

INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME

Leaflet and
Information



WHAT IS INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING?

Independent Custody Visiting is a well-established scheme whereby volunteers attend police custody suites to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The scheme offers protection to detainees and provides reassurance to the wider community.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire has a statutory duty to deliver independent custody visiting across his policing area. Independent Custody Visitors come from all walks of life and sections of the community. Bedfordshire custody suites are visited 4-5 times per month.



WHO CAN BECOME AN INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR?

Anyone over 18 years of age can become an Independent Custody Visitor except magistrates, those who have been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment within the last five years and serving Police Officers and Staff.

HOW CAN YOU BECOME AN INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR?

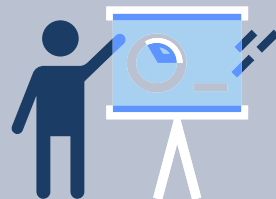
Further information and application packs are found on the OPCC website. You can also contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for further information using the contact information included in this leaflet.



<https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/independent-custody-visiting/>



HOW ARE INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS SELECTED AND TRAINED?



Successful applicants will be invited to attend an interview and if successful at interview, will be appointed subject to a police security vetting clearance. Those appointed will be issued with an identity card which must be carried on all visits.

Once vetting clearance has been passed, training will commence - this is usually a one day session. Ad-hoc training for Independent Custody Visitors is also conducted throughout the year.

CUSTODY SUITES IN BEDFORDSHIRE ARE AT:

- Police HQ, Woburn Road, Kempston
- Luton Police Station, Buxton Road, Luton



WHEN AND WHERE WILL VISITS BE MADE?

The actual timing and frequency of visits is entirely a matter for Independent Custody Visitors, although it is expected that each Independent Custody Visitor should carry out 12 visits per year.

Visits are always arranged through the Scheme Co-ordinator and are always in pairs.

There are special circumstances when a visit may be requested by a Senior Police Officer to alleviate concern and anxiety by the community with regard to a particular arrest.



WHAT HAPPENS DURING A VISIT?



When two Independent Custody Visitors arrive at a Police Custody Suite, they will be given immediate access to the Custody Suite.

A Custody Officer will supply details of detainees in custody. Independent Custody Visitors will introduce themselves to each detainee, and if consent is given, enquire on the welfare of that detainee. Independent Custody Visitors also check on the condition of the entire Custody Suite including cleanliness and supplies.

Any matters of serious concern should be immediately addressed to the Custody Sergeant or Duty Inspector. A report is then completed on the entire visit and the Custody Officer sends this to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

IT IS EXPECTED OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITORS THAT:

- Independent Custody Visitors will not interest themselves in the legal or evidential aspects of whatever matter has brought an individual into custody.
- An interview will not be interrupted or delayed to give access to a detainee.
- Independent Custody Visitors may be refused access to an individual for their own safety or if it is thought that a visit might prejudice an important investigation.
- Independent Custody Visitors must treat as confidential all details of what is seen and heard whilst carrying out their responsibilities.



IS THERE A LOT OF PAPERWORK?



Independent Custody Visitors are required to complete a standard report form for every visit made. A copy of the report is left at the Police Custody Suite and two copies are posted to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Any matters of concern in the reports are forwarded to Senior Police Officers to be addressed. Independent Custody Visitors are expected to attend Quarterly Panel Meetings which are held four times a year.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

The duties of an Independent Custody Visitor may sometimes be unpleasant but Independent Custody Visitors should not be subject to danger at any time.

Visits with detainees are carried out within close proximity of a Custody Officer and visits will be refused for detainees who are deemed a health and safety risk.

The Custody Officer should be within sight but out of hearing where possible during a visit with a detainee.

THE APPOINTMENT:

The tenure of appointment is 3 years following a 6 month probationary period. Although the work is voluntary, the Police and Crime Commissioner has the right to terminate an Independent Custody Visitor at any time.

For example, if the conduct of that Independent Custody Visitor is not of the required standard, or if the requirement of 12 visits per year is not being met.

Whilst Independent Custody Visitors are not paid for the work they undertake, all out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION ON HOW TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR, PLEASE CONTACT:



PCC@beds.police.uk



01234 842064



ICV Scheme Manager, OPCC,
Bridgebury House, Bedfordshire
Police HQ, Woburn Road,
Kempston, Bedford, MK43 9AX



SCAN ME