



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – October 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 **October 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 **October 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:

07/10/18

Clothes/shoes lockers open

21/10/10

Front office staff did not escort ICVs to the custody suite – had to wait for officer to come and collect them

Clothes/shoes on floor in corridor

Cells 13 & 14 out of use, intercom not working

Cell 21 – lock on the door needs attention

CCTV out of use in male corridor

23/10/18

Front office staff escorted ICVs to the custody suite straight away

Short staffed

Shoes/clothes cupboard and supply cupboard unlocked

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.

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.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy and kitchen was spotless

Staff polite and helpful

Areas for Improvement:

14/10//18

Cell 1 out of use – requires cleaning

Cell 2 out of use – intercom not working

Cell 5 – hatch broken/missing

Corridor 31-40 – overhead light not working

Shower 35 – shower floor badly stained

Cells 21-30 and 31-40 blowing cold air

Cell 28 – needs cleaning around the toilet area

15/10/18

Cells 5-8 require cleaning

One member of staff on restricted duty

17/10/18

There is still an issue regarding courts not being able to take detainees and as a result, they have to remain in custody

Force Response:

Remedial work all completed.

C/Insp Readdie was led on work in establishing the court user group, around detainees being held due to unavailability of court. This has removed the issues of weekend keepers being detained until Tuesday. This is closely monitored by custody Inspectors.

Forth Banks

Staff friendly, helpful and polite

Custody Sergeant new to custody so followed ICVs on their visit to better understand the process of visits

16/10/18 – DO 8598 extremely helpful

Areas for Improvement:

01/10/18

Self introduction appears to be an issue which could be as a result of new staff in custody (could consider introducing a flow chart as a reminder)

10 cells out of use

Foot lockers open. Trainers left in corridor and jogging pants left in front of fire door

09/10/18

Continuing issues regarding self introduction which may impact upon negative/unsuccessful responses from detainees

Foot locker 31 left open with property in it and shoes left in corridor 21-30

26/10/18

There are concerns regarding the length of time vulnerable detainees are waiting for interpreters and appropriate adults

One detainee (who had English as an additional language) had not declared on arrest that she had children

Force Response:

Remedial work all completed.

All issues around interpreters are fed into criminal justice, issues around AA are being addressed by C/Insp Readdie with LA's in relation to children and Insp Cuthbertson in relation to AA for adults.

