



NORTHUMBRIA **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER**

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – August 2019

Kim McGuinness, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria 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 2019** 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 2019** no issues of concern were highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted below.

Millbank – Resilience Suite (Visit undertaken 06.08.19)

Staff helpful and polite

Areas for improvement:

Cells 13 and 14 out of order due to repairs needed to plaster

No CAMIC machine available

Force Response: Since the ICV visit a "CUSTODY BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY" was undertaken at SOUTH SHIELDS POLICE STATION on 29th August 2019.

SUMMARY

The custody suite has been recently refurbished. Cells 1-12, Female 1-4 and Juvenile cells have been decommissioned.

In respect of Cells 13 and 14 they were reported to have minor hairline stress cracking at cove level and through flooring with slight restoration work required.

There is no camic facility at South Shields at present. South Shields continues to be operated in a resilience facility only at this time.

Southwick

Suite clean and tidy and staff polite and helpful.

Areas for improvement:

ICV's on several occasions commented that lockers were not being used for the storage of detainees clothing or were left open.

Force Response: Since the ICV visit a "CUSTODY BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY" was undertaken at SOUTHWICK POLICE STATION on 28th August 2019.

SUMMARY

Since the last inspection;

- A number of minor repair / actions have been completed.
- Servicing of mechanical plant & electrical equipment that specifically serve the cell complex area has been carried out in accordance with the preventative planned maintenance programme organised by the Force's Estates Department.

Of the 29 cells located at Southwick, only 10 have lockers adjacent to the cell. There are insufficient keys to operate such lockers and further are to be ordered to encourage staff to use the appropriate lockers where possible. In the meantime alternative locker provision is available and staff are encouraged to utilize these for the purpose of health and safety and respect for detainee's property. Compliance is to be monitored by the relevant Custody Inspectors.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy

Staff polite and helpful

All stores fully stocked

Areas for Improvement:

Pouches of out of date tea and coffee removed for disposal

Force Response: The out of date items have since been removed and the stock rotated, custody staff are aware to monitor and ensure compliance.

Forth Banks

Suite clean and tidy and all in order.

ICV's commented on calm atmosphere in the suite.

ICV's witnessed note on the door of a cell to remind the detainee of the time of next prayers time of next prayers which is good practice and commended by visitors.

Areas for Improvement:

Cell 46 Intercom not working

Cell 26 Alarm Broken

Cell 12 Wall cracked

Force Response: Since the ICV visit a "CUSTODY BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY" was undertaken at FORTH BANKS POLICE STATION on 28th August 2019.

SUMMARY

Since the last inspection the following significant work items have taken place:

- All lights throughout the custody suite have been changed to LED. This will have benefits in terms of reduced running costs, but also the lamps last significantly longer than the old fluorescent tubes and so the incidents of maintenance on site are significantly reduced thereby minimising risk to both staff and detainees.
- Servicing of mechanical plant & electrical equipment that specifically serve the cell complex area has been carried out in accordance with the preventative planned maintenance programme organised by the Force's Estates Department.
- The replacement of CCTV cameras in the cells has been completed along with some in other strategic locations around the charge desk. The rest of the cameras will be replaced as required or when funding allows.

Cell 12 and 26 were determined as requiring remedial work which has since been undertaken. Cell 46 continues to require intervention work from an external provider. Estates staff are aware of this and will ensure remedial work is conducted as soon as possible.