



NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Independent Custody Visitors

December 2023

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 2023**.

Sunderland - Southwick

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

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

Detainee food checked and all in good order.

ICVs positively noted that detainees had been provided with reading materials.

ICVs positively noted that where needed detainees had seen the nurse.

Areas for improvement:

One detainee who had been in custody over 24hrs reported that a shower had been requested but not yet provided (visit undertaken on 16.12.23. Detainee number 23/30620)

Force Response:

I reviewed the above custody record and note the person entered custody too late to go to court on that Saturday. The booking in process documents the detainee being informed of the use of showers and other facilities whilst awaiting court. On Sunday the detainee requested a shower, and this was facilitated immediately. I can see the detainee used the exercise yard and phone calls to family as well as fed at the recognised meals time.

Forth Banks - Newcastle

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

All detainee food checked and in good order.

ICVs positively noted that where needed, detainees had received contact with the Mental Health Nurse based within custody.

Exercise yards checked and all in order.

Areas for Improvement:

- 1/. Shortage of detainee pillows:
- 2/. Suite seemed to be short staffed but well managed.
- 3/. Several detainees visited had not been provided with toilet roll without requesting it.

Force Response:

1/. We provide a pillow and mattress in each cell and carry stock to replace damaged and worn items. If an item can't be replaced the cell should be taken out of service and reported. This is reviewed every morning in the daily management meeting and rectified as soon as possible. I will instigate a check on our stock and ensure we have adequate levels to ensure we are not having to shut cells or place persons in one without these basic items.

2/. Custody Inspectors manage resourcing across all suites and any unforeseen absences are reported to senior management and back fill provided.

3/. All staff are aware of ensuring a toilet roll is in the cell prior to a detainee being placed there, only in exceptional circumstances would this not be the case and that would be well documented. A reminder will be sent to the teams to manage this requirement.

Middle Engine Lane – North Tyneside

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

ICVs positively noted well stocked detainee meals and clothing.

Exercise Yard 3 checked and all in order.

ICVs positively noted that female hygiene packs had been provided where needed.

Areas for Improvement:

On two of the three visits the suite was short staffed (16.12.23 5:10pm and 21.12.23 6:10pm).

Force Response:

Custody Inspectors manage resourcing across all suites and any unforeseen abstractions are reported to senior management and back fill provided.