

Report of Office of Police & Crime Commissioner

Independent Custody Visitors findings – February 2014.

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 in February from the stations visited.

Alnwick –

No issues raised. All areas clean and tidy

Bedlington –

All areas clean and tidy.

Areas for improvement:

Vegetable curry out of date (January 2014)

ICV had to wait twenty minutes before being shown around.

Cell 3 in need of cleaning.

Etal Lane.

Staff addressing individual issues and notes taken and actioned.

Staff helpful and professional.

Area for improvement:

DP claimed not allowed to make phone call (14/10092)

Evidence of graffiti in some cells (M8, M10, M12, M17, F3)

D3 – red marker stain, been there some time (since last visit)

Gateshead

Staff very friendly and welcoming.

Areas for improvement

Cell F2 – out of use, repairs needed.

Millbank

Very clean and staff helpful, records well written.

Gillbridge

ICVs need to commit to regular visits to this suite.

Washington

Custody staff courteous and professional, no issues.

North Tyneside

Staff friendly

Areas for improvement

Medical room door left open.

Bedding store door not closing

Shoe cupboards not being used, shoes on floor.

Cleanliness of cells not as good as usual.

Interview room 7 unlocked

Interview room 10 not working.

Dirty toilets and washbasins.

Interview room 10 camera not working.

2,3,8,9 – No fire alarm

Medical room 1 unlocked.

North Shields

Staff polite and very helpful

Interview 3 not working.

Medical room door open.

Exercise yard not to be used – why?

Shower vents need cleaning.

ICVs are completing forms which are dated 6th February and 31st January 2014 but were not received in the OPCC until the 24th March 2014. A process of ensuring the forms are put in the internal post immediately needs to be set up.

CV2 forms are being sent to the OPCC – this is not a requirement.

Response from ACC Jo Farrell

General housekeeping. Following the appointment of three new custody inspectors all housekeeping aspect of custody are under review to ensure corporate ordering, storage and stock management. Custody Inspector's have geographic responsibility for the custody estate covering North, Central and South. This clear alignment provides for better oversight of the running of the sites, improving standards and performance.

Bedlington

ICV had to wait 20 minutes before being shown around. Date of visit 10 February. Custody Sergeant confirms that the ICV were shown into the custody suite without delay, however, he was in the process of booking in a prisoner. He explained that there would be a delay and asked the ICV to take a seat within custody where they could observe the booking in process.

Etal Lane

DP claimed not allowed to make phone call (14/10042) - Date of visit 6 March. CCTV for the booking in of the DP was viewed and listened to. The DP was abusive throughout and can be heard to ask for his mother to be informed of his arrest and provides a telephone number. The custody record has been examined and shows that the DP requested his mother be informed of his arrest. Immediately after the detention is authorised there is an entry stating 'Mum

aware'. At no time is the DP heard to ask for a telephone call.

Evidence of graffiti in some cells - Cells require repainting, awaiting date for the work to be undertaken. Estates aware

D3 - Red marker stain, been there some time (since last visit) - To be repainted as above

Gateshead

Cell F2 - out of use, repairs needed. Cell repaired

North Tyneside

Bedding store door not closing. Door checked closing properly

Interview room 10 not working, camera not working. Checked, fully operational

2,3,8,9 - No fire alarm. All alarms checked and in working order

Reference is made to a visit to North Shields police station (no date), unfortunately we are unable to find any information in respect of this visit. As you are aware this is a resilience station and therefore only opened when necessary. As a result occasionally standards may not be as you would expect. However, I can assure you in the event that it is necessary to open up this station staff will attend in advance to ensure that all is in order prior to opening. If you have any further details of this visit I would be happy to have this matter looked into it further.

The general cleanliness of the suites is a priority and constantly monitored by staff who will if necessary undertake cleaning if there is a issues of health and safety, spilt water etc.