



**Bedfordshire  
Police & Crime  
Commissioner**



# Independent Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel Pilot

September 2024

# Table of Contents

① Background

---

② Bedfordshire Pilot

---

③ Recruitment

---

④ Escalation process

---

⑤ Implemented changes

---

⑥ Looking forward

---



# Background

Over recent years, several independent reviews such as the ‘Lammy Review,’ ‘Angiolini (An-jo- lini) Review’ and the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) have identified issues of disparity and inequality in the Criminal Justice System. This led to a trust deficit between communities and the police.

To identify both good and poor systemic, cultural, and adopted practices that impact detainees whilst in police care, the NPCC developed guidance and recommended the implementation of Custody Scrutiny Panels.

The Bedfordshire Independent Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel (ICDSP) was set up in November 2023 and is made up of local people from across Bedfordshire. Their purpose is to represent local communities in conversations with police officers and staff actively involved in detention and custody environments.

The aim of the Panel is to independently assess and report on detention and custody processes such as challenging disproportionality in police custody, notably on grounds of race and/or protected characteristics.

[The joint guide on CDSP’s developed by the National Police Chiefs’ Council and the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners, with input from Ministry of Justice, Independent Custody Visiting Association and Home Office can be found here.](#)

# Bedfordshire Pilot

The Bedfordshire ICDSF are given unprecedented access to redacted custody records retained by the police to review matters of disproportionality objectively and independently, and police/detainee behaviour in the context of legislation, guidance, policy, and procedure.

The ICDSF produce a report and use a traffic light system (red, amber, green) of each custody record they review, and feedback is provided to the police and OPCC verbally at each meeting.

Feedback is then inputted into a Microsoft List by the PCC's office, and any issues raised are discussed with the Chief Inspector and Inspector. Feedback is also escalated via the Performance and Governance Board and reported into the Quarterly Transparency Report. Any urgent themes will be addressed directly with the Senior Leadership Team.

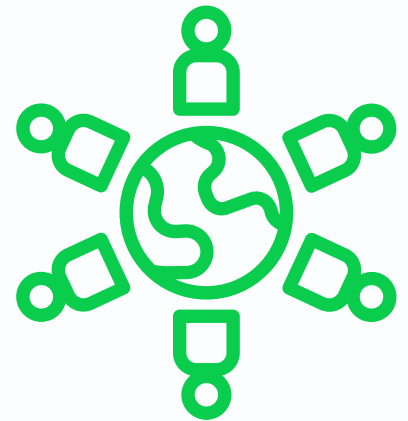
Key focuses include:

- Strip Searches
- Anti Rip Suits
- Young Detainees
- Black Detainees
- Female Detainees
- Use of Force



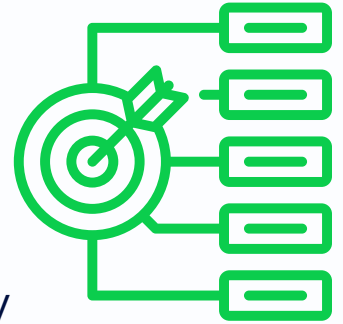
# Bedfordshire Pilot

- Meetings are held **quarterly**, however this is subject to review following completion of the pilot where we will likely amend the terms of reference to completing the meetings on a bi-monthly basis
- We currently have 13 volunteers as of September 2024, however we are actively recruiting to ensure the panel is representative of the counties diversity and age profile
- It is intended that the introduction and promotion of scrutiny and review will help build trust and confidence in policing in ethnic minority and other communities, particularly if Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) and Chief Officers work together to agree a consistent and comparative ICDSP approach to address what remains a national matter of concern, irrespective of location



# Bedfordshire Pilot

The aims and objectives of the Bedfordshire ICDSPP are to:



- Assess and report on detention and custody processes.
- Examine and challenge disproportionality in police custody in their application of police powers, notably on grounds of race/protected characteristics.
- Conduct assessments blind of ethnicity to prevent confirmatory bias by the Panel.
- Ensure partnership review and scrutiny of police detention procedures from start to finish, including appropriate use of custody data.
- Consider wider issues where the Panel feels it could add value e.g., issues of safety and dignity.
- Build trust and confidence with ethnic minority communities through transparency, accountability, engagement, and understanding of Criminal Justice and custody processes.
- Make observations and recommendations to PCCs and Chief Officers.
- Report back to the wider policing area in the form of a public facing annual report covering the findings of the ICDSPP in the preceding year.
- Assist in generating a transparent product suitable for public consideration at the end of each annual panel cycle.

# Recruitment



As of September 2024, we currently have:

- 13 volunteers
- 7 female and 6 male
- 15% of volunteers are from an ethnic minority background

Of the 13 volunteers, 6 are Independent Custody Visitors, 2 are members of the Use of Force and Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel, and 1 volunteer is a member of the Joint Audit Committee. Other members include those with lived experience and relevant professionals.

We are hoping to **increase** the diversity of our panel to accurately represent the community of Bedfordshire and would like to increase our numbers to around 20-25 volunteers.

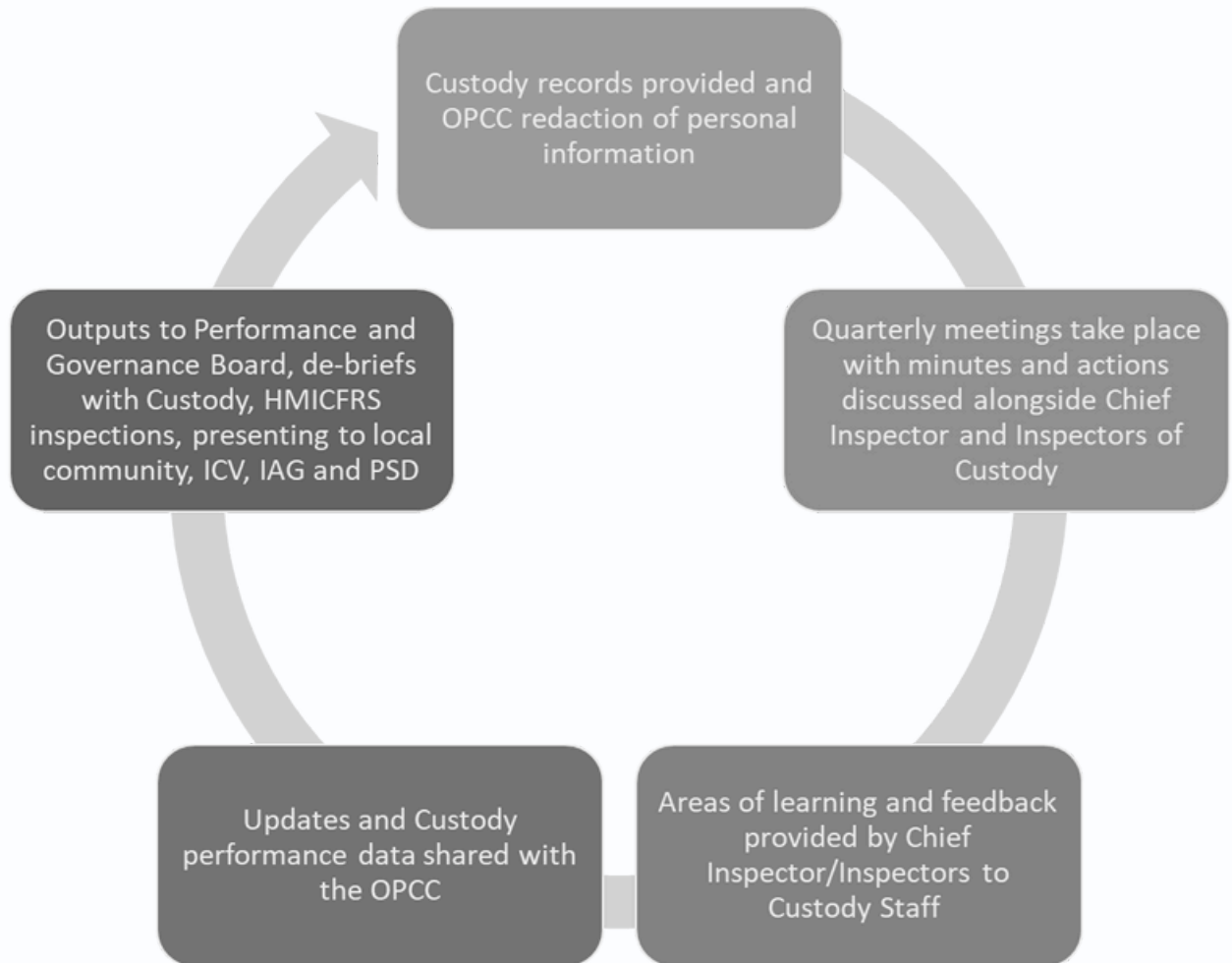
We are actively recruiting, especially for:

- Those with lived experience of custody and/or with interacting with the police
- Those with a profession such as healthcare professionals, liaison and diversion service, appropriate adults etc
- Individuals aged under 25
- Those from an ethnic minority

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# Escalation process



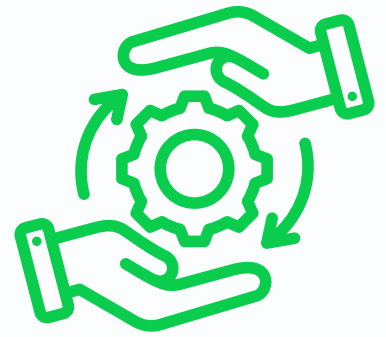
## Points of escalation

- Performance and Governance Board
- PCC one-to-one meetings with Chief Constable
- De-brief meetings with Custody
- Professional Standards Department
- Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA)
- Independent Advisory Group (IAG)





# Implemented changes



- The ICDSF have held 3 meetings and have reviewed 12 custody records. The first meeting held was an introductory meeting but subsequent meetings identified the following areas:
  1. Concerns over Appropriate Adult arrival times or lack of response
  2. External referrals unable to be made due to system issues
  3. Healthcare Professionals (HCP) not always available or on site therefore delaying detainees access to treatment
  4. Noted on one occasion late allocation of a female officer

Out of the 12 records assessed, the panel have graded 8 of the records green and 4 amber. It is worth noting that all rationale around strip search have been deemed adequate.

- Bedfordshire Panels have been able to work together collaboratively. Recently, an Independent Custody Visitor reported a complaint from a detainee surrounding their treatment on arrest. This was reviewed by the Use of Force Panel as well as the ICDSF and a full review of the custody record was undertaken. The ICDSF graded the custody record green. However, the Use of Force Panel identified organisational learning.
- The Children's Commissioner recently published a report on [Strip Searching of Children in England and Wales](#). Following publication, the Office have requested a focus on this area for the September 2024 meeting and have subsequently requested 6 out of 20 records to focus on strip searching of children in custody and 4 to focus on adult strip search.

# Looking forward

- The pilot phase for the ICDSPP will conclude in September 2024 and following this, the PCC's Office will produce a paper on their findings including next steps for the panel
- This will include the recruitment of a Chair for the panel and a review of the current members
- The PCC's Office will continue to recruit and are attending local university Freshers' Fairs in September 2024 to promote the panel to students
- It is hoped that the panel will begin to review CCTV as well as custody records once out of the pilot phase
- The panel will continue to focus on any emerging trends from reviewing the data prior to each meeting



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**BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE  
CUSTODY**



**MORE INFO**

<https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/independent-custody-detention-scrutiny-panel/>

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