

## **Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Role Description and Person Specification**

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are volunteers from the local community who, as part of a team, make unannounced visits to police custody suites where people have been arrested and are being held. They monitor how people held in custody are being treated and feedback to the Police and Crime Commissioner. They are a crucial part of reassuring the public that the Police are being independently held to account.

ICVs usually conduct one or two visits a month. However, the amount of time you need to give depends on the area your team covers and travel times. As well as the visits, there are regular ICV panel meetings and training. ICV Panel are usually held quarterly.

There are currently two custody visiting teams in Cambridgeshire who each visit designated police stations in their area. The north group visit custody suites in Peterborough. The south group visit custody suites in Cambridge. Visits are always conducted in pairs.

The key duties of an ICV include:

- making unannounced visits to Police custody suites,
- reporting back on these visits to the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme manager,
- attending quarterly panel meetings,
- undertaking relevant training provided by the OPCC.

## Key Qualities

There are key qualities that all ICVs require to conduct their role effectively. Any applicant or existing Independent Custody Visitor should be able to show these qualities to demonstrate to the Police and Crime Commissioner their suitability to act as an ICV on the Commissioners behalf.

**A concern for the welfare of others** – ICVs main focus should be the welfare of others. While it is not their role to provide direct help and support to detainees, they should be focused on ensuring those who are responsible carry out their duty with the upmost regard for detainees' welfare.

**Impartiality** – ICVs should consider and show respect for the opinions, circumstances and feelings of colleagues and detainees, no matter what their race, religion, position, background, circumstances, status, or appearance. They act honestly and ethically, challenging unprofessional conduct or discriminatory behaviour. An ICV must deal with people as individuals and address their specific needs and concerns.

**Teamwork** – ICVs should work co-operatively with others to get things done, and willingly give help and support to other volunteers. They should be approachable, developing positive working relationships. They should listen carefully and ask questions to clarify understanding, expressing their own views positively and constructively. An ICV should be able to put forward the benefits of a particular approach, keep people informed of progress and manages their expectations. ICVs should be courteous, polite, and considerate, showing empathy and compassion.

**Communication** – ICVs need to communicate ideas and information effectively, both verbally and in writing. An ICV should use language and a style of communication that is appropriate to the situation and people being addressed. An ICV should make sure others understand what is going on. An ICV should act in a confident way when challenged, be able to control emotions and not get emotionally involved in disputes.

**Openness to change** – ICVs should be positive about change, adapting to different ways of working. ICVs should be flexible and open to alternative approaches to solving problems. ICVs are encouraged to make suggestions for change and put forward ideas for improvement.

**Decision making** – ICVs gather, verify, and assess all appropriate and available information to gain an accurate understanding of situations. ICVs should consider a range of possible options before giving clear, timely, justifiable feedback or decisions.