



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – May 2016

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 May 2016 from the stations visited.

Alnwick

Suite clean and tidy.

Medical room left unlocked

Noted that food was due to run out of date in June

No issues identified.

Bedlington

Suite clean and tidy.

No issues identified.

Berwick

All well and clean and tidy.

No issues identified.

Hexham

Suite clean and tidy.

New set of blankets arrived in suite.

New electronic custody records system and screens now in place.

Southwick

Suite clean and tidy.

Cell complex very warm. Can the temperature be adjusted?

Force response = Temperature being monitored on a daily basis

Millbank

Clean and tidy station

Staff helpful and friendly.

Areas for Improvement:

M16 – Night light broken – Force Response - repaired

M24 – Lock and light not working - Force Response - repaired

D1 – Broken bench - Force Response - repaired

North Tyneside

Custody suite clean and tidy.

Staff polite and helpful.

Areas for Improvement:

Number of cells in need of cleaning – Force Response -cleaned

Cell 36 – Cell out of use due to broken lock/crack in window - Force Response - repaired

Shoe lockers left open – Force Response - staff reminded to close shoe lockers

22.05.16 – Lack of staff on duty resulting in showers, hygiene products not being offered to detainees. Clothes and mattresses also left on floor of cells. Visitors did state that the staff were as helpful as possible and were trying their best to cope with the number of detainees in custody.- force response - resourcing issues being addressed with recruitment process

29.05.16 – Concerns that detainee was placed in a dry cell but Detention Officer was unaware why this was the case and custody record did not reflect this. Force Response - custody staff emailed to monitor use of dry cells

29.05.16 – Due to staff shortage detainees were not able to visit exercise yard or showers. Visitors also delayed access to suite due to shortage of staff to allow entry. Force Response - resourcing issues being addressed with recruitment process

Forth Banks

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

Staff commented on the issues they are having in relation to obtaining appropriate adults for some detainees.

Clean and tidy suite

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 May 2016 no issues of concern were highlighted by visitors in addition to the areas highlighted above.