



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

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

### **Southwick**

Suite clean and tidy and staff polite and helpful.

ICV's

#### **Areas for improvement:**

Number of cells required work to fix issues however it was noted that these are due to be repaired when the suite is closed for works to be undertaken.

ICV's on several occasions commented that lockers were not being used for the storage of detainees clothing. These items were being stored outside of cells.

#### **Force Response:**

Southwick Cells were closed in August 2019 for 1 week. A number of repairs were made to the estate which included cell corridor floors being re-laid and cell buzzers replaced which had been defective. The work is now complete .Only half the cell complex have foot lockers outside of the cells. Staff at Southwick have been reminded of the requirement to adhere to health and safety and to ensure that foot lockers are used where available and that clothing lockers are used for the cells which do not have lockers in the cell corridor.

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

Custody suite clean and tidy  
Staff polite and helpful

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

Number of detainee lockers left open

On one visit no female Detention Officer was on duty

Stock needs replenishing of large detainee tracksuit bottoms

#### **Force Response:**

Staff at all hubs have been reminded of the requirement to correctly handle and secure detainees property when in custody.

July and August are peak annual leave periods where staffing levels are reduced at times. Each team has an allocation of both male and female staff in order to comply with the codes of practice regarding detainee care and dignity. On occasions female Police Officers may be asked to assist with searching female detainee's .We are fortunate to have just completed a recruitment phase of both female and male detention officers who start their training later this month. We will aim to ensure that male and female detention officers are on duty at each suite.

C Rota have responsibility for stock .The team have been advised to ensure replacement clothing is ordered.

### **Forth Banks**

Suite clean and tidy and all in order.  
No issues raised.

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

Number of detainee lockers and water access lockers left open

Cell 46 intercom not working

Cell 24 sealing around bed needs addressing – currently out of use

**Force Response:**

**The staff at forth banks have been reminded of the requirement to comply with health and safety legislation and to keep foot lockers, water access points closed.**

**The protector group has been notified about the intercom fault to Cell 46 and it will be repaired.**

**The sealant around the bed of Cell 24 has been repaired and the cell is back in use.**