

Independent Custody Visitors

November 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 **November 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. Food stocks all checked and in order however as stated below there are known delivery issues of food however there is enough in stock for detainees.

ICVs noted that dedicated female officers had been assigned to those that required them and that female detainees had been offered female hygiene items.

Areas for improvement:

- Interview Room 6 out of order due to recording equipment fault.
- Exercise Yard still out of use due to a potential ligature point being identified by staff and a birds nest. Exercise is only allowed with staff supervision.
- Force wide stock issues on food supplies.

Force Response:

Encouraging and pleasing to hear female DP procedures adhered to. Issue with the interview room has been reported and is now fixed. Estates are aware of the exercise yard issue and this has now been rectified and back in

use. Business services are fully aware food stock and are looking for a different company if the issue persists.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

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

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

ICVs checked all food stores and all in order.

Areas for Improvement:

- Cell 38 out of use due to broken CCTV.
- Cell 15 out of use due to broken hatch.
- Cell 32 blocked toilet.

Force Response:

Good to hear of the continued support provided to visitors from custody staff. And that all was in order with the food supplies. All cells are now back in use with all faults rectified.