



**VERA BAIRD**<sup>QC</sup>  
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

## Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

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

### Bedlington – Resilience Suite

#### **Area for Improvement:**

26/03/19 – It is noted that the suite is a resilience suite and not operational however visitors have noted that cleaning has not been undertaken and the suite is in need of attention.

### Berwick

18/03/19 All areas clean and tidy; food in date, ICVs warmly welcomed.

### Southwick

Suite clean and tidy, food checked and all in order and staff polite and helpful

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

10/03/19

**Cells out of use due to M1 buzzer not working**

**M5 still needs repairs to floor and wall.**

**M7 and 23 toilet blocked,**

**F1 nightlight flashing,**

**CCTV camera in female corridor not working**

**22/03/19 – Cells M22, 23, 13 & 14 buzzers not working.**

**M5 plumbing issue and has been out of order long term.**

#### **Force Response:**

In relation to all of the repairs detailed above , as discussed at the last ICV panel meeting , once the refurbishment of South Shields is completed – date yet unknown. Then Southwick will be closing for a few days so that all of the repairs can be effectively addressed. Inspector Cowling will ensure that the ICV panel are informed once South Shields is completed so they can re-start their visits and will also ensure that they are informed when Southwick closes for repairs.

Due to the amount of repairs which are required following detailed discussions with our Estates Department it has been decided that it is more cost effective and efficient to complete all of the repairs together and close the suite temporarily

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

Custody suite clean and tidy

Staff polite and helpful

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

06/03/19

Microwave possibly broken in detainee kitchen

Extension reel used for Sleep Apnea equipment in need of PAT testing

Low staffing levels due to transfer to other suites

The Microwave has been checked and it is not broken. The extension reel was removed by the Inspector around that time from MEL and brought to Forth Banks for PAT testing as they were on with it at that time. He updated the ICV re this at our meeting on 6/4.

C Rota were on duty, there were 5 DO, so not low staffing levels , there is no record of anyone working elsewhere on that day .

16/03/19

Cell 35 missing lock

Cell 35, the door lock has been fixed .

19/03/19

Low staffing Levels with 2 detention officers unavailable.

Removed one sleeve of out of date coffee

B Rota 4 DO on duty , 1 showing ARD and 1 AL (minimum should be 5 )

Mel have a good system in place by placing food and drink in the “use this first area “ within the detainee kitchen .I have asked Sgts to monitor this.

25/03/19

Out of date food disposed of.

**Force Response:** Mel have a good system in place by placing food and drink in the “use this first area“ within the detainee kitchen .I have asked Sgts to monitor this.

Staff have been reminded to ensure that the information which is relayed is objective and accurate.

### **Forth Banks**

Staff friendly, helpful and polite and suite clean and tidy.

### **Areas for Improvement:**

23/03/19

Issue with intercom entry system.

Cell 49 floor in need of repair – damage originally reported in January 2019.

### **Force Response:**

Issue with intercom entry system – this has been repaired after being reported via central maintenance

Cell 49 floor in need of repair – this has been repaired since the ICV visit.