

Thames Valley OPCC Independent Custody Visitor

Role Description

1. Arrange and undertake custody visits in accordance with agreed rotas, scheme guidance, and training.
2. Keep the Panel Coordinator and fellow visitors informed of any issues affecting planned visits or rota commitments.
3. Assess the conditions in which detainees are held, their treatment, welfare, health, and access to their legal rights and entitlements, with reference to PACE Code C.
4. Where appropriate, consult custody records to clarify concerns raised by detainees and support effective scrutiny.
5. Raise concerns, requests, or potential breaches of detainee rights, welfare, safety, or legal entitlement with custody staff and escalate matters where necessary.
6. Demonstrate the confidence and independence to challenge and report practices that appear unfair, unsafe, unlawful, or inconsistent with the principles of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.
7. Maintain personal safety and comply with all relevant health and safety requirements and procedures when undertaking custody visits.
8. Complete custody visit reports accurately, clearly, and promptly, recording all relevant information.
9. Submit expense claims in accordance with scheme procedures.
10. Complete required training and participate in panel meetings and other scheme-related meetings as appropriate.
11. Maintain the confidentiality of information obtained through the role and comply with all requirements relating to data protection, safeguarding, and information security, including refraining from discussing or sharing information on social media.
12. Carry out the duties of an Independent Custody Visitor in accordance with the Thames Valley Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Handbook and Code of Practice.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria	Measurement
Be at least 18 years of age.	Application
Live, study or work in the Thames Valley Police area.	Application
Minimum 3 years residency in the UK	Application
One of: UK Citizenship; Settled Status, Indefinite Leave to Remain; or Right to Work	Application
Have sufficient time, flexibility, and commitment to carry out the role of custody visiting.	Interview
Ability to work collaboratively with fellow Independent Custody Visitors and OPCC staff to support the delivery of the visiting programme.	Interview

Ability to communicate clearly and professionally with detainees, custody staff, fellow visitors and scheme coordinators, both verbally and in writing.	Both
Commit to communicate respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, upholding principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion.	Interview
Confidence to act independently, ask questions, and raise concerns appropriately when required.	Interview
Ability to physically move around custody suites and respond quickly where necessary to maintain personal safety (for example, stepping away promptly from a detainee or situation).	Both
Ability to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information appropriately.	Interview
Confidence and competence in using digital technology, including email, web-based applications and online systems, with the ability to learn new and work independently within digital environments.	Interview
Ability to type reports accurately and efficiently enter information into electronic systems.	Interview
Ability to travel independently to custody suites across Thames Valley	Interview

Desirable Criteria	Measurement
Knowledge of Independent Custody Visiting.	Interview
Experience working or volunteering in a public service, community, or safeguarding role.	Both
Access to a personal computer or tablet with internet access suitable for online training and use of scheme-related digital systems.	Interview

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme must be, and be seen to be, independent of the police. Applications cannot be accepted from:

- Serving police officers.
- Police staff.
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).
- Special Constables.

Applications may not be accepted from individuals whose current employment, professional activities, voluntary roles, public activities or other responsibilities may:

- compromise independence or impartiality;
- create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest;
- undermine public confidence in the scheme; or
- create information security, confidentiality or operational concerns.

Examples include certain roles within:

- the criminal justice system;
- prisons and probation;
- legal services relating to criminal justice;
- custody welfare and detainee advocacy;
- investigative journalism and media;
- political office or political campaigning;
- intelligence, investigation or security services.

These are assessed on a case-by-case basis.