

Custody Scrutiny Panel Meeting Summary

6 May 2026

The Custody Scrutiny Panel met for its second pilot meeting - this time looking at experiences of women in police custody.

The Panel received updates from South Yorkshire Police on how custody focus on the identification and management of vulnerability in custody settings, including the use of research and evidence to support good practice. The role of the Panel in supporting continuous improvement and providing independent public scrutiny was also discussed.

Members considered arrangements for gathering feedback from panel members on what they had reviewed at Panel meetings. There was an update on the future development of the Panel, including proposals to move from a pilot phase to an established scrutiny arrangement which would include more public involvement.

The Panel reviewed information relating to women in custody, including processes designed to support vulnerable detainees and access to partner support services. Members discussed opportunities to bring together additional data and feedback sources as part of future reviews to help strengthen scrutiny and understanding of detainee experiences.

As part of its scrutiny role, the Panel reviewed two anonymised custody detention cases. One case highlighted areas where practice could be improved. This included

- better recognition of all detainees' vulnerabilities and specific needs, including those that are less obvious.
- cultural awareness
- awareness of the impact of body language.

The second case demonstrated many examples of positive practice, particularly in recognising and responding to vulnerability.

Feedback from both reviews was shared with South Yorkshire Police who agreed to address the issues raised to support organisational learning and improvement. SYP would feedback on the outcomes of the feedback at the next Panel meeting.

Actions were identified for inclusion in the action log for monitoring.

The meeting concluded with a discussion about the future development of the Panel, including how findings and recommendations can be effectively communicated and monitored to help maintain public trust and confidence in custody services.