

Centre, including doctors and solicitors. I was initially only authorised to visit the Holding Centres, and not to sit in on any of the interviews. I eventually managed to persuade the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that both myself and the Deputy Commissioner could sit in on any interview so long as the detainee agreed (with one exception, we were never refused the consent of a detainee). When I first started visiting the Holding Centres, the only surveillance of interrogations was by CCTV, watched by a senior officer (usually an Inspector) seated in another room. In my view, this would never be satisfactory. It was not until some time later that surveillance of interrogations was conducted by both audio and visual means. Both I and Data Param Kumaraswamy (UN Special Rapporteur) came to the conclusion (albeit a conclusion that we each reached in different ways) that any surveillance of interrogations needed to be both audio and visual.

6. Sir Hugh Annesley was succeeded by Ronnie Flanagan in 1996. Ronnie Flanagan had at one time been in charge of the Castlereagh Holding Centre. He was also in favour of my role as Independent Commissioner for the Holding Centres.

#### **Friction Between the RUC and solicitors in Northern Ireland**

7. My first awareness of a suggestion of unprofessional conduct by some solicitors at Holding Centres came from talking to officers in around 1993/1994. My contact with defence solicitors was minimal, as I only came across them when they attended Holding Centres for interviews with their clients. If the defence solicitor was there, I always made an effort to speak to him or her. Around 70% to 80% of interviews were carried out with no solicitor present. I had the impression that complaints made by the RUC regarding the unprofessionalism of solicitors was constant throughout my time as Independent Commissioner. I am not aware of an occasion on which there were more or less complaints.