



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

## **Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner**

### **Independent Custody Visitors findings – November 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 **November 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 **November 2017** no issues of concern were highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted below.

#### **Alnwick**

No detainees in custody

No detainees in custody.

Warm welcome received by staff and food stores checked.

Food stocks all in date.

Suite clean and tidy.

#### **Berwick**

No detainees in custody.

Warm welcome received by staff and food stores checked.

Food stocks all in date.

Suite clean and tidy.

## **Bedlington**

No detainees in custody

All areas clean and tidy

All detainee food stocks in date

**Areas for improvement:**

**Detainee showers in need of immediate cleaning:**

**Force Response: Completed.**

**Panic alarm strips in corridor are not illuminated – possible fault.**

**Force Response: This isn't a fault Bedlington doesn't have illuminated panic strips.**

## **Southwick**

Suite clean and tidy and staff helpful

**Areas for improvement:**

**Only 1 size of female hygiene packs available in suite.**

**Force Response: Checked and alternatives added**

**Cell door 5 – Lock broken and door catching on floor.**

**Force Response: Repairs scheduled**

**Detainee clothes lockers left open:**

**Force Response: Sgts emailed.**

**Poor signal strength for use of mobile phablets which is a recurring issue.**

**Force Response: Custody are reviewing the capability of phablets**

**\*\*Incident where detainee had used a ripped blanket attached to sink plug resulted in staff requesting that mesh covers are provided for plugholes however this request was refused\*\***

**Force Response: Blankets are being returned to manufacturers in batches. Incident reviewed and impossible to create ligature hold with plug**

## **North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane**

Custody suite clean and tidy for a very busy suite

Staff polite and helpful

All detainee lockers closed

***Areas for Improvement:***

**Issues with mobile phablets losing signal – recurring issue.**

**Force Response: Custody are reviewing the capability of phablets**

**Forth Banks**

Staff friendly, professional and co-operative with both staff and detainees.

Clean and tidy suite

No issues of concern