

Subject: Appointment of Independent Custody Visitors from Outside Norfolk

Originator: Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Manager

Decision no. 24/2026

Reason for submission: For decision

Submitted to: The Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk

Summary:

1. Independent Custody Visiting Schemes are a statutory function of Police & Crime Commissioners (PCC) involving spontaneous, unannounced visits to Police Custody.
2. The Scheme recruits, trains and manages volunteers to undertake these visits, who, through the Scheme Manager, report back to ensure that the police custody provision is run effectively, treating all detained person within the law as well as with decency and dignity.
3. To ensure that the Scheme itself is run correctly and the Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are managed appropriately, it is operated within the terms set out in the Home Office Codes of Practice 2013, from which is borne a more detailed set of local Scheme Guidelines.
4. The Home Office Codes current state that volunteers must live or work in the County, so that local community interests are met.
5. The Home Office Codes, however, refer to having a robust and effective Scheme with enough trained and accredited volunteers.
6. During 2025, insufficient numbers of volunteers could be recruited. Local networking with other voluntary agencies identified that is an issue across all voluntary sectors, especially in local Boroughs such as King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth.
7. In the early part of 2026, the ICV Scheme Manager put in place a number of strategies to start to ensure that there were wider, year-round opportunities to attract new volunteers to add more resilience to the ICV Scheme as a whole.
8. Of the four Norfolk Police Investigation Centres (PICs), King's Lynn and Gt Yarmouth are near to their respective County borders.
9. Previously, applicants who live close to the border but in the neighbouring counties, have been determined as ineligible to join Scheme.

10. Giving consideration to applicants who live just over the County border opens up a broader recruitment pool and becomes part of the wider strategy for a better recruitment model for the Norfolk ICV Scheme.

Recommendation:

That the Norfolk ICV Scheme amends existing local policy, by considering the recruitment of ICVs who don't live or work in the County, but do fit a number of local agreed criteria, thereby ensuring the Police & Crime Commissioner maintains an efficient and effective ICV scheme that has sufficient volunteer numbers.

Outcome/approval by: Acting Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk – Mark Stokes

The recommendations as outlined above are approved.

Signature:



Date: 08/06/2026

Detail of the submission

1. Objective:

- 1.1 To maintain an effective and efficient ICV Scheme on behalf of the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- 1.2 To allow the ICV Scheme Manager a wider range of options when it comes to recruiting new volunteers, at a time when recruitment and retention of volunteers in the County is challenging.

2. Background:

- 2.1 Throughout 2025, the number of applicants and expressions of interest for volunteers on the ICV Scheme dropped significantly.
- 2.2 A number of those on our waiting list were no longer able to formally apply.
- 2.3 For a number of months, the number of existing volunteers at King's Lynn was insufficient to always cover the expected number of weekly visits.
- 2.4 Through meetings within the Norfolk voluntary sector, it became clear that many other organisations were struggling to recruit in certain areas of the County.
- 2.5 The Scheme Manager has expanded his network to try to overcome these difficulties, with a notable uptake of applicants during early 2026.
- 2.6 To maintain this going forward, the adoption of a local policy to allow applicants from outside of the County would continue to provide the Scheme Manager with wider options whilst recruiting.

3. Areas for consideration:

- 3.1 The long-term sustainability of the Scheme, and its ability to deliver an effective service is the primary consideration.
- 3.2 The Home Office Codes of Practice for Independent Custody Visiting, specifically say that volunteers must live or work within the County.
- 3.3 Some other Schemes have extended that to include live, work or study, the latter being outside the exact criteria set out in the Codes.
- 3.4 The current Codes date from inception in 2013, albeit are in the Home Office programme to review.
- 3.5 There have been many societal changes since 2013, especially the Covid Pandemic, and future reviews of the Codes may reflect that a wider set of criteria should be considered when looking at eligibility.
- 3.6 The Scheme Manager has adopted a number of other practices to assist with recruitment, which has traditionally been done via the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk's (OPCCN) media channels. Wider networking,

such as with the Law Faculty at the local university, volunteer fairs and the OPCCNs own Independent Advisory Group (IAG) have all drawn a strong interest in the Scheme.

- 3.7 Allowing volunteers who don't live or work within the County adds additional resilience and longer-term sustainability by adding to a 'menu' of recruitment options for the Scheme Manager.
- 3.8 Other Schemes have been consulted, and none have recruited outside of the Codes guidance, despite having identified strong candidates, which has caused frustration.
- 3.9 One Scheme had an existing volunteer who moved out of the County, but after review of his placement against the criteria in the Codes, he was allowed to continue in post.
- 3.10 In terms of what criteria should be considered when seeking to appoint from out of County, the circumstances of one applicant seemed to outline a realistic set of proposals.
 - They live closer to the PIC than all of the other current volunteers at the Kings Lynn Panel, just four miles over the border into Lincolnshire.
 - They work in, and frequent Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, whose arrested persons are serviced at King's Lynn PIC.
 - King's Lynn is their nearest town in terms of shopping, socialising, and friendships.
 - These two factors demonstrate interest, involvement, and investment in local communities, which is part of the ethos for our volunteers.
 - Their nearest Lincolnshire PIC is a significant distance from their home making it untenable to join their local ICV Scheme.

4. Other options considered:

- 4.1 There are existing options for recruitment as documented, but this option broadens the pool of potential volunteers. The only other option is to not recruit from outside of the County, which for the reasons set out, is to the likely detriment of the Norfolk Scheme.

5. Strategic aims/objective supported:

- 5.1 The long-term sustainability of the Norfolk ICV Scheme is the main consideration.
- 5.2 Delivering an effective and efficient ICV Scheme is a statutory function for Police & Crime Commissioners, and this proposal adds an additional option for the successful recruitment of volunteers.

5.3 The Norfolk ICV Scheme is acknowledged as one of the best Schemes nationally and has recently been awarded the Platinum level of the Independent Custody Visiting Association's (ICVA) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). The QAF is a multilevel benchmarking process, with the top award of Platinum being assessed against 120 criteria.

5.4 To support the achievement of the QAF and the ability to maintain the level in future years, the QAF process is an embedded part of the PCCs Police & Crime Plan. As such, the Scheme needs to maintain its standards across the board, including sufficient volunteer numbers at all times.

6. Financial and other resource implications:

6.1 There are no additional financial or resource implications, as irrespective of where a volunteer is recruited from, the administration of their service (including financial expenses) will be managed within existing structures and budgets.

7. Carbon emissions and other environmental implications:

Carbon Emissions

7.1 The estimated impact on our carbon emissions that must be reported under current statute from this proposal is:

Emission Categories:	Increase in tCO2	Saving in tCO2
Scope 1 – Fuel – Building Heating	0	0
Scope 1 – Fuel – Transport	0	0
Scope 2 – Electricity	0	0

Environmental Implications

7.2 No material implications.

8. Other implications and risks:

8.1 The main risk is operating outside the Home Office Codes of Practice which says that volunteers must live or work within the police area.

8.2 However, in proposing to do so, it alleviates a number of risks of falling outside the Codes in other areas, namely -

- Adequate numbers of suitably trained and accredited ICVs must be available at all times.
- The PCC must seek to ensure that the overall panel of ICVs is representative of the local community and provides a suitable balance in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity.

8.3 The ICVAs' official line is that all Schemes should operate within the Codes of Practice but obviously understand current frustrations with the Codes. Potential changes to cross-border recruitment is one of a number of suggested amendments

that the ICVA will be submitting to the Home Office for when the review does take place.

- 8.4 If any such volunteers are recruited, the criteria would need to be included within the ICV Scheme Guidelines, the local document that informs local policy and procedures and is a more detailed document borne out of the Home Office Codes of Practice.
- 8.5 This was last reviewed in 2023 and will be reviewed later in 2026 in any case, and these recruitment amendments can be encompassed as part of that review, thus ensuring full transparency around recruitment processes.

Originator checklist (must be completed)	Please state 'Yes' or 'No'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	No
Have human resource implications been considered?	Yes
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
Have sustainability and environmental factors been considered (e.g. biodiversity, employee commuting, business travel, waste and recycling, water, air quality, food and catering and estates construction)?	Yes
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	Yes

Is this report a Confidential Decision?

No

If yes, please state reasons below having referred to the [PCC Decision Making Policy](#)

Approval to submit to the decision-maker (this approval is required only for submissions to the PCC).

On behalf of the Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report, that the recommendations have been reviewed and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.

Signature: 

Date: 10/06/2026

Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

I certify that:

- a) there are no financial consequences as a result of this decision,
Or
- b) the costs identified in this report can be met from existing revenue or capital budgets,
Or
- c) the costs identified in this report can be financed from reserves,
And
- d) the decision can be taken on the basis of my assurance that Financial Regulations have been complied with.

Signature: 

Date: 08/06/2026

Public access to information: Information contained within this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and wherever possible will be made available on the OPCC website. Submissions should be labelled as 'Not Protectively Marked' unless any of the material is 'restricted' or 'confidential.' Where information contained within the submission is 'restricted' or 'confidential' it should be highlighted, along with the reason why.