



## **Independent Custody Visitors**

### **July 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 **July 2024**.

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### **Bedlington**

One visit was made to Bedlington custody suite which was the first since the suite was opened. All food stores checked and all in order.

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

- **Exercise yard still out of use due to spacings in walls being potential ligature points being identified.**
- **No hearing loop available in suite.**
- **Cell 3 broken bench**
- **No practice emergency evacuation of suite undertaken as of yet by staff.**

#### **Force Response:**

- **The exercise yard was reviewed by estates and declared fit for use, returned into service. We are carrying out works to resolve all the issues.**
- **Hearing loop sourced and now available in the suite.**
- **Bench has since been replaced, back in service.**
- **Tests planned; we avoid holiday periods so as not to miss any staff in their bio-annual events.**

### **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.

Detainee food checked and all in good order.

Juveniles visited had appropriate adults in attendance.

Detainees who had been in custody for extended periods had been provided with showers.

ICVs positively noted that where required female officers had been assigned.

ICVs positively noted that detainees where required had seen nursing staff.

ICVs noted that a wheelchair was available in the suite.

**Areas for improvement:**

- **Exercise yard in need of a clean.**
- **Cells 8,9 and 10 out of use due to being too hot.**
- **30.07.24 – staffing levels low on both day and evening shifts resulting in detainees not having time in exercise yard and waiting for call buzzers to be answered.**

**Force Response:**

- **Yard was cleaned prior to a recent estate's inspection and passed.**
- **Issue was reported and actions taken, since been returned to service.**
- **Noted, resourcing issues are addressed by the operational custody Inspector every morning and must be deemed sufficient to operate the suite, seeking additional staff as required.**

**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.

Officer 9570 commended by ICVs for their assistance during the visit.

Good supply of detainee toiletries available.

**Areas for Improvement or points raised:**

- **Low stock of detainee clothing.**

**Force Response:**

- **Force did experience some delays in re-supply over the summer. All suites have received their required replenishment since.**

### **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 that a wheelchair was available in the suite.

ICVs positively noted that female detainees had been offered hygiene packs and female officers assigned.

ICVs positively noted that distraction items had been offered.

ICVs positively noted that showers had been offered and provided to detainees.

#### **Areas for Improvement or points raised:**

- Some detainee lockers open.
- Out of date drinks identified and removed.

#### **Force Response:**

- Staff to be reminded, ensuring these lockers are secure.
- Thank you, stock rotation to be examined and ensured in place.