



Independent Custody Visitors

August 2024

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 **August 2024**.

Bedlington

One visit was made to Bedlington custody suite. All food stores checked and all in order. Only 9 cells open due to staffing levels.

Areas for improvement:

- **Low stock of small and medium detainee clothes.**
- **No hearing loop available in suite.**
- **Exercise yard out of use due to potential ligature points being identified.**

Force Response:

- **Noted and will review, stock is available across our custody estate.**
- **Hearing loop was located and now in the suite to be used as required.**
- **Exercise yard was inspected by Estates department and cleared for use, additional work is to be carried out to further improve, all detainees placed in the exercise yards are placed there following risk assessment and monitored via CCTV.**

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 where required had been assigned female staff.

ICVs positively noted that a wheelchair was available in the suite.

ICVs positively noted that hygiene packs had been provided to detainees.

Areas for improvement:

- **Toilet rolls not provided in cells on all occasions however provided during the ICVs visit.**

Force Response:

- **Thank you for prompting, Regular checks are made by unit to ensure, other than where a risk assessment specifies, all detainees have access to a toilet roll.**

Forth Banks - Newcastle

One visit was 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.

Hygiene packs provided to female detainees and female officers assigned where needed.

Three Op Safeguard detainees in custody with two visited.

Detainee wheelchair onsite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **Out of date Kosher food disposed of and restock needed.**

Force Response:

- **Was noted and the C/Sgt who deals with this has replaced the itmes.**

Middle Engine Lane – North Tyneside

Four 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.

Exercise Yard checked and all in order.

Medical rooms checked and all in order.

ICVs positively noted religious items stored with respect by staff for Asian detainees.

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

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **Lockers open**
- **Lack of medium detainee jogging pants.**
- **Female detainee stated that she had to ask for female hygiene products and these weren't offered. Date – 22/08.24 CRN 24/022488**
- **Detainees informed considerable wait for time in exercise yard.**

Force Response:

- **Reminder to be issued re the importance of security and also potential dangers.**
- **Stock levels have since been replenished.**
- **Specific case, thank you and feedback provided.**
- **Noted, staff to be reminder that they ensure that they provide realistic and meaningful explains when informing detainees of reason why request not being actioned.**