Independent Custody Visitors

September 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 **September 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.

Wheelchair on site.

Areas for improvement:

- Yard in need of cleaning
- Bird debris on exercise yard roof
- Call buzzers not cancelled even on empty cells (30.09.26 - 17:24)
- 12 sleeves of white tea out of date as of end of September 2026
- Detainee lockers open

Force Response:

The responses to the Independent Custody Visitor Reports for August and September have been completed in a similar timeframe so there have been some repeat issues identified.

The exercise yard is checked on a daily basis and any cleaning issues reported. The issue with the birds has been escalated to the Estates Team who are reviewing options.

The reminder regarding buzzers was issued in October. It is hoped that October and November's results will see an improvement.

The out of date tea has been removed.

The reminder regarding detainee lockers was issued in October. It is hoped that October and November's results will see an improvement.

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.

Wheelchair onsite.

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- 12.09.26 (17:38) - Several buzzers not cancelled
- Detainee microwave in need of cleaning
- Cell 3- vesda fault
- Cell 47 - camera fault
- Cell 46 - CCTV fault
- Light out in corridor outside of cell 49

Force Response:

The reminder regarding buzzers was issued in October. It is hoped that October and November's results will see an improvement.

The microwave has been cleaned.

Faults with cells are reported on a daily basis. Cell 3 and the light outside of cell 49 has been repaired. Specialist repairs are needed for cells 46 and 47, awaiting availability.

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 checked and clean.

Food and drink all in date.

Wheelchair on site.

Good supply of custody issue clothing and shoes

Areas for Improvement or points raised:

- **02.09.26 (17:59) Short staffed so checked suite but not detainees as no staff available to escort**
- **No towels which were ordered on 26.08.2026**

Force Response:

Unfortunately due to how busy the suite was and unexpected colleague sickness, staffing levels were low. Whilst at an agreed level to maintain detainee safety, it was not possible to extract a colleague to escort the ICVs around the suite.

There has been an issue with the delivery of towels but this has now been picked up directly with the supplier and towels have been delivered.