

Havering and Redbridge Independent Custody Visitors Panel

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the annual report of the Havering and Redbridge Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) Panel.

This annual report covers the period from 01/01/10 to 31/12/10.

The purpose of this report is to give a general overview of the work of the Havering and Redbridge ICV Panel and:

- Evaluate the panel's performance in 2010
- Provide the local community and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) with information about the visits made including the treatment of those held in custody
- Set out issues and concerns that have arisen
- Set out the objectives for 2011.

The MPA is an independent statutory body, which exists to make sure that London's police are accountable for the services they provide to people in the capital. The MPA has 23 Members who scrutinise and support the work of the police. The MPA promotes equality and diversity within the police service and is working in partnership to ensure all those who live and work in the capital are treated fairly and with respect.

The MPA has a legal obligation under the Police Reform Act 2002 for a custody visiting scheme to operate in its area. In April 2007 the MPA brought together the custody visiting arrangements managed by the boroughs into one London scheme. The scheme has the full support and cooperation of the Commissioner and the Borough Commanders for Havering and Redbridge, but is independent of the police. The MPA holds overall responsibility for the scheme's management and administration; a member of MPA staff is responsible for supporting the panel.

Custody visitors are volunteers from within the community. The MPA is responsible for recruiting, selecting and appointing all custody visitors and tries to ensure a balance of age, gender and ethnicity. Successful applicants to the scheme are given training in all aspects of a custody visitor's role and responsibilities. Custody visiting is governed by a range of legislation and guidance including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 as well as Home Office Codes of Practice and National Standards.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Havering and Redbridge panel currently makes one unannounced visit per week to both Romford (Havering) and Ilford (Redbridge) police stations. This meets the minimum requirement of one visit per week per 24/7 custody suite, that the MPA sets panels as a target. The panel has maintained a good visiting level of 77% to Ilford station and 81% to Romford station during 2010. The visits to both Stations are slightly down however on last year's figures.

Due to resource allocation reductions at the MPA, Havering and Redbridge Panel meeting frequency was reduced in 2010 with meetings being held every quarter, alternating between Ilford (Redbridge) Police Station and Havering Town Hall in Romford. These meetings are well attended by both panel members and the police and the venues continue to be most satisfactory. The panel wishes to extend its thanks to the Borough Commander of Redbridge, for allowing it to meet at Ilford Police Station.

Sergeant Eunice Ridout is the panel's police liaison for Redbridge and Sergeant Ian Lowe is the police liaison for Havering borough. The police liaison officers continue to assist the panel in its work, and the panel wishes to thank them for their cooperation and help in investigating any concerns and observations, and also in answering questions at panel meetings.

The Chair and Vice-Chair have represented the panel at meetings of the London ICV Chairs meetings. The panel is also represented by members at both borough Community Engagement Groups who keep the panel up to date when necessary of community issues that may be of relevance.

The MPA deems that panels with two police stations to visit weekly require a membership of 17 ICVs, as this allows for ICVs to maintain a visiting level of one visit per month, as laid out in the scheme handbook and memorandum of understanding. The panel's membership in Havering and Redbridge has been fairly well maintained with only one resignation, and a number of new members have also joined.

Many panel members have busy home and professional lives, and some also maintain other community roles as well as that as an ICV. Nevertheless, attendance at meetings and visit performance has been good.

A special mention must also go to Stephen Phillips, the Chair, who was awarded a long service award in 2010.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Since the beginnings of custody visiting, the Redbridge & Havering panel has worked hard in its role, in order to secure the accountability of the police to the local community it serves, bringing police and the community closer together, enhancing the public perception of police procedures and practices.

This annual report will we hope, provide the community with Information about the work the panel has carried out on its behalf in 2010.

ICVs very often address needs such as making sure detainees have clean cells, clean bedding, appropriate food and washing facilities - and reassuring the public that this is so. We have found that on the whole the police welcome our input as independent members of the public, observing and recording what is happening in the custody suite at any time. We sometimes have to raise issues and/or oversights, reported by detainees, to the custody manager who then cooperates with us, in getting the problems sorted out. For their part the detainees are often only too pleased that somebody has taken the trouble to check that they are being treated properly.

Generally during its visits the panel has found that detainees held in custody are being treated correctly, in accordance with their rights and entitlements and that the police in this part of London continue to demonstrate high standards of professionalism and commitment in their work. The Havering and Redbridge panel meets regularly to discuss visits made and custody managers or their deputies attend these meetings from the MPS stations in its area, in order to respond to any queries the panel members may have raised in connection with their visits to stations.

The panel suffered from one resignation in 2010, due to changes in personal circumstances but it endeavoured to recruit new members in order to maintain visiting levels, and now has 16 members on the panel. Some further work in this area is required in 2011 and it is hoped we will reach our target of 17 by late spring.

I would like to thank all the officers we come in to contact with, in Havering and Redbridge boroughs. Overall the police work very hard to facilitate our visits and any requirements we have during these times, despite often being under pressure from the increasing demands of the custody suite.

Thanks must also go to the panel members for all their hard work and commitment to their visits and the meetings over the past year. I must also sincerely thank Roy Pursey my Vice-Chair for the way he backed me up and helped during the year.

Stephen Phillips
Havering and Redbridge ICVP Chair

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

Since April 2007, panels have been asked to adhere to recruitment and interviewing guidance provided by the MPA. The MPA expects all panels to adhere to the MPA's equal opportunities policy, recruit new panel members from all sections of the community and actively foster good relations between people of different races, genders, sexualities, abilities and age on the panel.

In 2010 the Havering and Redbridge panel was made up of the following accredited members:

Name	Appointed
Amarjit Phull	2002
Frederick (George) Ford	2004
Joyce Ragbir	2004
Roy Pursey	2002
Stephen Philips	2000
Roger Dixon	2006
Victor Omoyinmi	2007
Linda Powell	2008
Nigel Collins	2009
Sanjeet Bhogal	2009
Suresh Vasishtha	2009
Saidi Athekame	2009
Henry Acheampong-Brembah	2009

The following member(s) joined

Deborah Regal	2010
Godwin Ogene	2010
Rachel Cartwright	2010

The following members resigned/de-accredited/sabbatical

Alison Maybin (sabbatical)	2007
David Rowlands (resigned)	2009

As of the end of 2010 the panel comprised of 11 men and five women with varying diversity in age and ethnicity.

Recruitment

The panel had a very successful year in terms of recruitment, and took on a total of three new members.

VISITS TO POLICE STATIONS

Good standards of care have been noted at all stations however, despite the pressures on police.

There have been few major concerns this year. The relationship with the custody staff has continued to be positive and the panel is happy with the way in which custody staff have explained the ICV role to detainees, and answered any queries they might have during visits. It is a source of satisfaction to the panel that there have been few complaints, if any, from detainees on how they are treated at Ilford and Romford stations.

ICVs have noted issues around health and safety in both stations. They have brought to the attention of staff, matters such as the FME rooms being left unlocked/open with sharps boxes and other medical items being left out. .

DATA FROM PANEL VISITS

Visit statistics from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010 for Havering and Redbridge

1. Number of Visits

	Station % Annual Target	Annual no. of visit
Romford (Havering)	42	81%
Ilford (Redbridge)	40	77%
Total	82	79%

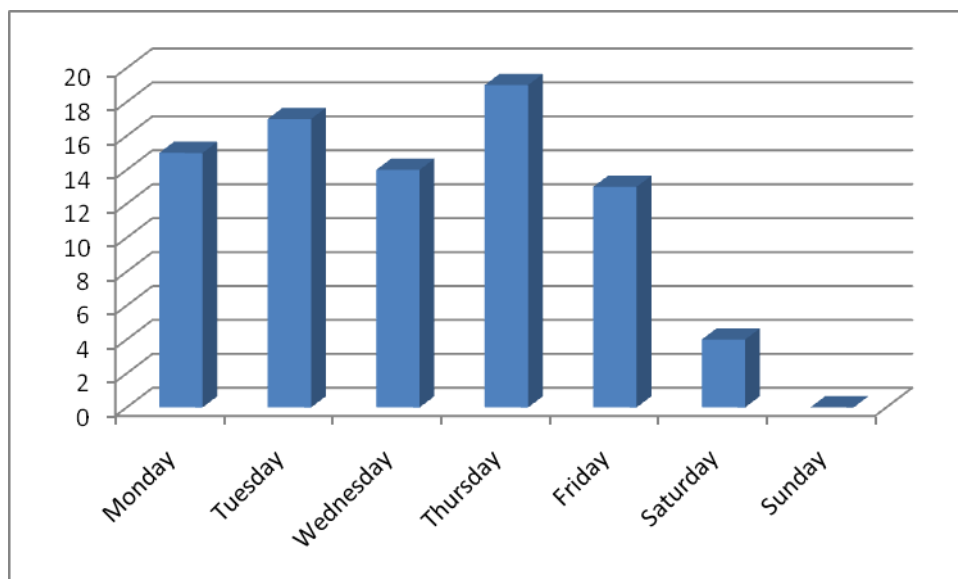
*MPA Annual Target is 52 visits per 24/7-custody suite – pro rata where applicable.

2. Time and day of visits – All stations

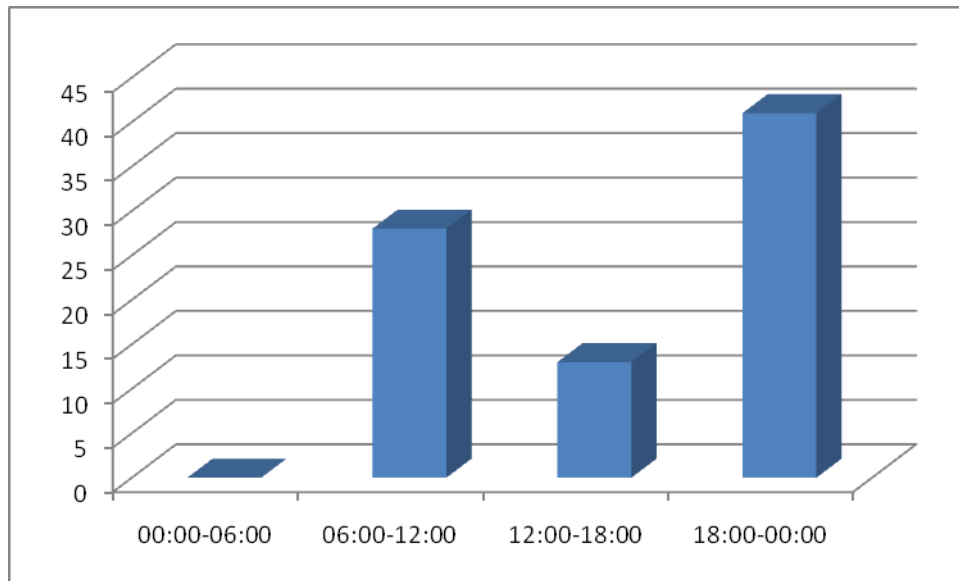
Independent Custody Visits are unannounced and the panel's intention is to avoid visiting in a predictable pattern.

The charts below display the number of visits carried out in the Borough of Havering and Redbridge in 2010, by day of the week and time period.

As can be seen from the graph below, visits were generally well spread out throughout the week, however, visits were very low at the weekend with none being undertaken on Sundays. This is something the members of the panel have discussed and will aim to improve on in 2011.

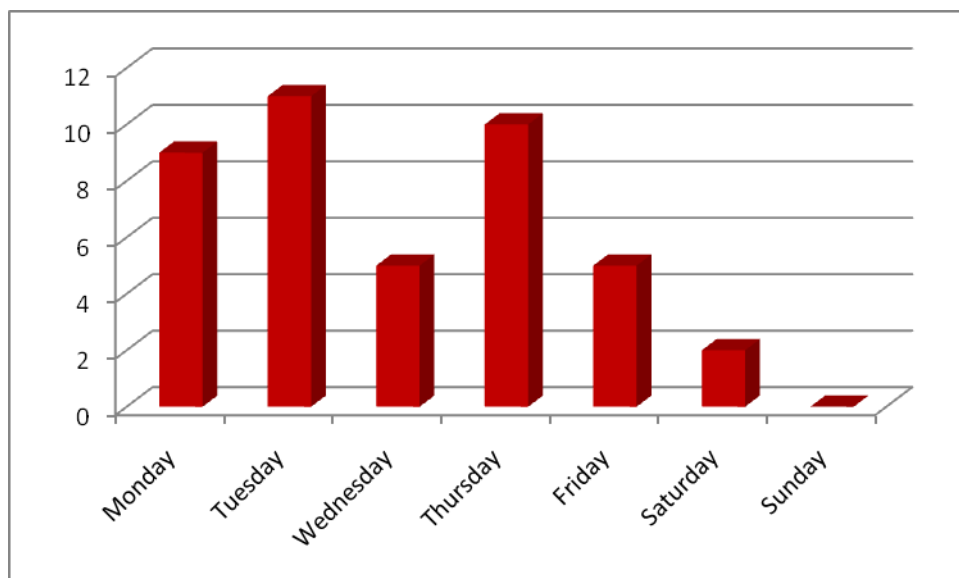


The graph below shows the time frames that visits were conducted by the panel. As it demonstrates, the majority of visits were completed in the evening after 6pm.

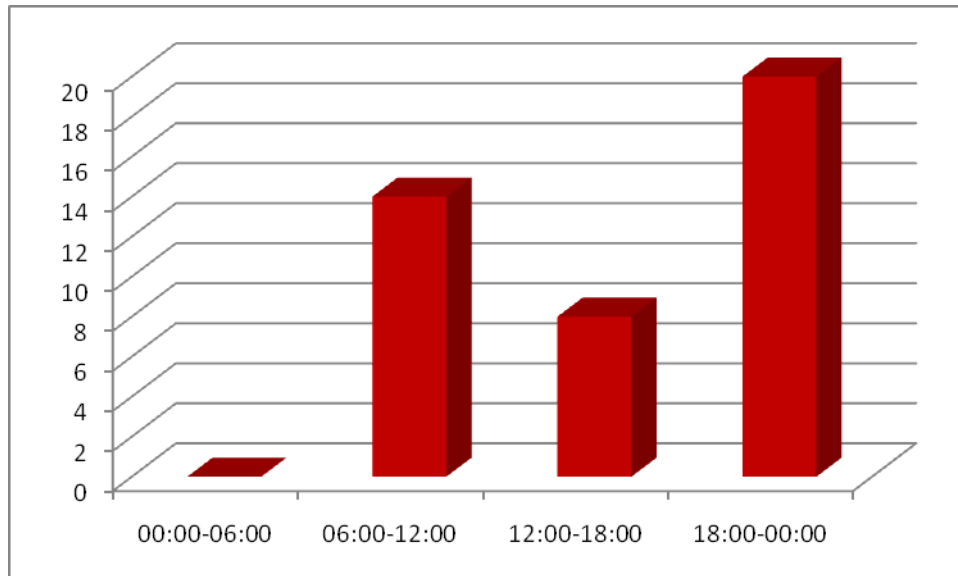


3. Havering station time and day of visits

The graph below shows the days that visits were carried out in Havering to Romford Station. As can be seen, the most popular days for the panel to conduct visits were Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

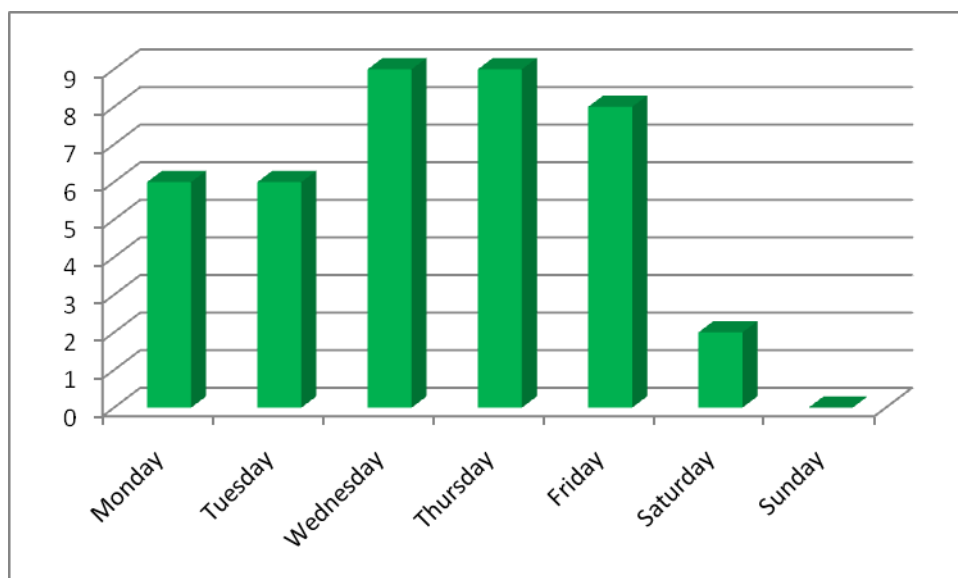


The graph below shows the times that visits were conducted in Havering to Romford Police Station in 2010. As can be seen, the most popular time for visits was after 6pm, with none being conducted early morning.

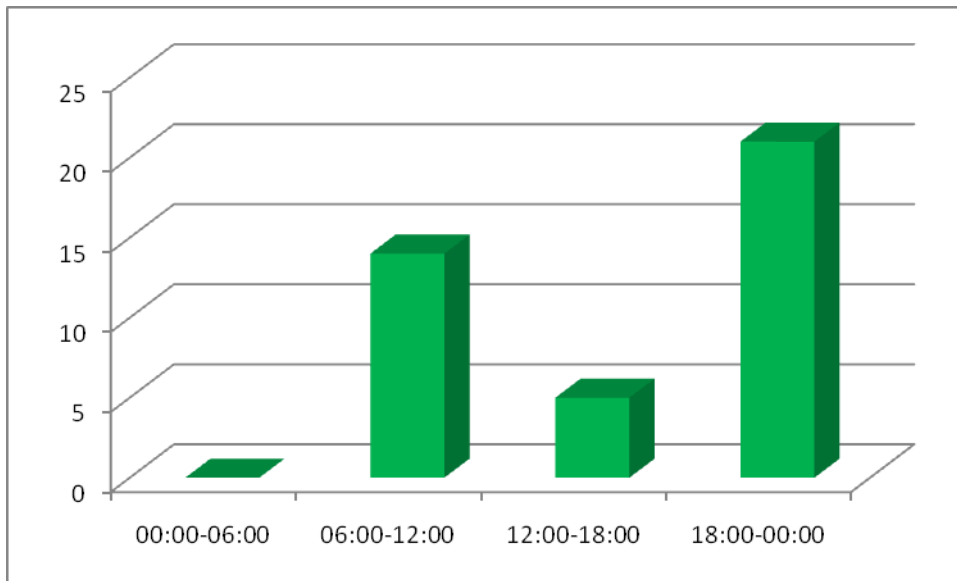


4. Redbridge station time and day of visits

As the graph below demonstrates, the vast majority of visits were carried out throughout the week, with only two on a Saturday and none on a Sunday. In order to avoid a predictable pattern the Panel will need to conduct visits more evenly throughout the week in 2011.

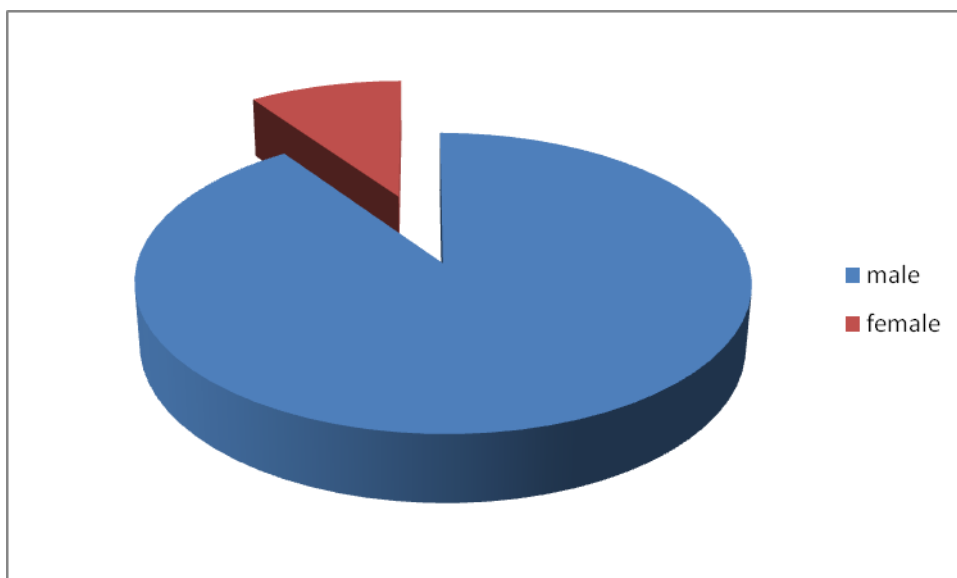


The graph below shows the time frames that visits were carried out in Redbridge to Ilford Police Station, as can be seen the most popular time for visits was in the evening after 6pm.

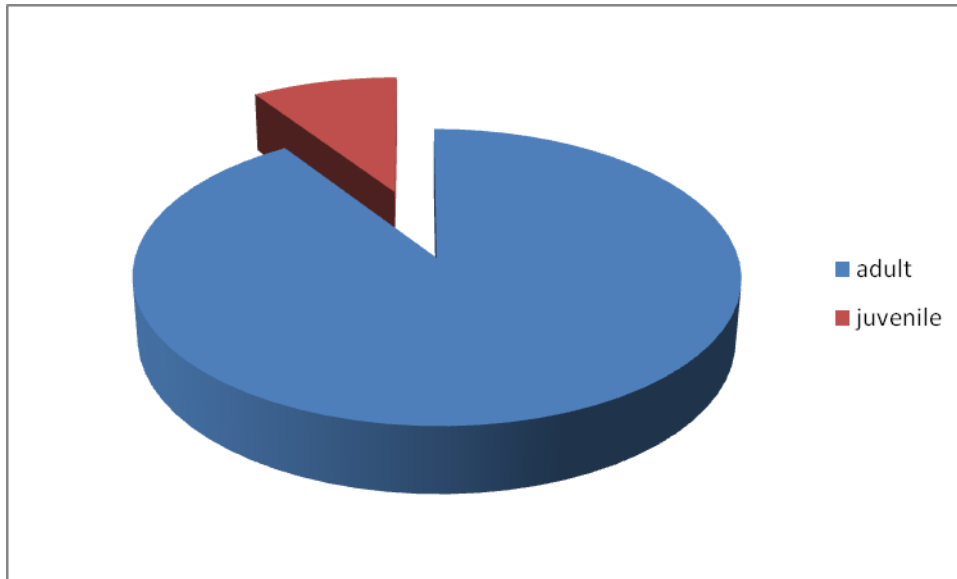


5. Demographics of detainees – All stations

As can be seen in the pie chart below, the majority of detainees held in stations in both Havering and Redbridge were male during the time that ICVs made visits.

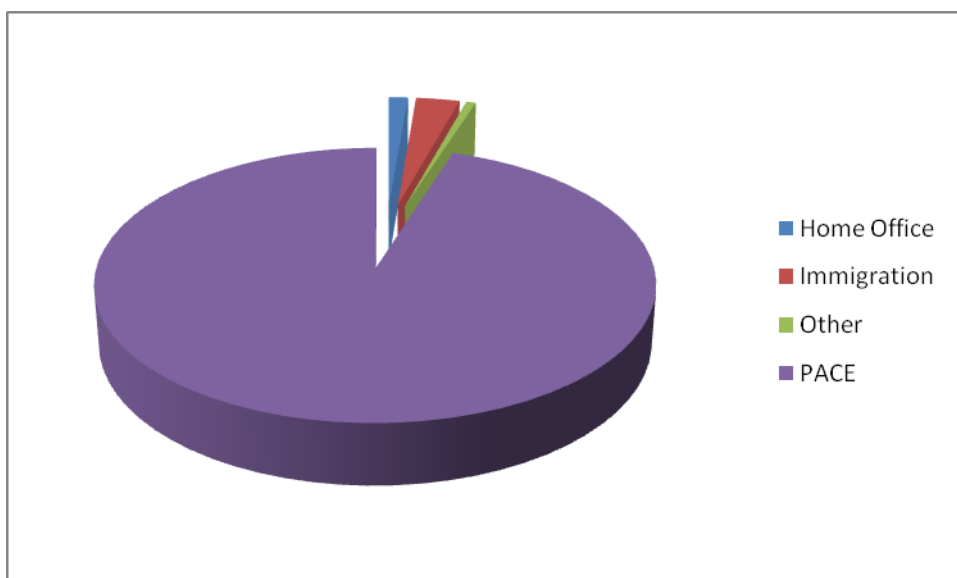


The graph below shows the percentage of detainees who were adults and who were juveniles. As can be seen, the vast majority of those held in Havering and Redbridge were adults (18 and over).



6. Categories of detainee – All stations

The pie chart below shows the percentages of category the detainees being held in Havering and Redbridge fall under. As can be seen, the vast majority of those held are held under PACE, with a small minority being held under immigration, Home Office (such as people being produced from prison for further questioning) or other (such as Bail to Return).



7. Concerns – All stations.

When visitors speak to detainees they record any concerns that detainees raise with them.

Visitors do not wake detainees if they are asleep, however they will usually check through the wicket in the door to check that all looks well in the cell. Visitors check concerns raised by detainees against their custody record (where permission has been gained from the detainee to do so), and will bring matters to the attention of the police if they remain concerned about any aspect of the detainee's treatment or welfare. Most minor concerns can be resolved during the visit and only more major or more complicated concerns are discussed at a meeting of the whole panel.

Over the course of the year there have been very few concerns raised by detainees being held in stations in Havering and Redbridge, those that have been raised over the year include requests for food, drink, blankets and telephone calls. These are often brought to the attention of staff by ICVs and dealt with whilst the visitors are still present at the station, however these were more to do with the fact that detainees were unaware they could ask for such things, rather than the police not giving them. The policy for the issuing of blankets is one that is raised across all the boroughs and is being addressed.

PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING **YEAR 2011**

Targets:

- To visit once per week to Ilford and Romford Police Stations.
- To carry out visits more evenly throughout the week, especially at the weekend.
- A weekly visit to Barkingside Station when it is in use.
- To maintain the current level of membership.
- To carry out 1-2 refresher training modules during panel meetings over the course of the year.
- To improve links and feedback between the panel and the local Community and Police Consultative Committees in each borough.
- To raise the profile of the panel and scheme across the borough through wider circulation of the annual report and publicity materials.