

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP - Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Sir Thomas P Winsor – Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
6th Floor Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PN

19 March 2018

Dear Home Secretary and Sir Thomas,

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and HM Inspectorate of Prisons: Report on an unannounced inspection visit to police custody suites in Humberside, October 2017

I am writing to you with my comments on the above report, as required by Section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017. I welcome the report, which was published on 6 March 2018.

The obligation to ensure people in custody are safe and treated with care and respect is paramount, especially so for the more vulnerable in our society. This is a complex and emotive area of policing, and systems must be in place to not just support people in custody, but also the dedicated staff working extremely hard to provide this service. This hard work by staff and officers in the custody suites has not gone unnoticed within the report.

However, the report shows that the processes in place have not been as resilient or effective as the public have a right to expect. This is something that the new force leadership team are grappling with. The theme running through this and previous inspection reports, as you may recall, is that more fundamental issues have been at the core of the problems highlighted, which stems from poor strategic planning and implementation in the past. The Chief Constable has kept me informed of his comprehensive plans to address not just the issues within this report, but also the wider more embedded issues. I am content with his plans and that these will be prioritised against the activity required. I will be receiving regular reports from the Chief Constable on progress and I am persuaded the force is now properly addressing the concerns, that some improvements have already been made and that a significantly better custody service is being developed day by day as the Force increases its staffing capacity.



In relation to one area of concern identified in the report around arrangements for obtaining appropriate adults in custody for vulnerable adults, you will be interested to know that I have been working with Hull University to develop an appropriate adult scheme for vulnerable adults. Prior to this inspection I was already researching the level of provision of appropriate adults as it was inadequate, with some gaps in local authority involvement and national legislation. Students will be trained in the coming months in the national standards and will work towards full accreditation. Initially, the scheme will service the custody facility in Hull, but I am in discussions with the University with a view to expand this service across the whole force area.

The report also identified concerns around appropriate adults for children. This service is provided by youth offending teams locally and there is Home Office Legislation in place for children. Appropriate adults should always be present during the strip searching of a child, and I will be asking the force why this has not always been the case. I can assure you that I will be looking into the levels of provision for children, and this inspection report adds real weight to the need for a review of the service for them.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to outline the work undertaken by Independent Custody Visitors. My office manages the Independent Custody Visitor scheme in this area and recently this was expanded to provide extra Custody Visitors who are doing excellent work to improve our inspections of custody suites and checking on the welfare of those detained by Humberside Police.

I will post this response onto my web-site for public access.

Yours sincerely



Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

cc:

Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP
David Lloyd, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
Lee Freeman, Chief Constable, Humberside Police
Dru Sharpling CBE, HM Inspector of Constabulary
Matt Parr CB, HM Inspector of Constabulary, Northern Region
Councillor Evison, Chair of the Humberside Police and Crime Panel

