



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – August 2017

The Police & Crime Commissioner, Vera Baird QC, would like to take this opportunity to thank Independent Custody Visitors for the work they have undertaken when visiting custody suites within the Northumbria Force area. The ICVs are valued members of the volunteer team. Below are the points raised during **August 2017** from the stations visited.

Issues Raised following introduction of PCC ICV Custody Suite Questionnaire

Following the 2014 HMIC Inspection into Northumbria Police Custody, a number of recommendations were made by HMIC to improve the custody process and service offered to detainees.

Northumbria Police have produced an action plan to address the issues raised with added checks by officers that these recommendations are being delivered. The Commissioner requested that ICV's be part of this process to make sure that an independent check that the force are delivering on these recommendations is made.

The OPCC produced a checklist of questions with each question relating to a specific recommendation in the report. During the month of **August 2017** no issues of concern were highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted below.

Alnwick

No detainees in custody.

Warm welcome received by staff and all areas clean and tidy.

Food checked and all in date.

Berwick

No detainees in custody.

Warm welcome received by staff and food stores checked.

Food stocks all in date.

Bedlington

No detainees in custody

Cleaning of suite has been undertaken

All detainee meals checked and in date

Emergency alarm repaired and working

Millbank

Clean and tidy station

Staff helpful and friendly

Areas for improvement:

Medical room and shoe locker doors left open

Force Response: Millbank custody suite is currently closed. Cleaning staff reminded of the need to keep these areas locked when not in use.

Southwick

Suite clean and tidy and staff helpful

Areas for improvement:

Detainee lockers and cupboards left open

Cold tap in detainee kitchen still running hot water

Force Response: Lockers and cupboards closed, staff reminded of the need to keep them closed, Business support will be checking the water temperature to make sure it is within the acceptable range.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy.

Staff polite and helpful.

Areas for Improvement:

Detainees not offered showers due to a limited number of staff on duty (20.08.17)

Clothes and shoe lockers left open

Detainees shoes stored on floor outside cells

Anti-bacterial soap dispensers in showers could pose a health and safety risk

A diabetic detainee commented that all food options were unsuitable as all contained added sugar.

Force Response:

Re Showers – custody records checked – some detainees might not necessarily have been felt to have been in long enough to offer a shower – however – some had been and weren't. Staff have been reminded to ensure we adhere to best practice in this area.

Shoes and lockers – Again – staff reminded and spot checks will be conducted by A/Inspector 1008 Stowers

Soap and Diabetic detainee issue – Soap removed and a nutritional information poster is now displayed in the kitchen that will assist staff in providing the most appropriate meals or to assist in advising detainees.

Forth Banks

Staff friendly, professional and co-operative with both detainees and ICV's
Issues previously raised in relation to cell locker doors has been rectified.

Clean and tidy suite

Areas for Improvement

Cell 34 loose screw on ceiling

Cell 38 fire alarm not working

Force Response:

Cell 34 is currently closed awaiting repair, we have had to call contractor to the height of the ceiling which has caused delay.

Cell 38 the fire alarm is working again.