



Chair, Independent Monitoring Board
HMP Gartree
Market Harborough
LE16 7RP

MoJ Ref: ADR108694

21 September 2023

Dear Chair,

HMP GARTREE: INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD FOLLOW UP CORRESPONDENCE TO MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL REPORT

Thank you for your letter of 4 September which seeks further information following my response to the concerns in your annual report about HMP Gartree. I address below the specific areas of concern you have raised for my attention:

Improving the environment at HMP Gartree

I note your concerns about future investment being underfunded. The £13.5 million funding investment is specific to the fire safety improvements including the fire alarm upgrade in the residential areas, and the shower refurbishments. The breakdown of the works projected costs is approximately £13 million for the fire safety improvement including upgrading the fire alarms in the residential areas and approximately £680,000 for the shower refurbishments.

I can also inform you of more detailed information about further funding for additional projects to be carried out at HMP Gartree with two of these bids having already been approved. The first is the fire alarm upgrade for non-residential areas which has now been added to the combined fire upgrade project. The anticipated cost is £2 million, but, due to commercial issues with the contractor this hasn't been instructed yet. The second project is the cell call replacement for wings A to D. The costs involved are currently approximated at £1.5 million with some cost exclusions in relation to design that still need to be confirmed.

Estate investment bids are being developed for HMP Gartree including the replacement of heating and hot water boilers site wide. Sustainable net zero carbon options are being considered and the project is estimated to be in the region of £8 million. The replacement of all residential wing windows will cost approximately £2.4 million, and the replacement of the Security Systems is anticipated to cost £3.5 - 4 million. A Control Room upgrade which would include a CCTV upgrade and a new furniture layout and installation to improve the current conditions is estimated to cost £300,000. There are also some plans for an additional houseblock which would improve some existing ancillary services to support the increased population. However, developing these further awaits an outcome on the Proposed new Prison Planning appeal before a planning application can be submitted, therefore costs are not yet anticipated.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) will continue to invest in prison maintenance so that existing prison places remain in use and are safe, decent and secure. This includes making major upgrades to security and continuing the programme to improve fire safety across the estate as set out in the White Paper and commitments to the Crown Premises Fire Safety Inspectorate to ensure all accommodation is compliant by the end of 2027. In addition, an estate-wide programme of fabric and infrastructure condition surveys is underway and on track to complete by the end of 2023. The results of these surveys will provide much greater clarity in terms of the investment that is required to maintain prisons in a good state of repair, inform the long-term estate strategy and future Spending Review bids.

Healthcare Provision

I acknowledge the Board's query regarding equivalence of health services and your concerns about people in prison with complex health needs and thank you for drawing this to my attention. The Ministry of Justice is committed to improving health outcomes for people in contact with the criminal justice system.

Prison healthcare services are commissioned by the NHS in England and Wales to the principle of community equivalence, ensuring those in custody have access to the same range of primary healthcare services that are offered in the community. The Health and Social Care Needs Assessment is of paramount importance to understand the needs of the prison population to ensure that the healthcare provision is not based on the local community or nationally, but for the specific population. The suite of measurements that are used to determine if the healthcare service provision is of an adequate level of care for the prison population are determined from mandated responsibilities around the provision of public health measures known as 7a responsibilities. In addition, other measures have been agreed by clinicians and health partners which are considered to be key measures of assurance such as the first and second screening uptake.

As mentioned by the Board, the new National Partnership Agreement on Health and Social Care in England published on 23 February 2023 sets out the shared priority workplan to deliver safe, decent and effective care that improves health outcomes for people in prison and those subject to statutory supervision by the probation service in the community. This workplan will continue to improve services in prison to ensure that people have access to timely and effective care that is tailored to their needs. All prisoners, especially those with complex needs, also have access to integrated mental health services commissioned by NHS England to provide the care and support they need. These include access to a range of treatments and interventions within prisons which are set out in the national service specification for mental health care in prisons. In addition, in 2024 NHS England will be undertaking a comprehensive review and consultation exercise of all prison healthcare service specifications which will ensure the services continue to meet the needs of those in the justice system.

I hope this information is useful and provides the clarity you and your Board members need. I appreciate the Board's invitation of coming to visit HMP Gartree. My planned prison visit list is already very full for 2023, however consideration will be given to your request as and when future visit plans are finalised. The Justice Secretary and I do appreciate the valuable role played by members of Independent Monitoring Boards throughout the estate and we are very grateful for your continued hard work and feedback.

Yours sincerely,



Damian Hinds
Minister for Prisons and Probation