

ICV Newsletter



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Welcome to our ICV newsletter, dedicated to the work of our Independent Custody Visitors. Let me first of all thank you for all your efforts, I appreciate the time you give to the scheme, your knowledge and dedication has ensured that Northumbria continues to be one of the most forward thinking schemes in the country.

The information you provide after visits is fully utilised, I ensure that any concerns you raise are addressed quickly by Northumbria Police. I know that you are committed to ensuring the issues raised in previous HMIC reports continue to be addressed – by doing this, we show HMIC that we act as a critical friend of Northumbria Police in relation to custody. When the force get it right, we will congratulate them (I note that many of you comment on the excellent work undertaken by officers, which is always pleasing to see) but when changes are needed, we will strive to get them implemented quickly and promptly.

Keep up the great work; together we are making a difference.

Best Wishes,

Vera Baird QC

Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner



TECHNOLOGY—MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Electronic Custody Record System

The Electronic Custody Registration (ECR) system, has been developed by the IT department within Northumbria Police – creating a system that has increased efficiency and speeded up the process:

The new technology allows custody staff to manage detainees more quickly, safely and more accurately and we have had interest from other forces about the system.

The system also allows reviews, medication schedules and other interventions to be entered and is

automatically synchronised to the hand-held devices. This ensures staff have access to information and add details into the system whilst they are away from the custody desk. Officers have welcomed the new technology which has dramatically improved the monitoring of detainees and helped the recording processes.

Independent Custody Visitors have fully embraced the new technology and it has allowed you to input data quicker and it meets the requirements following the HMIC Inspection



HMIC UPDATE

Members will recall that HMIC undertook a joint inspection of police custody suites with HM Inspectorate of Prisons in 2014 and they found many positive aspects, but there were a number of issues that needed attention, these included:

- ◆ Custody recording systems involved a mix of paper and computer records, allowing opportunities for human error in recording strategic and individual detainee information.
- ◆ The Force did not have sufficient focus on learning from adverse incidents, nor did it have a robust quality assurance system in place
- ◆ Handovers could be subject to incorrect recording of risk information.
- ◆ A number of issues raised in the 2011 inspection regarding health care had not been addressed when the inspection of 2014 took place.

As you know, an action plan was prepared by Northumbria Police. To allow the Commissioner to challenge the work of the force in relation to custody, the questions and observations carried out by ICV'S addressed the main recommendations. ICVs are the Commissioners eyes and ears in custody suites and the issues now reported highlight what was in the HMIC report.

The Commissioner will continue to ensure issues are addressed quickly by the force and updates of your findings are on the OPCC website:

<http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk/volunteers/independent-custody->

FACTS AND FIGURES:

During the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016, a total of 197 custody visits were undertaken. Of these, 1,504 detainees were in custody with 616 detainees being seen and 158 detainees refusing a visit.

END OF AN ERA

Northumbria Police has had a very effective dog welfare visiting scheme for many years. However, due to a new partnership agreement with a neighbouring forces Durham, Cleveland and North Yorkshire the dogs have been re-located to a shared facility in Durham.

The collaboration will provide new, improved facilities for our dogs – whilst making savings, all of which will be reinvested back in to policing.

The Commissioner would like to take this opportunity to thank Joyce Walker for her dedication to the police dog welfare visiting scheme over many years. Her work has ensured that Northumbria's police dogs were well looked after and "fit for duty".

