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**Phase 6 of the ‘good’ police custody study - Encouraging detainee
dignity: A pilot and evaluation of digital and paper-based
information guides to police custody for adult suspects in Norfolk
and Suffolk Police**

Layla Skinns and Lexine Smyth

Centre for Criminological Research, School of Law, University of
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Summary

Background:

This project developed, piloted and evaluated the perceived impacts of accessible digital and paper-based police custody information guides for adult detainees. These aimed to improve suspects' understanding and autonomous decision making, the legality of police custody and police custody practices in Norfolk and Suffolk Police. They drew on existing research from Phases 1-5 of the 'good' police custody about the importance of detainee dignity to 'good' police custody experiences and, in particular, the importance of opportunities for autonomous decision-making, such as about due process rights and entitlements, as well as the crucial significance of legality, that is, the existence of and adherence to publicly known legal rules (Skinns, et al., 2020; Skinns and Sorsby, 2019).

These information guides (IGs) were collaboratively and rigorously developed between May and September 2024, drawing on the expertise of academics, police, accessibility consultants, Creased Puddle, and their Lived Experience Associates, who are paid by Creased Puddle to share their experiences, such as of neurodivergence, mental ill-health and of the criminal justice system to help inform change, animators, Alternative View Studios, and a translator. Whilst the IGs were to be implemented in Norfolk and Suffolk Police, it was agreed that they should be developed in such a way as to enable their adoption by other police forces, which meant omitting locally-relevant information. This development process culminated in four brief animations:

1. Your time in police custody and your treatment
2. Your rights and entitlements
3. Your welfare and wellbeing
4. Your safety and security

The voiceovers for the animations were in English. However, the subtitles were available both in English and Romanian. At the time of the pilot, the latter was the most commonly requested for interpretation purposes in Norfolk and Suffolk Police. There was also a leaflet accompanying the animations, covering the same four topics.

Like the animations, this leaflet was in English and Romanian (see the [‘good’ police custody project website](#) for the animations and leaflets). For the animations, the intention was for them to be offered to all suspects, who could opt out if they wished. For the leaflets, these were to be offered on request, for example, if someone did not wish to watch the animation.

After securing ethical approval for the project from the University of Sheffield, these guides were piloted and evaluated in two police custody facilities, one in Suffolk (Site A) and one in Norfolk (Site B). The research questions used in the evaluation were:

1. To what extent were the animations and leaflets perceived to be implemented, as intended, and with as many suspects as possible? What hindered or helped this process?
2. What were staff and suspect perceptions of the animations and leaflets? For example in terms of their style and content, value and utility? What features did they appreciate and which did they regard as being in need of improvement?
3. In what ways, when, to what extent and why did suspects engage with the animations and/or leaflets? For example, did they watch and/or read them in their entirety and at what point in their detention? What motivated them to engage with them?
4. To what extent did staff and suspects perceive the animations and/or leaflets to impact on suspects, such as on the uptake of rights and entitlements and on detainee dignity, particularly on the potential for autonomy and autonomous decision-making? How did this come about and which rights, entitlements and forms of dignity were impacted the most, if at all?
5. To what extent have the animations and leaflets established a proof of concept, justifying continued use either in Norfolk/Suffolk Police or elsewhere in the future?

The Phase 6 data collection took place from November 7th 2024 to November 29th 2024 in Site A and from January 14th 2025 to February 7th 2025 in Site B. In each site, researchers spent 2 days per week over 4 weeks undertaking participant observation and then interviewing up to 7 staff, largely custody officers (COs),

detention officers (DOs), and managers, and up to 5 suspects including a mixture of men and women, and those from different age groups.¹ After accessing the IGs, data were also collected from 12 suspects (6 in each site) through a brief survey administered by staff when the research team were not present in the custody facility in order to expand the pool of suspect views on the IGs. A spreadsheet was also used by staff to record which suspects agreed or not to watch the animations and why, during the pilot study period (n=71). In total, this report therefore draws on 115 hours of observation, 20 interviews (12 with staff and 8 with suspects), 12 brief surveys of suspects and data recorded by staff about 71 suspects and their reasons for using the animations or not.

Key findings:

Implementation

- There were a number of staff members committed to the success of the project and certain parts of the implementation process were successful, as a result. For example, there was consensus that playing the animations at the end of the booking-in process was the optimum time, given the challenges of suspects taking information in at the charge desk when under stress. Some staff were thus committed to delivering the animations in this manner, expressing positive views about the IGs and their aims to better support suspects in accessing their rights and entitlements.
- Challenges, however, included practical ones of the animation being played after suspects were in custody for multiple hours or when staff had to make multiple visits to a computer terminal away from their main desk area to play the animations. Sometimes suspects were also not placed in cells with the necessary video technology, either due to busyness of the cells or staff overlooking this when allocating them a cell. At the time of writing, this challenge had been partially addressed by revising custody operating procedures to

¹ Throughout this report we largely use the term suspect, not detainee, to reflect that the giving of information about rights and entitlements is most relevant to those suspected of a criminal offence, rather than to the wider detainee population, such as those arrested on warrant following a failure to appear at court or those arrested on immigration grounds or taken to police custody as a place of safety in exceptional circumstances as per the Mental Health Act 1983.

ensure all suspects arrested under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) were placed in a cell with the video technology.

- Staff also expressed concern about the extra workload generated by the pilot, as a result of playing the animations, and the extra demands placed on them by suspects making additional requests having engaged with the IGs. This culture of custody also inhibited implementation in other ways, in that staff did not necessarily view all detainees as deserving the extra support provided by the IGs. Some also saw the pilot as an imposition by managers, the aims of which they had not fully understood, albeit that a more extended lead time for introducing the changes would have better supported staff with this. Moreover, at the time of writing, there was an ongoing review of shift patterns in Norfolk and Suffolk Police, the aim of which was to improve staff capacity.
- Because of concerns expressed by staff at the time of the pilot and evaluation, the overall intention for all suspects to be offered the animation and to opt out of watching it, if they wished, was not realised. This limited suspect access to the IGs and created inconsistencies in which suspects were offered and accessed them.
- This inconsistency was further driven by staff perceptions of suspects' 'suitability' for the IGs. First-timers, those who had not been in custody recently and those considered vulnerable or less familiar with custody, such as children and young people, vulnerable adults and those for whom there were language barriers were all regarded as 'suitable'. Conversely, the intoxicated or aggressive were considered less suitable, at least until when they sobered up or calmed down, whilst 'regulars' were generally seen as totally unsuitable as most staff perceived them to already know their rights and entitlements.

Perceptions of the information guides: their content, format and accessibility

Regardless of these challenges with the implementation process, nearly all staff and most suspects viewed the content, format and accessibility of the IGs positively.

- Both the leaflets and animations were seen as informative, clear and concise, covering appropriate content, with staff and suspects being particularly appreciative of animation 1 on 'Your time in police custody and your treatment'.

This was seen as covering the detainee journey, including information that staff did not typically provide.

- Most staff could not identify any key omissions from the IGs, though a couple mentioned the need for further information about: how those with hearing impairments should communicate with staff, local support services (though this had been deliberately omitted to make the IGs potentially useful to all police forces), and the need for suspects to reciprocate the dignity and respect shown to them by staff.
- As intended, staff saw the animations as accessible, simple to understand, jargon-free, and thus suitable for a wide audience, including for those who were neurodivergent, had learning disabilities, mental health conditions and/or low literacy levels.
- The accessibility features of the IGs were appreciated by participants including the use of subtitles, the pace and length of the IGs, and the format of the IGs as both leaflets and animations.
- At the same time, the focus on accessibility was sometimes to the detriment of the IGs, making them appear “condescending”, such as to those without additional needs. Ultimately, however, participants saw the emphasis on accessibility for most to be more important, with PACE Code C being available to those who wished to receive more detailed information.
- A minority of suspects expressed more negative views about the IGs, for example reacting emotionally to them, particularly when they felt that the IGs did not correspond with how they were being treated. A few would have also preferred actors, not animations, to make the IGs more relatable and further information about privacy in the cells.

Perceived effects of the information guides

In terms of *engagement* with the information guides:

- It was difficult to fully ascertain how many suspects were offered access to and engaged with the IGs though, of the 1435 detained in Site A and Site B during the pilot period, the available data shows that at least 71 suspects were offered

access and 38 watched the animations, mostly watching either all four animations or animations 1 and 2.

- They did so because they were interested to know their rights and entitlements and because of the benefits of this, as well as to alleviate their boredom in the cells.
- Those who did not engage with the IGs reported this was because: they already knew their rights and entitlements; negative feelings about the clocks displayed as part of the video technology used to play the animations, which over-rode their interest in knowing their rights and entitlements; or they wished to rest and did not want to be disturbed by the animations, hence the value of also being able to offer the leaflet.
- Engagement with the IGs also depended on staff perceptions of detainee suitability, whether suspects agreed to watch them in advance, and whether they were played at an appropriate point in their detention to be able to make use of the information provided (see also section 3.1.2).

In terms of the perceived *impacts* of the IGs, these were found to be on suspect behaviour, their understanding of custody processes and their rights and entitlement, and on detainee dignity, particularly in terms of improving their ability to make autonomous decisions:

- Unexpectedly, the animations were found to be *calming and a distraction*, such as when suspects were stressed and acting out. They also helped with particular stresses associated with suspect requests going unmet, as the animations explained that staff were sometimes too busy to act immediately on these.
- The animations were therefore, on occasions, deliberately used by staff to create a distraction and calming effect, for example, when detainees were displaying distressed and problematic behaviours in the cells.
- Staff and suspects perceived the most significant impact of the IGs to be the effect on *detainees' understanding of custody* by better informing them of

processes, the custody journey, and what they were entitled to under PACE and Code of Practice C.

- This was seen as important given the stress experienced by suspects at the custody desk, which prevented them from fully listening to or absorbing information provided on booking-in. The IGs therefore helped to fill in any missing information, which could also be caused by staff giving differing amounts of information or by mistakenly missing information out. The IGs also helped reinforce any information that had been taken in by suspects.
- For suspects, these gaps in information encompassed parts of the custody process that they were less familiar with (e.g. how long they might be there or potential case outcomes) and rights and entitlements they were not previously aware of (e.g. access to the exercise yard or a shower), as well as staff busyness and how this may prevent staff from acting immediately on suspect requests for help.
- In this pilot, it was intended that *detainee dignity* would be enhanced by enabling more appropriate autonomous choices (Skinns et al., 2020; Skinns and Sorsby, 2019). The two most prominent examples of this in the research were when the IGs were perceived to influence autonomous decision-making through requests for legal representation, appropriate adults (AAs), and to a lesser extent liaison and diversion (L&D) .
- With regard to perceived increases in requests for legal advice, the information provided in the IGs was fuller than that provided by staff, who also did not regard their role as advising or persuading suspects to make use of custodial legal advice. Based on the IGs, suspects could therefore make a more informed decision.
- For similar reasons, staff perceived there to be an increase in suspects checking whether they might need an AA, also alerting staff to vulnerabilities not previously disclosed.
- The IGs also supported the more sensitive delivery of information relevant to detainee dignity, such as about menstrual products or menopause packs, which

staff may not have known to whom to deliver it and which some staff may have found more difficult to deliver.

- Whilst IGs did lead to better suspect understanding and autonomous decision making, potentially better access to rights and entitlements and thus more dignified treatment, this could easily be undermined if staff did not then respond positively to requests suspects made, based on the IGs. Whether they did depended on staff availability, attitudes and willingness to help.

Proof of concept

- Staff and suspects expressed clear support for the continued use of IGs in the future, albeit with some adaptations to the implementation process. For this to be a success, the IGs should be used, not for all suspects, but for those new to custody and those particularly vulnerable or unfamiliar with it, thereby targeting the IGs at those most likely to use and benefit from them, as well as limiting the demand on staff and encouraging staff buy-in.
- This continued use was justified by participants in terms of the perceived effects of the IGs, such as on calming/distracting suspects, improving understanding and potential access to key rights and entitlements and dignity, as well as by the collaborative development process between police and academics and the resultantly higher quality content of the IGs, than had the police developed them on their own. The intention therefore was to “carry on” with them.
- In other words, the implementation and evaluation established a proof of concept for the IGs and participants were positive about future adoption of them in other parts of England and Wales, alongside the video technology that supported their delivery.

Key conclusions:

These findings indicate four salient concluding points. First, they demonstrate the importance of suspects’ due process rights and entitlements in supporting principles of legality central to ‘good’ police custody but also the limitations of (vulnerable) suspects’ understanding of them. Second, the present project adds to the existing research on why these due process rights exist sometimes only in theory, rather than

fully in practice, linked for example to suspect behaviour, understanding and misunderstandings, as well as to staff availability, attitudes and willingness to help. Third, the project reveals some of the reasons as to whether and how organisational change in the police happen. It demonstrates the importance of key individuals for driving change, as well as the need for change to “make sense” to operational staff (Bacon, 2014: 115), but also that police culture, that is the values and beliefs of police officers, can be difficult to change, if it is not simultaneously accompanied by changes to police policies and rules. Fourth, it demonstrates how the giving of information about rights and entitlements is closely connected to dignity rooted in autonomy and to police forces striving for more dignified treatment of detainees, and for ‘good’ police custody.

Recommendations:

1. **It is recommended that the IGs to police custody for adult suspects be made available for use in other police force areas, including via tablets or video technology, if available.** If adopted, it is a requirement that police forces notify the project lead, Layla Skinns (L.Skinns@sheffield.ac.uk), of this, so that she can monitor uptake.
2. If the IGs are adopted by other police forces it is recommended that they consider who is most suited to accessing the IGs and thus who will benefit the most from them, taking account of suspects’:
 - Prior experience of custody and how recent this is (e.g. first-timers or those who have not been arrested recently may be more suitable), though police forces should consider carefully any problems of restricting use to ‘first-timers’, not ‘regulars’, given the unhelpful effects of these labels identified in other research (see Dehaghani and Newman, 2023).
 - Vulnerability (e.g. whether suspects are PACE vulnerable or are perhaps vulnerable in other ways, as there is no need to restrict offering the IGs only to those who are PACE vulnerable);
 - Familiarity with custody (e.g. if someone is a foreign national and provided language barriers do not prohibit them from engaging with the IGs).
3. **The IGs are not recommended for use with children and young people,** as they were not designed with this group of suspects in mind, meaning they may

not be age-appropriate and key information about appropriate adults (e.g. who may be a child's parent) have been omitted from the IGs.

4. Currently, the IGs are also only recommended for suspects whose comprehension of English or Romanian is sufficient to be able to understand the more technical and legalistic aspects of the IGs, albeit that this has been kept to a minimum. It is hoped that the IGs can be translated into more languages in the future, based on any localised language needs reported to the project lead by police forces adopting the IGs.
5. **It is recommended that the animations are played to suspects in the cells shortly after they have been booked-in and had a moment to calm down and collect themselves**, but near enough to the start of their detention, so that they can make time-sensitive requests for any relevant rights and entitlements, such as legal representation.
6. **Prior information must be provided and consent sought before playing animations to suspects.**
7. In terms of the practicalities of adopting the leaflets, it is recommended that a small budget is provided by police forces to cover professional printing costs, with a view to the leaflets being reused by multiple suspects.
8. In terms of the animations it is recommended that they be played either on tablets or on video technology in the cells, if available. For the latter, it should be an option for any clocks showing on the video screens to be turned off and how to do this should be explained to suspects (e.g. if they need to ask staff to do this on their behalf).
9. If using video technology, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to how the animations will be played, for example, in terms of:
 - The location of any computer terminals used to play the animations, ensuring that these are in close proximity to the usual desks of staff who will be playing them.
 - Whether the animations are played as a single integrated recording with appropriate gaps in between, as was adopted in Site B in the present project. Or, whether each animation is played individually, as was the

case in Site A. Each option has pros and cons for staff and suspects, which need to be considered. For example, a single integrated video is better for staff in terms of minimising additional work, but less favourable to suspects who have less choice about which of the animations they watch.

10. If adopted, care should also be taken in preparing staff for this small adjustment to their working practices and in communicating to them in different formats (e.g. emails, briefings and training) about the aims of the IGs, expected changes to staff practices and their role in adopting them, so that there are greater opportunities for these changes to start to “make sense” to them (Bacon, 2014: 115).
11. Before fully adopting these changes, it is also recommended that there is a trial period beforehand, involving some of the staff who will be fully adopting the IGs later (e.g. with a single team of staff in one custody facility), thus giving opportunities to identify any challenges and make necessary adjustments before the IGs are rolled out further.
12. **If adopted, it is also recommended that this is not just on an informal basis, rather police forces should look at ways of integrating the IGs more fully into their policies and procedures**, such as through local police custody policies and role descriptions for COs and DOs. This might include guidance on: who is responsible for the IGs and what these responsibilities are; the timing of the giving of the IGs around other custody processes; how they will be played, including via placement of PACE suspects in video technology enabled cells. For example, Norfolk and Suffolk Police revised their custody operating procedures to ensure all PACE detainees are placed in a cell with the video technology.

Encouraging detainee dignity: A pilot and evaluation of digital and paper-based information guides to police custody for adult suspects in Norfolk and Suffolk Police

Layla Skinns and Lexine Smyth

Centre for Criminological Research, School of Law, University of Sheffield

1. Introduction

This report sets out the development, piloting and evaluation of animated and paper-based police custody information guides (IGs) in Norfolk and Suffolk Police. These guides aimed to improve suspects' understanding of police custody and their autonomous decision making about key rights and entitlements. In what follows in this section we briefly review the literature, background to the project and research questions, before explaining the methods used in section 2, findings from the research in section 3, and conclusions and recommendations for police custody policy and practices in section 4, including whether the research evidence warrants the roll-out of the IGs in other police force areas. Throughout this report we largely use the term suspect, not detainee, to reflect that the giving of information about rights and entitlements is most relevant to those suspected of a criminal offence, rather than to the wider detainee population, such as those arrested on warrant following a failure to appear at court or those arrested on immigration grounds or taken to police custody as a place of safety in exceptional circumstances as per the Mental Health Act 1983.

Police custody, that is, the place where someone is taken when arrested whilst a decision is made about what to do next with the alleged criminal case against them, is a key entrance point into the wider criminal justice process (Skinns, 2011: 2-3). There is an allegation of wrongdoing about which a decision must be reached, such as about whether and what to charge, with a charge resulting in onward movement of someone's case to court and potentially beyond. However, those in police custody are only suspects and there is a presumption of innocence until proven guilty. Indeed, the majority of suspects are and remain factually innocent at the end of police custody. Of those arrested and detained, 60-70% have no further action taken against them (Hucklesby, 2024), for example.

What happens in police custody, including whether a suspect makes use of their due process rights and entitlements, such as to silence or custodial legal advice, can have an important bearing on the outcome of their case in the immediate to longer-term. That is, whether no further action is taken against them or they are bailed, released under investigation, offered an out-of-court resolution or are perhaps charged and bailed or charged and have their bail refused. In other words, though it may seem like a small part of the wider criminal process, it is a critical part of it. Suspects' decisions, their treatment by the police and access to appropriate help therein all make a difference to what happens next. This can be summed up as "what happens in the beginning matters in the end" for criminal suspects (Gooch and von Berg, 2019: 85).

Police custody is also challenging for suspects, where there is much at stake both in terms of the criminal justice process and how arrest and detention impacts their wellbeing. Suspects are in a disempowered position owing to the power exercised over them by the police, having surrendered their liberty and their property and being subject to other kinds of intrusive police practices such as (strip) searching, DNA sampling, finger-printing etc. This sense of disempowerment may be even greater for those already vulnerable, perhaps because of their mental ill-health, neurodivergence, learning disabilities, addictions/intoxication, all of which are more likely amongst the suspect population (Samele et al., 2021; Rekrut-Lapa and Lapa, 2014). Furthermore, even though most detainees are only suspected of wrongdoing, and police custody is not supposed to be intended as such, some may find it punitive and humiliating and as a form of "social discipline", in which "police property" are conditioned into accepting police authority (Choongh, 1997: 1000). For vulnerable suspects it may also be an experience laden with risks which, if they go unaddressed, may lead to miscarriages of justice, 'near misses' and in the worst cases to death.

In light of their status as only a suspect in a criminal case and in light of their disempowered status, likely vulnerabilities and the power wielded by the police, it is critical that suspects have and are aware of a number of due process rights and entitlements available to them, so they can more effectively navigate a complex and challenging process, in which they are presumed innocent for the time being. Ensuring that police powers and suspects rights are clearly and publicly set out, in the case of England and Wales in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and its

accompanying Code of Practice C, is also central to supporting the principle of legality. This refers to “whether the police uphold the law as per established legal rules” (Skinns, 2019: 115), with this principle also being central to ‘good’ police custody (Skinns, and Sorsby, 2019). Where such legal rules are unclear or are not adhered to, then this puts suspects and also the legitimacy of the criminal justice process at risk. Indeed, PACE was introduced precisely for these reasons, when uncertainties and ambiguities surrounding the Judges Rules that pre-existed PACE collided with police malpractice, resulting in significant miscarriages of justice, such as the Maxwell Confait murder case and a Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure in 1981, which eventually prompted PACE (Skinns, 2011).

Key rights and entitlements available under PACE and PACE Code C include:

- Information about the rights and entitlements available to them provided verbally, and through a written notice of rights and entitlements or the PACE Code C, which suspects must be offered and may be allowed to read in their cells (PACE Code C, 2023: 3.1 and 3.2);
- Information about the nature of the offence they are being questioned about so that they can also understand why they are suspected of it and the right to information about the following substantive rights (PACE Code C, 2023: 3.21A);
- Access to free and independent legal advice, as soon as is practicable (PACE Code C, 2023: 3.21A(a));
- A qualified right to silence, meaning adverse inferences may be drawn from failures to disclose information about objects relevant to the crime they are suspected of or about their presence at a crime scene, which is later relied on in court and that the interview must take place under police caution (PACE Code C, 2023: 3.21 (b)), which in effect informs suspects of this right;
- Access to an appropriate adult (AA) if a suspect is a child or vulnerable adult, with a requirement that the police caution and information about the offence and their rights and entitlements be given to the suspect in the presence of the AA (PACE Code C, 2023: 3.21A(c));
- Access to an interpreter if they do not speak or understand English (PACE Code C, 2023: 3.21A(e)).

In police custody, access to these rights and entitlements are facilitated by the custody officer in conjunction with others e.g. designated detention officers, healthcare practitioners (HCPs) or liaison and diversion teams (L&D). However, this is an imperfect process and rights in theory are not necessarily rights in practice. For example, not all suspects request or receive custodial legal advice, sometimes because they do not understand what it is or falsely believe that duty solicitors work for the police or that the police may regard them as guilty if they ask for it or that receiving legal advice will delay their release (Kemp, Carr and Farrall, 2024: 76-82). Also, large proportions of vulnerable adults go without an appropriate adult because their vulnerabilities are hidden, not 'performed' sufficiently or are missed or sometimes overlooked by staff (Bath and Dehaghani, 2020; Dehaghani, 2019: 121-122; Gudjonsson et al., 1993).

These limitations on accessing due process rights and entitlements in police custody are also connected to the culture of police custody i.e. the informal beliefs, values, strategies and tactics that comprise the 'commonsense' of police work and which drive perceptions of the 'way that things are done around here' (Holdaway, 1983:2). One feature of this is the prosecutorial mindset of the police, in which suspects are presumed guilty rather than innocent, thus reflecting also the police's position in the adversarial English and Welsh criminal justice process (Skinns, 2019: 108-9). This prosecutorial mindset also overlaps with biases, prejudices and stereotypes about particular suspects (Skinns, 2019: 108-1111), rendering some to be seen as less deserving of help and support, including with accessing their due process rights. This includes the 'police property' to whom Choongh (1997: 1000) alludes, such as problematic drug users (Skinns, 2011: 71-3), young black men, who may be seen as as "dangerous, violent and volatile", as well as stereotypes about those with mental health conditions as "mad, bad and dangerous", resulting in "double discrimination" for black people with mental health issues (Angiolini, 2017: 87). This culture of custody may therefore potentially conflict with the intentions of this project, which are to empower suspects through greater access to information about their rights and entitlements and to enable more autonomous and thus more dignified decision making.

Moreover, as research on police culture demonstrates, this culture (the *habitus*) may be a barrier to organisational change of the kind required in the present project, particularly when it comes up against the discretion that officers have - i.e. their “authorised capacity to make choices about different courses of action or inaction, which are structured by and structuring of the legal and administrative rules, as well as the wider cultural and social structures that surround them” (Skinns, 2019: 21-22) - and when expected cultural shifts are not necessarily accompanied by changes to the rules of police work, including police policies and laws (the *field*) (Chan, 1996), and instead arise from directions given by senior police officers to their operational colleagues. As Bacon also notes, change will only work “if new ways of working are considered to work better than existing practices and make more sense than traditional understandings” (Bacon 2014: 115).

Beyond the bestowing of these rights, as prior police custody research has demonstrated, what also matters is *how* detainees are treated by the police. Detainees, for example, are attuned to the importance of the dignity of their treatment. Theorisation of the meaning of ‘good’ police custody, has shown the importance of detainee dignity rooted in equal worth, autonomy, public decency and privacy and the crucial nature of the material conditions of police custody as a precursor to detainee dignity (Skinns et al., 2023; Levi et al., 2022; Skinns et al., 2020; Skinns and Sorsby, 2019). Of particular importance for this project is the idea of dignity rooted in autonomy, which after the Second World War and the creation of the great conventions on human rights such as the ECHR became associated with the need for liberty linked also to Kantian idea of autonomy and self-determination (Simon, 2017; Henry, 2011). It may seem an anathema, given the deprivation of liberty and the exercise of other forms of police powers over a suspect, but in the police custody environment it is still possible for and indeed it has been recommended that suspects be encouraged to make appropriate autonomous choices (Skinns and Sorsby, 2019). These include decisions about due process rights and entitlements, including which ones to exercise and when, with these being some of the most crucial, if not only, decisions available to suspects (Blackstock et al., 2014).

However, in order to do this, suspects first need to be informed about and aware of what these rights are and how and when they might use them. The present project

intends to improve autonomous decision making by suspects, by expanding the opportunities for them to be informed of their rights and entitlements, beyond the brief notice of rights and entitlements and PACE Code of Practice C. The brevity of the former and the density and legal complexity of the latter suggests a need for forms of information-giving which sit between the two. Given the greater likelihood of suspect vulnerabilities (Crawnshaw et al., 2025; Samele et al., 2021; Rekrut-Lapa and Lapa, 2014), this furthermore implies the need for such information to be as accessible as possible in how it is presented, including in a range of formats such as digital animations and leaflets. The “emotional outpourings” experienced by suspects on booking-in owing in part to the immense uncertainties of what lies ahead (Wooff and Skinns, 2017: 576), also justifies giving suspects opportunities to consider information about due process rights and entitlements away from and separate to this booking-in process at the charge desk, such as in the cells, where it may be quieter and where they may have more chance to take the information in at a point when they are more ready to receive it, perhaps at a point when their emotional distress has reduced.

1.1 Background to the project

The main aim of this project therefore was to develop accessible animated and paper-based IGs for adult suspects in police custody and implement this in Norfolk and Suffolk Police, making use of their pioneering video technology in the cells, which enabled suspects to watch the animations or read the leaflet when they were ready and after the initial booking-in process. The animation was shared with suspects via a tablet-sized screen, which is part of the intercom panel in the cells above the cell door (see Appendix 1 for a photograph of this). These guides contained critical information about suspects’ rights and entitlements and the treatment they should expect from staff. They were developed, focusing on issues of accessibility and to help suspects to better understand their rights and to support more effective autonomous decision making by detainees.

This project draws on Phase 5 of the ‘good’ police custody study, entitled ‘[Influencing policy custody policy and practice](#)’. In this project, we piloted recommendations from a major ESRC-funded project, the ‘good’ police custody study (GPCS), in three police force areas. One of the measures piloted was a paper-based IG for adult suspects, which proved to be one of the most popular ones implemented.

This measure was introduced because a key finding in the underpinning research undertaken in the GPCS is the importance of detainee dignity rooted in autonomy and the importance of legality (Skinns, 2019; Skinns et al., 2021). By providing detainees with information about the police custody process, this enabled detainees to make informed and autonomous choices about their detention in police custody and about their key rights and entitlements, and it provided greater opportunity for adherence to legal rules about the provision of such information. This IG was also introduced because, though detainees are permitted to read about their rights and entitlements in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Code of Practice C, the information contained there is dense and inaccessible, particularly for vulnerable detainees (e.g. due to learning disabilities, neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD and autism, or mental ill-health).

Building on the underpinning research generated by the GPCS and this previous IAA-funded project, the present project has developed, piloted and evaluated an animated version of the paper information sheet used in 2019-21. This digital version was developed to be more accessible for a range of suspects and was accompanied by a revised paper-based version in English and translated into Romanian. Both were developed in conjunction with accessibility consultants, Creased Puddle, as well as with Norfolk/Suffolk Police, those with lived experience of police custody and a creative team from Alternative View Studios (see Section 3.1 for further details of the development process) .

1.2 Research questions

Taking into account the existing research and, in particular, the underpinning research in the GPCS, the evaluation of this project and thus this report focuses on the following research questions:

1. To what extent were the animations and leaflets perceived to be implemented, as intended, and with as many suspects as possible? What hindered or helped this process?
2. What were staff and suspect perceptions of the animations and leaflets? For example in terms of their style and content, value and utility? What features did they appreciate and which did they regard as being in need of improvement?

3. In what ways, when, to what extent and why did suspects engage with the animations and/or leaflets? For example, did they watch and/or read them in their entirety and at what point in their detention? What motivated them to engage with them?
4. To what extent did staff and suspects perceive the animations and/or leaflets to impact on suspects, such as on the uptake of rights and entitlements and on detainee dignity, particularly on the potential for autonomy and autonomous decision-making? How did this come about and which rights, entitlements and forms of dignity were impacted the most, if at all?
5. To what extent have the animations and leaflets established a proof of concept, justifying continued use either in Norfolk/Suffolk Police or elsewhere in the future?

2. Methods

2.1 The development of the animations and leaflets

From May to September 2024, the animations and leaflets went through a robust and thorough development process, involving academics, police and accessibility consultants, who were encouraged to share their respective expertise in regular meetings chaired by the project lead. This included:

- Prof. Layla Skinns, the project's lead;
- Two police stakeholders from Norfolk and Suffolk Police, a Chief Inspector with custody management responsibilities and a civilian responsible for custody development;
- A representative from the accessibility consultancy organisation, [Creased Puddle](#);
- Creased Puddle in turn made use of five Lived Experience Associates who their organisation regularly works with, who had lived experience of vulnerabilities of relevance to police custody, including mental ill-health, neurodivergence, gender, ethnicity, and who are paid by Crease Puddle to share these experiences to encourage change in the organisations with whom Creased Puddles works;
- Two external legal/criminological experts on police custody;
- [Alternative View Studios](#), including an animator/designer and staff with writing/copy editing skills;
- A translator and native Romanian speaker.

This wide ranging team was used to ensure the animations and leaflets were designed and developed to ensure they were as accessible as possible to a wide range of individuals. Whilst the IGs were to be implemented in Norfolk and Suffolk Police, it was agreed that they should be developed in such a way as to enable their adoption by other police forces, which meant omitting locally-relevant information, such as about local support services in Norfolk and Suffolk. The IGs went through multiple rounds of feedback and adjustments, as follows:

- Starting in May 2024, the animation script was drafted based on the previous paper-based guide.

- Initially, this script and the original version of the leaflet were shared with Creased Puddle and their Lived Experience Associates for comment. At this stage, they fed back a range of comments, including, for example, that there should be clearer links between the images and audio/text.
- Once adjusted, based on these comments, the script was recorded by a voice over artist and the animation script was used as a basis for updating the leaflet text developed in the previous IAA-funded project, alongside further comments from Creased Puddle's Lived Experience Associates.
- The leaflet text (no images) and 'animatic' (i.e. basic and incomplete) versions of the animations were shared again with Creased Puddle and their Lived Experience Associates for comment. They noted, for example, the need to minimise distractions such as music or visuals in the animation. This version of the leaflet was also shared with academic legal/criminological experts on police custody, who made a number of suggestions.
- The leaflet and animation script were both adjusted again and the near final version of the animations were then tested on the video technology in Suffolk, with the police, project lead and animator present to pick up on any minor adjustments needed (e.g. the size of the subtitles on animations needed to be increased due to the smaller-than-expected screen in the cells and its elevation above the cell door).
- This near final version of the animation and of the leaflet was sent for final comment by the police and Creased Puddle, with only minor further changes made after this. They were then translated into Romanian.
- After nearly 5 months of work, in September 2025, the pilot-ready versions of the animations and leaflets were completed, including the Romanian translations of them. These were uploaded on to the ['good' police custody project website](#) and shared at the National Police Chief's Council Police Custody Forum, before being implemented in police custody from November 2024 onwards.

2.2 Intended implementation process

This process of development culminated in four brief animations, with a running time of 2-4 minutes each (see the [‘good’ police custody project website](#)):

1. Your time in police custody and your treatment
2. Your rights and entitlements
3. Your welfare and wellbeing
4. Your safety and security

The voiceover for the animations were in English. However, the subtitles were available both in English and Romanian. Romanian was chosen because police data showed this to be the most requested language for interpretation purposes in Norfolk and Suffolk Police.

At the outset of the implementation process, it was intended for all potential suspects to have access to the animations, unless they declined. In other words, the intention was for suspects to opt out, rather than into watching the animations. In order to prevent these animations from being inadvertently played repeatedly on a loop (e.g. if staff were too busy to switch it off), staff were asked to play each animation separately. Moreover, at the end of the first animation staff were supposed to also check on the suspect in the cells and ask whether they had any questions about the animation that had been played to them. As set out in the findings below, however, the intended implementation process had to be adjusted as the project progressed. In particular, in Site B, the four separate animations were integrated into one recording, with brief pauses in between.

As well as the animations, there was also a leaflet that accompanied them (see the [‘good’ police custody project website](#)). This leaflet covered the same four topics as the animations - i.e. your time in police custody and your treatment, your rights and entitlements, your welfare and wellbeing and your safety and security - but did so in slightly more detail and in a paper-based A5 tri-fold leaflet format. Like the animations, this leaflet was in English and Romanian for the same reasons as the animations. However, rather than suspects opting out of reading it, they had to opt in. For example, if they preferred to have information provided to them in a written format then the

intention was for them to be offered the leaflet. Or perhaps if they did not wish to watch the animation, then the leaflet was to be offered instead.

2.3 Data collection, ethics and analysis

This report draws on data collected in Phase 6 of the ['Good' police custody study \(GPCS\)](#). The first three phases of this ESRC-funded national research study in England and Wales ran from 2013 to 2018 and rigorously examined the meaning of 'good' police custody. Mixed-methods data were collected in these three phases, including: a survey of custody managers in 40 of the 43 forces of England and Wales in Phase 1; in-depth observation and interviews with staff and detainees in four custody facilities in Phase 2, amounting to 532 hours of observation and 97 interviews; and, a survey of approximately 800 detainees and staff in 27 custody facilities in 13 forces in Phase 3. Phase 4 and 5 in 2018-2019 and 2019-2021, respectively, focused on developing recommendations for practice (see Skinns and Sorsby, 2019) and in putting some of those recommendations into practice (see Skinns et al., 2022; Skinns, Sorsby and Banwell-Moore, 2021).

In Phase 6 of this project, which is reported on here, the focus is on the development, piloting and evaluation of the perceived impacts of accessible digital and paper-based police custody IGs for adult suspects. The evaluation involved the collection of largely qualitative and some quantitative data in two custody facilities, Site A in Suffolk Constabulary and Site B in Norfolk Police. These custody facilities were chosen to include one from each force, and because one was slightly busier (Site A) and the other less so (Site B) in terms of the annual throughput of detainees in the previous year (5474 for Site A and 4760 for Site B), though they were both similar in terms of the numbers of cells (30 in site A vs. 24 in Site B), number of FTE staff (26 in Site A vs. 26 Site B, based on Custody Officers and Detention Officers), their look, feel and layout, and when they were built (both sites were built in 2010 - 2011). Importantly, both had recently had the video technology installed in approximately 50 per cent of their cells (15 in Site A vs. 13 in Site B), on which the pilot depended.

After securing ethical approval for the project from the University of Sheffield in October 2024, the Phase 6 data collection took place from November 7th 2024 to November 29th 2024 in Site A and from January 14th 2025 to February 7th 2025 in Site B (see Appendix 2). In each site, researchers spent 2 days per week over 4 weeks

undertaking participant observation and then interviewing up to 7 staff, largely custody officers, detention officers, and managers, and up to 5 suspects including a mixture of men and women, and those from different age groups. After accessing the IGs, data were also collected from 12 suspects (6 in each site) through a brief survey administered by staff when the research team were not present in the custody facility in order to expand the pool of suspect views on the IGs. A spreadsheet was also used by staff to record which suspects agreed or not to watch the animations and why, during the pilot study period (n=71). In total, this report therefore draws on 115 hours of observation, 20 interviews (12 with staff and 8 with suspects), 12 brief surveys of suspects and data recorded by staff about 71 suspects and their reasons for using the animations or not (see Table 1 below).

Prior to the project commencing in each site, staff who regularly worked in the custody facilities were informed via email about the pilot and expectations of them and of the evaluation, including that they were to be observed in the research, and they were also invited to contact the police or research leads if they had any further questions. This email communication was therefore the main means used to secure custody staff's informed consent to implement the IGs and for the observation. It was more difficult, though, to secure consent to be observed from staff/detainees passing through custody and who would not have been a recipient of the email communication. The police turned down offers to put up posters in the custody block when we were observing and, instead, we were proactive in explaining openly and honestly about the research and in wearing University cards to indicate our identity and that we did not work for the police.

Staff and suspects were approached to participate in interviews in custody, with both types of interviews taking place in custody at convenient moments for each, for example, for staff during quieter moments and for suspects whilst they were waiting for their case to progress, but not at a point when it might delay their release or interfere with their police interview or opportunities to speak to their lawyer. Only suspects who had accessed the IGs were suitable to participate in the research, since we were interested in their view on them. To minimise the risk of harm to either suspects or the research team, police gatekeepers also checked police records before these suspects were approached by the research team. Once it was agreed that they were a suitable potential participant, the suspects were approached in the cells by a member of the

research team (accompanied by a detention officer), who shared an information sheet with them, and requested their initial consent. If they agreed, the researcher would accompany them to one of the more casually arranged interview rooms (with a sofa and a coffee table, rather than rigid chairs and a desk), which was also nearest to the main custody desk. Once settled in this interview room, the researchers went through the information sheet with them in detail and secured their informed written consent to participate in the research, also making it clear that they could still decline to participate at this or at any stage, with only one refusing to participate at this point so they could rest and be alert for when their solicitor arrived. Whilst in the interview room, in most cases, staff would ask them whether they would like a drink whilst they sat in the interview with the researcher, to which many said yes. A copy of their consent form and the project information sheet was given to staff interviewees to keep, whilst for suspects interviewed in the research, this information was placed by staff in their property so they had access to it after the interview had taken place and upon leaving the custody facility.

At the end of each interview, both staff and suspect interviewees were asked whether they would like to choose a pseudonym for use in research outputs, or whether they would prefer for the research team to choose one for them, instead. In most cases, interviewees opted for the latter, with the research team picking names which were as suitable as possible for their gender, age and ethnicity. In the findings presented below, these interviewees are denoted by their pseudonymised name, followed by their role either as a detention officer (DO), custody officer (CO), suspect (suspect), followed by the letter A or B to denote which site the interview took place in. For example, Kayleigh, a suspect interviewed in Site A is denoted as Kayleigh, Suspect, A. For the observation notes, these are referred to by day and site (e.g. Obs. Day 1, Site A). The date which each day refers to can be found in Appendix 2. These notes have been pseudonymised to remove names of staff and suspects observed, using the same abbreviations/labels as for interviewees e.g. DO, CO, Suspect, Manager. Given the limited number of managers interviewed for the research, the site, either A or B, or police force and gender is not identified.

The field notes and transcripts from the Phase 6 data were analysed thematically, picking out fifteen broad themes and a number of sub-themes. These included; suspect details, suspect journey, suspect engagement, suspect response to watching

animations, suspect feedback on animations, staff feedback on animations, feedback on leaflet, outcomes of information guides, implementation process, suspect suitability, staff engagement, staff attitudes, video technology, wider observations of the custody suite, and suggested improvements and changes. These were arrived at firstly, through familiarisation with the data by listening to the interview recordings and rereading all transcripts and observation notes. Secondly, the transcripts and notes were initially open coded using NVivo 14 by scanning the data for meaningful pieces of content. Then the open coding was organised into broad themes by looking at similarity and patterns within the codes and a coding framework was developed guided by the research questions (section 1.2). To ensure consistency in coding, a second researcher used the framework as a guide to code two interview transcripts and two observation notes and then compared findings with the initial researcher's coding. From this, new codes and themes were generated. Themes and sub-themes were then reviewed and refined by ensuring each theme was supported by sufficient evidence and was therefore robust. Some sub-themes were removed for lack of evidence and others divided and redefined, resulting in distinct themes which could be named and defined.

The survey data collected and the information recorded by staff about suspects accessing the animations or not, were exported to an excel spreadsheet. The survey data were analysed by extracting responses to each survey question and then qualitative responses were coded thematically and the quantitative data were analysed for descriptive statistics e.g. frequencies and percentages. The data recorded by staff on a spreadsheet, were cleaned and exported to SPSS for analysis. In SPSS some variables were re-coded into new variables, including individuals' ages into age categories and reasons for declining to engage and vulnerabilities into coded categories. The data were then analysed using descriptive statistics and crosstabs were used to find themes within the data.

The data collected and analysed were as comprehensive as possible within the confines of the resources available for the research, but there were also limitations to these data, which reduced what we are able to say, in particular, about the impact of the IGs, both on suspect engagement and the effects on suspect choices. As information about how many people had accessed the IGs was embedded in custody records, this made it too difficult to extract it within the confines of the project. The few

survey responses, the sporadic details recorded by staff about engagement with the animations and the limitations in the amount of time the researchers spent observing the custody suites, during which the number of suspects present and engaging with the IGs fluctuated, also made it hard to fully scrutinise the effects of the IGs. We therefore explore *perceptions* of these impacts largely through the interview and observation data, supplemented by the other data sources wherever possible (section 3.3).

Table 1 - Data collected in the research

	No. of hours of observation	Interviews with suspects	Interviews with staff	Brief surveys of suspects	Information recorded by staff about animation use
Site A	61	3	5	6	33
Site B	54	5	7	6	38
		8	12	12	71

3. Findings

3.1 The implementation process

There were a number of participants committed to the success of the pilot and certain parts of the implementation process were successful, as a result. However, the overall intention for all suspects to be offered the animation and to opt out of watching it, if they wished, was not realised. Below we set out the successes and challenges experienced with this implementation process.

3.1.1 Successes of the implementation process

The evaluation showed a number of successes and useful lessons learned which should improve future implementation. Firstly, there appeared to be a consensus that custody officers (COs) offering suspects access to the IGs at the end of the booking-in process, was the most practical approach because then the staff “*know it’s been done*” (Edward, CO, A), and there is no confusion over whose responsibility it is subsequently. However, this did not happen consistently, even though staff saw the benefits of this (see Section 3.1.3).

Once staff had identified who to play the animation to, another successful part of the implementation process was the effort some staff went to in order to play the animations to suspects in the cells. As noted in Section 2.2, in Site A and at the start of the implementation process in Site B, this meant playing each animation separately. Staff and suspect interviews showed there was also agreement that the optimum time to do this was shortly after suspects first arrived at their cell and once they had a chance to settle. As detention officers (DOs) Graham and Robert reflected, suspects, particularly first-timers, are “*rabbits in headlights*” when they first arrive into police custody and are being spoken to at the custody desk. DO Robert further explained:

Their brain’s racing, everything’s new, everything’s scary, and probably the last thing that they’re doing is taking in all the specific details of what they’re being told around what they can and can’t do, what they should and shouldn’t expect. So, to have something that does remind [them] five, ten minutes after they’ve been in and settled down, yeah. (Robert, DO, A)

This sentiment was reiterated by other staff:

I think it's quite difficult because people get brought into custody, they're very irate or very confused, or in a state of where their mind is not very clear, and they're getting asked questions about their rights on the offset ... But that's probably the worst time to ask them, isn't it, because they don't actually know what an earth's going on ... So, it might be nice to actually give it a little while, and then, play those videos. (Sadie, DO, A)

When you're sat down in a cell, you're going to perhaps absorb that a little bit better when you're sat there. (Cameron, CO, B)

These feelings were also reflected in suspects' experiences. Kayleigh, for example, noted that once she had sat in her cell and been given a drink and a blanket, she was able to calm down and listen to the videos. This example reinforces the view that suspects are often too disorientated or stressed to take in all the information provided on booking-in at the charge desk and therefore may benefit from having this information repeated once they have had time to compose themselves in the cell. This is therefore a successful area of implementation as, except for in two instances, where suspects were played the animations on one of the researcher's laptops, prior to interviewing them, suspects consistently viewed the animations in their cells using the video technology, after being booked-in.

Whilst staff opted, as required, to play the animations to suspects in the cells, seeing this as the best option overall for them, they also speculated about what some of the other options might be. One female DO suggested playing them on repeat in the holding area where detainees wait to be booked in, much like happens in hospital waiting rooms, where infomercials play continuously, with subtitles but no sound, to help patients and their carers be better informed about matters relevant to that particular part of the hospital. However, as another male DO pointed out, detainees are not guaranteed to sit there for the whole duration of the animations, resulting in inconsistencies in who may be able to watch them in their entirety and thus access the information provided.

As noted in Section 2.2, a further expectation of the implementation process was that staff should check on suspects at the end of the first animation to enquire if they had any questions or requests. In some instances, this was found to happen after suspects watched either the first or multiple animations, but in most cases not.

3.1.2 Limitations of the implementation process

The intended process of playing the animations was to play the first animation a short time after a suspect was placed in a cell, with staff then checking afterwards if the suspect had any requests and offering to play the remaining animations, which would then be played consecutively. However, this intended process presented barriers for staff, which meant it was most often not implemented as intended.

At the start of the process, COs were not consistently offering the IGs whilst suspects were booked in. As a result, Inspectors or other staff, mainly DOs, sometimes with the encouragement of the researchers, would offer suspects' access to the IGs after they had already been in custody for multiple hours. This was a limitation, as the IGs were intended to be offered near the beginning of detention, so suspects were fully informed of their rights and entitlements from early on and could make any important time-sensitive requests such as asking for a solicitor at an early stage. In an interview, suspect Sasha (Site A), who was only offered and played the animations a couple hours after arriving and having already spoken to her solicitor, noted she would have preferred to access the IGs earlier on.

When the implementation process began in Site A, the staff also raised concerns about the need to play each animation separately. This meant they had to go to the medical room, where the equipment to play the animation was located, four times to play all animations to one suspect, as it was not possible to play all four one after the other. As a result, not all four animations were consistently offered and/or played in Site A, with often only the first and second being played. Staff also explained to the researchers that there were often long gaps left between playing the individual animations, as staff did not know when the previous animation finished playing and would become too busy to play the next or any of the subsequent ones.

Some of the effects of not all of the animations being played consistently and with potentially long gaps in between, were that some suspects may not have watched the animations most useful to them and that suspects lost interest or became annoyed, if for example an animation was played much later and whilst they were sleeping. When staff were asked what they thought of the process of playing the animations a DO responded:

Obviously I put one through to the cell, which is obviously then three minutes, then I had to go back, take that one off, put another one on, play that one, nine times out of ten, I felt that I was then... it's not a continuous thing, so ... I think they sort of then got bored with the fact that it's just got one of those animation things to watch again. (Graham, DO, B)

This limitation was immediately raised again in Site B:

But it would be useful for us if we could either ask them to obviously play all four, ... Or if the actual video was made as one complete video with maybe a pause between each section... To allow them to digest what they've heard. So a couple of minutes' pause, and then obviously start the next one. But that would only really be for the time restraints for us... Not necessarily for detainees. Because I think it's great it's split for them, because it does allow them time to process what they've listened to in the first one, and then you go on to the individual different ones (Caroline, DO, B)

In response to this, the four animations were integrated into one video for use in Site B, so that staff only had to play it once for suspects to be shown all four animations. A short gap was added between each animation, to provide suspects a moment to process all the information without it being overwhelming and to allow staff to check with them whether they had any questions. This adaption was welcomed by staff, “*an excellent improvement*” (Jason, CO, B) and meant suspects who accessed the animations were consistently played all four, although this did limit suspect choice as to which ones and how many of them they watched.

Another barrier to successful implementation which was repeatedly raised by staff, was the need to play the animations from a separate room to ‘the Bridge’, which is where the DOs sat at their desks and was adjacent to the booking-in desk, where the COs sat. Staff consistently questioned why the computer for playing the animations had been located in the spare medical room, as they felt this was inconvenient and time consuming if having to play the animations on multiple occasions, and argued it should have been located by the DOs’ desks. However, managers took a different view, noting the time taken to walk from the Bridge to the medical room and to load an animation had been timed and found to be no more than a minute. One manager in particular therefore wondered whether DOs’ complaints were an excuse for not fully

participating in the pilot. In Site B, some COs resorted to asking the Inspector to play the animations, as they were able to do this from their office. Yet this was only possible when an Inspector was in the custody facility and available, and it was implied by staff that at other periods COs would not offer the animations as they felt it was too much extra work to play the animations themselves.

The main problem with it at the moment is the fact that where the video player is, is on a computer behind a locked door in a medic's room, so you've got to get up, walk all the way. It doesn't seem like a lot, but you've got to walk around, it's an extra task to do that. (Jason, CO, B)

I think the computer needs to be closer to the bridge area if they're going to implement it ... it's just so time consuming (Rae, CO, B)

Male CO also raises concerns about the location of the terminals, saying that it does add to staff's workloads, which is hard if they are busy ... Because of these logistical problems with playing the animations, male CO notes that they become more of an "add on, rather than something staff can do all of the time". (Obs. Site B, Day 1)

A further barrier to implementation was that approximately only half of the cells in Site A (15/30) and Site B (13/24) were equipped with the video technology on which to play the animations. Consequently, on occasion, all cells with the video technology would be filled or the COs were trying to keep certain cells with the video technology free, as they were designed for vulnerable detainees, such as women, children and young people. As a result, suspects who staff considered suitable were not able to access the animations on these occasions (see Section 3.1.3 for discussion of suspect 'suitability'). This was observed in Site A on Day 2:

Male CO did not offer the animations to a male detainee because of the minimal number of cells left with the video technology. As some of the cells with the technology are supposed to be saved for children and some are the 'high risk' cells which are usually used for 'drunk/inebriated'. This is a shame as the detainee appeared to be a good 'candidate' for the animation having only been in custody once before. (Obs. Site A, Day 2)

Another drawback of not having video technology in all cells, was that COs would sometimes assign suspects to a cell without a screen unintentionally, either because they did not know which cells had screens or they forgot about the animations altogether. For example, it was observed in Site A:

Male CO asks me if I know which cells have the screens in as he is not aware, after asking Robert (DO), he realises he has put a detainee in a cell without the screens so he says there is *'no point playing it to him then if he can't see it'*.
(Obs. Site A, Day 8)

Whether a suspect was placed in a cell with the video technology was staff-dependent as on this occasion, the CO did not move the suspect, yet on another occasion, Robert (DO) moved a suspect to a different cell with the video technology. It is encouraging that some staff took the initiative to move a suspect to a cell with a screen. However it would have been better for suspects wishing to engage with the animations to be placed in a cell with a screen from the outset, as intended. Even if they could be moved to another cell, this is disruptive to the suspect and creates extra work for staff, as well as additional costs associated with cleaning a cell unnecessarily. Staff's indifference to suspects not being able to access the animations because they were not in a cell with the video technology is only one example of what was one of the more significant barriers to successful implementation, which is staff attitudes and the culture of custody.

Encouraging staff participation in the study and in supporting the implementation of the IGs was a slow process, although with some time and greater understanding of the IG's content and purpose, there was some change in staff attitudes. As a male CO said *"you are preaching to the converted"* in regards to the IGs (Obs. Site A, Day 4). A manager also recognised a change in staff attitudes towards implementing the IGs:

And I think a lot of people are on board now, whilst... when we've sort of explained why we're doing it and the reasons behind it, and actually it's a good thing. I think people are starting to see that. I think some people who may be from, I'm going to say old school, may have taken a little bit longer. And I think a lot of people have been like, well, how much is it going to add to my day? We're already busy. And it doesn't. And I think they've seen that and we've proved that. (Manager 1)

In spite of these positive changes in some staff attitudes, the researchers witnessed an evident resistance to implementing the IGs from others, who perceived them as an unnecessary burden. They complained both of the extra workload which the process of playing the animations created, although as discussed earlier this was viewed as limited, at least by managers, and also the potential additional workload from suspects making more requests having watched the animations. Staff complained that the IGs would encourage suspects to ask for more and be more demanding, as they reinforced information about key rights they were entitled to, which would then increase the demand on staff. Some were particularly concerned that suspects would persistently press the intercom button and expect to receive things immediately having watched the animations, even though the animations clearly explained that staff are sometimes busy and may not be able to respond immediately.

Female DO says: "Whatever you put in this, you'll always have someone who thinks they are entitled to the fucking world". (Obs. Site B, Day 4)

We'll get some people, you've given them all of this information ... you can have this, you can have that. People will abuse it quite badly, and we know they will abuse it, because they abuse other things as well. And they'll abuse it, well, it says here I can have this, and I have that, and I have this, and you will get that person who will abuse it totally ... they just want to piss us off, and make sure they get everything that they're entitled to, but they get everything they're entitled to, to start with, but they don't always get the extras. (Tracy, DO, A)

Whilst this may be a reasonable concern when custody facilities are particularly busy or short-staffed, there were many occasions when the opposite was observed and staff in both facilities had spare time available. It seemed, therefore, which some staff also reported, that some of their colleagues wished to do the bare minimum. One detention officer remarked that two of their colleagues "*want to do as little work as possible*" and create "*an unpleasant environment to work in*", with one of these colleagues remarking to this detention officer "*why would you want more responsibility, just take the easy money*" (Obs. Site A. Day 7). A similar perception of certain colleagues was described by another DO, Robert, when discussing the merits of implementing the IGs:

Anything that we can improve that gives people a better chance of being treated fairly or getting what they're entitled to, has to be a good thing. I know there will be people who would disagree, but that's purely on a... I'm old and jaded and a bit cynical, and I just want to do the bare bones. But I think anybody who is doing the role for the right reasons, always conscientious about what they're doing, would have to agree to that. (Robert, DO, A)

Access to the animations also seemed to be informed by which suspects were seen as deserving of the IGs. Some staff looked on suspects not as guilty, but as deserving of care and help, including through the IGs:

So, you get people here who've done absolutely nothing wrong, but something's happened, there's a suspicion, and they end up here. ... And everybody should still be treated at that same level, no matter whether they are the bad person, whether they are the person that, you know, we're waiting on a Mental Health Act assessment, or whether they've done nothing at all or everything. (Robert, DO, A)

Looking after the detainees, that's obviously our prime concern, and if I didn't want to do it, I wouldn't be here. So, a lot of people elsewhere won't agree with, well, they shouldn't get da, da, da, but yeah. So we've got to look after their welfare, everything while they're here, really. (Edward, DO, A)

However, other staff did not view custody as a place of care as they felt detainees should not be afforded comforts, such as food outside prescribed meal times or access to the extra information provided by the IGs, because they were there as punishment or to deter further criminal behaviour.

Female DO says there should be set hours for breakfast, lunch and dinner during which detainees are offered food and if they refuse they should have to wait until the next meal time, unless they are diabetic or need food to take medication. (Obs. Site A, Day 6)

Male DO says that soon they will have video games in the cells, suggesting that the screens and animations are a form of entertainment and stepping stone to other forms of entertainment, and that he hopes he's gone before that day

comes. He complains that “*young people are not scared of coming into custody*” these days, they aren’t deterred by it. (Obs. Site A, Day 6)

A further potential reason for staff resistance to implementation, may have been a lack of understanding of the need for and aims of implementing the IGs in ensuring and/or reinforcing detainees’ understanding of custody, and their rights and entitlements therein, with this being exacerbated by staff feeling ‘ordered’ to implement these changes by managers. One manager explained that staff in police organisations are particularly resistant to change and to messages or instructions coming from those higher-up the managerial chain, especially when they do not always understand why they are being asked to perform new duties and feel that managers lack an understanding of their workload. This was particularly noticeable when, in both sites, managers firmly reminded staff of the expectation to implement the IGs, which appeared to have little impact, except to increase resistant attitudes.

This challenge might have been mitigated by more thorough preparation of the implementation process with staff. There had been an intention to trial the implementation process prior to starting the pilot study, to work out any teething problems and allow staff to become familiar with the system. However, due to a lack of time, this did not occur at either site. Therefore, the study was slow to be implemented, and problems had to be solved as they arose. As Manager 1 stated, “*they weren’t prepped*”, this was further explained by another manager:

it was supposed to have a bit more of a softer launch so that people were more used to doing it, but it didn’t happen like that, which is probably part of the reason why I think it was very clunky in terms of how many times the videos were played. ... it relied on one or two or three, you know, a few members of staff to really drive it and it shouldn’t have been that way because ... the direction from the bosses was this isn’t a nice to have, this is a you will do this. And on the other side of it, it’s the, you know, this is the benefit, this is what the videos include, this is all your logins, please watch and familiarise yourself, see the benefit in it yourself, because that was a better approach than a you will have to do it. So, the process of getting people using the system was the difficulty and was a bigger challenge than I thought it would be, and part of that

is to do with the system and part of that is to do with culture and habits.
(Manager 2)

Researcher observation also confirmed this, as on first arrival to Site A it was evident that the implementation of the IGs was not yet embedded into staff practices:

The implementation of the information guide is clearly new to the team, suggesting it has not been implemented until today/my arrival. This and the lack of survey responses also suggests that the survey was not trialled/tested as planned with Manager 2. Due to this it feels that the implementation process is somewhat undefined/unclear. There has also seemingly been little encouragement to assist in survey completion – I have discussed this with manager 1 who says they will discuss this with the team during handover. (Obs. Site A, Day 1)

This apathy towards the pilot had seemingly not changed a week later and was evident across different shift patterns, as similar attitudes were observed by the researcher on Day 3 of observations, which took place the following week:

It seems that there is not a lot of knowledge about or enthusiasm for the pilot work, largely because staff say they are too busy, particularly when there are only two DOs on shift and also because they see it as too much of an imposition on their day-to-day practices ... the DO said he did not know anything about it as he had not read the email and that, in any case, he could not do much because of the role he had in custody today. (Obs. Site A, Day 3)

A lack of preparation was also evident in the fact that during observations some staff were not even aware of the IGs or the pilot study. Additionally, staff had not engaged with the IGs, including at least one manager who had not watched the animations. Staff were therefore not informed or aware of what was available and being offered to suspects. This was a consistent issue throughout the pilot study, with some staff only being made aware of the IGs due to the presence of the researchers. It was evident many staff members did not read all their emails which was the main method of communication from managers to them regarding the pilot.

Aside from the practical challenges, staff perceptions and attitudes, and the perceived imposition of the pilot by managers on staff noted above, suspects were also found to have to opt in rather than out of the animations. This opt-in approach was adopted when staff felt understaffed or too busy, making offering and playing the animations too much of a burden and not something they could prioritise.

And the only thing that I think will become a problem, if we are really busy, you've just given us another load of tasks to do on top. Where sometimes, no lie, I don't have time to go to the toilet or eat, and then you want us to do this, this and this, as well. But I understand why you're doing it, I don't think your expectation should be done every time, because there's just not the time.
(Tracy, DO)

This was also made clear by how often COs forgot to offer the animations to suspects, with consistent examples of staff forgetting even by the fourth week of the pilot and whilst the researcher was present. There were also multiple examples of some COs passing the responsibility on to DOs. For example, when one CO in Site A was informed that a DO had been offering the animations to suspects whilst completing their biometrics, the CO responded “*great, well, [Name of DO] can do it*” (Obs. Day 3 Site A). Ideally, if implementation were to continue, this task would become more fully integrated into staff duties, eventually becoming standard practice.

The opt-in approach was also adopted because staff did not agree the animations should be offered to all suspects or felt it was unnecessary, perceiving ‘regulars’ as not wanting or needing to engage as they “*know the system better than some of us (staff) do*” (Edward, DO, A). This issue of suitability will be discussed further in Section 3.1.3.

Whilst most suspects were not given the opportunity to opt-out, as intended, others were played the animations without choice or being informed. Researchers interviewed two suspects, who were played the animations without any prior knowledge, and such experiences were found to elicit negative responses. Both participants were shocked and confused when the animations began playing, with a male suspect believing they had been played to irritate and ‘wind them up’, especially as they started playing as he was sleeping. For a female suspect, she was startled by

the start of the animation, saying that it was too loud and thus off-putting. Additionally, during observations, a suspect was heard exclaiming “*it’s shit, I didn’t want to watch it, I want to sleep*” in reference to the animations which were presumably played without being informed of them in advance (Obs. Site B, Day 6). Had these suspects been offered and/or informed of the upcoming videos, they may have been more prepared for and receptive of them, including of the information provided and their volume.

3.1.3 Suspect suitability

Perceived suitability of suspects was a significant theme within the findings, which impacted which suspects were offered access to the IGs. Staff perceived the IGs as being of particular use to first-time detainees or those who had not been in custody recently. Furthermore, there was consensus across the interviews and observations that the IGs would be valued most by those less familiar with custody, children and young people, even though the guides were intended for adults, and vulnerable adult detainees (e.g. those requiring an AA). When asked in interviews “*which detainees do you think would benefit most from the animations?*” many staff responses reflected these two interviewees’ views:

first timers in custody, perhaps people with more... who have learning difficulties, who don’t take in information very well when it’s relayed to them across the desk. Yeah, all people like that really. I mean, the old sweats that come in and out of custody, not so much, but definitely a first timer, because they can’t take in the information at the desk when you’re just relaying it to them.
(Rae, CO, B)

But as I say, if it then comes to be something that’s going to be forever in the PICs, then possibly you might want to think juveniles, first timers, possibly certain types of offence. (Edward, DO, A)

Though some suspects were identified as suitable for the IGs due to language barriers and, relatedly, unfamiliarity with the police custody process of England and Wales, staff became frustrated, particularly in Site B that the IGs had not been translated into languages which helped with this. The IGs had been translated into Romanian because it was the most requested language for interpretation across the police force

area, but in Site B staff felt that other languages (e.g. Lithuanian) would have been more suitable for the suspects in this particular locality. As this manager said:

If the languages and everything were more available, that would really help, because that's really been our only hindrance in relation to some of the languages. (Manager 3)

By contrast, those viewed as unsuitable included the intoxicated because they may not have had the capacity to engage with the IGs or to complete the formal booking-in process on arrival. Similarly, suspects who were uncooperative and/or aggressive on arrival were seen as unsuitable due to their behaviour and were also taken straight to a cell, if a custody officer could not effectively complete the booking-in protocols. In addition, there was an overwhelming belief that those who had been arrested multiple times previously would also not be suitable as it was believed that they would not benefit from engaging with the IGs:

But if you've got someone in, who's got 86 convictions, is that going to make any difference to them? They'll know the system better than what some of us do. (Edward, DO, A)

This perspective is of particular concern in relation to legal advice. Research shows that being seen as a 'regular' means also being perceived as knowing the system, at times better than solicitors, and thus not requiring the same hand holding as 'first timers' (Dehaghani and Newman, 2023). Yet, 'regulars' still operate in the "same system [as first-timers], facing the same power imbalances" between them and the power of the police (Dehaghani and Newman, 2023: 74), which thus risks actual, rather than presumed, needs of 'regulars' being overlooked. Ultimately, it puts access to custodial legal advice in jeopardy for 'regulars', compared to 'first-timers' and undermines equal access to proactive defence counsel.

Whilst the perspective on the unsuitability of 'regulars' was reiterated by many custody staff over the period of the pilot, a small number of staff members, with some consideration, did see the potential value of providing the IGs to 'regulars' as well as 'first-timers', as DO Tracy explained:

Because even some of the regulars do not know what their rights are. But they assume they do, and when you tell them, because there is only three basic PACE rights, so, when you do tell them they are entitled to let someone know they're there, but they feel they're entitled to let everyone know they're there, well they're not. So, they do know they're allowed certain things, but other things, you know, ... And it's a lot of things that they're demanding, because they feel that that's their right. They do, but they don't know the process of how their right works. (Tracy, DO, A)

This perspective was supported by suspect interview responses which suggested that, although they had previously been in custody, they could benefit from engaging with the animations. For example, suspect Dave, who had been arrested multiple times (the last time being only three days previous), responded to the question '*And did you learn anything that you didn't already know from watching the animations?*' with:

Yeah, it sort of... it sort of retrained me on how the process is done. Like, I don't really take no notice of it, because the police, they do it all, don't they, they talk and stuff like that? And obviously, I know bits and pieces, I know they take your belongings, and I know they do this and that, but it was like... it was good, because it was just a solid process, all the way through (Dave, Detainee, B)

This illustrates the importance of staff not just assuming suspects who have been repeatedly arrested are fully informed of the custody process, as explained by this manager:

And I think that, bearing in mind some officers don't know how custody works, how on earth do detainees know? Even if they've been in 10, 15, 20 times, they have an idea of how it works, but do they know how it works properly? And I think that is... that's a quite powerful video. And especially for certain neurodivergents that it sets it out in a simple way, rights, entitlements. (Manager 3)

3.2 Perceptions of the animations and leaflets: their content, format and accessibility

Both the leaflet and animations received overwhelmingly positive feedback, especially the leaflet which was viewed as professional, informative, "*beneficial*" and "*clear and*

concise" (Sadie, DO, A). Whilst the animations garnered some critiques, particularly regarding the use of animation over actors and the omission of some relevant content, on the whole, they were well received by staff, with more mixed views offered by suspects.

Both the animations and the leaflets were perceived as informative by relaying all the important information on the process of custody clearly. Staff and suspects were particularly keen on the first animation on 'Your time in police custody and your treatment'. This was seen as valuable for covering the detainee journey and for explaining the step-by-step experience of being processed in custody, as this was not typically covered by staff.

Feedback from staff suggested the IGs included all relevant information, without omitting anything important, as most staff could not think of any extra details which should be included. However, a female DO raised that the animations lacked information for individuals with hearing impairments regarding how they could communicate with staff, and information about some of the locally-specific services in Norfolk and Suffolk police force areas, such as the drug and alcohol support provided by 'Change, Grow, Live', though this had not been the intention of the pilot work. The IGs were deliberately developed so that they could be adopted by any police force, meaning such locally-specific information was not included.

In addition, whilst staff appreciated the emphasis in the animations on the dignity and respect afforded to detainees by staff, they also thought there should have been reminders to detainees of the need for this to be reciprocated. CO Jason, felt the animations would be improved if they "*put more emphasis on the fact that we aren't the enemy, essentially, we are people here literally to help you, and that by trying to be polite with us, we'll help you out as much as we can, but there's limits to what we can do*" (Jason, CO, B).

As intended, staff also saw the animations as accessible, simple to understand, jargon-free, and thus suitable for a wide audience, including for those who were neurodivergent, had learning disabilities, mental health conditions and/or low literacy levels, as remarked on by the following staff:

And I think that is... that's a quite powerful video. And especially for certain neurodivergents that it sets it out in a simple way, rights, entitlements. (Manager 1)

Because the videos are great for the majority of the people we have in, because they do have a lot of difficulties, mental health and learning difficulties, and they do need to be able to have something that's a little bit more simple. And it is more simple, which we need, because our jargon is too difficult to understand. (Caroline, DO, B)

An autistic suspect also reportedly remarked on how useful he found the animations as he preferred to have information presented visually rather than only verbally or written.

There were also notable accessibility features of the animations which both staff and suspects perceived positively, such as the inclusion of subtitles. The inclusion of subtitles was not only useful for those with hearing impairments but also appreciated by others as it was familiar to them, given that some used them regularly when watching television, and helped them follow along more easily. The pace and length of the animations were also recognised as being appropriate and suspects felt this made them easy to follow and understand. All survey respondents (n = 12) either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements 'the information was provided in a clear and accessible format' and 'the information was logically presented and easy to follow'.

At the same time, this intended focus on accessibility also made the animations appear "juvenile" and somewhat "condescending" by some staff and suspects (Manager 3), particularly for those without additional needs or who were highly educated, as this DO remarked:

I just think some people might think we're undermining them slightly. I think that's the first thing that I noticed, is that obviously we do get all walks of life here and some people might... I can see it, and have seen it, frustrate people. Because it almost seems like we're trying to teach them baby steps. Like talk to them a bit like they're a child (Sadie, DO, A)

This perception of the animations as 'juvenile' was iterated on multiple occasions, though when asked for a viable alternative, few staff could think of one which would

also remain accessible to different audiences. There were suggestions of creating “two versions” with one being a “*bit more adult*” by using more technical language, for those without any accessibility needs or learning difficulties (Caroline, DO, B). However, as Sadie (DO) correctly understood, “*obviously your resources aren’t endless*” (Sadie, DO, A) and having two versions would create more work for staff in having to determine which is suitable to play to whom. Other staff had a similar understanding that, although the animations may feel patronising to a few suspects, it is necessary to use simple and clear language and images for accessibility purposes:

I think it’s a tad juvenile, but I understand it has to reach all people’s levels.
(Cameron, DO, B)

Furthermore, if suspects wish to access more detailed information about their rights and entitlements, they have a right to do this by reading PACE Code C, which is in theory offered to all.

Having the option of either the leaflet or the animations was appreciated by both staff and suspects in Site A. Unfortunately, Site B did not have access to the leaflets which was experienced as a limitation as a suspect explained she “*preferred to read without watching*” and “*wanted some quiet*”, so read the PACE Code C (2023) instead and asked for the animations to be turned off as they were too disturbing (Magda, Detainee, B). Therefore, had the leaflet been available to her, she may have gleaned more use or value than she did from the animations. In Site A, suspects appreciated the ability to have the choice to either read the information or watch it in video format, as well as the benefit of having the leaflet to refer back to during their detention. Staff also recognised the benefit of having both options available, as some suspects may prefer to read information, whilst others may not have the literacy capabilities or may better comprehend information audibly and/or visually. This was also recognised as a specific benefit of the animations, as suspects are offered a copy of PACE Code C (2023), yet this requires a suitable level of sight, a decent level of literacy and an understanding of legal language. Whereas, as the animations include spoken word, subtitles and clear images, they allowed those with learning difficulties, hearing and vision impairments and neurodiversity, to access the information.

Whilst nearly all staff provided predominantly positive feedback on the content and accessibility of the IGs, as did some suspects, there were also a few negative views

expressed by the latter, suggesting that suspects' views were more mixed overall, than for staff. For some suspects, the animations elicited an emotional response, including expletives such as: *"its shit"* (Obs. Site B, Day 6) and *"as for the bloody fucking cartoon"* (Obs. Site A, Day 5). One interviewee, also felt the information provided on suspects' rights and entitlements, and on how suspects should be treated by staff did not reflect his experience in custody on this or previous occasions, having felt that he had been intentionally denied some of these rights and had only received them after being played the animations over 8 hours after arriving into custody, as he explained:

They don't treat you with respect, you know what I mean, and ... what you're entitled to. I've been entitled to absolutely nothing. (Johnathan, Detainee, B)

Some suspects also provided feedback on how they would improve upon the IGs, offering similar suggestions to staff, namely, that a *"video with real people might be better"* than animations as this would make the videos more personable and relatable, and less patronising (Obs. Site B, Day 4). Another suggestion, related to information omitted from the animations about the possibility of staff entering the cells whilst suspects were using the toilet, which had happened to one suspect (Kayleigh, Suspect, A). A suspect also reasonably questioned why there was a QR code at the end of the animations, suggesting viewers scan it to find out more about the development of the animations, when suspects did not have access to their phones whilst in custody.

3.3 Perceived effects of the animations and leaflets

3.3.1 Engagement by suspects with the IGs

A full understanding of suspect engagement was difficult to determine as a result of the inconsistencies in implementation and of offering and playing the animations to suspects (see section 3.1), the lack of access to the leaflets in Site B (see section 3.2), and limitations in the data collected (see section 2.3). It was therefore unclear how many of the 715 suspects in Site A and 720 suspects in Site B, who were detained during the pilot period, were offered and also received access to the IGs. However, in the information that staff sporadically recorded in the project spreadsheet there were at least 71 suspects who were offered the IGs, of which 40 watched one or more animations. Of these suspects, who watched the animations, the majority were of

White ethnicity (92%), male (82%), between the ages 25-34 (27%) and had previously been arrested (75%), thereby reflecting the characteristics of those typically arrested and detained by Norfolk and Suffolk Police. Additionally, 65% (26) of those recorded as having engaged with the animations were not recorded to have any vulnerabilities, whilst the most common recorded vulnerability was being a 'juvenile' (13%, 5), even though the animations were intended for use by adults, followed by mental health (8%, 3) and neurodiversity (8%, 3).

In terms of how many animations suspects engaged with, the data recorded by staff shows that, of those who did engage with them, 83% engaged with all four and the second most common form of engagement was with both animation one and two (8%), which were the animations which staff deemed most useful.

Within this data recorded by custody staff, there were also notable differences in engagement in relation to site, gender and age. A greater percentage of suspects declined to engage with the animations in Site A with 64% (21) declines compared to 26% (10) declines in Site B. Whilst this may be indicative of the difference in staff attitudes across the two sites and how staff offered the IGs to detainees, it could also have been that staff were more often recording data on suspects who declined them in Site A, than who engaged with them. Differences in engagement according to gender were also found, with 62% (8) of female suspects declining to engage compared to 40% (23) of males, albeit that the absolute number of females were low at a total of 13. Additionally, those between the ages of 25 and 55 were less likely to engage with the animations (between 50-56% engaged), whereas those over the age of 55 (86%), between 18-25 (69%) and under 18 (83%) were more likely to engage.

Whilst staff may have been reluctant to offer the animations to suspects who were considered 'regulars', the majority of suspects recorded by staff to have been offered them, had previously been in custody (75%, 53) whilst only 24% (17) were in custody for the first time. When comparing those who had previously been in custody with 'first-timers', there was no little difference found, in terms of engaging with the animations: 55% (29) of suspects who had previously been in custody and 59% (10) of suspects in custody for the first time, agreed to watch the animations.

Researcher observation and interviews confirmed this uneven picture of engagement with the animations. Observation of CCTV footage from the cells and conversations

with staff indicated that some suspects were not interested in engaging with the animations and instead attempted to sleep:

First animation is played to the detainee, although he is lying in bed under a blanket and does not appear to be paying attention. He goes to sleep very shortly after. (Obs. Site A, Day 8)

Graham (DO) asked him whether he watched the animations, he said not as he just wanted to sleep. As a female DO, later points out to me, people that are living on the streets are often just happy to have a warm bed, pillow and a blanket and to finally get some proper rest. (Obs. Site B, Day 1)

There were also other incidents observed of suspects asking staff to turn the animations off whilst they were playing or not to play any more animations. In the data recorded by staff on engagement with the animations, there were similarly two instances recorded of suspects falling asleep whilst the animations were playing and declining to have them played again once awake. However, during observation, other suspects appeared to be paying attention and looking at the screen, often whilst consuming the food and drink provided by staff when suspects were first placed in their cell. Some interview responses similarly suggested a good level of engagement by some. One suspect was so keen to engage that he asked if there were more animations to watch, after having watched all four, and the following day requested to watch them again. By contrast, some interview responses suggested they were not so engaged, *"I didn't really pay attention much"* (Magda, Detainee, B), with some suspects not wishing to watch more than the first animation or being limited by language barriers.

In terms of why suspects engaged with the IGs, suspects provided two predominant reasons. First, they sought to alleviate boredom and pass the time: *"anything's better than nothing"* (Dean, Detainee, A). The second and perhaps more relevant reason was that they thought it would be *"interesting, to know a little bit more"* about custody and what would happen to them, as they thought it may be beneficial to them (Kayleigh, Detainee, A).

Detainees also provided reasons why they did not want to engage with the IGs, most commonly because they believed they would not be of use to them as they already

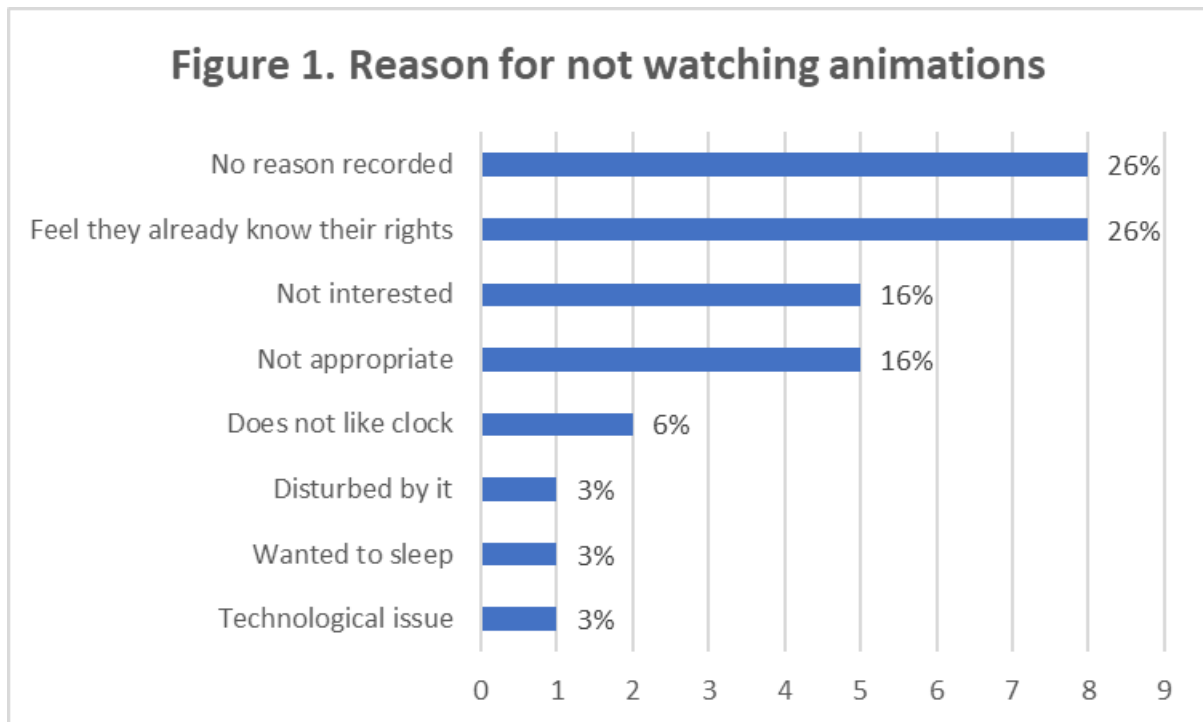
knew all their rights and entitlements, either based on prior experience of custody or because the CO had already explained them. Another regularly cited reason for not engaging was that suspects had mixed or sometimes negative feelings about the clocks displayed on the video screen in the cells, which were used to play the animations:

I've had some equate it to Chinese water torture, yeah, watching the seconds tick down. Yeah, I've heard more negatives about the clocks than I have more positives from detainees. (Rae, CO, Site B)

Well, it's helpful, but at the same time it's not, because I know that time's ticking and I'm still here. (Kayleigh, Detainee, Site A)

Others reported that the clocks made it feel like the time passed more slowly and reminded them of how long they had been detained, which frustrated them. Staff were empathetic to this and were happy to place them in or move them to a cell without the video technology. Indeed, some suspects requested this. Therefore, even if they had wished to watch the animations, they could not. In other words, concerns about the clocks over-rode suspects' desire to be better informed about their rights and entitlements.

These qualitative findings regarding why suspects declined to watch were also shown in the reasons recorded by custody staff on the spreadsheet, as can be seen in Figure 1. Staff recorded that detainees declined the animations primarily because they knew their rights, were not interested or because it was not appropriate for the detainee, for example, four suspects were not going to a cell but straight for interview and/or release and another suspect was 'taken to hospital for potential overdose'.



The final reason regularly given as to why the suspects did not wish to engage specifically with the animations, was that they wanted to rest and did not want to be disturbed by a video which some felt was “*loud*” and “*annoying*” (*Magda, Detainee, B*). These latter two reasons demonstrate why it was useful to have the option of engaging with the leaflet, rather than only the animations, so suspects still had access to the information without being unnecessarily disturbed either by the animation or the presence of a clock on the video screen in the cells.

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, some suspects were not given the option to engage or not with the IGs, as some were not offered access predominantly because of staff perceptions of suitability, whilst others were played the animations without being informed in advance. Whilst the animations were sometimes used by staff, particularly in Site B, as a ‘distraction technique’ (as will be discussed further in section 3.4), playing the animations to suspects without prior agreement was not always successful, coming as a shock and disturbance, eliciting negative reactions. Furthermore, suspects did not always engage with the animations when intended, i.e. shortly after being placed in a cell, as discussed in section 3.1.2; instead, some suspects were played the animations after having already been detained for a prolonged period.

3.3.2 *The perceived impacts of the IGs on suspects*

Staff and suspects recognised how the IGs could increase suspects' understanding of custody processes and their rights and entitlement, and to some extent could therefore impact positively on them accessing their rights and entitlements and on detainee dignity, particularly in terms of improving their ability to make autonomous decisions, such as about legal advice and appropriate adults, if this had been missed. A further impact of the IGs was to calm and distract distressed suspects.

Calming and distracting suspects:

An unintended impact of the animations realised during the study was the positive effect they had on some ill-tempered suspects when 'acting up' by calming them down. Both staff and suspects cited the animations as a positive distraction when a suspect was feeling stressed, combative or reactive, and as something to take their mind off their current situation when emotions were running high, as the researcher notes here:

A female detainee said that the animations helped her to pass the time in her cell, which she appreciated and to calm her and reassure her at a point when she was feeling pretty stressed and also cross with herself for getting herself into this situation. (Obs. Site A, Day 3)

Making suspects aware of certain entitlements available to them, may have also helped as accessing these entitlements proved to be calming and helped ease any worries they may have had about the uncertainties of what lay ahead for them, as explained by Manager 2:

And we've seen de-escalation from detainees that are... you know, that are violent, that are intoxicated, all these kinds of things, and a simple offer to go outside and get a bit of fresh air makes a hell of a difference. And these videos remind both staff and custody of that. (Manager 2)

Additionally, it helped calm some suspects and alter their behaviour by reminding them that the custody staff can be busy and are there to take care of them, not just to lock them up. For example, suspect Kayleigh explained how the animations helped her understand "*more about the timings and what's going to happen when*" which stopped her from "*kicking off*" and "*banging on the door*" demanding to know more about what

was happening with her case and how long she was going to be there (Kayleigh, Detainee, A).

In some cases, the animations were deliberately used as a distraction technique, with this being an approach predominantly adopted in Site B, in which multiple staff noted incidences of them playing the animations in cells when suspects were 'kicking off'. Seemingly, the animations successfully distracted suspects as noted by the researcher during observation:

Male CO then tells me that he was surprised by a regular who is a "*prolific thief*", who liked the animations and said to the CO when he was leaving that "*they were alright*". The animations actually distracted the detainee during a night shift when he was having a 'fit' and had started taking his clothes off, dipping his t-shirt in the toilet and throwing it at the CCTV. The male CO explains that when the animation started to play, he [the suspect] immediately stopped and started watching the screen. (Obs. Site B, Day 6)

However, as discussed in section 3.1.2 not all suspects appreciated being played the animations without prior warning. Additionally, some suspect reactions to the animations suggested they would not have successfully worked as a calming technique on them and alternatively may have elevated their anger and provoked further aggression and distress.

Greater understanding:

Staff and suspects perceived the most significant impact of the IGs to be the effect on suspects' understanding of custody by better informing them of processes, the custody journey, and what they were entitled to under PACE 1984 and Code of Practice C. Custody Officers have a duty to inform suspects of key rights whilst they are booked in, such as the right to a solicitor and to have someone informed of their detention, as well as offer them a copy of the PACE Codes of Practice. However, the manner in which COs offered the Pace Codes of Practice to suspects varied, as one female CO explained that "some of her colleagues do not particularly 'sell' the PACE COP when offering it to detainees" (Obs. Site A, Day 4). This implies that its value to suspects may not have been immediately apparent to them and that an alternative form of information, like the IGs used in the pilot, was valuable. Additionally, the PACE Codes

C is a legal, technical document which some staff admitted to not having read all the way through or understanding fully themselves, making the need for the IGs all the more important:

I spoke to two male COs about the animations and they were broadly supportive and saw the value in enabling detainees to be better informed of and make use of their rights (e.g. male CO said that they always try to encourage legal advice and for children they have to opt out of it). They also appreciated their value in light of the complexities of the PACE Codes of Practice. Male CO joked “*maybe I should watch them*”, since the Codes are so complex that even he struggles to follow them, even though he is supposed to be upholding them. (Obs. Site A, Day 3)

Because we throw information at them and expect them to understand it all and... PACE is complicated. It took... it's taken me many years to... To understand PACE. And do I fully understand it? I like to think I fully understand most of it, but if I don't know something, I'll look it up. But for them, it's an unknown world, isn't it? And I think we especially take it for granted that they'll just understand everything. (Manager 1)

Staff also recognised that arrival into custody and getting booked in at the desk, is a moment of stress for most, combined with feelings of intimidation, which likely resulted in many not absorbing or quickly forgetting the information provided by COs. As a manager explained:

We can tell somebody at the desk you're entitled to this, this, this, this and this. But with all the information that's thrown in their face at that material time and then the door shut, I can guarantee you they probably won't remember half of it. So, just really... it's almost... and that's also a situation of stress as well, being brought into a police station, coming in front of a custody sergeant, it's an allegation of something, some of the crimes they're alleged to have done are serious ones, and ... I try and put myself in that situation and think, well, I wouldn't be concentrating if that was me ... you're not really hearing. So... and I sort of said to him, I said, do you know that we've got showers? No. Were you told? I don't think so. And that just goes to show... I know the custody

officers do it, it just goes to show how much information they miss. And that's why I think it's really important. (Manager 1)

Additionally, participants recognised that suspects were not always listening to custody staff when being explained their right and entitlements at the desk on booking-in, be that out of confusion or ill-feeling towards the police, and therefore benefited from being reminded:

They're not really listening to what the sergeant's saying, they're thinking about either what they have done or what they haven't done, they're angry because they haven't done it, or they're angry with themselves, so you know, they're not really thinking about what the sergeant's saying at the desk (Graham, DO, B)

This observation was supported by a female suspect who explained that she closed her “*ears when it comes to the police, law, all of that*” as she has “*never liked police*” so she switched off when being spoken to by custody staff at the desk (Kayleigh, Detainee, A). However, in her cell she was prepared to listen to information coming from a more neutral source, i.e. the animations, saying that she “*might as well just watch them*”, even if just to alleviate “*boredom*” (Kayleigh, Detainee, A). Similarly, suspect Dean also watched them to alleviate boredom, noting that “*anything's better than nothing*” (Dean, Detainee, A) and consequently both perceived the animations as a positive intervention which had provided them with a greater understanding of custody.

Additionally, the giving of information about suspect rights is inevitably an individualised process, meaning that how much detail and which details COs provided when running through a suspect's rights thus varied in depth and explanation, making further information to fill in any gaps important, such as through the IGs. For example, whilst some COs covered only the “*main rights*” (Caroline, DO, Site B) - i.e. if a suspect would like someone informed of their arrest, a solicitor and to read PACE Code C - others went into greater depth including information about what would happen whilst they were there and what the suspect was entitled to, such as food and drink, a shower, medical care, a blanket, a book, and time outside. Moreover, as this interviewee notes, staff are only human and sometimes made mistakes, such as missing out important information about someone's rights and entitlements:

But occasionally, being humans, we do forget to mention things to people sometimes. Whereas if that video gets played, we know it's definitely been mentioned to them. So, that way, it could actually help us comply a little bit more with the College of Policing. (Jason, CO, Site B)

Therefore, staff and suspects perceived the IGs to not only reinforce the information provided by COs and other staff but, significantly, participants recognised how the IGs went further by including information which may have been missed, skipped over or overlooked by some COs, and potentially presenting this information in a more accessible format, whilst also meeting with wider expectations of staff, such as by the College of Policing.

When asked in what ways did the animations improve their understanding of custody, this suspect responded:

Because it's... with the animated video, it's not too... it's simple for you to understand, you know, when you go and be processed, they explain this and this and this and you sort of think oh. But when you sit in your jail cell and you watch the animated videos, it... it sort of explains more than what they explained to make you understand it more. So, that's good... It lets you know more than what they let you know [at the custody desk]. Because you will have thought that they'd tell you everything, but in the animated videos it tells you more. (Kayleigh, Detainee, A)

Conversely, some custody staff were defensive and resistant, as they felt the IGs merely repeated what they already explained to suspects and therefore perceived them as redundant.

Female DO says “*We already tell them all that though. What is the point of the animations?*” (Obs. Site B, Day 4)

However, one CO saw how the IGs reinforcing the information provided by them to suspects, could be a benefit to staff too:

it's good for us, because then obviously we've covered everything and abided by our rules and our codes of practice, so yeah, I think it's of great benefit to detainees and to us. (Rae, CO, B)

Detainees also provided examples of how engaging with the IGs improved their understanding of particular parts of the custody process they were less familiar with, such as how long they may be in custody and potential case outcomes, and rights and entitlements they were not previously aware of, such as access to healthcare, time in the exercise yard, a shower, religious materials, reading materials etc., as this suspect explained:

It just made you aware of like the things that you actually have maybe like a right to. Like time outside, it said something like that. Didn't know that was a thing. Like a prayer mat... Obviously like food and drink and stuff, like that is fair enough. But yeah, it just makes you aware of other things that people, not necessarily me, but other people might need. (Sasha, Detainee, Site A)

When asked 'to what extent did the animations improve your understanding of police custody?', Dean responded with:

yeah, there was quite a few bits and pieces in there. Well, the healthcare thing and that, I didn't know about that. (Dean, Detainee, Site A)

Detention Officer Maria, provided another example of how the IGs can elicit greater suspect understanding of particular parts of the custody process, in regard to the pressures staff may be facing and the speed at which they can respond to their requests, as a result:

I think it is quite a help, because it's informative, but at the same time, when it says about, for example, food and drink being offered at certain mealtimes, it did say if you want anything in between, ask for it, but be aware that people might be busy, and they might be... and I thought that was quite good, because we do try and feed and water people as much as we can if they ask for it, but sometimes it's just not... you can't do that. At least that actually shows that you have the right to ask for it, but just be aware that things take time. (Maria, DO, B)

By having a greater understanding of the police's role in custody and their busyness, suspects may be able to make more informed choices, such as not 'kicking off' because they felt they were being ignored or treated unfairly.

Dignity, choice and rights:

In this pilot, it was intended that detainee dignity would be enhanced by enabling more appropriate autonomous choices (Skinns et al., 2020; Skinns and Sorsby, 2019). These include decisions about which of their due process rights and entitlements, suspects request and when. The two most prominent examples of this in the research were when the IGs were perceived to influence autonomous decision-making and requests for legal representation and appropriate adults, and to a lesser extent L&D. Firstly, engaging with the IGs allowed some suspects to make a more informed decision as to whether to request legal advice. This was important because staff in the research recognised that their role was not to persuade or advise suspects about legal representation and they also varied in the way they delivered this information to suspects, which seemed to inhibit uptake:

Male CO asks the detainee "*would you like to exercise your right to a solicitor?*" When the detainee responds "*no*", the CO continues with other questions without explaining that it is free and independent legal advice. (Obs. Site B, Day 3)

Male CO asks "*Would you like a solicitor?*" the detainee replies "*no thank you*" so the CO explains that "*it is completely free and won't keep you here any longer*" – then the detainee agrees to one. (Obs. Site B, Day 3)

Though not persuasive, the IGs more fully explained custodial legal advice in a factual way, for example noting that requesting a solicitor is not an admission of guilt, that solicitors are impartial and there to represent the suspect, and that they can change their mind at any point. The IGs therefore provided suspects with an opportunity to more fully consider their initial decision after being booked-in, during which they may not have fully listened or staff may have provided incomplete information. A female DO suggested that some suspects were unsure whether they had requested a solicitor or not during booking-in, most likely because of the previously discussed initial shock

of being in custody impacting their concentration and awareness, and that watching the animations resulted in more suspects enquiring after one:

I have noticed a lot more people obviously have been enquiring about solicitors, and just saying, "Have I got a solicitor?" (Sadie, DO)

For similar reasons i.e. because the role of the AA had been more fully explained to suspects as well as who was entitled to have one, there was also evidence of a perceived increase in suspects checking if they could have an AA present during police interviews, as a result of engaging with the IGs:

we did also see an uptake in requests for someone else to be present at the interview... we wouldn't tell the person that didn't meet the threshold about appropriate adults because it just doesn't apply to them necessarily. But because we don't ask the questions, you know, we don't know every vulnerability that someone has. So, when you watch the videos and, you know, you say, need a little bit of support then, you know, we can offer you appropriate adults, friends, family, those kinds of things. (Manager 2)

That the animations encouraged suspects to check if they needed an AA, had further potential benefits in that, as the Manager quote above notes, it may have encouraged a further conversation about someone's potential vulnerabilities and for them to share information about this they had not previously disclosed. To a lesser degree there was evidence that the IGs had improved suspects' access to L&D services. For example, suspect Dave requested to speak to L&D immediately after having watched the animations for a second time. Such outcomes may improve detainee dignity through improved autonomous choices, as well as the safeguarding of that dignity and suspects rights entitlements by the presence of AAs and legal advisors, who can act as a check and balance on police powers in custody.

Staff and suspects also recognised how including information in the IGs on issues such as the pixelation of the toilet on CCTV and entitlements such as a shower, menstrual products and a menopause kit, also enhanced detainee dignity. Though the research showed staff consistently informed suspects of the pixelation of the toilet and their right to a shower, Rae (CO) recognised that some staff may be more hesitant or embarrassed to inform female suspects of their right to menstrual products and

menopause kits. When asked if they felt that the IGs could have an impact on detainees' dignity, Rae responded:

Absolutely, because I don't think we make it clear enough to say, the older women, my age and older, about the menopause box. I think a lot of us find it quite rude to just say to random women, would you like a menopause kit, so at least this is done in a more dignified manner. Sanitary items, I know we've probably... it's an uncomfortable thing to address, the fact that we perhaps do have the medic if there's something they don't feel comfortable to speak to us about, L&D. So, it's there for them to see in private and they can consider it, and we don't have to have that difficult conversation at the desk with male officers buzzing around and, you know, people that they don't feel comfortable with. (Rae, CO, Site B)

Whilst some suspects and staff recognised how the IGs may have impacted on detainee dignity, others felt that this was not the case as “*there's no dignity in there*” (Dean, Detainee, Site B), with three of seven detainee interviewees agreeing with this. Some staff were also uncertain of the impact the IGs could have on dignity.

In relation to actual dignity for them, I'm not sure, to be honest with you, how much it would improve. (Manager 3)

Amongst those that did not see the benefits of the IGs for detainee dignity, there was a general consensus that even though this was so, the IGs did improve suspects' understanding of custody which was important in itself.

DO Robert summed up the findings in response to the question ‘to what extent do you feel that the animations would improve detainee dignity?’. As shown in the quotation here, he notes the possibilities of enhancing dignity, autonomy and a sense of control for suspects, based on the information provided in the IGs, but that this could easily be undermined if staff did not then act on any requests suspects made, based on the information provided:

I think, from an individual's perspective, at least they're armed with information that they may not have already had by watching the videos. They know what to expect. They know, in very general terms, how they're going to be treated, and

what should and shouldn't happen. So, it gives them a little bit of armour, almost, to think right, I know this isn't going to happen, I know I'll have some rights, I know I'm not going to be kept in for three days, because the video says it's 24 hours. I know I can have my solicitor. So, I think it will help some people to feel that they've got some control, because they've got a little bit of awareness and knowledge. So, an individual will feel better. It's still up to all the staff who are working with them to act on what the people are then asking. Rather than being dismissive of that, and that's going to be quite a step, because if you have the knowledge, and you ask for something, and it's dismissed or you're ignored, then your feelings of respect and dignity will be lower, possibly, than if you didn't even know what your rights were, because you're being dismissed, ignored. (Robert, DO, Site A).

In other words, the enhancing of detainee dignity depends on the IGs being offered in the first place and then on staff's availability and willingness to help with any subsequent requests made. As alluded to in Section 3.1.2 above, the offering of the IGs depended amongst other things on busyness and the attitudes of staff towards detainees and whether they are seen as deserving of such information and help. Similar challenges were also found with the delivery of the rights and entitlement. For example, during observation, a senior CO complained about their being too many rights available to suspects and in particular too many expectations about showers being provided:

The CO complains about all the things which they are expected to offer and provide detainees "these days". She complains that detainees shouldn't be offered showers unless they are there for 24 hours or going to court, not once they have arrived – she is annoyed that "they" [referring to higher-ups] are pushing showers and expecting them to offer a shower to detainees as soon as they arrive. They see it as their [detainees] problem if they haven't showered that day. The CO notes that she has been up since 5am and has showered and brushed her teeth, so detainees should have been capable of doing the same. (Obs. Site A, Day 8)

Hence, some detainees were made to wait hours for a shower, having requested one multiple times. This was partly because of staff busyness, but combined with certain

staff members' unwillingness to escort a detainee to the shower. In one case, two female DOs did not feel comfortable escorting a male detainee to the shower, who had been arrested for harassment and the male DO on duty did not see it as "his job" to provide such an entitlement. Therefore, it was only when a male CO was later informed of this and had availability to escort this detainee himself, which was not typically a CO's role, that the detainee was provided with a shower.

Some staff reflected that whilst they would like to offer detainees all their entitlements, sometimes they were not able to due to staffing shortages:

We do struggle, in all honesty with that, because of a lack of staff, and if it's really, really busy out there and chaotic, it's very difficult to get people down for a shower. (Jason, CO, Site B)

I think what we're lacking is the staff to some... to provide what we're perhaps promising in the videos (Rae, CO, Site B)

In sum, the IGs, suspects' rights and entitlements and the dignity afforded by the IGs were all available, in theory, but this did not mean that all of these were necessarily available in practice, with this coming down to the availability, attitudes and willingness of the staff to implement them.

3.4 Proof of concept

Staff and suspects expressed clear support for the continued use of IGs in the future, albeit with some adaptations to the implementation process. Managers and other staff suggested that as the process of implementation became habitual to staff and an everyday part of the job, they would witness more success in terms of consistent implementation and staff support in the future. However, for this to be a success, it was viewed that the IGs should be used, not for all suspects, but for the benefit of those new to custody and those particularly vulnerable or unfamiliar with it. In other words, there was a need to target the IGs at those most likely to use and benefit from them. As this manager noted, this more targeted approach would also limit the demand on staff and encourage buy-in too:

when I first started this project, it was having a mind that we would play the video or videos, or animations if you want to call it that, to all detained people.

But ... it might actually be that we change that decision, and we're more targeted in the use of it against the individual's needs, which again, will then reduce workload on staff and support in the buy-in of that. (Manager 4)

Most suspects interviewed, similarly felt that continuing to provide others' access to the IGs would be beneficial, especially for individuals unfamiliar with custody:

I think everyone should be shown it when they come into custody, as long as... if they're not aggressive and whatever. If they just want to go to sleep, let them go to sleep. But everyone should have a watch of it, especially if you've only been in here a couple of times. Some people know the law through and through, don't they? But like myself, I'm... yeah. Yeah. (Dean, Detainee, A)

This continued use of the IGs was justified by their perceived benefits discussed in Section 3.3.2, in terms of calming and distracting suspects, improving their understanding of key rights and entitlements, and improving potential access to AAs, legal advice and also to a lesser extent L&D, with this also enhancing opportunities for detainee dignity rooted in autonomy.

It was also justified by the quality of the development process and content of the IGs. In interviews with two managers, they talked about the benefits of having worked with academics and others to develop much higher quality guides, than if the police had tried to develop something of this nature on their own. Consequently, they felt that custody staff were more likely to support the IGs, owing to their enhanced credibility, and suspects were more likely to benefit from them the higher quality information they included, both currently and in the future, as they have been developed by experts and backed by research evidence:

There's credibility with the research that's developed, and then, as we said, sometimes taking staff along a journey as to why we're doing things is sometimes tricky from a policing perspective. But if it can be backed by people who can talk from an academic point of view as well, it really does help enforce that message. (Manager 4)

For us, the only negatives have been a cultural issue rather than a contents issue. The comments that I receive about the actual contents have always

been really good. Yeah, and you know, we plan to continue to use it and print more leaflets and carry on with it. (Manager 2)

Managers perceived the animations as a positive step forward in Norfolk and Suffolk Police aims to ensure greater suspect understanding, autonomous decision-making and dignity, and improved treatment of suspects. Additionally, managers believe the animations could be used to demonstrate the successes of the video technology introduced into the cells in these two police force areas and to therefore enable them and their partner organisations to continue developing additional videos about other matters of relevance to suspects:

And since these animations, we've... and we've spoken about this to other areas of business including community safety, and we've now had some short videos from alcohol and drug partnership people that we're now playing where that's appropriate as well. So, utilising the methodology that we're using in terms of the animations from a policing point of view, we're able to deliver partner messages as well. (Manager 4)

Two male COs in Site A “could also see a future in which all police forces have screens in cells like Norfolk and Suffolk for sharing information of this kind” (Obs. Site A, Day 3), thereby reflecting managers' wishes to promote the IGs and the video technology beyond Norfolk and Suffolk Police:

And I think that this is a really strong example of how we've thought outside the box to solve an issue that we identified, and it's still a great... for the good of policing, full stop, really. ... Because we were the first to use the... this kind of equipment and that... as you said, it's now within the Home Office design guide for custody that all new builds must consider this as part of their build. (Manager 4)

In other words, the implementation and evaluation had established a proof of concept and participants were positive about future adoption of the IGs in other parts of England and Wales, alongside the video technology that supported their delivery.

4. Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions about the research questions

To conclude, we return to the research questions (RQs) set out in Section 1.2, addressing each one in turn. These are as follows:

1. To what extent were the animations and leaflets perceived to be implemented, as intended, and with as many suspects as possible? What hindered or helped this process?
2. What were staff and suspect perceptions of the animations and leaflets? For example in terms of their style and content, value and utility? What features did they appreciate and which did they regard as being in need of improvement?
3. In what ways, when, to what extent and why did suspects engage with the animations and/or leaflets? For example, did they watch and/or read them in their entirety and at what point in their detention? What motivated them to engage with them?
4. To what extent did staff and suspects perceive the animations and/or leaflets to impact on suspects, such as on the uptake of rights and entitlements and on detainee dignity, particularly on the potential for autonomy and autonomous decision-making? How did this come about and which rights, entitlements and forms of dignity were impacted the most, if at all?
5. To what extent have the animations and leaflets established a proof of concept, justifying continued use either in Norfolk/Suffolk Police or elsewhere in the future?

In relation to RQ 1, though certain key operational and managerial staff showed great enthusiasm for the pilot, the IGs were not implemented as fully and with as many suspects as intended, with suspects having to opt in to receive them, rather than to opt out, meaning also that suspects who accessed the IGs tended to be first-timers, those less familiar with custody and vulnerable adults. This change in the implementation process was driven by staff availability to deliver the IGs, as well as attitudes towards detainees and the pilot, and willingness to help. However, as discussed below, this change in approach also led to the recommendation that

questions of suspect suitability should be central to how the IGs are implemented in the future. In addition, at the time of writing, there was an ongoing review of custody shift patterns in Norfolk and Suffolk Police, the aim of which was to improve staff capacity. This is likely to offer a further solution to staff concerns about the extra demand on their time presented by sharing the IGs with suspects.

In answer to RQ2, it was found that staff and suspects were positive about the content format and accessibility of the IGs. They were viewed as informative, clear and concise, covering appropriate content, as well as being viewed as accessible, simple to understand, jargon-free, and thus suitable for a wide audience, including for those who were neurodivergent, had learning disabilities, mental health conditions and/or low literacy levels. The accessibility features of the IGs appreciated by participants included the use of subtitles, the pace and length of the IGs, and the format of the IGs as both leaflets and animations, with only minor suggestions being made to improve them, such as to address missing information about how those with hearing impairments should communicate with staff.

It was difficult to fully ascertain how many suspects were offered access to and engaged with the IGs (RQ3), though the available data shows that at least 71 suspects (of the 1435 detained in police custody during the pilot periods) were offered access and 38 watched the animations, mostly watching either all four animations or animations 1 and 2. By and large, suspect engagement with the IGs took place in their cells shortly after they arrived into police custody, i.e. at a point at which they were better able to absorb the information after the stresses of being booked-in, though there were some exceptions to this. Detainees were primarily motivated to engage with the IGs out of a desire to know more about their rights and entitlements and because of the potential benefits this may yield for their ability to cope with police custody, and because the IGs provided a means of alleviating their boredom and distracting them from the stresses of being detained. However, whether they engaged with them depended on staff, such as on staff perceptions of suspect suitability for the IGs.

In terms of the perceived impacts of the IGs, which addresses RQ4, these were found to be on: suspect behaviour, with the IGs having a calming and distracting effect, which staff sometimes used to their advantage; suspect understanding of custody processes

and any rights and entitlements they were less familiar with, such as to a shower and to use the exercise yard, which suspects might have missed or may have been omitted by staff during booking-in; and on detainee dignity, particularly in terms of improving their ability to understand their rights and thus make autonomous decisions, such as about legal advice, AAs and to a lesser extent about L&D services. The IGs also supported the more sensitive delivery of information relevant to detainee dignity, such as about menstrual products or menopause packs, which staff may not have known to whom to deliver it and which some staff may have found more difficult to deliver.

Finally, in answer to RQ5, it was found that staff and suspects expressed clear support for the continued use of IGs in the future, albeit with some adaptations to the implementation process. For this to be a success, the IGs should be used, not for all suspects, but for those new to custody and those particularly vulnerable or unfamiliar with it, thereby targeting the IGs at those most likely to use and benefit from them, as well as limiting the demand on staff and encouraging staff buy-in.

This continued use was justified by participants in terms of the perceived effects of the IGs, as discussed in the paragraph above. In other words, the implementation and evaluation established a proof of concept for the IGs and participants were positive about future adoption of them in other parts of England and Wales, alongside the video technology that supported their delivery.

4.2 Discussion

These findings indicate four salient points for discussion. First, they demonstrate the importance of suspects' due process rights and entitlements, but also the limitations of (vulnerable) suspects' understanding of them. Particularly, since the Maxwell Confait Case that drove the introduction of PACE, there has been no doubt of the need for there to be a clearly specified and publicly known set of rules about police powers and suspects rights, which are available to both parties to read, understand, access and apply and which also support the principle of legality and also 'good' police custody (Skinns and Sorsby, 2019). Yet, over time it has also been recognised that vulnerable suspects may particularly struggle with understanding what is currently available to them, either because the brief notice of rights and entitlements is too brief or because PACE Code C is too dense and legalistic, which was confirmed in the present research.

As such, anything that enables all suspects to better understand and access these rights, as the IGs in the present project have been shown to do, is another step towards avoiding the miscarriages of justice that drove the introduction of PACE and its Codes of Practice and towards enabling improvement in adherence to established rules on the giving of rights and entitlements information. The IGs in the present project go even further still, benefiting vulnerable suspects in particular in improving their understanding of their rights and entitlements. They were deliberately created to be and recognised by participants as accessible, simple to understand and thus suitable for a wide audience, including vulnerable suspects.

Second, the present project adds to the existing research, briefly examined in Section 1, which has considered why these due process rights exist sometimes only in theory, rather than fully in practice and how failures with full adherence to police policies and codes of practice arise. Suspects' understanding or misunderstandings of these rights and who they are for, provides one set of barriers. As shown in the present research, these include some of their own presumptions about being a 'regular' and thus not in need of information about their rights. However, as shown in the research, delivery of rights also hinges significantly on the police, including on their availability informed by their beliefs and attitudes about how busy they are and what they are willing to prioritise. No doubt, at points, staff were too busy to encourage uptake of the IGs or to act on requests made by suspects having engaged with them, but the culture of particular facilities and teams within them was a further crucial barrier. For example, some staff did not necessarily view all detainees as deserving the extra support provided by the IGs, nor did they think that detainees should be empowered to ask for their rights and entitlements and they did not want to have to deliver these 'extra' requests either. In some cases, this culture of custody made staff reluctant to prioritise encouraging uptake of the IGs, but in other instances there was more active resistance and staff deliberately not engaging with the pilot at all, such as by not reading their emails or watching the animations. Simply put, they did not want the small amount of extra work that the IGs imposed on them and resultantly disengaged entirely.

This leads to a third set of issues worthy of discussion, namely, organisational change in the police and how this happens or not. The present pilot study showed how crucial key individuals are for driving change, given that a few such individuals - both managers and operational staff - were the ones who drove the implementation process

and any of its successes. It also showed how important it is for changes to “make sense” to operational staff which (Bacon, 2014: 115), for most staff, the present project did, albeit that for some it did not, such as those who saw the pilot as an imposition by managers, the aims of which they had not fully understood, in part because they had not read their emails about it. Furthermore, the pilot demonstrated, much like other studies examining organisational change (e.g. Chan, 1996), some of the circumstances in which change is inhibited. Police culture - i.e. the informal beliefs, values, strategies and tactics that comprise the ‘commonsense’ of police work and which drive perceptions of the ‘way that things are done around here’ (Holdaway, 1983:2) - is notoriously difficult to change, particularly when shifts in police culture (the habitus) are not simultaneously accompanied by changes to police policies and rules (the field), as well as perhaps to the material conditions. This suggests that in order for changes to police custody practices to be effective, such as for staff to encourage uptake of the IGs, such changes should be incorporated into police policies and custody role descriptions, as well as into the custody estate. This might help bring the field in line with the habitus and vice versa, and ensure that such changes are not just expected by managers on an informal or goodwill basis.

Fourth, the present project also demonstrates how the giving of information about rights and entitlements is closely connected to dignity rooted in autonomy. As prior research has demonstrated, police custody is not by nature a place readily associated with suspects having access to opportunities for autonomous decision-making (Skinns and Sorsby, 2019). Yet, it is possible, including for vulnerable suspects, particularly with appropriate encouragement, in this case in the form of accessible IGs. The present project therefore provides further evidence of the importance of and how police forces may strive for more dignified treatment of detainees, and for ‘good’ police custody.

4.3 Recommendations

This project yields a number of recommendations, the most critical of which are highlighted in bold.

1. **It is recommended that the IGs to police custody for adult suspects be made available for use in other police force areas, including via tablets or video technology, if available.** If adopted, it is a requirement that police forces

notify the project lead, Layla Skinns (L.Skinns@sheffield.ac.uk), of this, so that she can monitor uptake.

2. If the IGs are adopted by other police forces it is recommended that they consider who is most suited to accessing the IGs and thus who will benefit the most from them, taking account of suspects':
 - Prior experience of custody and how recent this is (e.g. first-timers or those who have not been arrested recently may be more suitable), though police forces should consider carefully any problems of restricting use to 'first-timers', not 'regulars', given the unhelpful effects of these labels identified in other research (see Dehaghani and Newman, 2023).
 - Vulnerability (e.g. whether suspects are PACE vulnerable or are perhaps vulnerable in other ways, as there is no need to restrict offering the IGs only to those who are PACE vulnerable);
 - Familiarity with custody (e.g. if someone is a foreign national and provided language barriers do not prohibit them from engaging with the IGs).
3. **The IGs are not recommended for use with children and young people**, as they were not designed with this group of suspects in mind, meaning they may not be age-appropriate and key information about appropriate adults (e.g. who may be a child's parent) have been omitted from the IGs.
4. Currently, the IGs are also only recommended for suspects whose comprehension of English or Romanian is sufficient to be able to understand the more technical and legalistic aspects of the IGs, albeit that this has been kept to a minimum. It is hoped that the IGs can be translated into more languages in the future, based on any localised language needs reported to the project lead by police forces adopting the IGs.
5. **It is recommended that the animations are played to suspects in the cells shortly after they have been booked-in and had a moment to calm down and collect themselves**, but near enough to the start of their detention, so that they can make time-sensitive requests for any relevant rights and entitlements, such as legal representation.

- 6. Prior information must be provided and consent sought before playing animations to suspects. Under no circumstances, should this not be the case.**
7. In terms of the practicalities of adopting the leaflets, it is recommended that a small budget is provided by police forces to cover professional printing costs, with a view to the leaflets being reused by multiple suspects.
8. In terms of the animations it is recommended that they be played either on tablets or on video technology in the cells, if available. For the latter, it should be an option for any clocks showing on the video screens to be turned off and how to do this should be explained to suspects (e.g. if they need to ask staff to do this on their behalf).
9. If using video technology, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to how the animations will be played, for example, in terms of:
 - The location of any computer terminals used to play the animations, ensuring that these are in close proximity to the usual desks of staff who will be playing them.
 - Whether the animations are played as a single integrated recording with appropriate gaps in between, as was adopted in Site B in the present project. Or, whether each animation is played, individually, as was the case in Site A. Each option has pros and cons for staff and suspects, which need to be considered. For example, a single integrated video is better for staff in terms of minimising additional work, but less favourable to suspects who have less choice about which of the animations they watch.
10. If adopted, care should also be taken in preparing staff for this small adjustment to their working practices and in communicating to them in different formats (e.g. emails, briefings and training) about the aims of the IGs, expected changes to staff practices and their role in adopting them, so that there are greater opportunities for these changes to start to “make sense” to them (Bacon, 2014: 115).

11. Before fully adopting these changes, it is also recommended that there is a trial period beforehand, involving some of the staff who will be fully adopting the IGs later (e.g. with a single team of staff in one custody facility), thus giving opportunities to identify any challenges and make suitable adjustments before the IGs are rolled out further.
12. **If adopted, it is also recommended that this is not just on an informal basis, rather police forces should look at ways of integrating the IGs more fully into their policies and procedures,** such as through local police custody policies and role descriptions for COs and DOs. This might include guidance on: who is responsible for the IGs and what these responsibilities are; the timing of the giving of the IGs around other custody processes; how they will be played, including via placement of PACE suspects in video technology enabled cells. For example, Norfolk and Suffolk Police revised their custody operating procedures to ensure all PACE detainees are placed in a cell with the video technology.

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Appendix 1 - Photos of the technology used by Norfolk and Suffolk Police



Appendix 2 - Table of when the data was collected in Norfolk and Suffolk Police

Site A	Date:
Day 1	07/11/24
Day 2	07/11/24
Day 3	12/11/24
Day 4	15/11/24
Day 5	21/11/24
Day 6	22/11/24
Day 7	28/11/24
Day 8	29/11/24

Site B	Date:
Day 1	14/01/25
Day 2	17/01/25
Day 3	23/01/25
Day 4	30/01/25
Day 5	31/01/25
Day 6	06/02/25
Day 7	07/02/25