

## **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**