



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

## Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

### **Independent Custody Visitors findings – November 2018**

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 **November 2018** 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 **November 2018** 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:**

01/11/18

Cells 13 & 14 – intercoms still out of use

Cells 17 & 18 – toilets blocked

15/11/10

Front office staff extremely busy so had to wait for 10 minutes for officer to come and collect them

Cell 9 Inner hatch has sharp edges so requires attention

Cell 10 out of use – requires cleaning

20/11/18

Toilet roll and hygiene packs observed on the floor in the corridor

**Force Response:**

**Insp Cowling is addressing issues with front office staff and their role in allowing access at the earliest opportunity.**

**Remedial work all completed.**

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

Custody suite clean and tidy and kitchen was spotless

Staff polite and helpful

**Areas for Improvement:**

11/11//18

Shift/rota short staffed – 2 DOs down

Custody suite closed to new detainees as ICVs arrived, due to staffing so no officers available to escort the ICVs

19/11/18

Cells 7, 22 and 31 out of use

Musty smell in corridor 31-40

Corridor 1-10 cold.

26/11/18

Wing 31-40 – light at the end of the corridor out of order

**Force Response:**

**Staffing is an on-going issue, the manner in which leave is allocated has changed to take into account all 3 suites and minimum number increased to alleviate shortages.**

### **Forth Banks**

Staff friendly, helpful and polite

03/11/18

Escorting officer very polite and extremely helpful throughout the visit

15/11/18

Custody Sergeant and DO 4213 very helpful

28/11/18

DO 5685 very helpful and responsive – calm and ordered custody environment and ICVs observed there was a quick response to detainees request.

**Areas for Improvement:**

15/11/18

Cell 42 – needs cleaning

**Force Response:**

**Remedial work all completed.**