



# News from the Commissioner

## Communities benefit from justice scheme

“I want residents’ concerns to be taken seriously...”

A government-funded pilot project where people who have committed low-level offences carry out work to make amends for the damage they have caused is making an impact on communities across the county.

More than 100 people who have been found by police committing anti-social behaviour have taken part in the Immediate Justice programme in the first 10 months of the scheme.

Between them, these 100 people have carried out more than 500 hours of community improvement work such as cleaning up parks, playgrounds, public areas and community assets.

The programme provides an alternative to prosecution for people who have committed lower-level offences such as criminal damage, causing a public nuisance or being drunk and disorderly.

Police officers and PCSOs refer offenders to the programme, run by a team working in the office of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone.

One of the community assets that has benefitted from the scheme is the Victoria Centre in Wellingborough.

The Centre provides safe meeting places for people of all faiths and cultures and has welcomed three offenders to help with practical issues that the centre has faced in recent months.



Diana Trickett from the Victoria Centre and Aidan Gibson from the Immediate Justice Team

Principal Operations Manager Diana Trickett said: “As a local community centre, we work to help people get back on track with their lives, so working with the Immediate Justice programme felt right for us.

“All of the offenders that have been with us have worked hard and it has been pleasing to see some tangible differences to our facilities as a result of their efforts.”

The three offenders fixed and painted a fence as well as cleared and maintained the garden areas at the Centre, which has been welcomed by the local community.

“You could see the difference in attitude of the offenders from when they started to when they left us and hopefully them seeing the positive impact they have made to us will help them with their rehabilitation.”

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone said she believes the success of the scheme so far reinforces that anti-social behaviour must be taken seriously.

Danielle said: “People want to feel safe in their communities and anti-social behaviour can have a hugely negative effect on feelings of safety. I want residents’ concerns to be taken seriously, and for them to feel confident that police are tackling the issue head on. This scheme means anyone who inflicts this kind of behaviour in our communities will face swift and visible action.”

The Immediate Justice scheme is a pilot project and the Commissioner and her team are looking at how this important work can be taken forward in the longer term.

# Could you help the Commissioner check the welfare of detainees?

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**The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has a statutory duty to run a scheme to check on how detainees are being treated in custody.**

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The Commissioner has a team of Independent Custody Visitors who are all volunteers from the local community. They make unannounced visits to custody centres to speak to detainees in the cells. They observe and report on the welfare of detainees to check that they are receiving their rights and entitlements and that the conditions they are being held in are satisfactory.

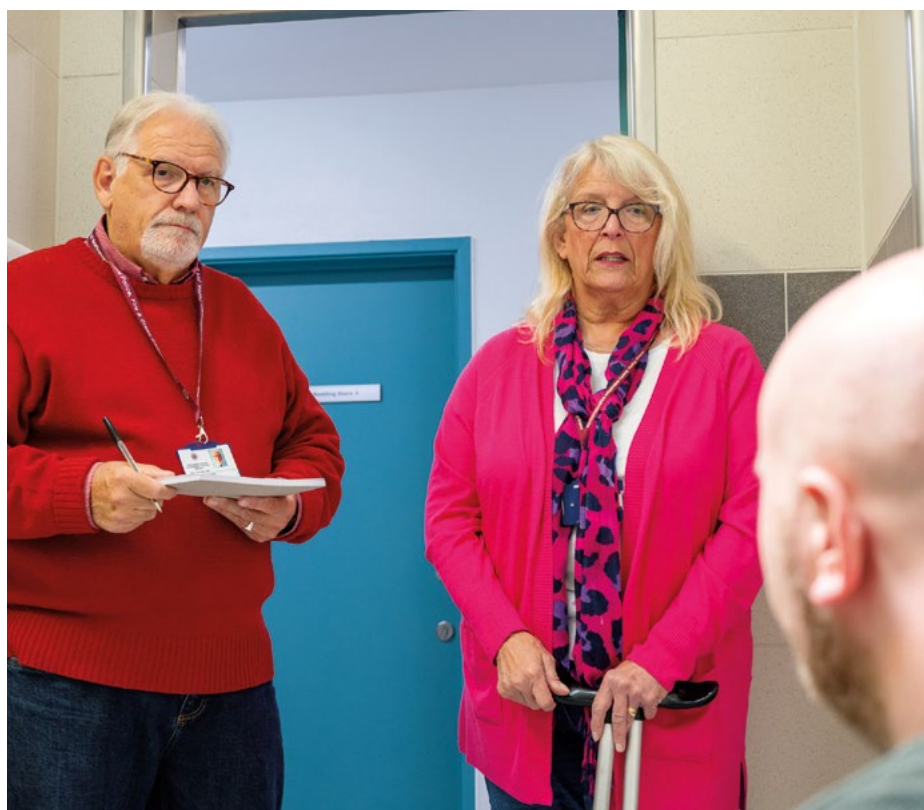
As well as helping ensure standards remain high, the feedback from the Independent Custody Visitors assists the Commissioner in holding the Chief Constable to account.

If this sounds like the role for you, there are currently a number of vacancies for Independent Custody Visitors. Anyone interested in joining the scheme must live or work in Northamptonshire and be at least 18 years old. Applicants must evidence they can be impartial, objective and non-judgemental, as well as being able to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone said: "Independent scrutiny is important, so that communities have confidence in their local police service. This scheme provides an effective independent oversight of police custody and enables me to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the public."

Former Independent Custody Visitor Steve Edwards explained why he joined the scheme.

Steve recently moved on from the ICV Scheme to take up a different volunteer role, and speaks highly of his time as an Independent Custody Visitor. He said:



Former ICV Steve Edwards with long-standing ICV Catherine Broughton visit a detainee in custody

"I've always sought to fill my retirement years in a productive way and my time as an ICV has been very interesting and worthwhile. As custody visitors, we are in a unique position to ensure that detainees are treated fairly and equally and without discrimination due to their many different backgrounds and circumstances.

"As a former police officer, I've worked in many custody suites and after many years away I have been impressed with the improvements in conditions and treatment of detainees; sometimes very different to my previous experiences. As an ICV I've always found the Police and Civilian staff to be respectful towards detainees and us as visitors.

"I found the ICV training and mentoring to be very helpful and I think anyone joining the scheme will be really interested to learn about the process and to see what actually happens in a custody facility."

## Quick facts

- Independent Custody Visitors always work in pairs
- They are always accompanied by a member of staff
- They visit either the Criminal Justice Centre in Northampton or the Weekley Woods Justice Centre in Kettering once a month
- Full training is provided and ICVs meet regularly to discuss any issues or concerns

The application form can be found here - [Independent Custody Visiting - Northamptonshire Police & Fire Commissioner \(northantspfcc.org.uk\)](https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk)

The closing date for applications is **Monday 25 November.**



# Partners working together to tackle retail crime in Northamptonshire



**Businesses have been asked to take part in a number of innovative pilot schemes aimed at tackling the toll of retail crime in Northamptonshire.**

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone hosted a roundtable event, the third in the county, bringing together representatives of national and local retail and other businesses and Northamptonshire Police to discuss the work that is taking place to tackle retail crime.

Northamptonshire Police set up a Retail Crime Team earlier this year, and the police officers in the Team work in partnership with the Northamptonshire Business Crime Partnership as a dedicated resource to investigate crime and support retailers.

The meeting also heard about the work of the specialist Retail Crime Evidence Gatherers, two expert staff within the Business Crime Partnership whose roles are funded by the Commissioner and who offer dedicated support to retailers.

The Business Crime Partnership also has an app for members that contains images and details of prolific retail crime offenders and enables them to report incidents and upload CCTV and statements that go directly to Northamptonshire Police.



This team and joint approach has been key to increasing the number of shoplifters brought to justice, increasing the engagement with businesses and their confidence that crimes are and will be taken seriously.

Two exciting pilot schemes were also announced: a high-visibility, floor-based CCTV system that can be remotely activated by retailers and a mobile, A-frame robot that moves around locations displaying crime prevention messages as a deterrent to offenders.

Rachel Trafford from Park & Shop Service Station in Rushden said that the work taking place in Northamptonshire is making a difference to retail crime. She said: "We have noticed a huge difference in the past few months, crime in our store has decreased massively.

**"...criminals don't even try our shop anymore because they know it's not worth it..."**

"We used Disc (the app) to report every incident of shoplifting, no matter how small. We have now not had to report an incident for 6 weeks, which we believe is because everyone of our reports were prosecuted, so criminals don't even try our shop anymore because they know it's not worth it."

# Community groups benefit from Commissioner grants schemes

Three community groups have been given grant funding to improve the lives of young people and offer safe spaces to people in the LGBTQ+ community.

The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has three different grant schemes that are open to help groups deliver projects that help to make communities and residents safer.

One of these is the Small Grants Scheme, which offers grants of up to £3,000 to help fund smaller projects which meet strategic objectives in the Commissioner's upcoming Public Safety Plan, formerly known as the Police, Fire and Crime Plan.

## Three Small Grant Scheme

The three schemes have been successful recently in securing funding for their community work and increasing support for vulnerable people.

"...I am delighted that we are able to financially support our community groups..."



Pupils from Quinton House School organised an inter-schools conference

## Far Cotton and Delapre Stay and Play

Another successful scheme was Far Cotton and Delapre Stay and Play, which was granted £2,999. Run by Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council, the scheme provides a range of stimulating toys, creative materials and opportunities for physical play for young people.

This important provision for parents/carers and their young children helps to prepare them for starting school.

## Quinton House School

Quinton House School has been awarded £1,200 towards funding its 'For Students, By Students' conference in Northampton. The conference focused on providing education on what is deemed as harmful sexual behaviour, and involved speakers from local charities, Northamptonshire Police and a local Magistrate.

More than 100 students from eight schools attended, and the event had great feedback, with participants receiving brochures with educational advice on it.

"...increasing support for vulnerable people..."

## Q Space

And finally, Q Space were awarded £2,999 to organise and set up the Bean Bag Café at Daventry Pride earlier this year. The fund helped to set up a point of contact for the LGBTQ+ community at the event, offering one-to-one support and a safe space for those that needed it.

The group is also hoping to develop a peer-led LGBTQ+ support group for adults in the future.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone said: "I continue to be inspired by the projects and initiatives that our community groups are running.

"Over the last few months I have been out and about having a 'Big Conversation' with communities across our county, and people tell me that they want to see services in place that help to support young people and our most vulnerable residents.

"My upcoming Public Safety Plan will focus on what steps we can put in place to help deliver and facilitate that, and I am delighted that we are able to financially support our community groups through our Grants Schemes. I would encourage any community group to apply for funding and utilise our schemes to help develop their projects."

Find out how to apply for a grant at [northantspfcc.gov.uk](http://northantspfcc.gov.uk)

### Contact the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

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