



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

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POLICE CUSTODY IN SUTTON – COMMENDABLE

Police custody provision in Sutton was well managed, with properly trained staff and strong partnership working arrangements, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, and Dru Sharpling, HM Inspector of Constabulary, publishing the report of a joint inspection into custody suites in Sutton.

The inspection was part of a national programme of joint inspections and was conducted at Sutton, the single custody suite for the London borough. Overall, there were some areas of excellent practice. However there were also a small number of areas for improvement.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- the borough commander ensured good local management oversight of the suite;
- staffing numbers were sufficient and staff were properly trained;
- there were some strong partnership working agreements;
- staff interacted well with detainees and efforts were made to address particular vulnerabilities;
- a balance was maintained between progressing cases and the rights of individuals, and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) was rigorously adhered to;
- the management of DNA and forensic samples was good; and
- substance misuse support was good.

However, there were some concerns:

- staff handover arrangements required improvement;
- there was a lack of appropriate monitoring of the use of force, both locally and London-wide, as we have found elsewhere;
- complaints procedures were confused; and
- health care was adequate, but would benefit from more robust monitoring of provision.

Nick Hardwick and Dru Sharpling said:

“Overall, custody provision in Sutton was commendable. This report sets out a small number of recommendations that we hope will assist the MPS and MPA to improve provision still 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 15 June 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 1-3 March 2011.
5. Please contact Jane Parsons (HMI Prisons press office) on 020 7035 2123 or Ruth Allman or Angharad Thomas (HMI Constabulary Press Office) on 020 3513 0600 if you would like more information or to request an interview.