

Independent Custody Visitors

July 2021

On the 24th 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 during **July 2021**.

Southwick

Three visits were made to Southwick Custody Suite, the suite was found to be clean and tidy on all occasions. Staff were also friendly and helpful.

Food and drink stocks and all in order.

Showers and washing had not been offered to 3 detainees on the 06.07.21 visited as discussed in the areas for improvement below, with ICVs being informed that no male detention officers were on duty allowing for washing facilities to be offered.

Areas for improvement:

- ICVs identified a lack of “sporks” which are in need of replenishment.
- Lockers and panels open outside cells.
- Cells M18 + 23 out of use.
- Cell 4 – Plaster coming away around door.
- Cell 5 – Crack in floor by toilet.
- Exercise yard in need of cleaning.
- **06.07.21** – 3 detainees (21/14697) (21/14735) (21/14706) who had been in custody for extended periods of time were not offered the use of shower or exercise.

Force Response: Issues with exercise, showers and panels/doors open has been highlighted in this month's custody circular as a reminder for staff. The lack of sporks has now been addressed and exercise yard cleaned. Maintenance to the cells is ongoing and being closely monitored.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Three visits were undertaken to Middle Engine Lane, the overall cleanliness of the suite was very good and all staff were polite and helpful.

All food and drink stocks checked and all in order.

ICVs commented on the positive attitude of staff with specific praise for DO 6964 during their visits.

Exercise yard checked and in good order.

Areas for Improvement:

- Out of date detainee drinks identified and removed.
- Cells 11, 24, 25, 31, 39 are out of order with repairs having been requested.
- Affray alarm had intermittent issue which has been reported.
- 28.07.21 – Detainee (21/16414) not offered shower or hygiene pack.
- ICVs noted that stock levels of large clothing (Tops and bottoms) and Size 10 shoes need replenishing as non in stock.

Force Response: DP exercise addressed in custody circular. All cells have been repaired and in use. Affray alarm fault resolved. DP clothing is monitored and replenished frequently which has resolved this issue.