

COMMISSIONER'S INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY REPORT

Custody & Detention – Women in Custody Processes

16 October 2025

Scrutiny Panel:	Custody & Detention
Members:	Martin Adams Fred Cox Jane King Sue Mather Paul Smith Jennifer Watkins Sue Westwick Also present: Sgt Ian Fortey - Force Michelle Ryan – SCO Holly Sproston - SCO
Purpose:	The Force has a Female Detainees in Custody Policy. The purpose of this scrutiny is to ensure that the correct procedures have been followed regarding this policy and recommended best practice for women within custody. For all aspects, the scrutiny should demonstrate: - the needs of female detainees were recognised and dealt with in terms of • Pregnancy? • breastfeeding/ nursing mother? • Peri-menopausal/ menopausal/ post-menopausal? - Has it been recorded properly within the custody log?
Panel Findings:	In August 2025 198 females were arrested and taken to custody. At the pre meeting on 30th September 2025 the panel selected 8 custody records to review at the main scrutiny meeting. The panel selected based on the age criteria and were keen to select one record from each age decade from 18 - 79. Custody Record C25014164 – Southern Area Custody Facility. The detainee was a 73-year-old white female. Total detention time was 9 hours 7 minutes.



All necessary checks were undertaken and complied with. It was noted that the custody record reflects on a few occasions that this was the detainees first time in custody and this was considered in actions taken by officers.

Custody Record C25014521 – Northern Area Custody Facility.

The detainee was a 64-year-old white female. Total detention time 9 hours 25 minutes.

All necessary checks were undertaken and complied with. Additional consideration given to detainee's medical issues and additional mattress and blankets provided.

Custody Record C25014105 – Southern Area Custody Facility

The detainee was a 49-year-old white female. Total detention time 22 hours 32 minutes.

All necessary checks were undertaken and complied with.

Custody Record C25014119 – Northern Area Custody Facility

The detainee was a 44-year-old Asian female. Total detention time 17 hours 32 minutes.

All necessary checks were undertaken and complied with.

The panel were impressed by the comprehensive notes on this custody record which clearly identified the issues with health and language for this detainee. The record demonstrated the care and consideration given.

Custody Record C25014123 – Northern Area Custody Facility

The detainee was a 34-year-old Black female. Total detention time 3 hours 25 minutes.

All necessary checks were undertaken and complied with. The custody record does not indicate if the detainee was made aware of the shower facility. This may have been due to the short detention time.

Recommendations and Observations:

The panel have noted the following:

Observations:

- The leaflets given to female detainees on arrival in custody were shared with the panel. The panel would like to know whether these are available in any other languages.
- All custody records reviewed indicated that the checks and processes specific for female detainees had been complied with.
- The custody records were clear and for Custody Record C25104119 there were comprehensive notes on the issue identified and solutions considered.

Recommendations:

- The Female leaflets to be available in other languages, if not already.



Force Lead Response:

Sgt Ian Forty- attendee on behalf of custody management

I recognise that female detainees in custody may require additional care due to menstrual needs and wellbeing considerations. The female leaflet outlines this additional support, but I accept the panel's feedback this only is written in English. I will ensure the leaflet is translated into our top five spoken languages in custody and will continue to monitor each Sgts compliance with the female in custody policy.

CI Peacock – Force Custody Lead

As always Custody would like to thank the panel of volunteers for taking the time to review and make comment on these records. There is clear reassurance from the panel that the custody staff are effectively managing the care and welfare of female detainees, and these are well rationalised on the records. It is also good to note that the team are acting with real compassion.

I have noted the observations and recommendations.

The recommendation has now been actioned, and we have copies of the female leaflet which is printable in the top 5 alternative languages and held on the custody data base.

I would like to thank the panel for this feedback as this has allowed us to improve the service available to female detainees.

