

## **Independent Custody Visitors**

**February 2021.**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, following an announcement by the Prime Minister re Covid-19 and government guidelines, all visits to custody suites were suspended until further notice.

To ensure the OPCC maintained an overview of the work of custody, the OPCC liaised with the custody manager and custody record reviews were undertaken by ICVs.

In October 2020 ICVs returned to face to face visiting and undertook visits to the three main custody suites across the force area, with their findings reported back to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Kim McGuinness.

Below are some of the highlights, issues and other newsworthy information raised during visits or by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

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### **Southwick**

One visit was made to Southwick, the suite was found to be clean and tidy. Staff were friendly and helpful with thanks given to officer 5891.

ICVs noted that Zoono cleaning of the suite to combat Covid had been undertaken and labels clearly displayed that cleaning had been undertaken.

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

- Lockers and panels open outside cells.
- Issue with lack of detainee blanket supply
- Cell 3 door sticking
- Cell 9 – Fault on VESDA
- Cells 12 – Cracks in plaster
- Cell 18 broken intercom
- Cell 21 broken intercom
- Cell 22 broken hatch

#### **Force Response:**

Staff reminded about the protocol in relation to lockers and panels being open outside the cells. Blanket supply resolved and monitored in line with all items that need to be replenished on a regular basis.

Cell 3 - issue resolved and cell can be used.

Cell 9 - issue resolved and cell can be used.

Cell 12 - issue resolved and cell can be used.

Cell 18 - issue resolved and cell can be used.

Cell 21 - fault reported and repair scheduled.

Cell 22 - issue resolved and cell can be used.

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

One visit was undertaken to Middle Engine Lane, the overall cleanliness of the suite was very good. Escorting Sgt was helpful throughout visit.

ICVs confirmed that hygiene packs had been supplied to detainee.

All staff within the suite were utilising the required PPE.

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

- Cell 36 and 37 out of use due to issue with plumbing pipes
- Pillows and mattresses stored at end of corridor
- 21 – 30 VESDA fault
- Out of date drinks and food disposed of

#### **Force Response:**

Very pleasing to hear that the escorting Custody Sgt was helpful throughout the visit and that the overall suite cleanliness was very good. As well as PPE protocol being adhered to.

Pillows and mattresses are now back in the cells where they belong and staff reminded about the risks of them being left in the corridors.

Cell 36 and 37 - issue resolved and cells can be used.

VESDA fault rectified.

Further checks conducted of food and drink, all in date.

## **Forth Banks**

One visit was undertaken to Forth Banks where staff were polite and friendly, the overall cleanliness of the suite was good.

One detainee mask was noted to be hanging on a door handle of a cell however following previous intervention by the Chief Inspector of Custody this is a marked improvement on previous visits where masks were stored in this way as a matter of course.

### **Areas for Improvement:**

- Detainee lockers open
- Cell 31 – leaking sink
- Cells 42/43 – water panels open outside of cell
- Cell 42 – broken intercom

### **Force Response:**

Again, pleased to hear that the welcome and cleanliness was very good. The issue with the masks has been addressed on numerous occasions and will continue to be monitored until we have 100% compliance. As per Southwick, staff reminded about leaving lockers and water panels open and the added risk this presents.

Cell 31 and 43 - issue resolved and cells can be used.

Cell 42 - fault reported and repair scheduled.