



Nottinghamshire

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Independent Custody Visiting for Nottinghamshire

Information for Applicants



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Who is the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner?

Nottinghamshire's Police and Crime Commissioner is Paddy Tipping who was elected in November 2012 by the public of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The Commissioner's role is to represent the public and to hold the police to account on their behalf.

The Commissioner works with the Chief Constable and other partners to deliver and improve policing performance, cut crime and antisocial behaviour and continue to build trust and confidence in policing.

The Commissioner is ultimately held to account for performance by the public, every four years, through the ballot box.

If your friend or relative was taken into police custody wouldn't you want to know that they were being treated with respect and dignity?

Independent Custody Visitors are members of the local community who check on the welfare of people in police custody, by visiting custody suites unannounced.

The purpose of custody visiting is to provide an independent oversight of the detention of people held in police custody, by enabling members of the local community to observe, comment and report on the conditions under which persons are detained at police Custody Suites, with a view to securing greater public understanding and confidence in the way police officers carry out their duties with regard to detained persons.

Visits are made in pairs and to ensure the visits are carried out in an impartial and unbiased way, Independent Custody Visitors do not know who they are visiting or why they are there.

Representing various backgrounds and sections of the community, Independent Custody Visitors must be over 18 and have no direct involvement in the Criminal Justice System.

The role of the Independent Custody Visitor is purely voluntary but reimbursement of out of pocket expenses is provided.

We actively seek to recruit people who are under-represented and we value equality and diversity in our volunteer workforce.

The responsibility for custody visiting arrangements lies with each Police and Crime Commissioner in consultation with the Chief Constable. Each Police and Crime Commissioner operates its own scheme according to local arrangements.

The Nottinghamshire Independent Custody Visitors make unannounced visits to the 2 custody suites in Nottinghamshire. The Bridewell, which is the largest and is in the City Centre and Mansfield. The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme are expected to make a minimum of 2 custody visits a month in accordance with a monthly rota.

Wouldn't you want someone to check on you?

The Recruitment Process

It is important, when making appointments, to reflect a cross-section of the community in a particular area and every effort is made to ensure that Independent Custody Visitors are recruited directly from members of the local community. It has been recognised that people from black and ethnic minority communities are currently under-represented within the scheme and therefore applications from these areas would be particularly welcomed.

Magistrates and serving police officers are specifically excluded from becoming Custody Visitors. Other people may also be excluded, particularly if they have direct involvement with the Police or in the Criminal Justice System. The Commissioner wishes to appoint persons who are impartial in the interests of the Scheme's credibility.

How are Independent Custody Visitors selected and trained?

Volunteers wishing to become an Independent Custody Visitor will be required to complete an application form.

If you are shortlisted you will be asked to attend an informal interview. You will need to demonstrate:

- An understanding of the role of an Independent Custody Visitor.
- Commitment to the role.
- Respect for equality and diversity.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Impartiality.

If you are successful at interview you will be asked to provide personal information to enable security vetting to be carried out. We will also require 2 references.

Following vetting clearance you will be invited to attend a half day information/training course organised by the Volunteer Manager.

The training programme is made up of practical and theoretical exercises covering all aspects of custody visiting and is complemented by a set of guidelines and the basic principles of the Police & Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).

A summary of the initial training provided to Independent Custody Visitors:

Background and Context

- The historical development of Independent Custody Visiting.
- Who's who? – the people and organisations involved.

Values, Attitudes & Skills

- Personal qualities required by Independent Custody Visitors.
- Interpersonal skills required.

Procedures and Processes

- Role of the Independent Custody Visitor.
- Procedures at a Custody Suite.
- The visit process.
- Example scenarios and questions.
- Reports.

You will be issued with a Nottinghamshire Police identity card, which you must use when visiting. Further training sessions will be arranged locally and regionally to keep you informed on new developments and to share experiences.

Once appointed as an Independent Custody Visitor you will complete a six month probationary period and then appointments are usually made for a set period, which may be renewable.

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR

ROLE DESCRIPTION

1. To carry out the duties of an Independent Custody Visitor, including visits, in accordance with the scheme's guidelines and the training provided.
2. To arrange visits to designated custody suites with fellow Custody Visitors during allotted periods and/or in accordance with the agreed roster.
3. To undertake weekend and late night visits to designated custody suites.
4. To advise the Volunteer Manager, or the Police & Crime Commissioner, and fellow Custody Visitors of any problems with rostered/planned visits. If required, make arrangements for another Visitor to substitute as necessary.
5. To check on the conditions in which detainees are kept, their health and well-being and that they are receiving their rights and entitlements, with reference to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).
6. Where appropriate, consult detainees custody records to clarify and check any concerns they have raised.
7. To discuss with the Custody Officer any concerns and requests arising from the custody visits and bring to the Custody Officers attention any issue that need to be dealt with.
8. To complete the Independent Custody Visiting Report ensuring that all relevant information is recorded correctly, clearly and concisely and that the copies of the form are sent to the appropriate departments.
9. To attend Independent Custody Visiting Team meetings.
10. To attend initial and on-going training sessions, as appropriate (minimum of one per year).
11. To complete and submit expense claims in accordance with the scheme guidelines.
12. To carry out the duties of an Independent Custody Visitor with regard to the Health and Safety requirements of the scheme.

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

Measure By

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Be at least 18 years of age. | Application |
| 2. Not an officer or employee of the Police & Crime Commissioner or Police Force or a Justice of the Peace | Application |
| 3. Live or work within the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area. | Application |
| 4. Able to communicate well, both verbally and in writing, with a diverse range of people. | Application/
Interview/
Reference |
| 5. Have a knowledge and awareness of diversity and equality issues. | Application/
Interview |
| 6. Able to work as part of a team. | Application/
Interview/
Reference |
| 7. Flexible, reliable and have enough time to carry out the Custody Visiting role. | Interview/
Reference |
| 8. A good listener. | Interview/
Reference |
| 9. Objective, impartial, non-judgemental and able to constructively challenge when necessary | Application/
Interview |
| 10. Able to travel by private or public transport to undertake visits. | Interview |
| 11. Able to maintain confidentiality in relation to detainees and custody visits. | Interview |
| 12. Portray a positive image of themselves and the Police and Crime Commissioner. | Interview |

Desirable Criteria

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Have some knowledge of Custody Visiting | Application/
Interview |
| 2. Have an interest in the rights and welfare of individuals in the Criminal Justice System | Application/
Interview |