closures which included:

- Aberystwyth from October-Dec 2024
- Cardigan Dec 2024-Feb 2025
- Newtown January-April 2025.

Dafen is considered to be the largest and busiest suite of all the custodies with 18 cells, followed very closely by Haverfordwest by 17 cells; therefore, it would be expected that a higher number of visits would be conducted in these regions.

Every 3 months we host an ICV Panel meeting which involves ICVs, custody services and OPCC to discuss relevant issues. The frequency of visits has been highlighted and noted by ICVs which is considered integral for the ICV visits to not be predictable.

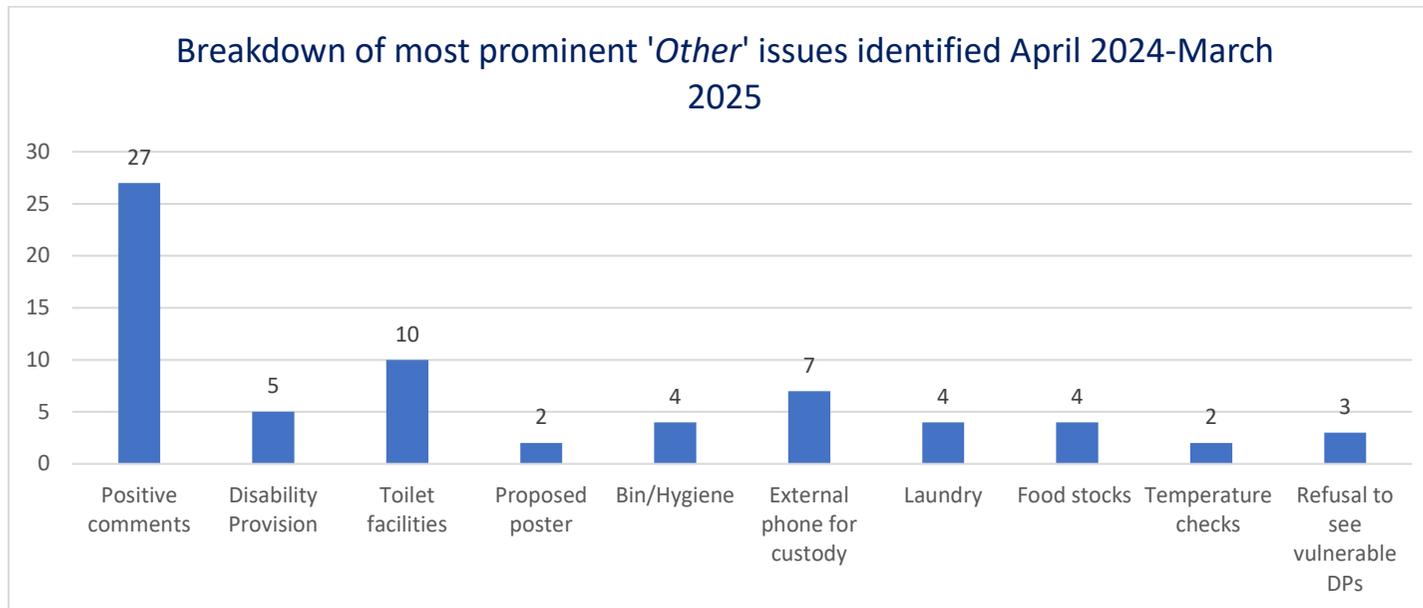
April 2024 - March 2025



From the graphs illustrated above, it is evident that the persistent themes of HCP, Staffing issues, Delays into Custody, Option 1 calls and Religious Items have significantly decreased or are no longer an issue at custody. This illustrates the partner relationship between Custody Services and ICVs over the past year and evidence of accountability in improving services with issues raised from ICV visits being rectified.

April 2024 – March 2025

**Breakdown of “Other” issues identified from each region**



A list of “Other” issues identified by ICVs include concerns in relation to:

Provision for an external buzzer, female sanitary products, plimsolls allocated to DPs, ligature concerns, lack of Anti-Harm Suit, marker implemented for Mecca, bench reinstated by custody desk, CCTV, a second computer terminal and lack of reading material. For further information in relation to these issues, please see under the [Scheme Highlights](#) section under [Other](#).

April 2024 – March 2025

### **Breakdown of ICV volunteers over April 2024-March 2025**

#### **Number of Active ICVs in Q1: 14**

- Pembrokeshire: 3
- Powys: 3
- Ceredigion: 3
- Carmarthenshire: 5

*There were four new applicants in the process of being vetted. There were three ICV taking a temporary break from the scheme.*

#### **Number of Active ICVs in Q2: 13**

- Pembrokeshire: 3
- Powys: 3
- Ceredigion: 3
- Carmarthenshire: 4

*Four applicants were still in the process of being vetted and three volunteers remained on a temporary break from the scheme. However, 2 members subsequently departed.*

#### **Number of Active ICVs in Q3: 16**

- Pembrokeshire: 5
- Powys: 4
- Ceredigion: 1
- Carmarthenshire: 6

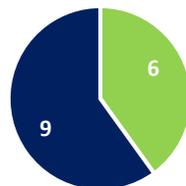
*Two new applicants were being processed for vetting and only two volunteers taking a break from the scheme. We had one member depart the scheme.*

#### **Number of Active ICVs in Q4: 17**

- Pembrokeshire: 5
- Powys: 4
- Ceredigion: 2
- Carmarthenshire: 6

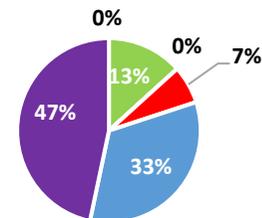
*A further three new applicants that are being processed for vetting and two volunteers taking a break from the scheme. After Q4, two members have since departed the scheme.*

#### **Gender of current members**



■ Male ■ Female

#### **Age range of current members**



■ 18-25 ■ 26-35 ■ 36-45 ■ 46-55 ■ 56-65 ■ 66+

April 2024 – March 2025

The ICV scheme has seen a wider range of age range over the past quarter and the OPCC remains committed to representing the demography of Dyfed-Powys; whilst also ensuring that volunteers who have shown interest and commitment are selected to be part of the team. Our age range of those 66 years and above is only 47% in comparison to last year's 80%. The scheme has also successfully recruited 6 new members with 5 members departing.

The Ethnicity of our volunteers are all White British and whilst it has been acknowledged this is not representative of the demographic area of Dyfed & Powys, the OPCC is dedicated and committed to reach all communities by continuing it's community engagement activities and learning from each experience. The OPCC has been to a number of events to help support the recruitment campaign for the ICV scheme and this is further referenced in our [Recruitment](#) section below.

April 2024 – March 2025

### **Scheme Highlights from April 2024-March 2025:**

#### **Health Care**

- Dyfed-Powys Police (DPP) negotiated a new contract provider to supply custody suites with embedded Health Care Professionals (HCP) in October 2024. Since this, only 3 HCP concerns were raised which were in relation to:
  - HCPs not locking the medical room when they are not occupying this space.
  - An ICV expressed concerns of the ‘passive aggressive’ manner the HCP responded to an ICV’s questions.
  - Concern raised in relation to a lack of overnight HCP staff at Brecon & Haverfordwest custodies.

#### **Staffing Issues**

- In Q2, staffing issues had been highlighted as the main concern sighting impact this had on:
  - Custody staff wellbeing
  - Upholding detainee’s rights and entitlements
  - ICV scheme in gaining instant entry and being escorted around the suite.
- These matters were raised and escalated within the Policing Board in the October meeting by the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC). Reassurances were provided from the Chief Constable that recruitment plans are underway and resilience measures are currently being implemented to tackle the issue. ICVs have since only reported three encounters whereby staffing levels were considered an issue. The Force have been in the process of training operational sergeants to be trained in custody to provide resilience and custody staff rotas are now being aligned with the Detention Escort Officers (DEO) to ensure duties are better aligned.

#### **Delays into Custody**

- Delays into custody were in part affected by staffing issues experienced in Q2, which resulted in a number of visits being abandoned.

## April 2024 - March 2025

- From Q3, ICVs have not experienced any delays into custody which suggests that ICVs have contributed towards the efficiency of custody procedures and staffing levels.

### Religious Items

- The manner with how religious items were stored had been identified as a concern in Q1 and Q2 in Dafen. The issue relates to how all religious texts and prayer mats should be wrapped and stored correctly, not alongside other storage items such as shoes, toilet paper or any other personal property as per accordance with ICVA guidance.
- Within Dafen, the items had been moved into a storage cupboard and were subsequently kept on a table in the locker room which had issues regarding the cleanliness, as the table is being used to make warm beverages such as teas and coffees. These are contrary to how religious items are expected to be stored and in consultation with the Duty Inspector of the custody suite, these items will now be kept on shelves within the locker room of the medical staff which were also highlighted as a recommendation by visiting ICVs.

### Disability Access

- In Q3, ICVs reported three incidents across three different custodies querying accessibility and reasonable adjustments for disabled detainees. These included:
  - Whether thicker mattresses are an adequate solution for lower benches in custody cells in Dafen. Lower benches have been implemented to prohibit the potential harm that may occur to detainees who may fall.
  - Concerns raised how disabled or mobility challenged detainees would access the Haverfordwest toilet facilities.
  - There was an encounter with a detainee who was deaf in Brecon. ICVs had established communication through the means of writing and exchanging messages. Queries were raised regarding the facilitation of custody staff receiving basic British Sign Language (BSL) lessons and the accessibility of an audio loop within the custody suite.
- Since Q4, ICVs have now established that every suite has:
  - Wheelchair access.
  - A supply of thick mattresses

## April 2024 – March 2025

- Sight lines in a small number of cells to help those detainees with visual impairments.
- Hearing loops, to help those with hearing difficulties.
- Adapted communal toilets.
- A CD containing detainee’s rights and entitlements in British Sign Language (BSL).

### Positive Feedback

- To emphasise objective scrutiny, ICVs, over the course of the year, have highlighted a number of positive comments in relation to the manner custody staff have treated and accommodated them personally. Comments have also been made by detainees specifying how well they have been treated or the manner custody staff have conducted themselves under work-related pressures. Here is a highlight of some comments made over the course of the past year:
  - A box containing toys and games for children had been donated into one of the custody suites which provides very useful distraction items and a welcome addition to the current option of a foam ball.
  - On a number of occasions, it was reported how “welcoming” and “helpful” custody sergeants across Dyfed-Powys have been in assisting ICVs visits.
  - *“The communication and support of the team on duty was commendable. Each was multitasking calmly and whilst abuse being thrown at them. All detainees had plans but custody let down by other agencies. The team had 9 detainees, a custody sgt, a DO, and a nurse. 8 of the 9 detainees were vulnerable. Amazing good teamwork”.*
  - Custody staff have been reported being very accommodating to new ICV members providing tours and answering any questions they may have in both Newtown and Brecon.

### ‘Other’ Issues Identified

- Here is a breakdown of the ‘Other’ issues identified over the past year.

#### April 2024 – March 2025

- **Laundry**- Two incidents were recorded in Newtown whereby stocks of towels were low and, on another occasion, reported that no towels or blankets were returned. The local Inspector is aware of the issue and has advised he is monitoring after addressing with the supplier.
- **Food Stocks**- In Newtown, food stocks were being supplied to Brecon requiring custody staff members to drive to collect which is approximately a two-hour drive each way. This has resulted on the odd occasion where stocks have run low. The local Inspector has provided reassurance that this matter has been resolved with food stocks now being directly delivered to Newtown.
- **Hygiene**- The Dame Vera Baird Inquiry Report suggested basic provision of sanitary provisions for women in custody. ICVs noted that the provision in Haverfordwest does not have any hand cleanser or discrete bags to dispose of used items. ICVs also suggested that certain items and packets are left open which may be unhygienic. ICVs also noted an issue with the bins provided in Haverfordwest. ICVs questioned the hygiene of these bins as it requires the press down function to open the bin to dispose of waste. Pedal bins were sourced by the Force and provided to custody after receiving this feedback.
- **Poster for detainees**- Staff highlighted to ICVs at Cardigan that they would appreciate a poster to signpost to detainees that violence or abuse towards them will not be tolerated. As a consequence to the recent ICV Panel meeting, the Force are exploring opportunities to create a poster for detainees to comment on their treatment, make complaints and make compliments.
- **External buzzer**- Issues have been raised with Aberystwyth whereby entry to custody can only be obtained via the main reception area. Out of hours is causing issues for ICVs to gain instant access as they are required to contact 101 whereby long delays are experienced either speaking with the call handler or for the call handler to contact the custody. ICVs suggest that an external buzzer for external organisations including legal representation, interpreters and Appropriate Adults to gain access. The Force have advised that this work has been scheduled and is likely to take place after the summer period 2025.
- **Plimsolls**- Detained persons (DP) are routinely asked whether they would like plimsolls providing if they were asked to remove their footwear. In Haverfordwest, ICVs had a discussion whereby plimsolls were not being offered as once they are opened, they are discarded. As such the Force will not be adopting an automatic issue of plimsolls to detainees as this has significant cost and environmental implications.

April 2024 – March 2025

- **Ligature concern-** ICVs queried whether it is necessary to remove possible ligatures of laces and/or chords of clothing from complaint detainees who are on level 1, 30-minute observations from staff. ICVs referred to the College of Policing which states at level 3 to 'remove ligatures'. ICVs queried with the Force in the recent Panel meeting whether a risk adverse culture compromises detainees' rights and dignity? The Force acknowledge that culture surrounding risk management needs to be re-evaluated for those DPs who are considered vulnerable to retain their dignity by keeping their clothes for Observation Level 1's. This will be continuously monitored.
- **Lack of Anti-Harm Suit (AHS)-** ICVs discussed the proposed plan of removing the AHS from custody and shared some concerns raised by staff in relation to resources available to mitigate individual risk. ICVs proposed whether AHS could be phased out to assist custody staff and whether any decision to use them would require inspector authorisation. The Force advised that AHS are not recognised as good practice, that their use lacks dignity to detainees, the rationale to utilise them almost certainly will increase the chance of violence and encourages complacency in risk management of the detainee. Since the proposed plans to eradicate AHS, there has not been one record of them being used in Q4 which may suggest that they are not needed.
- **Marker for Mecca-** A marker on the wall of a detention cell has been proposed by ICVs to point towards Mecca for Muslim detainees to assist with the direction for their prayers. Custody inspectors have indicated that Muslim DPs have the compass on their prayer mats, but it needs to be established whether the compass is stitched into the matt or whether it is a live compass.

#### Recruitment

- During the course of the year, the OPCC has attended a number of events to promote the ICV scheme including:
  - Eisteddfod Urdd in Meifod.
  - The Royal Welsh Show.
  - Open days at Brecon & Newtown Police Stations.
  - Pembrokeshire County Show.
  - Mosque visits at Haverfordwest and Milford Haven.

## April 2024 - March 2025

- The scheme managed to recruit 5 new members, 3 in Carmarthenshire, 1 in Pembrokeshire and the other in Ceredigion over the year.
- There are 3 awaiting vetting who will be based in North Powys and South Powys respectively.

### PCC visits to Custody

- The PCC conducted a number of visits across Dyfed-Powys custodies over the past year.



- On the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the PCC accompanied an ICV visit to Dafen, alongside the Chief Inspector Jenna Jones and with the assistance of Acting-Inspector Matthew Jenkins, a compilation of photos and video clips were taken to highlight the good work that ICVs do on a regular basis and also to advertise for our recruitment campaign. The visit was flagged on our social media page which can be viewed here: [Instagram](#).

April 2024 - March 2025



- On the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 alongside an ICV visit, the [Police and Crime Commissioner visited Brecon custody](#) to get an update on the scheme and to assess the daily function of the custody suite. The PCC stated: *"It was a very positive visit to the Brecon Custody Suite, and I was pleased to see first-hand how well the team is managing the daily operations. The input from the Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) was invaluable in assessing the welfare of detainees, and I remain committed to ensuring that our facilities continue to meet the highest standards."*



- On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the PCC attended alongside ICVs to support the [Youth Ambassadors](#) tour of Dafen.
- Overall feedback was very positive from the YA specifying how clean the custody suite was and how accommodating the custody staff were in answering their queries and for facilitating the tour.
- Further details and pictures can be found on our [Instagram](#) page.

April 2024 - March 2025

### Welsh Language Training

- As part of the OPCC's Welsh Language strategy for 2024/2025, ICVs were offered the opportunity to improve their Welsh language skills. The OPCC, in collaboration with the Force's Welsh Language Tutor, supported ICVs and other volunteers with level one Welsh over Q4 and will look for opportunities to include further training.