Independent Custody Visiting for Nottinghamshire

Information for Applicants

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Who is the Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire?

Nottinghamshire's Police and Crime Commissioner is Caroline Henry who was elected in May 2021 by the communities of 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, but also holds regular public meetings with the Police and Crime Panel.

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 making unannounced visits. ICVs speak with detainees about their health and well-being, if they have been given access to their rights and entitlements and in addition, reporting on the condition of the accommodation.

The purpose of custody visiting is to provide an independent oversight of detention in police custody, by enabling members of the local community to observe, comment and report on their findings. This process helps to secure greater public understanding and confidence in the way police officers carry out their role in a closed area of work.

Visits to custody are made in pairs and to ensure the visits are carried out in an impartial and unbiased way, Independent Custody Visitors do not know the detainee 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: Nottingham 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.

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.
- Confident IT user.

If you are successful at interview, you will be asked to complete a vetting application form and provide original ID documentation to enable a security vetting check to be completed. We will also require references.

Following vetting clearance, you will be invited to attend a half day training course as well as a separate visit to the custody suite. There is an initiative currently underway to design training modules to be delivered directly to each volunteer through E-learning (virtual training), which there will be an expectation for ICVs to complete on a quarterly basis.

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? 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 3 years, which may be renewable.