

Essex Independent Custody Visitor Scheme

Role Profile & Recruitment Process

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme is a volunteer programme which all Police and Crime Commissioners in the UK have a statutory responsibility to deliver. The programme is designed to independently monitor the standards of custody suites in police services, and safeguard the welfare of those detained within them. The scheme enables appointed volunteers recruited from within communities to visit police station custody suites, check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. It offers protection to both detainees and police, and reassurance to the wider public. Custody visitors must be 18 years or older.

The role of an independent custody visitor is an important one, and all applicants are asked to consider and confirm their ability to meet the requirements of this role before applying.

Independent Custody Visitors are required to:

- Visit a minimum of two custody suites a month, at varying locations around the county. (Custody visits must always be completed in pairs, and coordinators will liaise with custody visitors to agree an appropriate rota.)
- Conduct visits at various times of day and night, since police custody is operational 24 hours a day.
- Complete and submit a clear report following each visit, detailing the visits they have undertaken and any issues raised or identified according to the Essex ICV reporting framework.
- Raise any issues of urgent or immediate concern expediently with custody staff at the time of the visit.
- Attend scheme group meetings and training sessions whenever possible to provide feedback on visits and the scheme, and ensure training and information is up to date.
- Agree to complete a criminal records bureau check prior to appointment, and every three years thereafter.

Required skills and behaviours:

- ICVs are required to be objective and impartial, and must not involve themselves in the investigative process relating to detainees.
- ICVs must treat all detainees equally and speak to detainees with professionalism and respect.
- ICVs should have the confidence to raise issues as and when they are identified in a custody suite, and challenge custody staff appropriately where necessary.
- ICVs must have the ability to complete clear and comprehensive written reports following visits.

Recruitment Process:

- Once an application has been submitted this will be reviewed by the ICV scheme manager.
- Subject to the application, applicants will be invited for an informal interview at the OPCC offices to discuss the scheme. This is an important opportunity for applicants to find out more about the scheme and their role within it.
- Subject to a successful interview, a standard criminal records bureau check will then be undertaken.

Entry onto the Essex ICV scheme is at the discretion of the Chief Executive of the OPCC and subject to successful vetting and application process.