



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Gartree**

**For reporting year  
1 Dec 2021 – 30 Nov 2022**

**Published May 2023**



## Contents

<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of establishment	4
3. Executive summary	5
 <b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	12
5. Fair and humane treatment	20
6. Health and wellbeing	31
7. Progression and resettlement	33
 <b>The work of the IMB</b>	
Applications to the IMB	40
Glossary of terms	41

## **1. Statutory role of the IMB**

1.1 The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board (IMB) appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison is situated.

1.2 Under the National Monitoring Framework agreed with ministers, the Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

1.3 To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison and also to the prison's records.

1.4 The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMB is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 2. Description of the establishment

- 2.1 HMP Gartree (Gartree) first opened in 1965 as a category C male training prison. In 1992, it became a category B male prison, with an emphasis on housing prisoners serving indeterminate and long-term sentences. It remains a category B prison. Following a review of the wider prison estate, Gartree is part of the Long-Term and High Security Estate (LTHSE). The prison is located just north of Market Harborough, in Leicestershire, and is roughly equidistant between Northampton and Leicester. The prison remains within the public sector and is operated by the Prison Service.
- 2.2 The certified normal accommodation is 708, with an operational capacity of 608 as of 18 July 2021. Operational capacity dropped from 708 to 608 on 5 July 2020 as a result of works taking place.
- 2.3 The layout of the establishment is based around nine wings. The original four are laid out in an H block style, forming A, B, C and D wings, each containing around 100 cells on three landings. The two most recently built wings, G and H, are located south of the original complex, and have cells on two levels. G wing now operates as the induction wing, although the majority of prisoners housed on this wing are permanent residents.
- 2.4 What was originally the smallest wing, E wing, now provides a 12-cell separation and progression unit (SAPU); F wing is now Gartree's therapeutic community and an additional therapeutic community plus, holding prisoners with particular learning disabilities and difficulties. Part of H wing houses the psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) unit, which holds 58 prisoners, and the other spur of H wing is a dedicated over-50s unit for 60 of Gartree's older prisoners.
- 2.5 The main providers of contract services to the prison are currently:
- Maintenance: Amey
  - Healthcare: Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)
  - Education: Milton Keynes College
- 2.6 The Board acknowledges that many of these contracts are awarded by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and not controlled or performance managed by the Governor at Gartree.

### **3 Executive summary**

#### **3.1 Background to the report**

- 3.1.1 During the 12 months of this report, Gartree was subjected to a number of regime changes due to Covid-19. The Board acknowledged the extensive work of the Governor, senior management team (SMT), officers and prisoners in being able to return Gartree to normal regime in April 2022.
- 3.1.2 The Board acknowledges the support given by the Governor, deputy governor, SMT and officers so that the Board is able to meet its obligations. We look forward to building and strengthening this support and improved working relationships.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

##### **How safe is the prison?**

- 3.2.1 During the past year, there has been a total of 53 assaults by prisoners on staff, a worrying increase of ten on the previous year. There has also been an increase in the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, up by 19 from the previous year.
- 3.2.2 Violent incidents increased from 82 to 111 in this reporting period even though there was a wing out of operation. The increase is concerning and of course the lifting of Covid restrictions will have played a part in the increase. However the Board's view is that this level of assaults and violent incidents should not be taking place.
- 3.2.3 As reported last year there continues to be an influx of drugs and other illegal items, and an increasing number of drone sightings and finds. However, effective targeted detection and searching has allowed prohibited items such as phones, drugs, weapons, and 'hooch' (illicitly brewed alcohol) to be effectively detected and confiscated. Changes in the way that exercise is now taken (no whole prison exercise) have helped to reduce the trading of illicit items and improve safety. In addition, a body scanner is now used in reception to help reduce the number of illicit items being brought into the prison from other establishments and by those returning from court and external healthcare appointments. Unfortunately, the security initiatives begun last year, which allow scanning and searching of all persons entering the establishment, remain incomplete.
- 3.2.4 Issues relating to debt and violence persist and some prisoners still report being victimised or feeling vulnerable to attack, which can lead to them self-isolating and/or self-harming.

- 3.2.5 There has been an increase in the number of recorded incidents of self-harm from 223 in 2021 to 242 in 2022. Of these 242 incidents 27 were classed as serious ('near miss') incidents which have required hospital/medical attendance. This is an increase of five on the previous year.
- 3.2.6 There has been an increase in self-harm by ligature/hanging. All of the other reasons cited for opening an ACCT have reduced. In particular there has been a fall in the number of ACCTs being opened because a prisoner is 'low in mood', from 75 in 2021 to 46 in 2022, which may be attributed to the changes from a Covid regime to a full regime that includes exercise, access to the gym and work.
- 3.2.7 The Board is pleased to note that the number of prisoners listed as socially isolating continues to reduce and these individuals are now actively managed with challenge, support, and intervention plans (CSIPs). A new Gartree 'Isolated Prisoner Strategy 2022-23' has been published during the past year. Isolated prisoners are now invited to multi-disciplinary review meetings to discuss their personal isolated prisoner support plans.
- 3.2.8 In this reporting period PAVA has been drawn three times and used twice. After viewing the incidents, the Board agreed with the finding that PAVA (an incapacitating pepper-like spray) had been used legitimately. In addition, batons have been drawn twice but not used.
- 3.2.9 Over the past reporting year there have unfortunately been nine deaths in custody at Gartree. Four of these have either been attributed to Covid or a Covid-related illness. Towards the end of this reporting period Gartree was designated as a cluster site of deaths in custody (DiCs) due to two deaths taking place within a defined period of time. The Board offers its condolences to the families of the prisoners.
- 3.2.10 The Board will continue to monitor evidence that action points related to recommendations from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) investigations into these deaths are followed up, implemented and/or monitored. Disappointingly, some previous recommendations made by the PPO have been repeated in this reporting period regarding end of life care in relation to prisoners and those who are being escorted to hospital. The Board looks forward to seeing all actions recommended by the PPO completed and implemented.
- 3.2.11 Organised criminal activity continues to exert influence within the prison with the smuggling of phones, drugs, and other restricted items into the prison. The Board recognises the work of the security department and all staff who work hard to address this issue.

### **How fairly and humanely are prisoners treated?**

3.2.12 The Board considers that on the whole prisoners at Gartree are treated fairly and humanely.

3.2.13 Overall, the Board believes that the relationships between prisoners and staff at Gartree are generally positive, with many supportive and constructive interactions observed. While new officers are typically dispersed across different wings and functions to provide a balance of experience, there have been instances where this has not been the case.

3.2.14 Overall there has been a reduction in the use of long-term segregation both in the SAPU and on the wings. However, the Board remains concerned about the prisoners who are housed in the SAPU for extended periods. Over this reporting period it appears to have become more difficult to move prisoners who are to be transferred to secure mental health units. This delay in transferring can cause major challenges for the staff and other prisoners located in the SAPU.

3.2.15 The Board remains dismayed at the non-existent progress on improvements to the fabric and infrastructure and to showers and some other areas. Despite the Minister stating that showers in wings A and C would be completed by January 2023 (letter from Stuart Andrew MP, Minister of State for Justice, sent to IMB Chair on 16 July 2022) the Board can confirm that at the time of writing this report (January 2023) work has not yet started, let alone been completed.

### **How well are prisoners' health and wellbeing needs met?**

3.2.16 The Board believes that the prisoners' health and wellbeing needs may be being met. However, information has been requested on a number of occasions (for this and previous reports) to evidence the statement that is widely used that services and treatment being provided by NHFT are equivalent to those in the wider community. Despite support from the Governor no information has been received. Therefore, the Board declines to express any view on the health and wellbeing of the prisoners in this annual report in relation to NHS commissioned services, as it lacks the factual data/information, rather than anecdotal comment, to show whether outcomes as outlined in various commissioning documents are being achieved.

### **How well are prisoners progressed towards successful resettlement?**

3.2.17 The Board remains hopeful that plans will be implemented to provide wider training and employment opportunities to support future employability and address its concern about the amount and quality of purposeful activity truly available to the prisoners at Gartree. Any opportunities which help to prepare prisoners for a future release into a modern digital world are to be welcomed at every stage of a prisoner's journey, providing them with relevant skills and offering prisoners purpose in their work and their time in prison.

3.2.18 However, the Board acknowledges some of the positive planned additional employment opportunities, for example the setting up of the DHL canteen shop, and the clean, rehabilitative, enabling & decent (CRED) scheme which may result in the prisoners gaining a City & Guilds qualification.

3.2.19 The Board is concerned about the slow movement of prisoners to category C and category D prisons, and the virtual moratorium on progression for these individuals, which is acknowledged as a national issue rather than Gartree specific.

3.2.20 In addition, the lack of offending behaviour programmes being offered to prisoners, unless they are over tariff or within 12 months of their planned release date, impacts on prisoners being able to make progress.

3.2.21 However, the Board remains very concerned about the prisoners at Gartree serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPPs). Whilst the Board acknowledges the work being undertaken at Gartree itself, 25 of the 42 IPP prisoners at Gartree are within the complex cohort, and little significant progress is being made nationally.

### **3.3 Main areas for development**

The Board requests that answers are specific to Gartree rather than at a national level.

#### **TO THE MINISTER**

3.3.1 Will the Minister confirm again that the funding bid received by Gartree to address the unacceptable state of the showers will remain available to the establishment, as work has still not commenced?

3.3.2 Could the Minister confirm again that investment to address the seriously deteriorating infrastructure of Gartree will continue, regardless of any options



under consideration for a new prison to be built within the locality, and that Gartree will not suffer in any way should a new prison be built?

3.3.3 Does the Minister believe that sufficient work has been undertaken in the past 12 months so that the whole of Gartree will no longer be described as ‘dark, dingy and in need of repair’ (report on a scrutiny visit to HMP Gartree by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 22 and 29-30 September 2020). Similar words were used by representatives of the MoJ to describe Gartree during the *Gartree Prison Appeal Inquiry Planning appeal: Land to the South of HMP Gartree* held during October 2022.

3.3.4 The Board thanks the Minister for confirming that key services provided at Gartree are monitored through governance for quality and performance. Therefore, can the Minister confirm to the Board that all services being provided to Gartree by outside organisations (e.g. healthcare, maintenance and education) are achieving all quality and performance targets for the services they have been commissioned to provide?

## **TO THE PRISON SERVICE**

3.3.5 Can the Prison Service confirm what additional support Gartree will receive to increase the number of offending behaviour programmes in order to enable prisoners to complete courses required to assist in their progression?

3.3.6 What additional support will be offered to Gartree to ensure that assessments and sentence plans for all prisoners are up to date, and what actions is the Prison Service taking to ensure that when new prisoners are received at Gartree they arrive with the necessary up to date assessment/paperwork?

3.3.7 Can the Prison Service confirm again that Gartree will receive sufficient ongoing budget and capital funding in order both that prisoners can live, and staff can work, within a safe, secure, and decent environment? The Board continues to note that other prisons have received substantial investment to improve their infrastructure. Could the Prison Service explain to the Board why Gartree has not received this level of investment?

3.3.8 Can the Prison Service confirm what are the attraction, recruitment, and retention plan for prison officers to ensure that staffing levels at Gartree do not suffer because of the new private sector prisons due to open in close proximity to Gartree, which may appear to offer more attractive employment?

3.3.9 Can the Prison Service confirm to the Board that the new property framework for prisoners’ property is meeting the objective(s) of the new framework, or share any data that is available to show that improvements have been made and the new framework is on target to achieve its objectives?

3.3.10 The Board acknowledges the Prison Service's suggestion to review data published by the government in relation to areas such as safer custody. However, the information appears to be published at a national level and therefore does not offer the Board the necessary specific information in relation to Gartree, and has no information regarding healthcare, which remains the main area of data the Board still seeks. Therefore, can the Prison Service confirm to the Board that the integrated health services at Gartree are achieving the outcomes expressed in various commissioning documents, and that the healthcare is equivalent to the local wider community (i.e. the Market Harborough district)?

## **TO THE GOVERNOR**

3.3.11 Will the Governor work with the education department to reduce the frequency of prisoners leaving their classrooms to partake in other activities such as the gym?

3.3.12 Will the Governor continue to work with the Board to improve communication with the Board and in relation to the necessary notifications to the Board in order for the Board to carry out its duties?

## **3.4 Progress since the last report**

3.4.1 The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened over the past year has reduced from 183 in 2021 to 134 for 2022.

3.4.2 The physical environment in reception has improved with private spaces available for initial interviews and healthcare assessments, and the area in the SAPU has been decorated, which has brightened the environment.

3.4.3 In 2022 there was a decrease to 98 in challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) from 180 in the previous year. Whilst the Board acknowledges that the reduction may be explained by the restricted access that prisoners have had to each other for part of this reporting period, the Board also acknowledges that there is a reduction in the number of isolating prisoners during this reporting period.

3.4.4 Over the past year the safer custody and equality functions have benefited from additional resource, which has enabled the allocation of dedicated staff to lead on ACCT documents and/or CSIP reviews and documents. In addition, improvements in the following areas have been achieved: improved security and evaluation of data, auditing of data exploring the disproportionate representation of groups regarding areas of concern for example access to work, increased number of complaints and use of force.

- 3.4.5 The key worker scheme, part of offender management in custody (OMiC), has progressed over the past year, however at a much slower rate than the Board would like to see especially as Covid lockdowns have seriously impacted on this work. The Board continue to look forward to seeing the levels of interaction prior to lockdowns being restored as a matter of urgency.
- 3.4.6 In our last report we asked the Governor to continue to encourage greater use of body worn cameras throughout the establishment to help de-escalate potentially violent situations. Eighty-five percent of the available body worn cameras (BWCs) are booked out each day, and there is evidence that the de-escalation work by staff is beginning to contribute to reducing the need for use of force.
- 3.4.7 Major improvement in the complaints system has been evidenced by the number of complaints received by the Board about the handling of prisoners' complaints having reduced significantly. The Board also acknowledges improvements in the quality of responses received by the prisoners.
- 3.4.8 The Board acknowledges the effort and achievement regarding the employment of 500 prisoners, with only 80 prisoners unemployed. It is also noted that new prisoners are normally offered employment within 2-3 weeks of their arrival in Gartree.
- 3.4.9 The Board recognises the investment made in relation to the visits hall. This investment has improved the visit experience for both the prisoners and their visitors.

## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4 Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception and induction**

- 4.1.1 Prisoner movements in and out of Gartree are generally less frequent than in other establishments due to its categorisation as a lifer' prison. However, as reported in previous years, an ongoing fire improvement upgrade has required a large number of prisoners to be decanted; this work appears to have progressed slowly as a result of other issues discovered on B wing.
- 4.1.2 The physical environment in reception has improved, with private spaces available for initial interviews and healthcare assessments. Induction information about the prison regime is provided for prisoners including information about the IMB. A body scanner is now used in reception to help reduce the numbers of illicit items being brought into the prison from other establishments and by those returning from court and healthcare appointments.
- 4.1.3 The Board notes that members of the reception staff are knowledgeable and helpful towards new arrivals.
- 4.1.4 Face-to-face inductions and first night safety interviews, which are necessary to identify risks and vulnerabilities presented by a new arrival and provide prisoners with basic information, are generally carried out immediately but some have sometimes taken place the following day.

#### **4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody**

- 4.2.1 The ACCT process is the system used to support those people at risk of self-harm and suicide. It is used to identify risks, behavioural triggers, and protective factors for individual prisoners and to enable care plans to be drawn up to provide individual support, address issues and to help reduce risks. These prisoners then have regular ACCT reviews, are recorded on the daily briefing sheet (DBS) and are discussed at a weekly safety intervention meeting (SIM).
- 4.2.2 The number of ACCT documents opened over the past year has reduced from 183 in 2021 to 134 in 2022, which is to be welcomed. The list of prisoners on an open ACCT is recorded on the DBS, with review dates and details of the case co-ordinator clearly listed. Having a single (sometimes double) key contact has improved the management of ACCTs and provides the prisoner with a clear understanding of when reviews will take place and who will carry them out. Post closure ACCTs are also recorded on the DBS

for six weeks and now have to remain on the DBS until the safer custody team have confirmed that they can be closed, and that all relevant paperwork has been properly completed and returned.

- 4.2.3 Staff in the safer custody team are tasked with overseeing the recording of all ACCT documents, training, and quality assurance of the data. Mental health nurses and psychology staff are also a key part of the ACCT team and offer support and guidance during ACCT reviews and input into care plans.
- 4.2.4 A limited number of prisoners have been on constant watch over the reporting period.
- 4.2.5 Following the introduction of in-cell telephones at Gartree, prisoners have been able to contact the Samaritans (from these in-cell phones) at no charge. The Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) provide a valuable service and operated throughout the period of Covid restrictions. The number of Listeners available in Gartree has reduced as a result of some prisoners achieving recategorisation and moving on to other establishments. Ongoing recruitment and training to boost numbers of Listeners is underway.

### **Self-harm**

- 4.2.6 The Board notes that in the past year there has been an increase in the number of recorded incidents of self-harm, from 223 in 2021 to 242 in 2022 (see table 1 below). Of these 242 incidents, 27 were classed as serious (near miss) incidents which required hospital/medical attendance. This is an increase of five on the previous year.
- 4.2.7 The Board is aware that some acts of self-harm are carried out by a small number of prisoners who self-harm multiple times and who can often have complex mental health issues which may contribute to and help explain their self-harming behaviours. Prisoners who self-harm are managed through the ACCT process. For the reporting period the number of acts of self-harm (242) was actually larger than the number of ACCTs opened (134). This supports the suggestion that some individuals self-harm on more than one occasion.
- 4.2.8 A breakdown of ACCT referrals is provided in table 2 below. The only reason recorded for opening an ACCT between 2021 and 2022 where there has been an increase, is as a result of self-harm by ligature/hanging. All of the other reasons cited (cuts minor, cuts major, overdose, self-poisoning, food refusal, statement of intent, low in mood) have reduced. In particular there has been a reduction in ACCTs being opened because a prisoner is 'low in mood', from 75 in 2021 to 46 in 2022. Perhaps this reduction can be explained by the

lifting of the Covid restrictions in mid-2021, which had been in place for the greater part of the past year and affected all of the prisoners, resulting in them spending extensive periods each day in their cells. The Board acknowledges that during Covid all prisoners were offered exercise and also had showers and association as appropriate.

### **Deaths in custody**

4.2.9 Over the past reporting year there have unfortunately been nine deaths in custody at Gartree. Four of these have either been attributed to Covid or a Covid-related illness.

4.2.10 Towards the very end of the reporting period the Board was saddened to hear of two separate deaths within a short period of time, though presumed to be unconnected. These are thought to be self-inflicted. Gartree was designated as a cluster site for deaths in custody as a result of this.

4.2.11 There are a number of ongoing PPO investigations relating to these and other deaths in custody at Gartree. The PPO investigates all deaths in custody and the coroner carries out an inquest where necessary. The Board will continue to monitor evidence that action points related to recommendations from PPO investigations into these deaths are followed up, implemented and/or monitored. Some previous recommendations have been repeated, about the manner in which some prisoners have been escorted to hospital. The Board looks forward to being able to report in its next annual report that all PPO recommendations have been followed up, implemented and/or monitored in a timely manner.

### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation**

4.3.1 During the past year, there has been a total of 53 assaults by prisoners on staff, a worrying increase of ten on the previous year (see table 1 below). There has also been an increase in the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, up by 19 from the previous year (see table 1 below). Violent incidents increased from 82 to 111 in this reporting period. The increase is concerning yet maybe not surprising, given that the Covid lockdown restrictions were lifted, providing more opportunity for contact between prisoners. However, with at least one wing out of operation (due to the fire safety works being undertaken), the roll count is significantly lower, so such an increase is of concern.

4.3.2 CSIPs have now been used at Gartree for several years; in 2020, 80 CSIPs were opened, compared to a much greater number of 180 in 2021, however in 2022 there was a decrease to 98. This may be explained by the restricted

access that prisoners have had to each other (principally due to Covid) which has reduced the opportunities for prisoners to bully/be bullied or harming one another and/or assaulting staff. It is encouraging to see the wider proactive referral process of the CSIPs still being promoted and monitored by the safer custody team and now reported on the DBS with review dates and case manager details clearly listed.

- 4.3.3 SIMs are held to discuss violent and vulnerable prisoners. These meetings provide a forum for the professionals to discuss and review the progress of prisoners who are segregated, self-isolating, or have complex needs. The one-page summary plans for these prisoners include information about their behaviour and triggers to help wing staff manage interactions with them more effectively.
- 4.3.4 Last year, the Board expressed concerns about the number of prisoners recorded as self-isolating, included on a single list of CSIP/self-isolating prisoners on the DBS. A new Gartree 'Isolated Prisoner Strategy 2022-23' has been published during the past year, which outlines and provides useful guidance on a three-step plan (1. enquire, 2. record and report, 3. support and monitor) for staff to adopt. Isolated prisoners are now invited to multi-disciplinary review meetings to discuss their personal isolated prisoner support plan. The number of isolating prisoners has reduced over the reporting period. The self isolating prisoner policy is in active operation. In addition, practice around risk of harm applies to men who are vulnerable, and safeguarding strategies are operationalised. This has brought about clearer guidelines and consistency for those prisoners who do withdraw from prison life and ensures that their regime is better defined. Reviews take place every week with a senior officer and every 28 days a custodial manager will also conduct a review. In-cell education and employment are being offered to these men. There are plans for self-isolators to go to one of the workshops to work. Additional exercise is also offered to these men. The Board recognises the regime and staffing challenges this presents. Preventative work is being done to minimise men self-isolating, with staff training and communication about debt management and suitable distraction activities. The division of prisoner exercise is believed to assist in minimising vulnerability.
- 4.3.5 Organised criminal activity can exert influence within the prison, which can often make it difficult to locate prisoners with affiliations or conflicts. To address this issue, the security department gathers, analyses and monitors intelligence and evidence about these gangs and their members both inside and outside the prison. This is crucial work, as organised criminal activity is believed to contribute to many violent incidents and the smuggling of phones, drugs, and other restricted items into the prison. Unfortunately, since the

Covid restrictions have been lifted (albeit to a new less open regime)  
organised criminal activity is still evident and prolific.

**TABLE 1: Safer custody statistics 2022**

(figures provided by the safer custody team, HMP Gartree)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Self-harm incidents	20	283	434	427	562	350	223	<b>242</b>
Serious self-harm (near misses) incidents (attended hospital)	33	23	13	18	29	32	22	<b>27</b>
ACCTs opened (see table below for reasons opened)	139	135	184	186	226	164	178	<b>132</b>
CSIP referrals				137	125	260	354	<b>272</b>
CSIPs opened				53	39	80	180	<b>98</b>
Assaults: <b>prisoner on prisoner</b> (including serious)	60	59	65	79	78	52	39	<b>58</b>
Assaults: <b>prisoner on staff</b> (including serious)	22	29	69	61	81	48	43	<b>53</b>
Violent incidents	82	87	134	140	159	100	82	<b>111</b>
Deaths in custody	1	3	2	1	2	5	3	<b>9</b>
Serious incidents – command suite opened. <b>Safety do not record these incidents</b>								

**TABLE 2: Reasons for ACCT document being opened 2022**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hanging/ligature	4	2	8	8	10	6	3	<b>6</b>
Cuts minor	42	41	58	92	84	57	34	<b>24</b>
Cuts major (require sutures)	6	3	10	2	8	9	8	<b>4</b>
Overdose/self-poisoning	5	13	8	2	15	5	11	<b>6</b>
Food refusal	5	0	1	1	2	0	0	<b>0</b>
Statement of Intent	20	31	32	27	52	33	45	<b>41</b>
Low in mood	57	45	60	47	48	53	75	<b>46</b>
<b>Other</b>							N/A	<b>N/A</b>
Transferred on open ACCT	3	3	7	2	7	1	7	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	139	135	184	186	226	164	183	<b>134</b>



## **4.4 Use of force**

- 4.4.1 Officers sometimes have to use force for a variety of reasons. Non-compliance with a given order, threatening behaviour, breaking up an assault and preventing self-harm are common reasons for force to be used. A guiding principle is that a minimum of force is used to achieve the desired aim. As might be expected, incidents involving use of force are carefully recorded and monitored. All such incidents are analysed at the monthly use of force meeting with a multi-disciplinary membership, chaired by a governor and attended by an IMB member.
- 4.4.2 All officers are trained in the appropriate use of force, but some officers are given extra training, involving protective equipment for use in situations which have escalated or where a planned use of force (UoF) is necessary – e.g. a man refusing to move cell to another wing etc. In such a planned UoF incident a member of healthcare staff and, sometimes, an IMB member are present.
- 4.4.3 Hand-held video equipment is used to record such planned events. BWVCs are nearly always used and provide a useful record of UoF incidents. Typically, 85% of the available cameras are booked out each day. Fixed CCTV equipment provides further evidence. An issue during the year has been that there have been insufficient staff trained as instructors for UoF. It is understood that early in the coming year some officers are being sent on the training course.
- 4.4.4 The issuing of PAVA spray continues to be rolled out. This is a spray canister, carried by an officer, which contains a lachrymatory substance with a spray range of about ten feet. It would only be used when an officer felt that s/he was about to be attacked by a prisoner. Initially it was only being carried by the dedicated search teams (DST) officers (since uncovering an illicit substance, or phone etc in a cell is often a trigger for violent behaviour) and UoF instructors.
- 4.4.5 PAVA spray has been drawn three times and used in two incidents during the reporting year. In both cases the Board member attending the subsequent viewing of the video record at the UoF monthly meeting agreed with the decision that the spray was used legitimately, with the officers concerned justifiably believing that there was an imminent threat to their personal safety or that of others in the vicinity. Batons have been drawn on two occasions but not used.
- 4.4.6 During the year there has been an ongoing emphasis by the governors on encouraging staff to attempt to de-escalate a situation that is threatening to

develop into one where UoF is required. Video footage, viewed by the Board during the monthly UoF meetings, suggests that this is happening.

- 4.4.7 If a prisoner continues to exhibit violent behaviour during a UoF incident, he can be placed in a special accommodation cell (padded to prevent self-injury) in the SAPU and/or placed in a body belt. Neither facility has been used in 2021-22.
- 4.4.8 The number of UoF incidents is usually in the range of 10-25 per month (it peaked in June 2019 at 52 at a time when there was a concerted programme of cell searching in Gartree). In the calendar year 2018 there were a total of 230 UoF Incidents, in 2019 there were 262, in 2020 the total was 218 and in 2021 the number was 234. For this reporting period the number is 228. The numbers are thus more or less constant, bearing in mind that there is also a reduced prison population from 2020-21 onwards resulting from the ongoing building improvement works. These have resulted in a wing at a time being vacated; thus, there are around 100 fewer men in the prison, a reduction of 15%.
- 4.4.9 On completion of any UoF incident, all participating officers are required to complete a form, Annex A, recording their participation in the incident. Non-completion of these forms had been a significant problem in previous years – there were often 50 or more outstanding – but during the reporting year the number of non-completions has fallen considerably, typically to four or five each month, and most of these occur when an officer is absent from the prison, due to leave, illness etc, following participation in an incident. The staff who manage this are to be congratulated on their achievement.

## **4.5 Preventing illicit items**

- 4.5.1 Illegal drugs and other illicit items continue to infiltrate the prison by a variety of means, and their prevalence is closely linked to the levels of debt, violence and bullying which occur in Gartree. During this reporting year items such as hooch, distilled liquid, phones, SIM cards, chargers, smoking paraphernalia, tattooing equipment, and weapons have been detected and reported on the DBS. Some of these items are brought in and passed on during visits and there have been several arrests made by the police when such incidents have occurred.
- 4.5.2 Drones are an increasingly used means of attempting to deliver prohibited items, in what often appear to be targeted areas of the prison. Some of the drones are detected or intercepted but it is not known what percentage successfully deliver the items. The new scanners (Rapiscan) in the post room continue to intercept mail attempting to provide drugs to some of the

prisoners. The new scanner in the search room in the gatehouse is operational.

- 4.5.3 The security department collects intelligence to help monitor supply chains in the prison. This helps to establish which, if any, of the wings have an issue with drug usage. The supply and use of drugs can be linked to organised criminal activity and can cause disruption, violence and debt.
- 4.5.4 Weapons (homemade items fashioned out of blades, pieces of metal melted into plastic etc.) continue to be discovered in prisoners' cells, communal areas or the areas outside wings and can be found during intelligence-led or ad hoc searches of the establishment and prisoners by both wing staff and the DST and their dogs.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

- 5.1.1 In this report, as in many past ones, the Board highlights the ongoing deterioration of Gartree's infrastructure due to a lack of investment, particularly on wings A to D. The buildings' fabric is continuing to significantly deteriorate as it ages.
- 5.1.2 Despite the poor fabric and condition of the establishment, both prisoners and staff have made noticeable efforts to maintain clean and tidy living conditions. The Board recognises these efforts but remains concerned about the lack of investment in maintaining Gartree's infrastructure. There has been an over-reliance on external funding sources, such as bids, to fund necessary renovations. For example, there was a successful bid to address the issues with the showers, but no work has been done on them during the reporting period and they remain unacceptable. The Board is growing concerned that this issue still has not been addressed.
- 5.1.3 The Board remains disappointed that there have been no plans put in place to make the infrastructure accessible for prisoners with disabilities or mobility issues. We look forward to reporting on the progress made by the equality action team (EAT) and social care plans in addressing this issue in our next annual report.
- 5.1.4 The Board does recognise that some of the issues faced last year may have been contributed to by the extremely hot weather which resulted in over-hot or cold cells which presumably would have had an effect on prisons nationwide.
- 5.1.5 There have been ongoing issues at Gartree where the Board recognises the prompt attempts at repair, however the Board remains concerned as to whether the fixes being implemented are of a temporary nature and whether a more permanent solution needs to be sought in order to avoid the concerns about heating in the establishment.

### **Food**

- 5.1.6 The kitchens continue to provide high quality meals within increasing budget constraints, while also meeting the dietary needs of all prisoners, including those with medical or religious requirements, vegetarians and vegans. There have been issues when occasionally some food items have been unavailable due to supply chain and/or wider global issues, which present additional challenges for the kitchen.

- 5.1.7 The kitchens are occasionally monitored as part of the IMB weekly rota reports sent to the Governor. There have been few complaints about the quality or availability of food. There have however been occasional instances where prisoners have raised concerns about the quantity of food or portion sizes on offer. The prison has confirmed that the meals are within calorie guidelines.
- 5.1.8 As noted in the last annual report, and despite the fact that the Board was told that significant funds had been allocated in previous years to address this issue, the kitchens at Gartree continue to experience problems with broken equipment and delays in repairing or replacing it.
- 5.1.9 The self-catering facilities on the residential wings still require some investment and replacement of items, but since the opening up of the regime the prisoners have resumed making varied ingenious meals, utilising the limited facilities that are available.
- 5.1.10 In his response to last year's IMB report, Stuart Andrew MP, Minister of State for Justice, acknowledged that he was aware of the poor level of service the facilities management provider had received from the specialist catering equipment sub-contractor and advised that a new sub-contractor had been appointed in an effort to improve repair response times. In our conversations with the kitchen manager and staff, there still appear to be ongoing issues with equipment repairs.

## **5.2 Segregation**

- 5.2.1 The SAPU comprises 12 cells, two special cells, an office for administration, a boardroom for adjudications and reviews, two showers, a small kitchen and toilet area for staff, a courtyard with three separate exercise areas, and a lobby for holding and telephone use. Several shelves of books are available for prisoners, and there are several noticeboards displaying general information.
- 5.2.2 As previously mentioned, the physical conditions in the SAPU are poor for both staff and prisoners. The administrative office is cramped and the furniture old, but the SAPU staff have made considerable efforts over the past year to reorganise the office to provide as much space and make it as useable and welcoming as possible.
- 5.2.3 The areas outside the cells have been repainted this year, which has brightened up the unit, and the SAPU cleaner keeps the unit as clean and tidy as possible. The exercise yard which is used for segregated men, both in the SAPU and those segregated on wings, consists of nothing more than three metal cages with no view. While the Board understands the need for secure and cost-effective accommodation, we would again ask if there are any

measures that could be introduced to make the environment more calming and hopeful. The Board has been advised that gym instructors have helped to develop information boards to be fixed to the exercise yard walls with basic exercise regimes for the prisoners to follow, and yoga mats are now available for use in the yard.

- 5.2.4 Prisoners in the SAPU are mandatory visited by Board members as part of the weekly rota, in addition to daily visits from the duty governor, chaplaincy staff, mental health professionals, and healthcare staff. SAPU staff are helpful in facilitating these visits and the Board remains impressed by the high level of care that staff show towards the prisoners in the SAPU, despite the challenging circumstances, when a number of prisoners can regularly require either a two-officer or three-officer unlock.
- 5.2.5 It is the Board's understanding that the prison has an obligation to notify the Board when a prisoner is taken to the SAPU as part of the Memorandum of Understanding with HMPSS. Disappointingly, this notification rarely occurs, similar to many other required notifications from the prison.

#### **The past 12 months in the SAPU**

- 5.2.6 The SAPU continues to house prisoners who exhibit some of the most challenging behaviour and those with complex mental health needs. The SAPU staff work in a professional and compassionate manner, displaying resilience and good humour despite the daily challenges they face, and over the past 12 months there appear to have been some new staff members and a greater consistency, which allows the officers to build good supportive relationships with those in their custody and care.
- 5.2.7 The good order and/or discipline (GOOD ) review boards occur on Mon, adays and Thursdays and are led by the head of safety. This improved consistency has helped enormously to ensure that prisoners receive clear information about their behavioural goals to enable them to be reintegrated back onto the wings or moved out of the prison. Mental health staff and a psychologist also attend the review boards.
- 5.2.8 The Board also monitors the treatment of prisoners who are segregated on the wings and ensures that they receive the same regime as those who are segregated in the SAPU. The prisoners segregated on wings are also subject to the review boards and if they refuse to attend the head of safety will commonly visit them to follow up, with healthcare, psychology and the IMB in attendance.
- 5.2.9 The Board remains concerned about prisoners who have been housed in the SAPU for sometimes extended periods. In the past twelve months it appears to have become more difficult to move on some SAPU prisoners who are waiting to be transferred to more suitable establishments. In some instances,

prisoners with complex medical or mental health conditions who are awaiting transfers to secure mental health units find their time in the SAPU can be difficult and can present added challenges for the staff and other prisoners.

### **5.3 Staff-prisoner relationships, key workers**

- 5.3.1 Overall, the Board believes that the relationships between prisoners and staff at Gartree are generally positive, with many supportive and constructive interactions observed. However, the prison has experienced an ongoing loss of experienced officers for a number of reasons over a number of years, which can present challenges. While new officers are typically dispersed across different wings and functions to provide a balance of experience, there have been instances where this has not been the case.
- 5.3.2 The vital prison officer entry level trainee (POELT) mentor role had developed well but has suffered from the loss of the postholder. The Board looks forward to seeing this filled. The newer, less experienced staff, who last year may have benefited from the more restricted Covid regime, may have felt less confident working in Gartree when the restrictions were lifted, and staff turnover has been an issue. Information received from exit interviews lists transfers, pay and promotion as key contributors for the turnover. The Board recognises the challenges the prison faces in recruiting and retaining staff but has been advised that recent pay rises have helped reduce attrition. The prisoners suffer when staff levels drop and the regime, key work and programmes are affected.
- 5.3.3 Every prisoner should be assigned a key worker with whom they should have an average of 45 minutes of structured interaction per week. While the Covid pandemic disrupted key working within the prison, the Board believes that progress has been made in this area, although at a slower rate.
- 5.3.4 The prisoner council meets with the Governor, deputy governor, and SMT members on a monthly basis to address issues of concern and share important information. Board members have often attended these meetings in the past and found them to be well-attended with a full agenda.

### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

- 5.4.1 The prison is bound by the provisions of the Equality Act (2010), which requires the prison to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 5.4.2 Dedicated equality staff are now in place and actively collect and monitor a whole range of data pertaining to protected characteristics. The equality action team (EAT) meetings, which are made up of a multi-disciplinary group,

including prisoner representatives, explore different facets and are now showing signs of in-depth scrutiny and evaluation of many aspects of the prison. Evidence shows that reasonable adjustments are made to care and support for the men via the reasonable adjustments panel. Sub-groups are being developed for veterans and young adults. Work to support neurodiversity in the prison is also taking place and there is the development of a panel (including healthcare) to support this issue. Auditing explores any disproportionate representation of groups for example based on age, race, religion and disability.

- 5.4.3 The EAT's activities have highlighted, throughout the reporting year, areas of concern such as access to work by black and mixed race prisoners, increased numbers of complaints by Asian prisoners, and use of force on black prisoners. Efforts are made to evaluate, assess and act with respect to fair and equal treatment. Some examples include the provision of goods for transgender prisoners, and dedicated forums for young and older prisoners. It is evident that prisoner engagement and representation in the EAT mechanisms is crucial and vital to ensure people are heard. Importantly, the incentives scheme is also reviewed within this group to ensure all have equal access to privileges based on behaviour.
- 5.4.4 The incentives scheme is now reviewed by the EAT, and there is also more in-depth evaluation of adjudications, use of force and complaints procedures. There are staff now leading on different protected characteristics and staff are being encouraged to be equality representatives. It is evident that there are significant attempts by the EAT to review and evaluate not only protected characteristics but also nuances based on prisoner location and access to services. The Board is also pleased to note that prisoner representatives also include those who have experienced care (care leavers) and service with the armed forces (veterans).
- 5.4.5 Table 3 below shows the age breakdown of prisoners in Gartree. The percentage of prisoners in each age category has remained broadly similar over the past reporting year, despite comments often being made which suggest that the prisoners are getting younger.



TABLE 3 Age breakdown of prisoners in Gartree							
Age breakdown				Age breakdown		Age breakdown	
	2019	2020			2021		2022
18 – 21	6	4		18 – 19	0	18 – 24	<b>23 3.8%</b>
22 – 29	131	106		20 – 29	112 18.5%	25 – 29	<b>79 13.3%</b>
30 – 39	197	191		30 – 39	181 30.0%	30 – 39	<b>176 29.7%</b>
40 – 49	166	145		40 – 49	125 20.7%	40 – 49	<b>139 24%</b>
50 – 59	125	119		50 – 59	110 18.2%	50 – 59	<b>101 17%</b>
60 – 69	57	64		60 – 69	59 9.7%	60 – 69	<b>61 10.2%</b>
70 +	15	15		70+	16 2.6%	70 +	<b>14 2.3%</b>
	697	644			603		<b>593</b>

5.4.6 In addition, staff events are also taking place such as menopause awareness and challenging banter. The prison does not currently have a foreign national officer and a disability officer in place, and the Board understands that there is no requirement to have either role. However, Gartree does have an equalities manager and this post supports foreign national prisoners and those with disabilities. There are four disabled cells in the prison. A buddy scheme is also underway, where prisoners can act as carers for those that need it. A review of the prison canteen is under way to ensure culturally sensitive products are made available to all. The procurement of these products needs to be endorsed by central services. Celebrating diversity does take place. However, resources and staff to create these events can be a challenge.

5.4.7 Discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRF) are available on all wings for prisoners who wish to report incidents of concern. All DIRFs are checked by the Governor. The board is pleased to note that independent scrutiny of DIRFs is undertaken by the Zahid Mubarek Trust. This is a significant development since the last reporting year and falls in line with other prisons. Alongside this, new systems for review and auditing have been introduced, including training for investigating DIRF concerns and for conducting one-to-one conversations about equality. DIRFs are routinely logged and dealt with in a timely manner. In this reporting year, 124 DIRFs were received, and 96 were acknowledged as DIRFs, while 19 were redirected to request and complaints, and nine were from staff.

## **5.5 Faith and pastoral support**

- 5.5.1 During 2022 chaplains returned from a prolonged time away from Gartree due to Covid. Regular services and groups for the majority of faith groups resumed. Chaplains for Buddhist and Rastafarian faiths are still not available to visit the prison. A new Roman Catholic chaplain has been appointed and a full-time Anglican chaplain has been selected but is still subject to the vetting process.
- 5.5.2 Despite staffing pressures the chaplaincy continues to make daily face-to-face visits to prisoners in the SAPU, to those men segregated on wings ,and to vulnerable prisoners such as those men on open ACCTs and those socially isolating.
- 5.5.3 Post Covid, prisoners' family bereavements and serious illnesses require support from the chaplaincy. The Governor supports applications from prisoners to visit seriously ill relatives and attend family funerals in the community. In instances where this is not possible, the chaplaincy oversees remote contact through video calls on digital tablets. These calls enable the chaplaincy to comfort, and support distressed and grieving prisoners. In some instances, prisoners are able to access streamed funeral services. This has also been extended to allow prisoners to apply to participate in funerals of extended family members.

The chaplaincy works closely with the catering team to arrange festival meals for all faiths. During 2022 community festival meals were restarted in the chaplaincy.

The breakdown of faiths declared by the prisoners at Gartree in the latter part of 2022 is contained in table 4.

<b>Table 4 Religious and faith denominations</b>				
Religion / faith	Year			
	2019	2020	2021	<b>2022</b>
Agnostic	3	5	4	1
Atheist	6	6	7	3
Baptist	1	0	0	0
Buddhist	24	19	17	17
Christian	61	48	44	37
Church in Wales	3	3	2	4
Church of England	138	131	125	109
Church of Scotland	3	3	3	1
Eastern Orthodox	1	1	1	2
Hindu	4	5	5	7
Jain	1	1	1	0
Jehovah's Witness	4	5	3	2
Jewish	4	4	2	4
Methodist	2	2	1	1
Mormon	11	10	7	6
Muslim	157	145	148	153
No Religion	127	115	97	102
Oriental Orthodox	1	1	1	0
Other	1	0	0	0
Pagan	12	12	13	15
Pentecostal	2	3	3	3
Quaker	1	1	1	1
Rastafarian	7	11	10	9
Roman Catholic	99	103	96	98
Salvation Army	1	1	1	1
Sikh	8	7	6	5
Spiritualist	0	1	1	1
Taoist	1	1	1	1
Total prison population	682	644	601	583

## 5.6 Complaints

- 5.6.1 A prisoner is entitled to submit a complaint if, for example, he believes that prison rules are not being properly implemented, he believes he has been mistreated, or his property has been misappropriated
- 5.6.2 The prison's policy states that the complaint must be submitted within three months of the incident or the circumstances coming to the prisoner's attention. He would then submit a 'Comp 1' complaint. The policy requires that this must be responded to within five working days of its receipt (10 working days if it requires contacting an outside body, e.g. another prison, or if the complaint is against a member of staff). If the prisoner is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint he can submit an appeal against the decision – a Comp 1a – with similar deadlines for responses. If he feels that the issue is particularly serious, he can submit a confidential complaint – a Comp 2 – to the Governor of the prison. This too has a five-working-day deadline. Alternatively, the Comp 2 can be submitted to the deputy director of custody, in which case a six-week deadline is in place. Additionally, a prisoner may submit a Comp 2 to the Chair of the IMB.
- 5.6.3 The system starts with a member of the administrative staff collecting the complaints each day from the locked collection boxes on each wing – this is done at 7am. The complaints are logged and passed on to a relevant person – a head of function, a custodial manager (CM) or senior officer (SO) – this usually takes place at the daily morning meeting. The recipient then investigates the complaint, produces a response which is logged, and the written response is passed to the prisoner.
- 5.6.4 During the year the IMB Chair received 36 confidential access complaints. Of the Comp 1s received by the prison, over 90% each month are answered within the required five working days. Those which require external enquiries have a much lower percentage answered within the required 10 working days – in some months fewer than 5% of the complaints were answered within the time limit. This reflects the difficulties of dealing with other prisons, external agencies etc. A high proportion of confidential access complaints are usually answered within the time limit.
- 5.6.5 About 50% of the complaints received by the prison produce a result which might be thought to support the prisoner's claim. The largest category of complaints concerns items which were missing from the prisoner's canteen order delivery – if supported, these result in a refund to the prisoner's account.
- 5.6.6 It is fair to say that, until recently, Gartree IMB did not consider that the complaints system was effectively operating. The IMB used to receive many applications alleging that complaints had not been responded to. Investigations usually revealed that the complaint had disappeared in transit

and often the IMB had to resort to hand-delivering complaints to make sure that they arrived. Complaints which had been processed often revealed poorly thought-out responses. That has now changed, and the IMB receives very few such applications.

- 5.6.7 The IMB has inspected the current system and considers it to be well thought out and effective in handling the complaints and producing clear, reasoned responses. The governor in charge of the system conducts a monthly quality check on 10% of the complaints received that month to ensure that they are being handled within the prescribed timescale, that responses are informative etc.
- 5.6.8 The prison, and in particular the governor in charge of the system, are to be commended for having brought about such a change in a system which the IMB previously considered was creaking at the seams.

<b>Table 5 Official complaints received by HMP Gartree</b>		
Subject of complaint	2021	<b>2022</b> (Dec 21 – Nov 22)
Adjudications	19	<b>38</b>
Bullying	12	<b>44</b>
Canteen	166	<b>234</b>
Confidential	316	<b>378</b>
Education	20	<b>13</b>
Finance / cash	191	<b>243</b>
Food	57	<b>40</b>
Gym	2	<b>3</b>
IEP	14	<b>28</b>
Letters / censors	94	<b>102</b>
Medical / healthcare	?	<b>3</b>
OASys / OM	14	<b>26</b>
Offending B Programmes	34	<b>39</b>
Other	159	<b>345</b>
Pre Release / release	0	<b>0</b>
Reception	16	<b>45</b>
Property	202	<b>350</b>
Re- categorisation	46	<b>67</b>
Residential	215	<b>302</b>
Security	28	<b>47</b>
Segregation	2	<b>4</b>

Staff	69	<b>48</b>
Transfer / allocation	23	<b>29</b>
Violence	3	<b>9</b>
Visits	40	<b>64</b>
Work	60	<b>129</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1802</b>	<b>2630 (+ 30%)</b>
		<i>Figures provided by business hub</i>

5.6.9 As can be seen from the above table, there were around 2630 complaints received which included Comp 1s/1As, 393 complaints which were referred to external agencies, and 378 confidential access / Comp 2 complaints. There were around 30% more complaints received during the past year, which may be attributed to the opening up of the regime.

## 5.7 Property

5.7.1 As shown in table 5 above, property complaints remain high. This year it was again the most common reason for prisoners submitting complaints (other than confidential complaints). The Board acknowledges that there have been some changes in reception and the procedures used for storing and recording prisoners' property and looks forward to continued improvements in this functional area.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

- 6.1.1 Healthcare services are provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT), which is commissioned to provide integrated services to prisoners, including physical healthcare, mental healthcare, social care and clinical and psychosocial substance misuse services.
- 6.1.2 Information has been requested on a number of occasions (for this and previous reports) to evidence the statement that is widely used that services and treatment being provided by NHFT are equivalent to those in the wider community. Despite support from the Governor no information has been received. Therefore, the Board declines to express any view on the health and wellbeing of the prisoners in this annual report in relation to NHS commissioned services. The Board believes that it should be able to access factual data/information, rather than anecdotal comment, to demonstrate whether outcomes as outlined in various commissioning documents are being achieved.

### **6.2 Exercise, regime**

- 6.2.1 The prison has a purpose-built gym in its own building. In addition, there is an outdoor sports pitch, mostly used for football, with an Astroturf type surface which can be used in almost any weather conditions – only snow accumulations defeat it. Alongside this is a large, grassed area with a path around the perimeter and many prisoners use this for an extended walk. The gym building has an indoor sports hall (with basketball, badminton, 5-a-side football, volleyball etc facilities) and two large rooms, one upstairs, housing a wide range of fitness training equipment, weights facilities etc. There are shower and changing facilities. The gym is open from 8.15am to 6pm Monday to Thursday and from 8.15am to 4.15pm on Fridays and at weekends. The day is divided into five sessions from Monday to Thursday and four sessions from Friday to Sunday.
- 6.2.2 The gym is run by the activities department and attendance is on a wing-by-wing basis. Prior to the pandemic attendance was by individual booking and an attendance rate of around 70% was seen. The attendance rate is now around 50%. The most popular activities are weight-based activities, football and the cardiovascular exercise facility. Sometimes healthcare will refer an individual to the gym if they feel that exercise or physiotherapy would be helpful e.g. in recovery from an injury or as part of weight loss regimes.

6.2.3 Physical exercise is popular with a fairly large proportion of the prison's population and the facilities available are considered appropriate for this.



## **7. Progression and resettlement**

### **7.1 Education, library**

- 7.1.1 Education continues to be provided by Milton Keynes College, who have a large suite of offices and classrooms on the first floor of the main building. For most of the reporting year (from mid-January onwards) the department was operating normally following the previous year, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic restrictions. The department now has 40-60 men (around 10% of the current prison population) working in classrooms for four days per week.
- 7.1.2 As in the previous year there has been a move away from the traditional GCSE/A Level offering towards what the department considers are programmes which better cater for the needs of the men. Some of these are in-house programmes and some are externally accredited. The latter include graphic design, music, radio, education and training, supporting learning disabilities, food safety and cleaning.
- 7.1.3 The non-accredited courses include a debt awareness programme (Managing my Money) and a programme to help with living at Gartree (Brighter Lifer). This aims to improve men's skills in prison in areas such as cooking, cleaning, ironing, letter writing etc – many of the men come from backgrounds where these skills have been little in evidence. The department staff describe these programmes as 'careers in custody'.
- 7.1.4 The department also offers English for speakers of other languages ( ESOL) programmes, supports NVQ programmes in the prison's kitchen, and offers courses in food safety and cleaning.
- 7.1.5 About 40 men are supported in various distance learning programmes, such as those offered by the Open University. The usual range of functional skills, English and maths courses are also offered.
- 7.1.6 The biggest problem that the department reports this year is that the men frequently have to leave their classroom sessions part way through to partake in other activities e.g., gym, PE, visits, PIPE courses etc. The department is working with the activities organisers to try to minimise this loss of classroom time.

### **Library**

- 7.1.7 The library is situated in the main building, between A and D wings. It is housed in a light, airy room with an attached office and a meeting room. It houses a good selection of books – fiction and non-fiction – and a stock of DVDs. The facilities are available to staff and to all prisoners.

- 7.1.8 Access to the library is booked through the activities department (although books can be returned by wing representatives without prior booking). The library is open every weekday and at weekends for wing sessions. As well as books there are also 10 computers which prisoners can use for non-online activities and there are photocopying facilities.
- 7.1.9 Books are provided by Leicestershire County Council. In previous years there has been an effective request system, but the pandemic restrictions seem to have affected this. There are some restrictions on types of books – most queries that arise are of a religious nature and are referred to the chaplaincy. DVDs tend to be more problematic in this respect than printed material.
- 7.1.10 It is thought that about 10% of the prisoner population make regular use of the facility – a disappointingly low number. DVDs tend to be in greater demand.

## **7.2 Vocational training, work**

- 7.2.1 The prison offers employment to prisoners in 11 workshops. These cover a range of activities – bicycle refurbishment, textile manufacture and textile recycling, braille work, laundry, IT, waste management, gardening etc. Additionally, there is employment for a number of prisoners on each wing as wing cleaners, in the prison kitchen and some in-cell work opportunities. The latter includes the packing of tea/coffee/sugar sachets for distribution across the prison estate.
- 7.2.2 Prisoner employment is managed by the activities department. During the year they have been trying to get men newly arrived in Gartree into employment more quickly than was the case and it is now not uncommon for men who have only been in the prison for two to three weeks to be offered employment.
- 7.2.3 There is an allocation board every Wednesday morning which, as the name suggests, allots prisoners into vacant positions. A primary consideration is the risk associated with an individual prisoner. Unless a prisoner is deemed to be low risk they tend to be initially allocated to workshop 6 (tea/coffee packing) or workshop 7 (recycling used clothing into cleaning rags). If they prove satisfactory there, they can be transferred to another workshop. The most popular ones are the kitchen, laundry, the Studio, the bicycle workshop and wing working posts. Rates of pay are £1.80 per session (plus £0.50 per day) – just under £20 per week for nine sessions, for a band 1 position and lower for bands 2 and 3. However, some areas can offer higher rates of pay because they require prisoners to work longer hours, such as the kitchen, where early starts and late finishes plus working through lunch are required, or on the bio-cleaning team where prisoners can earn up to £30 per week.

7.2.4 Forthcoming developments include setting up a DHL canteen shop in workshop 1. There will also be some plastic remoulding in workshop 7 using machinery transferred from HMP Ford. Additionally, H wing will soon have men working on stripping down some of the government's stock of unused PPE from the Covid outbreak. A particularly exciting development is the setting up of what is known as a CRED scheme (clean, rehabilitative, enabling and decent). This will entail two staff from Amey monitoring a team of prisoners in redecorating and refitting cells. This will be a rolling programme, refitting three cells at one time on a wing-by-wing basis. There is the possibility of the prisoners gaining a City & Guilds decorating qualification from this.

7.2.5 There are currently about 80 prisoners who are unemployed – this does not include those who are of retirement age. This means that almost 500 men are employed within the prison.

### **7.3 Offender management, progression**

7.3.1 The offender management unit (OMU) has largely recovered from the effects of the Covid pandemic and returned to a more normal level of operation.

7.3.2 OMU staff requirements through the year have generally been met, which is an improvement on the previous year. Prisoners are allocated an appropriate prison or probation officer manager (POM) based on their risk profile under OMiC. POMs comprise a mix of probation officers and prison staff and the more risky and complex prisoners are assigned probation officer POMs.

7.3.3 All the POMs have been able to support and contact prisoners during the year with an improved balance of face-to-face and in-cell phone contact.

7.3.4 In a lot of cases, assessments and sentence plans are not up to date, nor within the parameters stipulated within the offender assessment system (OASys ). About a third of prisoners' sentence plans are affected. Funds have recently been made available for an (external) OASys taskforce to assist in clearing the backlog. But this will take a long time as a significant number of cases become out of date each month. The Board considers that OASys is vital in monitoring and assessing the risk of individual prisoners and in facilitating their rehabilitation and progression. It is disappointing that the OASys requirements are not being met, though we acknowledge the situation is worse in some other prisons and often Gartree receives new prisoners without any accompanying up to date assessments or paperwork.

7.3.5 Most progression work carried out at Gartree has the objectives of the recategorisation of prisoners and achieving successful parole hearings.

Offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) are offered, though are not as widely available as prisoners would like. Prisoners make us aware that, whilst motivated to do courses to assist in their progression, the prison is rarely able to offer them. Courses are largely restricted to those over tariff (the minimum period of imprisonment set by the court) or within 12 months of their planned release date. Parole hearings have been managed by a mix of video link and face-to-face meetings.

- 7.3.6 Historically, the prison has housed indeterminate and life sentenced prisoners for the bulk of their sentences with a view to their progression to category C and category D prisons for the final period of their sentences up to release. More recently, the make-up of the prisoner population has changed because the prison is housing an increasing number of younger, riskier, more complex and more violent prisoners and about one third of the prisoners have links to organised crime. The prison also houses prisoners who are at the start of their sentences. These changes provide additional challenges for the OMU and the prison's operation generally.
- 7.3.7 There are currently 105 category C prisoners (137 in the previous year) and three category D prisoners (five in the previous year). During the year, 37 (54) prisoners were progressed to category C, and two (18) to category D. The IMB is concerned about the slow movement of prisoners to category C and category D prisons and has been informed of a virtual moratorium on normal progression movements at this time.
- 7.3.8 The prison has 42 (41) men serving imprisonment for public protection (IPP) sentences, the remainder being life sentenced prisoners. IPPs remain a massive problem as highlighted in the House of Commons Justice Committee report issued in September 2022. The government has not responded, at the time of writing this report, to the concerns and recommendations in the report yet.
- 7.3.9 Internal IPP progression boards, focusing on IPP prisoners within the 'complex cohort' of prisoners, meet monthly. Twenty-five of the 42 IPP prisoners in the prison are included within this complex cohort. The work of these boards is important in attempting to tailor the right environment for an IPP prisoner, working on a case-by-case basis, although little significant progress is made, given the scale of the task and the challenges presented by the remaining IPP prisoners.
- 7.3.10 The Board is concerned that the MOJ is forecasting the number of IPP prisoners in the prison estate to increase as the number of recalls starts to exceed the number released and is further concerned that prisons are left to manage indefinitely a hard core of prisoners deemed 'unreleasable'.

7.3.11 Overall, the Board considers that the OMU has provided a satisfactory level of support to prisoners over the year, and staff and management feel supported.

## **7.4 Family contact**

7.4.1 The prison recognises the importance of a prisoner's family and that maintaining family relationships can benefit progression, reduce reoffending upon release and, to some extent, reduce inter-generational crime.

7.4.2 Visits take place in the visits hall from 2pm to 3.30pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays and enough capacity is available to meet all prisoner visit demands. The Board is pleased to hear that the contract with Pact (the prison advice and care trust) has been renewed for a further five years, as the support this organisation gives to maintaining and developing strong relationships with families is considerable. Pact operates from the visitor centre located at the prison entrance.

7.4.3 Equally the Board is pleased that the visits hall has undergone a refurbishment, together with new furniture being installed. This investment has improved the visit experience for both the prisoners and their visitors.

7.4.4 There was a change to the social video calling service provider, and new equipment has been installed in the visits hall. This social video call facility remains popular and is especially helpful for foreign nationals.

7.4.5 In-cell phones continue to provide a valuable link for prisoners to their families.

7.4.6 Family days will restart in February 2023 and be held monthly. The family days take place in the visits hall, last 4.5 hours and are very child focused.

7.4.7 The prison is currently looking at initiatives to assist the 240 prisoners who receive no visits.

## **7.5 Resettlement planning**

7.5.1 The prison rarely releases prisoners directly. It is possible, however, that HMP Gartree will start to release more prisoners directly if the reduction in progression movements remains. The prison would need further resource to manage direct releases.

7.5.2 During the past year, only one prisoner was released directly. All prisoners are released under Parole Board direction and are provided with appropriate

accommodation prior to release, so no prisoners are released homeless. Release is overseen by the Parole Board and Probation Service and all men receive a release plan, produced in conjunction with the community offender manager, which includes licence conditions. Following release, prisoners are monitored according to their individual risk management plan by the community offender manager, liaising with the external Probation Service.

## The work of the IMB

<b>BOARD STATISTICS</b>	<b>Current reporting year</b>	2021
Recommended complement of Board members	<b>14</b>	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	<b>8</b>	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	<b>7</b>	8
Total number of visits to the establishment	<b>313</b>	188
Total number of segregation reviews attended	<b>231</b>	117

## Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Previous reporting year	Current reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	1
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	3	4
C	Equality	5	2
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	4	5
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	4	5
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends		5
F	Food and kitchens	3	0
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	18	17
H1	Property within this establishment	19	16
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location		14
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)		11
I	Sentence management, including HDC, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	7	13
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	13	14
K	Transfers	2	5
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	13	21
M	Inappropriate	1	4
	Total number of applications	94	139

*The previous reporting year, December '20 to November '21, was partially affected by Covid restrictions. This probably explains the increase in total applications received this year, although the total of 139 applications still falls well short of the 344 applications received in the 2019 reporting year.*



## **Glossary of terms**

ACCT	assessment, care in custody and teamwork
BWC	body-worn camera
CCTV	closed-circuit television
DBS	daily briefing sheet
DIC	death in custody
DIRF	discrimination incident reporting form
DST	dedicated search team
GOOD	good order and/or discipline
HMIP	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
Hooch	Illicit/illegally brewed or distilled liquids
IPP	imprisonment for public protection
LTHSE	long term high security estate
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NHFT	Nottingham Health Foundation Trust
NHS	National Health Service
OASys	offender assessment system
OMiC	offender management in custody
OMU	offender management unit
PIPE	psychologically informed progression environment
POELT	prison officer entry level trainee
PPO	Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
SAPU	separation and progression unit
SMT	senior management team
UoF	use of force



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [imb@justice.gov.uk](mailto:imb@justice.gov.uk).