

Police Board appeal for volunteers

A call for volunteers to independently assess the welfare of people in police custody and advise on equality issues within the local community has been issued by the Lothian and Borders Police Board.



Applications are being taken for Custody Visitor posts and Lay Diversity Adviser posts from people of all walks of life who are interested in making a difference to their community.

Lay Diversity Advisers are independent members of the community who monitor and scrutinise police investigations of hate crime and influence police strategy and operations in relation to diversity and equality.

Custody Visitors are also independent members of the local community who visit police stations unannounced to observe, monitor and report on the welfare of people held in custody.

Both play a vital role in helping to uphold and encourage public confidence by scrutinising police activities – whether in their dealings with people in custody or with minority groups.

Councillor Iain Whyte, Convenor of the Lothian and Borders Police Board, said: “These roles are vital in helping the Police Board monitor, assess and improve both equality and custody welfare issues. We need independent visitors to make sure everything is done in a correct and proper manner in the custody suites and to ensure the welfare of those in police custody.”

“These volunteers represent the wider public and help us make

sure that the police live up to their duty of care to everyone in all our communities.”

Rakesh Joshi has been a Custody Visitor since April 2010 and visits police stations across the Lothian and Borders area to assess the conditions of detainees.

He said: “For the detainee, whether being held for the first time or more than once, it can be a very traumatic and difficult period. Having a ‘regular joe’ coming to talk to them can make them feel that little bit more at ease with their situation, making the custody experience more bearable for both detainee and more routine for custody staff.

“For myself I always feel I have made a difference after speaking to the detainee, leaving them thinking that they are being cared for by custody staff and also people outside the four walls of a custody suite. They are not just being brushed aside and forgotten about.”

An information event will be held on Tuesday 31 January at 7pm at the City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh for those interested in becoming Lay Diversity Advisers. A further event for Custody Visitors will be held on Saturday 4 February at 10am at the City Chambers.

Lay Diversity Advisers Scheme

Applicants can register their interest by sending an email to policeboard@edinburgh.gov.uk, calling the Police Board on 0131 529 4240 or downloading an [Application Pack](#).

The [Application Form](#), [Equalities Monitoring Form](#) and [Advertising Feedback Form](#) can also be downloaded for completion electronically.

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 15 February 2012.

Custody Visiting Scheme

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