



Independent Custody Visitors

July 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 **July 2026**.

Sunderland – Southwick

Two 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.

Wheelchair on site.

Areas for improvement:

- Debris on roof of exercise yard
- Yard in need of cleaning
- Out of date tea and coffee removed

Force Response:

The debris on the roof of the exercise yard and the cleaning of the yard is linked to birds that are currently nesting. Estates are reviewing to see what else can be done. Nesting season is coming to an end so this issue should reduce.

The rotation of supplies remains a priority to ensure detainees are not given out of date food or drink.

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 offered distraction items.

Two wheelchairs onsite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- 29.07.26 (6:28pm) - 7 staff on duty however stated they were unavailable to escort ICVs due to how busy the suite was therefore no detainees seen.
- Cell 45 has a broken lock
- Cell 47 has a camera fault
- Detainee lockers unlocked

Force Response:

Custody colleagues are aware that Independent Custody Visitors must be granted access to the Custody Suite and this did happen. The priorities for Custody staff has to be the safety of all who are in the custody suite, releasing detainees in a timely manner once outcomes are known and the management of PACE clocks. At the time of the visit on 29 July, the suite was exceptionally busy and it was unfortunate that there was not a Custody colleague available to escort the Custody visitors so they could see detainees.

All cells are checked for maintenance issues on a daily basis and reported for repair. Both cells have now been repaired.

The detainee lockers are kept within a separate room with the Custody suite and access is limited.

Middle Engine Lane – North Tyneside

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

Food and stocks checked and all in good order.

Clothing stocks at good levels.

Wheelchair on site.

Hygiene packs checked and well stocked.

Menopause packs are now in use within the suite.

Where required detainees had seen medical professionals within the suite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **Cell 6 door glass broken**
- **Cell 26 out of use as stiff door**
- **08.07.26 (5:29pm) + 16.07.26 (5:17pm) suite checked but no detainees visited due to staff shortages.**

Force Response:

All cells are checked on a daily cell and where repairs are needed, reported. Both cells have now been repaired.

Unfortunately on both the dates mentioned there were no colleagues available to escort the Custody Visitors to see detainees.