

Cumbria Police Authority  
**Personnel Committee**  
**27 April 2005**  
**Item No. 8**

Report by the Clerk and Chief Executive.

## **INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME – RECRUITMENT.**

### **Background**

In September 2004 the Police Authority made a series of decisions about the operation and oversight of the Custody Visiting Scheme in Cumbria, including that –

“Responsibility for recruitment to the Scheme be devolved to the Personnel Committee” and  
“A recruitment campaign be mounted for Custody Visitors”

The purpose of this report is to outline a recruitment process and to seek the Committee’s approval to the process.

### **RECOMMENDED: That**

- (1) the proposed recruitment timetable and process be approved; and
- (2) the arrangements for shortlisting and interviews, as set out in the report, be approved.

### **Detail**

The Custody Visiting Scheme in Cumbria is composed of four Panels (North Cumbria, West Cumbria, Barrow and Kendal) each of which is to have 15 Custody Visitors. Panel membership is currently –

North Cumbria –	7
West Cumbria –	13
Barrow –	8
Kendal -	8

Under the revisions to the Scheme agreed in September 2004 each Panel will be set a target of visiting the designated police station in their area an average of once a week. Non-designated stations will be visited less frequently. At the same time each Custody Visitor will be asked to make minimum of six visits a year. For the two to be in balance each Panel needs a reasonably full compliment of Custody Visitors.

Given the number of Custody Visitors on three of the four Panels it is now timely to hold a recruitment drive for new Custody Visitors.

The Custody Visiting Codes of Practice, issued to underpin the Police Reform Act, requires the Police Authority to strive to ensure that the Scheme's members are reflective of the community as a whole. Recruitment must also be open, non-discriminatory and well publicised. The Authority is also required to issue all applicants with a standard application form and every new Custody Visitor must be interviewed and appointed on merit. These requirements establish the basis on which the Authority must make future appointments.

Attached at Appendix 1 is the application form to be used by all applicants. This form is based on the model produced by the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA). A person specification is attached at Appendix 2 and a job description at Appendix 3, both also based on the ICVA models.

Publicity for the recruitment campaign will take the form of newspaper advertisements, posters sent to major employers, CABx and colleges throughout the County and press releases. Examples of the posters will be available at the meeting.

A suggested timetable for the selection process is attached (Appendix 4).

As all Custody Visitors must be interviewed and as they will serve in specific areas it is proposed that four interview sessions are held, one in each area. To assist applicants in employment interviews could be scheduled over an afternoon and evening in each area. It is suggested that the interview panels should be composed of the Authority's Lead Member for Custody Visiting, a Member of the Personnel Committee and a representative of the relevant Custody Visiting Panel. If it is necessary to shortlist before interviewing it is suggested that this should be undertaken at a County-wide level, rather than locally, by the Lead Member for Custody Visiting, a Member of the Personnel Committee and the Deputy Clerk.

After completion of the selection process all the newly appointed Custody Visitors will be invited to a training session in early September. New Visitors will not be issued with an identity badge to enable them to start making visits unless they have attended this training event. All appointments will be for three years, subject to the satisfactory completion of a six month probationary period.

For future years, and to retain Panel membership at acceptable levels, it is proposed to maintain a list of people interested in becoming Custody Visitors and to run an active recruitment campaign every three years.

**C R Alcock**  
**Clerk and Chief Executive.**

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2005.**

**Background papers:** Report to, and Minute of, Cumbria Police Authority on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

**Race and Diversity Implications:** The Authority has a duty to ensure that the Scheme is representative of the community it serves.

**Human Rights Implications:** The Scheme plays an important role in ensuring that the rights of detainees in police custody are respected.

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Appendix 4

## **CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY INDEPENDENT CUSTODY VISITING SCHEME**

### **RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE 2005**

11<sup>th</sup> May – Press release issued and posters circulated.

13<sup>th</sup> May – Advertisements placed in press

10<sup>th</sup> June – Closing date for applications

13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June – Shortlisting (if required)

20<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July – Check references and vetting.

4<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July - Interviews

??<sup>th</sup> September – Training Seminar for new Custody Visitors.  
Identity badges issued.