

Independent Custody Visiting Association

Operation Safeguard

ICV Checklist

April 2020



There are a number of reasons whereby police custody might be called upon to hold remanded or convicted detainees for a period of time. ICVA has produced a specific briefing for those detainees who have Virtual Remand Hearings, (VRH), and are subsequently remanded in police custody awaiting transfer, and you should refer to that briefing and checklist in those cases.

Should prison overcrowding become critical, then a contingency plan is in place, agreed by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, (HMPPS), and the National Police Chiefs Council, (NPCC), to temporarily house sentenced prisoners in police custody suites. This is known as **Operation Safeguard**. The length of this contingency being in place will not normally be more than one month from the point of activation, although during the Covid-19 pandemic this may be subject to change.

The below represents a brief checklist for ICVs when carrying out visits to this group of detainees and the reporting mechanisms for reporting monitoring findings of this specific group.

When you arrive in custody

- Identify how many Operation Safeguard prisoners and how many detainees under PACE Code C are held in custody at the time of the visit.
- Ensure as far as you are able to, that you speak to a mix of both those detained under PACE Code C and Operation Safeguard.
- Prioritise visits to children or vulnerable adults of both detention types.

During your visit

Your visits to those detained under PACE Code C should follow your normal visiting and reporting processes.

If the detainee is a prisoner being held under **Operation Safeguard**, please check on their rights and entitlements, such as access to medical care as you would for a PACE detainee, but also additional arrangements such as:

- Has the prisoner had access to varied food including fresh fruit?
- Have showers been offered or arranged at detainee requests?
- Does the prisoner have access to clean clothing when requested?
- Has the prisoner been offered regular exercise and fresh air?
- Has the prisoner been offered reading materials and distraction objects?
- Has the prisoner been offered nicotine replacements if needed?
- Has the prisoner been able to make additional phone calls?
- If the prisoner requires access to ongoing treatment regimes, such as opiate substitution, has this been provided?

- If the prisoner is a child or is vulnerable, have visits or varied arrangements been made to lessen the impact of detention? (Arrangements such as additional time with AA/family member, time out of cell etc.).

- Ask the prisoner if you are able to check the custody record

When looking at the custody record (with permission)

- Has the length of time the prisoner is expected to be in police custody been noted, and if so, explained to the prisoner?
- Does the custody record detail offers of the entitlements above regardless of the prisoners acceptance/refusal?

When completing your report

- Report on rights, entitlements and wellbeing as normal.
- Report on whether the prisoner has been offered regular showers, daily exercise, reading materials, distraction items, fresh fruit etc. as per the checklist above.
- Note if you have not been able to access the custody record and why.
- Note the number of non-PACE prisoners held in the suite, and if this is placing additional or high levels of demand on custody staff.
- Note the general ambience of custody, does it seem safe and controlled, with effective care given to both groups of detainees.

Scheme managers

- Please report on the volume of Operation Safeguard prisoners and impact on PACE Code C detainees and custody staff via the ICVA Midweek Monitor in the section provided.
- Please highlight any problems, themes or strengths to your PCC as normal.
- Please report themes and issues to ICVA as part of the Midweek Monitor or, if requiring immediate support/information/escalation via email info@icva.org.uk.