



NORTHUMBRIA **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER**

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – September 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 **September 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 **September 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.

Areas for improvement:

ICV's on several occasions commented that lockers were not being used for the storage of detainees clothing or were left open.

Cell 10 reported as out of use and currently being used for storage

Force Response: Of the 29 cells located at Southwick, only 10 have lockers adjacent to the cell. There are insufficient keys to operate such lockers and further are to be ordered to encourage staff to

use the appropriate lockers where possible. In the meantime alternative locker provision is available and staff are encouraged to utilize these for the purpose of health and safety and respect for detainee's property. Compliance is to be monitored by the relevant Custody Inspectors.

Items being stored in cell 10 have been removed and the cell is now clear. However it is awaiting repairs due to a damage toilet which has created a sharpened edge.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Custody suite clean and tidy
Staff polite and helpful
Supplies well stocked

Areas for Improvement:

Visit on 01.09.19 – detainees stated that showers had not been offered.

Force Response: Of the detainees spoken to, two of the three detainees were not offered showers. The electronic custody records of those detainees have since been highlighted to the relevant custody inspector for learning. Compliance moving forward will be monitored through regular peer audits undertaken by each team.

Forth Banks

Suite clean and tidy and all in order.

ICV's commented on staff who were informative, helpful and engaging

Areas for Improvement:

Cell 15 + 46 – fire alarm not working – Out of order

Cell 12 under repair – out of order

Force Response: Cell 46 continues to require intervention work from an external provider concerning the intercom call facility but the fire alarm is now rectified. Estates staff are aware of this and will ensure remedial work is conducted as soon as possible. Cell 12 and 15 were determined as requiring remedial work which has since been undertaken and both cells have returned to use.