

## How much time will I be expected to commit?

Visits to the Police Investigation Centres are conducted on a weekly basis but, as you will be allocated to a Panel of visitors in a specific area, the frequency of visits each volunteer undertakes can vary from fortnightly to six weekly.

To be truly independent and impartial it is essential that visits are undertaken over a range of days and timings to ensure public confidence within the community, and you must be willing and able to attend at any time of the day or night (although you will arrange this in advance with your visiting partner). In addition you will be expected to attend quarterly Panel meetings and ad-hoc training.

## Do Independent Custody Visitors get paid?

No. The role of Independent Custody Visitors is voluntary. However, we do value the time commitment shown by our volunteers and therefore pay allowances for reasonable out of pocket expenses such as travelling costs or carer's allowance.

## Suffolk Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

### How to apply

If you would like further information, or an application form, please contact:

**Independent Custody Visiting,  
Scheme Administrator,  
Office of the Suffolk Police and Crime  
Commissioner,  
Portal Avenue,  
Martlesham Heath,  
Ipswich, Suffolk,  
IP5 3QS**

Telephone: **01473 782774**

e-mail: **spcc@suffolk.pnn.police.uk**

Further information is also available on our website:

**[www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk-pcc.gov.uk)**

If you would like to receive a copy of this document in an alternative format please contact us.



## Independent Custody Visiting Scheme



A photograph of the interior of a Police Investigation Centre. It shows a hallway with a grey door on the right and a wall-mounted hatch safe on the left. The hatch safe has a sign that says "HATCH SAFE".

# Have you got what it takes?

Your questions answered

## Introduction

This leaflet is designed to answer your questions about Suffolk's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

The Commissioner is looking for community minded volunteers to visit police stations unannounced and in pairs to check on the facilities for those being held in custody and ensure that they have had their rights and entitlements upheld in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

## What is the purpose of Independent Custody Visiting?

The Scheme is designed to ensure greater public understanding of, and confidence in, the statutory and non-statutory rules governing a detained person's welfare.

In addition, it offers an extra level of mutual protection to detained persons and police officers by providing independent scrutiny of the treatment of detained persons and the conditions in which they are held.



## Who are Independent Custody Visitors and what do they do?

Independent Custody Visitors are members of the local community aged over 18 years. They are impartial and have no direct association with the criminal justice system.

The role of Independent Custody Visitors is to look, listen and report on their findings. The information contained in the report is then analysed by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office and the key areas for action are recorded and addressed, in addition to the issues requiring immediate attention, e.g. a delay in access to the custody suite.

Independent custody visitors do not need to know why a person is being detained in custody and they do not talk to those held about the alleged offence or follow up on what happens subsequently.



## Who can join?

Whilst no formal qualifications are required, listed below are some of the necessary skills and attributes.

### It is important that you:

- Are over the age of 18 years
- Have no conflicts of interest (those ineligible include serving police staff, special constables and justices of the peace).
- Live or work within the county of Suffolk.
- Have a good understanding of the English language.
- Possess effective communication skills.
- Have sufficient time and flexibility to carry out the role of Independent Custody Visitor.
- Are prepared to visit any location as required.
- Have the ability to demonstrate an independent and impartial view in relation to all parties involved in the custody visiting process.
- Have the ability to work with colleagues as part of a team.
- Are respectful and understanding towards others.
- Can maintain confidentiality.
- Have good observational skills given the need to conduct visual inspections.