

Independent Custody Visitors

April / May 2022

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 **April/May 2022**.

Sunderland - Southwick

Six 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 positively highlighted that detainees where needed had access to mental health nurses.

ICVs positively noted that detainees visited had been provided with toilet rolls in their cells, provided with showers and distraction items.

ICVs positively noted that where detainee clothes had been removed that this had been logged on their custody record.

Food stocks were checked and all in order on each occasion.

Areas for improvement:

- 24.04.22 (6PM) + 21.05.22 (4:35pm) – Shoe and clothes lockers open.

Force Response :

This is a recurring observation. It is disappointing, as the staff at all 3 suites are reminded monthly of the need to keep shoe and clothing lockers shut or if not in use locked closed. I will reinforce this message to all staff.

North Tyneside – Middle Engine Lane

Five 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 positively highlighted that where appropriate detainees had been provided with female hygiene packs.

ICVs positively highlighted that where detainee clothes or shoes had been removed, this was recorded on the custody record.

All exercise yards checked and all in good condition however due to a potential ligature point in each yard, detainees must be supervised whilst using the yard.

Areas for Improvement:

- 07.03.22 - Cell 14 out of order due to issue with cell call bell.
- On several visits ICVs noted that detainee food stocks were extremely low.
- 28.04.22– Cells 6+8+ 9 out of use due to broken locks.
- 26.03.22 – Shower outside cell 15 out of use.

Force Response:

Cell 14 – has been repaired, date unknown.

Cells 6,8,9 repaired by NLS 13/5/2022

Shower outside cell 15 repaired 11/04/2022

Food stock is national issues we are working with Bidfood to rectify the supply

Newcastle – Forth Banks

Three visits were undertaken to Forth Banks, the overall cleanliness of the suite and exercise areas was good and all staff were polite and helpful.

ICVs commented on the assistance provided by Sgt 8768 and officer 8968 who was very helpful during their visit.

ICVs highlighted that detainees had been provided with reading materials.

ICVs commented on good stock levels of detainee meals.

Areas for Improvement:

- 11.04.22 / 09.05.22 / 19.05.22 – Detainees had not been provided with toilet roll in their cells and all had to ask on each visit made by ICVs.

Force Response:

This is another reoccurring theme. There are times when toilet roll is quite correctly withheld from detainees. This is due to some of them using it to block toilets, wet and use the roll to cover the cctv camera or generally splatter wet roll all around the cell which put the cell out of order until cleaned.

Custody Sgt's have been reminded to update the custody record when toilet roll is withheld.

On all other occasions toilet roll should be offered to detainees and allowed to be kept in the cell. I have again reminded all staff of this.