

**NORTHUMBRIA PCC RESPONSE TO HMICFRS
INSPECTIONS OF NORTHUMBRIA POLICE**

Inspection title	Custody services in a COVID-19 environment
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I welcome the HMICFRS report focusing on custody services during the Covid-19 pandemic. I was very pleased to read that in general police forces took immediate and decisive action to respond to the extreme circumstances of the pandemic. However, I acknowledge that there are issues arising from the use of virtual legal advice and representation in particular.

Northumbria Police have updated me on their current position against recommendations made and have identified actions for improvement. Some of the difficulties faced by the force come from the current custody system in operation. For example, the current Electronic Custody Record (ECR) system does not have a facility to record whether a detainee has, or is suspected of having, COVID-19. At present, all detainees in custody who are being treated as potentially infected with COVID-19 are reported within daily management reporting. The migration to the Northgate Connect custody system in 2022 should allow data to be extracted via a keyword search facility.

However, the force continue to work to ensure risks are mitigated. Detainees receive a comprehensive, pre-release risk assessment and if they are suspected, or known, to be infected with COVID-19, this would form part of the risk assessment. To minimise risk, detainees are provided with fresh PPE on release and police transportation may be provided. National direction is awaited following consultation between the NPCC and the NHS.

I will continue to monitor progress through my Scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely



Kim McGuinness
PCC for Northumbria