



05 December 2023

## **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT: 'AN INSPECTION VISIT TO POLICE CUSTODY SUITES IN SOUTH WALES POLICE'**

This comprehensive report details the findings from an inspection of South Wales Police Custody Suites. The HMICFRS inspection assessed the effectiveness of custody services and outcomes for detained people throughout the different stages of detention. It examined the force's approach to custody provision in relation to detaining people safely and respectfully, with a particular focus on children and vulnerable adults. Four recommendations have been made to address HMICFRS main areas of concern; Leadership, Use of Force, Reviews of Detention and Healthcare, with 15 other areas noted as needing improvement.

I am pleased my office was able to help with this inspection through our Independent Custody Visiting Scheme, and more so that the findings of the inspection aligned with the feedback shared by my Independent Custody Visitors and Scheme Manager. My office is currently in the process of developing an '*Independent Custody Scrutiny Panel*' to monitor the progression of the HMICFRS recommendations, ensuring positive progression in this area.

A report of this sort is extremely valuable for myself and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner by pointing to areas for improvement and enabling us to work with the Chief Constable, on behalf of the public, to seek continuous improvement towards the highest possible standards in police custody. It enables us to recognise progress and success so that we give a balanced picture to the communities across South Wales who depend on having the best possible police service.

The Deputy Chief Constable summarises his views on the report as follows:

*'We welcome the HMICFRS report, as it helps us to further understand how we can continue to improve our custody provision here in South Wales.'*

## Rt Hon Alun Michael JP OStJ FRSA

Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddu De Cymru  
Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales



*Working within the legislative framework, our absolute priority is the safety and welfare of detainees, avoiding any adverse level of risk.*

*It is acknowledged that some processes, such as the recording of information, are not of the highest possible standard and this is something we are taking extremely seriously and taking steps to address.*

*We have worked really hard to drastically reduce the number of people who are suffering mental health episodes being taken into police custody as a place of safety. We also recognise that we need to do more to reduce the number of children who are kept in custody for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is a complex situation which we need to address with the support of partner agencies who are often responsible for their care.*

*Our custody staff deal with over 22,000 detainees every year, many of whom are vulnerable, in some form of personal crisis or intoxicated. Our custody staff work in a very challenging policing environment.*

*It's pleasing to see the acknowledgement of the good work of our custody staff in relation to how they deal with detainees respectfully, patiently, and reassuringly, recognising diverse needs.'*

I am grateful for the Deputy Chief Constable's comments and the commitment to working towards the recommendations in the report. It is clear that any recommendations are necessary and welcomed.

**Rt Hon Alun Michael**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales**