



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – January 2019

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 **January 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 **January 2019** no issues of concern were highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted below.

Berwick

All areas clean and tidy; food in date, ICVs warmly welcomed.

Southwick

Suite clean and tidy and staff polite and helpful

Stocks of food all in date

Areas for Improvement:

03/12/18

Cells 13 & 14 – intercom still out of use

Dead bird on the 'roof' of the exercise yard

11/12/18

Cell 5 has a broken toilet

Cell 9 requires cleaning and locker open

Cells 13 & 14 – intercom still out of use

Clothes/shoes and mattress on floor in corridor

30/12/18

Cells 13 & 14 intercom out of use

Cell 16 has a persistent buzzing sound, which cannot be disabled

Force Response:

Remedial work all completed.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy

Staff polite and helpful

04/01/19

All in order – no issues

13/01/19

All in order – no issues

19/01/19

All in order – no issues

28/01/19

All in order – no concerns

Force Response:

Great thank you

Forth Banks

Staff friendly, helpful and polite

04/01/19

DO 4714 very helpful to ICVs on the visit – smooth visit

08/01/19

Detention Officer extremely helpful and proactive during visit which resulted in a smooth and positive visit

17/01/19

Escorting officer polite and professional throughout the visit

General environment clean and tidy throughout

Areas for Improvement:

04/01/19

Cells 1-10

Empty shampoo/gel packets left in shower cubicle

Toilet paper – dispenser paper left on toilet door and tipped onto floor

Cells 11-20

2 pairs of shoes left in the corridor

Female hygiene pack left lying on floor

Cells 16 & 17 – locker unit fully open

Used towel in shower

Cells 21-30

21 – footlocker broken (currently taped shut)

22/23/27/32/33 – foot lockers open

Cells 31-40

32-40 footlocker units (whole panel open)

31 – toilet blocked

35 – shoes left outside

Phone No 2 out of use

Cleaner's store No 3 door open

08/01/19

Repeat concerns raised by DPs about delay in buzzers being responded to/actioned.

DPs commented on mixed messages re communications, particularly when requiring phone calls. Appeared to be an issue with different shifts

(It was surprising to see 4 DPs in over 20+ hours in one visit, given day/time)

Cells 1-10

Panel unit open at cells 6/7

Cells 11-20

Panel unit open at cells 18/19

12 – door stopper (rubber) broken

14 – intercom broken

Cells 21-30

Jogging trousers/blanket on floor at doors

21- door broken on foot locker

23 & 26 – lockers open

28 – shoes in corridor

Shower – empty shampoo and shower gel packets left in shower space

Cells 31-40

31 – toilet blocked

32 – belongings outside

34 & 36 – lockers open

27/01/19

Immediate access was given to custody but had to wait around 15 minutes due to custody being very busy and staff lunch breaks – Custody Inspector empathised and reassured ICVs that a Detention Officer would join them as soon as possible to escort them

Force Response:

Remedial work all report and repairs on-going or completed.

With regards being provided with escort although a priority the safety and well-being of those in custody is paramount and delay can sometimes occur although this is rare.