



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

## **Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner**

### **Independent Custody Visitors findings – March 2016**

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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 2016 from the stations visited.

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#### **Alnwick**

Suite clean and tidy.

No issues identified.

#### **Bedlington**

Suite clean and tidy.

No issues identified.

#### **Berwick**

All well and clean and tidy.

No issues identified.

#### **Hexham**

No visits undertaken

#### **Southwick**

Suite clean and tidy.

No issues raised

#### **Millbank**

Clean and tidy station

No issues raised

## **North Tyneside**

Custody suite clean and tidy.

Staff polite and helpful.

### **Areas for Improvement:**

Exercise yards in need of cleaning

Boxes of out of date food in kitchen

Cell 21 – No water flowing to basin or toilet

Cell 3 + 39 – camera broken

Bible available for detainees is too small

Number of mattress seams in need of repair (Recurring issue)

### **Areas for Improvement:**

Exercise yards in need of cleaning – have been swept clean

Boxes of out of date food in kitchen – have been removed

Cell 21 – No water flowing to basin or toilet – Have been fixed

Cell 3 + 39 – camera broken - cameras fixed

Bible available for detainees is too small – this has been replaced by full sized Bible

Number of mattress seams in need of repair (Recurring issue) – this is a recurring issue as mattresses wear out and are constantly replaced when no longer serviceable.

## **Forth Banks**

Staff friendly, professional and co-operative with both detainees and ICV's.

Clean and tidy suite

### **Areas for Improvement:**

Some detainees stated they were not offered washing facilities

Cell 19 – blocked toilet

Cell 16 – toilet in need of cleaning

### **Areas for Improvement:**

Some detainees stated they were not offered washing facilities. There are hand washing facilities in all of the cells except the dry cells. Detainees who are detained

over night or for over 24 hours are offered shower facilities. Additionally if someone requests a shower it will be considered and given where risk allows it.

Cell 19 – blocked toilet. Checked and no issues currently.

Cell 16 – toilet in need of cleaning. Checked and no issues currently

### **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 2016 only one issue of concern was highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted above.

#### **Millbank**

**Staff are finding it increasingly difficult to request appropriate adults through the local authority.**

The issue of appropriate adults for adults is just not an issue for South Tyneside, work is being progressed to secure a voluntary service.

No issues in terms of appropriate adults for juveniles