



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – March 2018

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 **March 2018** 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 **March 2018** 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

Food stock checked and all in date

Berwick

No detainees in custody

Warm welcome received by staff

Suite clean and tidy



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Bedlington

Delay in admission due to custody being in operation

All areas clean and tidy

Food stock checked and all in date

ACTION:

Cells 4 and 11 – CCTV pictures unclear

Force Response: Estates looking at this issue but there is a rolling program of upgrading cameras ongoing.

Southwick

Suite clean and tidy and staff helpful

Female hygiene pack in stock

Areas for Improvement

Lockers 16, 20 and 22 open

Force Response: Staff reminded on procedure of ensuring lockers are closed.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy

Female hygiene packs in stock

Food stocks checked and all in date

Staff polite and helpful

Areas for Improvement:

No wash/shower offered to detainees who have been in custody overnight and no hygiene pack offered (cells 32 and 40)

Cell 15 – out of order, plaster around intercom needs to be repaired

Wifi system and tablet reception very poor

Cell 6 – Drinking water sink beside cell 6 – out of use and very dirty – shaving remnants in bowl

Shower beside cell 25 – still requires cleaning

Water closet 32/33 unlocked – locker 37 unlocked

Force Response: Shower area and sink cleaned.

Staff reminded are need to offer showers and this now forms part of our monthly audits/quality checking.

Wi-Fi – system has been upgraded and IT are monitoring performance and any reception problems. Staff report that upgrade has solved these issues.

Staff reminded on locking of closets/lockers

Cell 15 now repaired

Forth Banks

Staff friendly and helpful

Comments on tidiness of the suite

Detainees commented on helpfulness and assistance provided by officers and staff on 20th March, 23rd March and 27th March (DO 5024 singled out on two occasions for being proactive and extremely helpful)

Female hygiene pack being offered routinely by staff

Trainers left in corridor but locked away when identified

Areas for Improvement

Water tap access 'lockers' open at cells 24 and 42

Cell 24 – out of order due to broken fire alarm, highlighted on a couple of visits

Cell 26 – key lock not working

Phone box 2 out of order – damage to phone

Force Response: Cell 24 and 26 have now been repaired. Phone box 2 has also been repaired and is back in use.

Staff reminded on closing lockers.