

## **Leicestershire Independent Custody Visitor Blog**

When I first saw the advert looking for Independent Custody Visitors (ICV) I really didn't know what to expect. I wasn't familiar with the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme. As each step progressed towards being selected I became more and more excited to start and now I've been an ICV for nearly six years I'm very happy I joined and continue to enjoy the role.

Independent Custody Visitors are independent of the Police and we carry out visits in pairs to custody suites within Leicestershire. It is our responsibility to check on the conditions in which detainees are held, the detainee's health and well-being and to ensure they receive their rights and entitlements.

On my first few visits I couldn't speak to the detainees as I was so nervous, it helped observing experienced custody visitors and I am now a confident and experienced custody visitor myself.

Being an ICV is a really rewarding voluntary role. You receive extensive training to help carry out the role effectively and the training also equips you to understand the law with regard to custody and detainees.

As a team we carry out one visit per week to each custody suite in Leicestershire. We turn up unannounced so we can view the true working between custody Staff and detainees.

We are regularly thanked for our efforts by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which means a lot to me as it shows we are valued for the role we do.

One of my greatest achievements was when I was elected as Deputy ICV Coordinator, which involves additional responsibilities and a closer working relationship with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Leicestershire Police.

I never thought that I would be doing this role but I'm so glad I am. I look forward to welcoming our new volunteers to help them settle in and I thoroughly enjoy my role and the difference I make.

Kathryn

Independent Custody Visitor