

The Custody Visiting Process

Pairs of visitors arrive unannounced to the custody suite they have been assigned to. They should be given immediate Custody suite access. The Custody Officer inspects their identification badge and informs the visitors of detainees held and any special circumstances relating to those in custody.

Visitors have access to any person detained although access may be limited or denied for visitors' safety or if such access could interfere with process of justice. Visitors have access to all parts of the Custody Suite.

The Escorting Officer enters the cell first to ensure it is safe for the independent custody visitors to enter and explains to the detainee that the independent custody visitors will introduce themselves. The escorting officer will remain in the cell whilst the independent custody visitors introduce themselves.

The escorting officer will then leave the cell but remain close so as the independent custody visitors and detainee can be seen but not heard. The visitors will then introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the visit and ask whether the detainee wishes to go ahead with the visit and consents to them seeing his / her custody record, and also confirm whether the conditions of detention are adequate.

Independent Custody Visitors must remain impartial and not get involved in the investigation process of officers however admissions or discussion of an alleged offence may be disclosed in legal proceedings. Visitors may also inspect a detainee's custody records.

The Custody Officer updates the custody record concerning the contact (if any) between the Visitor and detainee. Visitors may inspect vacant cells, detention rooms, charging area, medical room, etc.

The Visitors complete the a report of their visit electronically, seeking clarification of their observations, if necessary. The completed record form is then electronically sent to the Scheme Manager for any action to be taken.

A monthly report is also produced to identify and inform Northumbria Police of any issues that have been identified. These reports can be found by accessing the reports box on the left hand side of the Independent Custody Visiting web page.