



Rt Hon Suella Braverman  
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Dear Home Secretary

I welcome the inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) regarding an inspection visit to police custody suites in Lancashire.

I note from the report that HMICFRS have identified that Lancashire Constabulary has made good progress in improving custody services since the last inspection and has a clear governance structure to provide safe and respectful custody services, with oversight from senior managers.

I am also pleased to note that HMICFRS has recognised that custody personnel treat detainees respectfully and are generally patient and reassuring during their interactions with them.

I have however, considered the recommendation highlighted for Lancashire Constabulary, 'to make sure that when clothing is removed from detainees and replaced with anti-rip safety suits this is fully justified as the most appropriate way of managing the detainee's risks.'

In that light I feel it is important that all interactions with detainee's must be necessary, justified, and proportionate to ensure the safety and welfare of detainees but I am troubled that the language used in the report suggests that not enough consideration is being given by custody staff to maintaining detainee dignity when clothing was removed.

Custody staff deal with difficult and complex situations each day and assess the risk that each detainee presents to themselves, staff, other detainees, and other people coming into the custody suite and as such, custody staff carry with them a significant inherent risk on behalf of the Constabulary.

I am confident however, that senior leaders within Lancashire Constabulary will explore whether more can be done to mitigate the issues HMICFRS have highlighted in this regard, but I would suggest that to say there is little consideration given by custody staff is not an accurate reflection of the position.

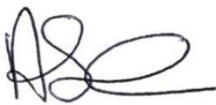
I have considered the guidance surrounding the introduction of Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels (CDSPs) to increase transparency, scrutiny and performance within police custody and my office is currently progressing this with the appropriate officers within Lancashire Constabulary with a view to establishing a new panel within this financial year.

I believe there is potential for this Panel to improve the communities understanding of decision-making processes, delivering assurance, legitimacy, and transparency around police custody procedures as well as providing opportunity for learning internally. Within the membership of this panel will be an existing ICV with knowledge and experience of how the scheme operates and understands how visits are undertaken. The ICV scheme administrator will also attend any business of the panel in relation to Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels.

ICVs have received an update regarding the HMICFRS Custody Inspection highlighting work already undertaken by the force, and areas that still require improvement. Through the ICV scheme, custody visitors will also continue to oversee and monitor work within custody suites.

I conclude by re-iterating my commitment to supporting the Chief Constable to maintain standards and drive the necessary ongoing improvements in this complex and challenging business area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. S.', written in a cursive style.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire