



Independent Custody Visitors

January 2026

Below are some of the highlights, issues and other newsworthy information raised during visits or by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner during **January 2026**.

Sunderland – Southwick

Three visits were made to Southwick Custody Suite, the suite was found to be clean and tidy. Staff were also friendly and helpful.

Food stocks and kitchen checked.

ICVs positively noted that a wheelchair was on site.

Areas for improvement:

- **Out of date drinks removed**
- **Exercise yard in need of cleaning.**
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Force Response:

- Stock rotation is completed regularly across all suites. Following your observations I have asked that all suites conduct additional stock checks
- This outside space is subject to regular cleaning. I have asked that additional work be carried out.

Forth Banks – Newcastle

Two visits were undertaken, the overall cleanliness of the suite was good, and all staff were polite and helpful.

All detainee food checked and in good order.

ICVs positively noted that detainees had been provided washing facilities and time in exercise yard.

Wheelchairs available in suite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **Cell 9 broken lock**
- **Cell 14 out of use**
- **Cell 22 out of use - light broken**
- **Cell 47 camera fault**
- **No lids on cups on bench in kitchen and no sleeves for cups**
- **Buzzers 31-40 not cancelled**

Force Response:

- Cells are often out of use for routine maintenance, cleaning of safety issues identified by daily checks. The matters highlighted above have been fixed
- Additional sleeves for cups have been ordered
- Custody staff have been reminded re the cancellation of these buzzers.

Middle Engine Lane – North Tyneside

Two visits were undertaken, the overall cleanliness of the suite and exercise areas was good, and all staff were polite and helpful.

Food and stocks checked and all in good order.

Good clothing stocks.

Exercise yard checked and in order.

Wheelchair in suite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **13.01.26 – Short staffed due to staff being moved to other suites**
- **Damaged light switch in Cell 11.**

Force Response:

- Staffing across our suites is based upon cell demand with resources moved between our 4 suites to match demand. All suites operate within agreed tolerances with line managers able to move resources to match demand
- The cell damage highlighted above has been fixed

Bedlington - Northumberland

One visit was undertaken, the overall cleanliness of the suite and exercise areas was good, and all staff were polite and helpful.

Food and stocks checked all in good order.

Clothing stocks checked and fully stocked.

Clean blankets from laundry arrived during visit.

Detainees had been provided with distraction items.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **Strip lighting at charge desk in need of replacement**

Force Response:

- The lighting issue has been fixed.