



NORTHUMBRIA **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER**

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – December 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 **November 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 **December 2019** no issues of concern were highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted below.

Etal Lane (Resilience Suite)

No detainees in custody as the suite had only recently opened.

It was noted that there were no specific cells solely for female detainees at the time of the visit.

Force Response: There are cells specifically for female detainees but these were not in use at the time of the visit.

Bedlington (Resilience Suite)

No detainees in custody.

Suite was spotlessly clean with all food stocks checked and a warm welcome by staff.

Southwick

All staff polite and friendly.

Areas for improvement:

Suite was short staffed.

Several detainee lockers open

Force Response:

ICV's attended on the 16th December 2019 and noted the suite was short staffed. Between the hours of 07:00 – 19:00 hours there were two sergeants and six detention officers which later reduced to four detention officers as two had early finishes in place. During the hours of 19:00 – 07:00 hours that day there were two sergeants and four detention officers on duty with resilience available from other custody suites if demand dictated. The agreed staffing level is five. Again, this can fluctuate in accordance with demand.

Communication has been circulated amongst staff providing a timely reminder of the necessity to utilise and secure detainee lockers when in use. Custody Inspectors are responsible for ensuring staff comply and will continue to measure compliance.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy
Exercise Yard checked and all in order
Staff polite and helpful
Supplies checked.

Areas for Improvement:

Cell 3 – broken camera

Six sleeves of black tea out of date and disposed of.

Force Response: The camera has been physically checked by the Custody Inspector who has geographical responsibility for the custody suite at Middle Engine Lane and I can confirm that it is now in full working order.

The out of date tea has been removed from the kitchen and the existing stock checked.

Forth Banks

Suite clean and tidy and all in order.

ICV's commented on extremely helpful staff.

Areas for Improvement:

Cell 17 – Broken alarm

Cell 2 – CCTV camera not working

Force Response: Both issues have since been rectified and the cells are now in working order.