

Independent Custody Visitors

September 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 **September 2021**.

Southwick

Four 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.

ICVs viewed the distraction items that are currently being piloted in custody suites for use by detainees. Some had been damaged and were in the process of being replaced.

ICVs received positive comments from detainees regarding level of care they had received from Custody Nurse and Staff.

ICVs noted that dedicated female officers had been assigned to those that required them.

Areas for improvement:

- Exercise yard out of order due to birds nest.
- Cell 23 – Hatch fault.
- Cells 3, 15 and 21 out of order due to camera fault.

Force Response:

Very pleasing to hear the positive feedback. All cells with camera faults have now been rectified and back on line. Cell 23 will require a new hatch which is

in hand. The issue with the loose cement, bird's and the mess they make in the exercise yard is also in hand and the yard should be back on line soon.

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.

ICVs commented on the helpfulness of detention officers during their visit.

Areas for Improvement:

- 20.09.21 – Issue where there was difficulty arranging an appropriate adult for a detainee which occurred due to the use of an old contact rota being in circulation.

Force Response:

Again, helpfulness noted and will be fed back to staff. The Sunderland University Appropriate Adult Scheme is an excellent resource. The rota is distributed on a monthly basis to all custody staff so the most up to date information is always available.