**National Expert Forum – Terms of Reference**

**Context**

The Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) is a Company Limited by Guarantee with the following objects in place:

1. the relief of distress among persons who are held in custody in the United Kingdom and elsewhere by developing and promoting the efficient and effective provision of custody visiting; and
2. to advance the education of the public in matters and issues concerning the rights, health and wellbeing, and the conditions of facilities, of persons who are held in custody in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

The National Expert Forum seeks to provide advice to the Board of Directors from an operational angle and to undertake workstreams as directed by the Board.

**Aims**

Vision

ICVA’s vision is:

“ICV schemes prevent torture and ill treatment of detainees and deliver effective oversight of police custody in order to ensure dignity and wellbeing and deliver public reassurance.”

(To be reviewed by Board when established)

Mission

ICVA’s mission is:

“ICVA leads, supports and represents ICV schemes that are effective, protect vulnerable detainees and deliver effective oversight of police custody.”

(To be reviewed by Board when established)

Purpose

The purpose of the National Expert Forum is to deliver shared work and projects, to provide the Board with practical advice, to raise trends and issues to be taken up nationally and to seek strategic sign off for amends to existing protocols.

**Objectives**

The objectives of the National Expert Forum are:

* To consider operational matters regarding delivery of schemes, both successes and challenges.
* To report to the Board in terms of themes, feedback from ICVA activities and reporting on best practice.
* To escalate issues of concern to the Board for further consideration.
* To suggest areas for service improvement, both in schemes and ICVA.
* To provide feedback on ICVAs project activities and usefulness thereof.
* To assist with the delivery of ICVAs business plan, as directed by the Board.
* To assist with development of appropriate policies and procedures for ICVA that are effective, robust and transparent.
* To recognise diverse strengths and needs and to promote equality through all services and internal processes.

**Scope**

The National Expert Forum (NEF) will work hand-in-hand with ICVA’s Board of Directors, providing a golden thread through the work of the two groups. The NEF will have no less than 3 members who also sit on the board as member directors. The NEF will assist by providing consultation on the annual business plan, subscriptions and other decisions relevant to custody visiting, and will give the Board feedback to inform strategic planning. The NEF will assist to deliver the business plan with the Board.

**Values**

* The National Expert Forum will ensure that custody visiting is at the heart of its work and decisions.
* The National Expert Forum will value working together and others as a team; it will promote and encourage partnership working with our members and stakeholders, supporting and empowering those who share our aims.
* The National Expert Forum will value and demonstrate independence, integrity, and transparency.
* The National Expert Forum atmosphere and culture will encourage open and constructive debate.
* The National Expert Forum will promote collective responsibility and act in ICVA’s best interests.

**National Expert Forum meetings**

* NEF meetings will take place quarterly, following the close of each quarter.
* The Board will set an annual cycle of meetings where agendas will reflect and support ICVA’s business processes with NEF meetings being scheduled to fit this cycle.
* The minutes of the NEF meetings will be shared with both the board and ICVA’s members.

**National Expert Forum composition**

* Each region should be represented at the NEF the minimum of a regional rep from:

City of London

Eastern

East Midlands

MOPAC

North East

North West and North Wales

Northern Ireland

Scotland

South East

South West

Wales

West Midlands

Yorkshire and Humberside

* The NEF should not consist of more than 15 members to ensure effectiveness.
* The NEF will elect a chair and vice chair at the first meeting of the group.

**Review and revision**

The National Expert Forum will review this terms of reference on at least an annual basis. The Board may amend the document providing any amendments are in line with ICVA’s Articles of Association.