

Jane (not her real name) below tells us her experience of being an ICV and what the role means to her:

“I took up the role of ICV as my contribution to West Yorkshire Police and for their invaluable support in the work that I do within Safeguarding and Welfare. In addition for their contribution in supporting and delivering vital education to very vulnerable young people and their families.

Over the last 5 years I have worked closely with Police particularly with a Primary aged programme that I coordinate. The programme involves a Police section where children are educated about Safety, Stranger Danger, Internet Safety, Hate Crime, Missing Children and which concludes with a visit to a Custody Suite. The Police section forms 6 weeks of a 30 week timetable that is delivered to children aged between 9-11 years old from 9 different schools.

The role of the ICV has opened up an opportunity for me to personally relay to children, first hand, what prison/custody surroundings are like, what it may make you feel like, what it may hold for the future but most of all what it means to them as a person, more importantly, the reasons why not to enter into the Criminal Justice System.

Children are intrigued with the information and ask questions about how, what, why and where etc. If this approach changes the mind set for just one young person then the whole package has been worthwhile.

For me personally, it has made me look at why and how people take the criminal route and provoked an even bigger desire to look into young people’s lifestyles more. I am able to state that I hold an ICV role in professional meetings which helps in times when any young person is involved with crime. This in turn helps with how I can deal with them or the situation.

Although I recognise there can never be a right in a wrong situation, it has helped me distinguish real harden criminality from desperation and the reasons why we all, as professionals try so hard to help those most in need.

I see the role of the ICV as crucial in monitoring the well-being of people ensuring the correct procedures are carried out and that all needs are met. It is without doubt a credit to West Yorkshire Police that standards are so high and staff are so highly trained that these needs are met at times when they are both challenging and upsetting. Meeting the staff within the Custody Suites has been both informative and welcoming. It opens up the reality of what Officers are faced with on a daily basis and a view into what Custody Suites accommodate along with the challenges that they are faced with.

A real concern of mine is in radicalisation, I would like to take part in terrorism training for ICV once I have completed my 18 months in post.

Well done to everyone, it takes a special person to do the job.”