Independent Custody Visitors

August 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 **August 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.

Menopause packs and distraction items requested and provided to detainees.

Wheelchair on site.

Areas for improvement:

- Yard in need of cleaning
- 12 sleeves of out of date coffee removed
- Kitchen checked
- 12 sleeves Kenco black coffee
- Officers having to share keys and only one bunch which opens all cells and cupboards and yard
- Cell 11 out of use due to broken hinge

Force Response:

The yard is checked as part of the daily checks and any cleaning issues reported. There has been an issue with nesting birds but hopefully over the coming months this will reduce the impact to the yard. Access will be limited until cleaned,

All out of date drinks have been removed and refreshment date checks remain a priority.

There was an issue with keys being taken to other stations and taken home in error. This has now been resolved and all sets are back at Southwick.

The daily checks are used to report any maintenance issues with cells. Cell 11 is now fully operational.

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 and female hygiene packs where appropriate.

Two wheelchairs onsite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- 15.08.26 (6pm) - Several lockers open
- 15,08,26 (6pm) - Several buzzers not cancelled, even on empty cells
- Cell14 light broken
- Drinks on bench have no lids
- No cup holders or sleeves
- Detainee microwave requires cleaning as burnt on food inside

Force Response:

The detainee lockers are kept in area accessible to custody colleagues. A reminder has been issued to ensure that all lockers are kept shut. This reminder will also include ensuring all buzzers are cancelled when answered.

Cell 14 has now been repaired and is available for use.

The reminder issued has also included a reference to ensuring the drinks on the benches are covered and where available cup sleeves are used. A request has been made to ensure each suite has a sufficient supply of cup sleeves.

The microwave has been cleaned.

Middle Engine Lane – North Tyneside

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

Exercise yard 2 + 3 checked and clean.

Food and drink all in date. Boxes in the stores have all been sorted and best before dates clearly recorded on box

Wheelchair on site.

Good supply of custody issue clothing and shoes

Hygiene packs checked and well stocked.

Menopause packs are now in use within the suite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **05/08/26 - Detainee lockers open.**

- **Cell 6 out of order due to broken window**
- **Light out in corridor by cell 18**

Force Response:

The reminder referenced in the issues identified under Forth Banks covered the detainee lockers.

Middle Engine Lane is undergoing refurbishment until 26 October 2026 and is closed. The availability of all cells will be reviewed prior to opening.