

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO 2025-26-050

Your request has now been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) and we provide our response below.

You asked:

For a copy of any local or national policy, guidance or other material (e.g. checklist or training materials) relating to the storage and handling of religious texts in custody that Independent Custody Visitors in Dorset are provided with or have access to with respect to their custody visiting duties.

Your request for information has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) and our response is as follows:

For a copy of any local or national policy, guidance or other material (e.g. checklist or training materials) relating to the storage and handling of religious texts in custody that Independent Custody Visitors in Dorset are provided with or have access to with respect to their custody visiting duties.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Dorset does hold information falling within the scope of your request.

1. Local guidance for ICVs

Each Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) is provided with written guidance detailing what to expect during a visit. Within this guidance there is a section on *Faith Needs* which states:

“The religious requirements of a detainee should be respected and met insofar as it is possible whilst in police custody. The specific needs of each individual will be established and recorded during the booking in process, and if custody staff are unable to meet those needs this should be explained to the detainee and the reason recorded in the custody log. In Dorset, each custody suite has a number of religious items that ICVs should ensure are stored respectfully. The direction of Mecca is indicated on the ceiling of each cell for Muslim detainees and access to halal, kosher, vegetarian and vegan meals should be available. Appendix H provides the ICVA briefing on this subject.”

A copy of this local guidance is attached as Document 1.

2. National Guidance – ICVA Briefing

The above guidance directs ICVs to an open-source national document on the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) website, titled *Storage of Religious Items in Police Custody*. This document is available online at: [Storage-of-Religious-Items.pdf](#) and is also held locally. A copy is attached as Document 2.

3. Checklists / visit forms used by ICVs

When completing a visit, each ICV completes an electronic visit form (e-form). Within this form, question 189 in the Closing Section (page 70) relates to checks on the storage of religious items. A copy of this e-form is attached as Document 3.

Other than the documents set out above, we do not hold any additional local or national policies, guidance or training materials provided to, or made available to, Dorset ICVs that relate specifically to the storage and handling of religious texts in custody.