

## **Independent Custody Visitors**

### **December 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 **December 2022**.

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### **Sunderland - Southwick**

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

ICVs noted that cup holders for hot drinks were in use within the suite following this being raised as an issue by ICVs.

ICVs reported detainee kitchen was in order.

ICVs positively noted that detainees had been provided with toilet roll without asking.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

Suite wheelchair that was used for a detainee being moved to Durham Prison has been returned but staff report that this is not the original Chair that was provided.

Several sleeves of out of date drinks and pots of porridge removed

Cell 5,6,14 and 19 out of use

#### **Force Response :**

Wheelchair returned does appear to be different, however after examination it meets the needs of what is required for custody use.

Noted regarding out of dates drinks/porridge. Staff reminded to check items regularly.

Southwick is now closed for refurbishments. All cells will be in use when reopen.

### **Newcastle – Forth Banks**

Two 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 positively commented on the support provided by Officers 5010 and 9570.

ICVs positively highlighted that a youth detainee had been provided with support and when visited they reported they felt safe in custody.

ICVs positively reported that female detainees were provided with a female officer whilst in custody.

ICVs reported that detainees had received care products such as toothbrushes.

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

ICVs noted that some detainees had been provided with toilet rolls, however some hadn't.

Chemical store cupboard left open.

Detainee lockers left open

#### **Force Response:**

Every cell should now have toilet roll provided after clear instructions sent to all staff, including Inspectors. When toilet roll is removed for safety reasons or to prevent damage then this is to be recorded on the Custody record.

Staff reminded regarding leaving cupboard and locker doors open.

### **Middle Engine Lane – North Tyneside**

Two visits were undertaken, the overall cleanliness of the suite and exercise areas was good, and all staff were polite and helpful.

Exercise yards checked and all in order.

#### **Areas for Improvement:**

16 boxes of out of date drinks disposed of.

Still no cup holders for detainee drinks in suite and this has been reported multiple times.

Detainees not reported to have been provided with toilet rolls without asking  
(21.12.22)

Cell 21 out of use due to wall crack

Reported short staffing (21.12.22)

### **Force Response:**

**Noted regarding out of dates drinks. Staff reminded to check items regularly.**

**Cup holders are now at MEL – I have seen these personally in kitchen 25/1.**

**Every cell should now have toilet roll provided after clear instructions sent to all staff, including Inspectors. When toilet roll is removed for safety reasons or to prevent damage then this is to be recorded on the Custody record.**

**Cell 21 is awaiting maintenance staff to repair**

**Short staffing due to sickness, resignations and retirements. New recruits are joining the department in February to bring all shifts up to full strength.**