



**VERA BAIRD**<sup>QC</sup>  
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

## Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

### Independent Custody Visitors findings – June 2015

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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 June 2015 from the stations visited.

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#### Bedlington

All areas clean and tidy.

Staff unable to locate ICV documents (CV3 and Questionnaire)

No issues identified.

#### Berwick

All well and staff pleasant

No issues identified.

#### Hexham

All areas clean and tidy.

#### **Area for Improvement:**

No blankets or towels in store cupboard

#### Millbank

Suite clean and tidy and staff helpful

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

Left wing shower out of use

Cell M13 leaking toilet

Cell M16 water leak

### **Southwick**

Suite clean and tidy.

Helpful staff

#### **Areas for improvement:**

Three cells out of use – D1, 12 and 8

Some detainees held overnight complained about not being offered shower

### **North Tyneside**

Staff friendly and helpful

#### **Areas for improvement:**

Some mattress and pillow seams coming away

Detainee kitchen facilities in need of cleaning

Interview Room 9 out of use due to broken recorder

### **Forth Banks**

Staff friendly, professional and co-operative with both detainees and ICV's

Clean and tidy suite

#### **Areas for Improvement**

Some detainees complained about not being offered shower/exercise facilities

Several detainees complained of cells being cold however blankets were provided

Assistant Chief Constable Jo Farrell has responsibility for Northumbria Police Custody. Her responses to the issues identified by Independent Custody Visitors can be found below:

**Alnwick**

**Area for improvement:**

**Hexham**

**Area for improvement:**

Store of blankets and towels and hygiene items being taken to the suite.

**Millbank**

**Area for improvement:**

All repaired and back in use

**Southwick**

**Areas for improvement:**

3 cells repaired and back in use

Some detainees held overnight complained about not being offered shower, **DP's offered shower facilities when brought to the attention of staff by ICV's**

**North Tyneside**

**Areas for improvement**

Repairs carried out interview room now working.

Issue of cleaning passed to cleaning supervisor for attention.

Mattresses and pillows checked those not fit for purpose removed.

**Forth Banks**

**Areas for improvement**

Staff reminded of need to offer showers to detainees.

Heating checked and is in working order.

**Issues Raised following introduction of PCC ICV 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. Any issues raised and the response from Northumbria Police, can be found below:

### **Alnwick**

#### **No supply of hygiene items for detainees**

Stock to be replenished

### **Forth Banks**

#### **Female detainee not offered female hygiene pack**

Detainee had been allocated female officer who has been reminded re the need to offer pack.

### **Southwick**

#### **Some detainees not offered showers despite being detained overnight**

Staff reminded to offers showers to detainees.