



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

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

### **Independent Custody Visitors findings – February 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 February 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**

All well and clean and tidy.

Detainee shower has now been decommissioned.

#### **Southwick**

Suite clean and tidy.

Actions

Concerns raised by visitors that detainees held in cells without inbuilt washing facilities were not being offered hand washing by staff. Chief Inspector Benson has confirmed that a sign has been positioned within the custody suite to inform detainees that they can request hand washing facilities if needed.

## **Millbank**

Clean and tidy station

No issues raised

### **Areas for Improvement:**

**Cell M10 CCTV not working** – camera fixed and cell in use.

## **North Tyneside**

Custody suite clean and tidy.

Staff polite and helpful.

### **Areas for Improvement:**

**Cell 7 out of use** – repaired cell in use

**Cell 10 sink drain blocked and leaking** - repaired cell in use

**Cell 30 out of use due to faulty fire alarm** - repaired cell in use

**Cell 39 camera out of use**- repaired cell in use

**Detainees held overnight not offered toothbrushes** – reminder to staff by custody Inspector.

**Number of mattress seams in need of repair** – mattresses being checked on regular basis and replacements ordered when necessary.

## **Forth Banks**

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

Clean and tidy suite

### **Areas for Improvement:**

**Detention officer escorting ICV's not aware of procedure during visits.** –

Do 4213 - Officer identified and procedure to be explained by line manager.

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