

**ORIGINATOR:
BUSINESS CO-ORDINATOR
(CUSTODY VISITORS),
OFFICE OF THE PCC FOR SUFFOLK**

DECISION NUMBER: 37 - 2025

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**SUBJECT: THREE YEARLY REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT
CUSTODY VISITOR APPOINTMENTS**

SUMMARY:

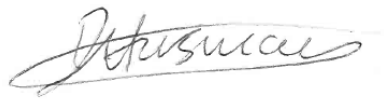
1. The Home Office Code of Practice for Custody Visiting requires each Scheme to undertake a reconstitution process every 3 years. The key factors considered in maintaining appointments are:
 - i) The continuing ability and willingness of the individual in question to do the job effectively having regard to the role profile for an Independent Custody Visitor (ICV);
 - ii) Ensuring that the individual is operating within the Scheme Guidelines, in accordance with the Home Office Code of Practice and other National Standards, and within the spirit of the Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Chief Executive Officer review the contents of this report and endorse the proposal to renew the appointments of 15 ICVs in Suffolk as of 1 January 2026 for a three-year term.

APPROVAL BY: Chief Executive Officer

The recommendations set out are agreed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. H. Smith', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Signature:

Date: 19 December 2025

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Home Office Code of Practice for Independent Custody Visiting provides guidance in respect PCC duties in discharging the independent custody visiting function.
- 1.2 In respect of individual appointments to custody visiting schemes, the Home Office provides the following national guidance:
- “29. Appointments as an ICV must initially be for three years and must not be confirmed until a six-month probationary period has been satisfactorily completed. Full re-assessments of suitability must take place at regular intervals but no longer than three years apart. The key factors in renewing appointments for further periods must be the continuing ability and willingness of the individuals involved to do the job effectively. Any decision not to renew the appointment must follow the principles of natural justice and must be publicised in the scheme’s memorandum of understanding or guidance.”*
- 1.3 The current ICV appointments to the Scheme in Suffolk are effective until 31 December 2025. The last full review of all appointments to the Scheme was undertaken in December 2022.
- 1.4 The PCC’s Scheme of Governance and Consent (at section 3 - Delegations) sets out the ‘Functions designated/delegated to the Chief Executive of the Office of the PCC’ which includes the administration of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and any other volunteer schemes including the appointment, suspension and removal of custody visitors and other volunteers. This report is therefore submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration.

2. **REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITOR APPOINTMENTS IN SUFFOLK**

- 2.1 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk has commenced the three yearly review processes in line with Home Office guidance, being particularly mindful of the designated Role Profile and Person Specification for an Independent Custody Visitor in Suffolk.
- 2.2 One volunteer gave advanced notice they would be stepping down at this point of review so left the Scheme at the ICV panel meeting on 2 December. In November 2025 letters were circulated to 16 of the volunteers to establish if they wished to continue in the role for a further three-year period.
- Two volunteers decided to step down at this point, one of whom left the Scheme in late November, and one confirmed they would complete their final visit at the end of December as per the rota before stepping down.
 - 14 volunteers confirmed in writing that they would like to continue after December 2025 (13 for the three-year term and one for 12 months).
 - One volunteer has just come to the end of the initial six-month probation period.
- 2.3 The Scheme Manager is currently in the process of recruiting more volunteers for both panels. There are currently five applications going through the vetting process and two additional interviews to be undertaken. Any new appointments would be made subject to a probationary period and ultimately serving until 31 December 2028.

3. **INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS**

- 3.1 A review of the number of visits and calls made by the 15 visitors who wish to continue, their attendance at Panel meetings and training has been undertaken. Feedback from the Panel Co-ordinators has also been sought about the performance of individuals, their commitment/flexibility to the Scheme and consideration of issues such as effective interaction with detainees and this is included in Appendix 1 (Confidential appendix - NOT FOR PUBLICATION).

- 3.2 The Suffolk PCC Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Guidelines state:

3.5 **Appointment and Accreditation**

ICVs can serve a maximum of two terms (six years). However, they are welcome to re-apply following a three-year break.

The PCC reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to extend a period of appointment (with the individual's agreement) beyond the six-year term. This may be done to retain particular skills within the scheme or to provide continuity.

- 3.3 There are four volunteers across the Scheme that have served for longer than two terms. Three are serving members of the Martlesham Panel and one from the Bury St Edmunds Panel. Given that we are actively recruiting for new volunteers, it is recommended that the four experienced visitors are approved to enable them to continue for a further three-year term to ensure continuity and support the training and development of new panel members.
- 3.4 In light of the continued willingness and flexibility of the volunteers, satisfactory levels of performance and positive feedback received, the Chief Executive Officer is recommended to consider renewing the appointments for all 15 current ICVs with effect from 1 January 2026.

4. **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME**

- 4.1 No material changes to the Scheme are proposed currently however there are several developments to note:
- The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) has recently launched its e-learning package which will enable volunteers to access and complete relevant training online. This will provide training records for each individual volunteer and will allow the Scheme Manager to manage and direct training in a much more structured way.
 - As part of the ICVA Quality Assurance Framework 2025, annual one to one welfare checks and an annual ICV survey to capture 'volunteer voices' have been introduced.
 - The Independent Custody Visitors Report Form is currently being reviewed, in consultation with ICVs, to streamline the process.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with consideration of the recommendations contained within this report.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

- 6.1 There are no other implications or risks associated with consideration of the recommendations contained within this report.

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?	YES
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 all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	YES