National Appropriate Adult Network

# Effective appropriate adults: what does it take?

Chris Bath - Chief Executive

1

## Actually vulnerable

?

2

## Recorded as vulnerable

**~10%**

of adults

3

## AA need recorded

**9%**

of adult detentions

4

## AA attended

**~4 in 5**

5

## Who attended

**?**

Not in national data

6

## Able to act

**?**

Hard to measure

**Voluntary interviews: no national data on vulnerability or AAs**

Source: Home Office, Police custody and pre-charge bail, year ending March 2025; NAAN Vulnerability Identification Tracker.

# Adults in police custody: what proportion have a mental health condition or learning disability?

Under 10%

10–20%

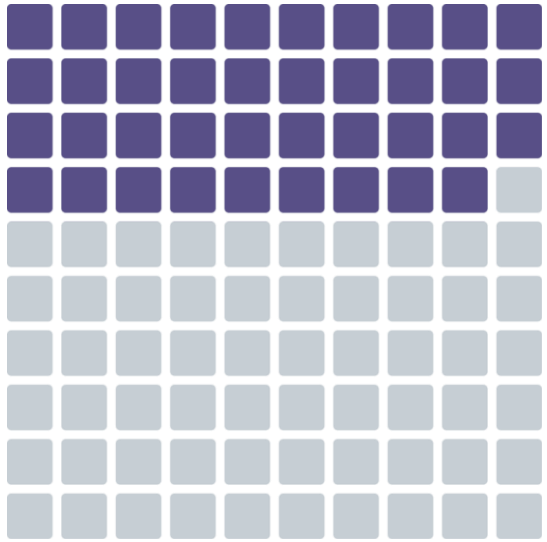
20–30%

30–40%

Over 40%

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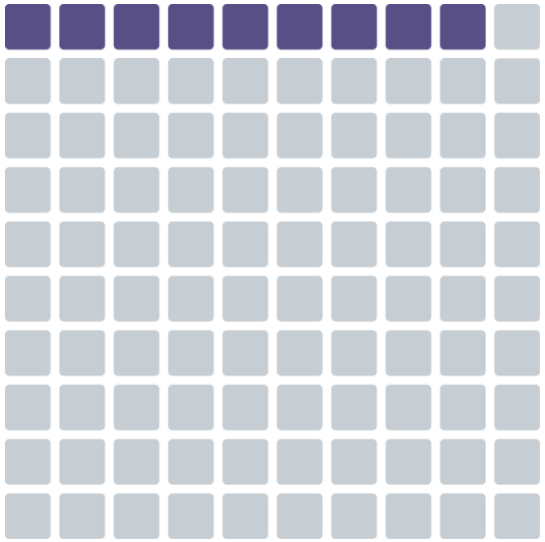
# 39%



**mental health condition or learning disability**

One major study: McKinnon and Grubin, 2013

# 9%



**police recorded the need for an AA**

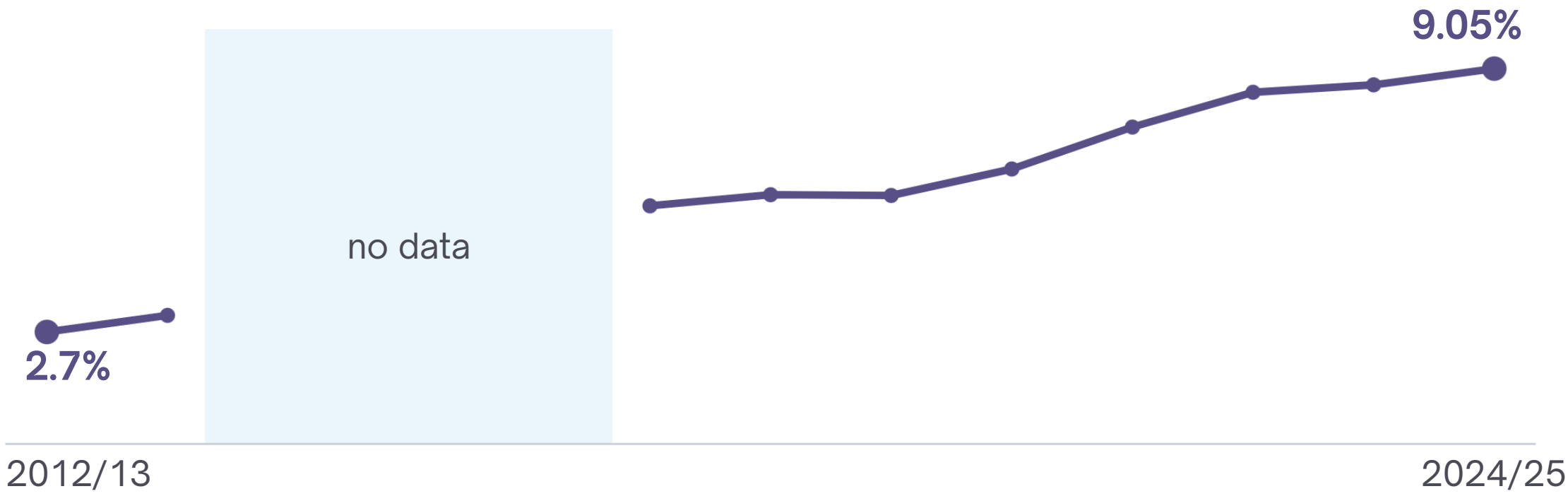
2024/25

Source: McKinnon, I. and Grubin, D. (2013) Health screening of people in police custody: evaluation of current police screening procedures in London, UK. European Journal of Public Health, 23(3).

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# 2.7% (2012/13) → 9.05% (2024/25)

## Adult detentions where police recorded the need for an AA, England and Wales



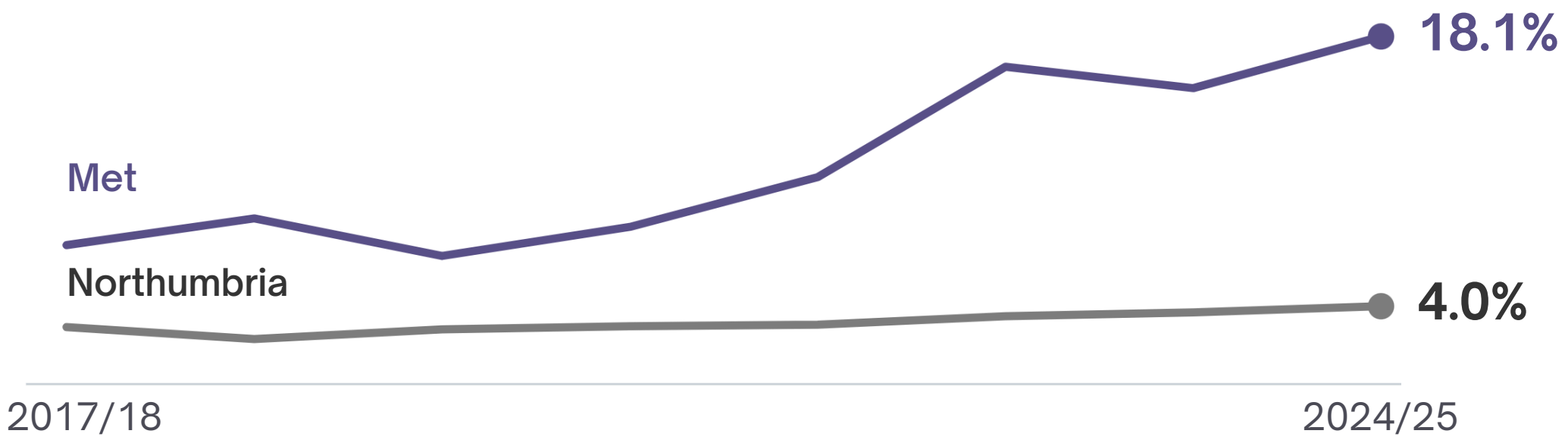

Highest: Lincolnshire, Cleveland, Derbyshire (about 20%) · Lowest force: 2.7%

Sources: There to Help (2015); NAAN FOI data; Home Office ADR; NAAN Vulnerability Identification Tracker.

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# Met 18.1% · Northumbria 4.0% (2024/25): same tool

## Adult detentions where police recorded the need for an AA




**Asking healthcare or L&D whether an AA is needed? There's already a reason to suspect**

Source: NAAN analysis of police FOI data (to 2022/23) and Home Office Annual Data Requirement (2023/24 to 2024/25).

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# Voluntary interviews: AA need recorded 4.8% vs 8.7% in custody (2022/23); still no national AA data




AA data in voluntary interviews today: none

Source: NAAN (2023) Voluntary interviews report.

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# What should be in place for children & adults (examples)

- ☑ Available 24/7, whatever the offence or postcode
- ☑ Normally there within an hour, never more than two
- ☑ A clear, agreed way to request an AA
- ☑ Support for the whole detention, not just the interview
- ☑ Well trained (PACE and TACT) and properly supervised
- ☑ Independent of the police
- ☑ Voluntary interviews covered
- ☑ An escalation route when it goes wrong

**24/7?**

**Within the hour?**

**Free to download:** NAAN National Standards
**NAAN members:** Guidance for commissioners, scheme leaders and AAs.

Source: NAAN National Standards

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## Children

- A legal duty since 1998
- Still about 1 in 10 waited over six hours (2024/25)

## Adults

- No duty since PACE in 1984
- Forces are half as likely to record the need where there’s no organised scheme

Sources: Crime and Disorder Act 1998 s.38; Home Office, Police custody and pre-charge bail, year ending March 2025 (13 forces); There to Help 2 (2019).

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# Towards a duty for adults

**1984**
PACE: police must secure an AA

**1998**
Duty for children

**2015**
Home Secretary commissions NAAN review

**2017**
Councils: no new duty without funding

**2018**
Voluntary partnership agreement

**2025**
Policing minister asks for options

**2025**
PCC abolition announced

**2026**
Home Office to explore AA provision

**Now**
Police governance bill being drafted

**2028**
PCCs replaced

**Today about three-quarters of force areas rely on policing money for adult AAs**
**NPCC custody lead supports a statutory duty**

Sources: NAAN, Statutory provision (appropriateadult.org.uk); Home Office letter to NAAN, March 2026.

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# Often a parent, not a trained AA

- Code C starts with the parent; the custody officer decides who acts
- Free video (under 10 minutes), linked from Home Office guidance
- Poster with QR code for custody
- Inspectors check police give parents independent information




vimeo.com/appropriateadult/video

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# What AAs tell us they need from custody

## 1. Getting in

- ☑ Requested through the scheme's system, not favourite AAs
- ☑ Called at booking-in
  Code C 3.15
- ☑ Invited to come now, not at interview time
- ☑ Let in promptly
- ☑ Safe parking and route

## 2. Being there

- ☑ A professional place to wait, apart from custody staff
- ☑ A private room
  Code C 3.18
- ☑ The full custody record, including the record of vulnerability factors
  Code C 2.4 and 1.4

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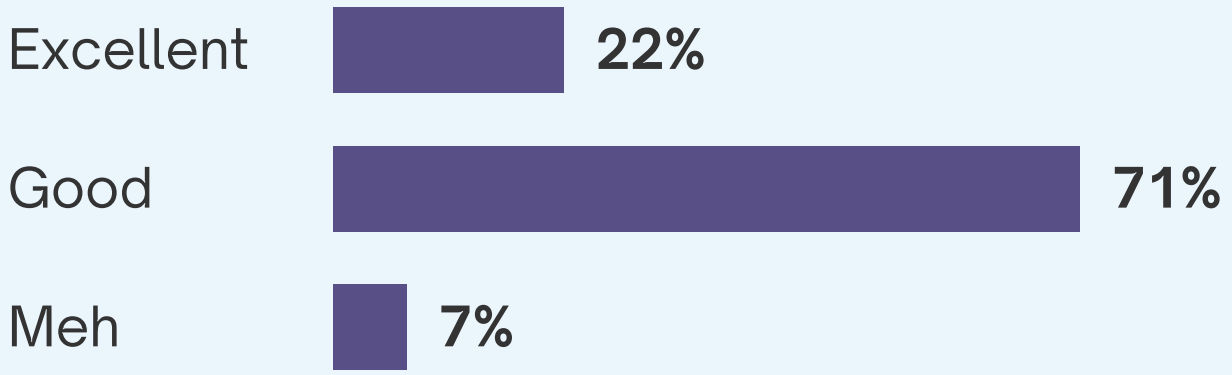
# What AAs tell us they need from custody

## 3. The whole detention

- ☑ Every PACE procedure, including charge, bail and out-of-court resolutions
- ☑ Challenge on grounds for detention at any time
- ☑ Solicitor requests acted on
  Code C 6.5A
- ☑ No rights-only cover

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# This conference, 2024: 93% rated the relationship good or excellent




**Your words, most common first**

1. Challenge
2. Prompt
3. Balanced

Working like colleagues?

**Closer to the solicitor than the custody nurse**

Professional respect, yes; part of the team, no

Source: Slido polls, NPCC Custody Conference 2024 (73 votes; 89 word-cloud responses from 55 participants).

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# Northumbria

Low use of AAs → Engaged with the scheme → AA scheme invited to train officers

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1 **Look up your force on the tracker**
(NAAN home page, scroll down)

2 **Put the vulnerability videos into custody training**

3 **Link every parent to the video and guides**

Visit NAAN's page for police

web: appropriateadult.org.uk

email: chrisbath@appropriateadult.org.uk

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