

Police Custody

Doye Akinlade
**(Chair, Lambeth Panel of Independent Custody
Visitors)**

Jane Warwick
(Lambeth Appropriate Adults Scheme)

Independent Custody Visitors

- **Formed in 1982, following Scarman Report, as Panel of Lay Visitors. Statutory basis in PACE (1984)**
- **Have the right to visit police custody suites, unannounced to ensure that PACE codes of practice are being adhered to.**
- **In Lambeth, aim is to visit each of three custody suites, on average, once a week routinely.**
- **There are additional visits at the police's request.**
- **All visits documented and reviewed with the police on a monthly basis.**

What PACE says detainees are entitled to

- ***Right*** to have friend or family informed of arrest
- ***Right*** to consult with a solicitor free of charge
- ***Right*** to consult section C of PACE (1984) - the Code of Practice

- ***Entitled*** to reasonable standards of physical comfort, food and drink, access to toilets and washing facilities, medical attention and exercise when practicable.

Police Custody in Lambeth

Suite	Cells	Detention Rooms	Number of Detainees
Kennington	9	2	400/month
Brixton	15	2	600/month
Streatham	5	1	300/month

Insufficient capacity at weekends

Key issues with custody

- **Shortage of blankets**
- **Problems with washing, especially at Streatham and for women**
- **Inadequate facilities and layout at Streatham**
- **Capacity for dealing with vulnerable people eg mentally ill, juveniles, immigration cases**
- **Poor out of hours support from other agencies eg social services for juveniles or mentally ill people**
- **Police, and front desk staff, training in role of custody visitors**

Appropriate Adults

- **Requirement under Code C of PACE for an 'appropriate adult' to be present for the police to read a 'vulnerable person' their rights, to charge them or to interview them.**
- **'Vulnerable person' may be a juvenile, person with mental health issues, reading or writing difficulties, visual impairment or has other difficulties.**
- **'Appropriate adult' may be parent or guardian, family member or social worker, for example.**
- **Sometimes none of these are available**

Appropriate Adult Scheme

- **Formed in Lambeth in 2000**
- **A team of 8 volunteers who are police checked and trained.**
- **Each year, the team undertake over 800 call-outs to Lambeth custody suites.**

Key Issues with Appropriate Adults

- **Difficulties with statutory services**
 - especially from the Social Services Mental Health Team
- **Inadequacy of police cells as a 'place of safety'**
- **Cross-border detainees. Poor co-ordination and lack of ownership**
- **Poor resourcing by statutory agencies of the service**

Volunteering

- **Independent Custody Visitors**
 - Independent of the police
 - Police checked, trained, probationary period
 - Rostered visits
 - work in pairs
 - Commitment no minimum number of visits
 - Monthly panel meeting
- **Contact: For informal chat contact Chair or Administrator**

Volunteering

- **Appropriate Adults**
 - Independent of the police
 - Police checked, trained, 'shadowing' period
 - Work on a 'call-out' basis
 - Standard reporting required
 - Expenses are met
- **Contact: Co-ordinator 07918 144854**