



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

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**POLICE CUSTODY IN CLEVELAND –  
GENERALLY POSITIVE**

Police custody provision in Cleveland was well managed, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, and Dru Sharpling, HM Inspector of Constabulary, publishing the report of a joint unannounced inspection into custody suites in Cleveland.

The inspection was part of a national programme of joint inspections of police custody and covered three custody suites serving Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar. Overall, there were some areas of excellent practice, as well as a few areas which needed to be addressed.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- there was good strategic management of custody, assisted by a positive relationship with the Police Authority and an active independent custody visitors scheme;
- there was a sufficiently resourced body of permanent staff, who had good initial training – although refresher training was limited;
- the physical environment of the suites was good and safety procedures were generally satisfactory;
- an appropriate balance was maintained between progressing cases and the rights of individuals, and PACE was adhered to; and

- health care provision was generally good, supported by effective clinical governance.

However, there were some concerns:

- although safety procedures were generally satisfactory, health and safety walk-throughs were under-developed and there was inappropriate dependence on CCTV for supervising those at risk of self-harm;
- there were examples of serious delays in accessing appropriate adults to support juveniles and vulnerable adults; and
- police custody was too often used as a place of safety under the Mental Health Act.

Nick Hardwick and Dru Sharpling said:

“Overall, police custody in Cleveland was well managed. Detainees were generally well treated, their rights respected and their most pressing needs attended to. This report provides a small number of recommendations to assist the force and the Police Authority to improve provision further. We expect our findings to be considered in the wider context of priorities and resourcing, and for an action plan to be provided in due course.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors:**

1. A copy of the full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 19 September 2011 at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/police-cell/index.htm>.
2. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent inspectorate, inspecting places of detention to report on conditions and treatment, and promote positive outcomes for those detained and the public.
3. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the effectiveness of police forces and authorities to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects and regulates all 43 police forces in England and Wales

together with other major policing bodies such as the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the British Transport Police and HMRC.

4. This joint inspection was carried out from 9-11 May 2011.
5. Please contact Jane Parsons (HMIP Press Office) on 020 7035 2123 or 07880 787452 or Angharad Thomas (HMIC Press Office) on 020 3513 0600 if you would like more information or to request an interview.