



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Gartree

**For reporting year
1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023**

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Introductory sections 1 – 3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

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.

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.

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.

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

HMP Gartree first opened in 1965 as a category C training prison for men. In 1992, it became a category B prison for men (who do not require maximum security but for whom escape must be made very difficult), with an emphasis on housing prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (where they don't have a set release date) 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.

The certified normal accommodation (CNA) level (the number of prisoners a cell can accommodate in uncrowded conditions that HMPPS believes are good and decent), for Gartree is 708¹, with an operational capacity (the maximum number of prisoners that can be held without serious risk to safety, security, good order and the proper running of the planned regime) of just over 600 as of January 2022 (as reported in the HMIP report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Gartree January 2023). Operational capacity dropped from 708 to 608 in July 2020 due to a programme of Fire Safety works taking place throughout the older wings within the establishment, which is ongoing.

The layout of the establishment is based around nine residential wings, the original four being laid out in an 'H block' style, forming A, B, C and D wings, each containing around 100 cells over three landings. The two more 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. 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.

The separation and progression unit (SAPU) is housed in E wing and now provides a 12-cell segregation block. F wing is home to Gartree's Therapeutic Community (TC), as well as Therapeutic Community Plus (TC+), which is for prisoners with particular learning disabilities and difficulties.

The main providers of contract services to the prison as of 31 November 2023 are:

- Maintenance: Amey
- Healthcare: Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)
- Education: Milton Keynes College

¹ Figures included in this report are local management information. They reflect the prison's position at the time of reporting, but may be subject to change following further validation and therefore may not always tally with Official Statistics later published by the Ministry of Justice.

3. Key points

Background to the report

The Board has continued to monitor Gartree prison over the last 12-month period, running from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023, and acknowledges that there has continued to be effective leadership and a drive to provide a fair and consistent regime.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) visited Gartree from 16-26 January 2023 to carry out an unannounced inspection. The key findings were published in May 2023 and, overall, the inspectors reported positively on progress in many areas since their previous visit in 2017. They reported that, at this inspection of Gartree, they found outcomes for prisoners were:

- reasonably good for safety
- reasonably good for respect
- not sufficiently good for purposeful activity
- reasonably good for rehabilitation and release planning.

As a Board, we remain very concerned about:

- The fabric and building infrastructure at Gartree.
- The facilities for some of the older/disabled prisoners, which remains inadequate.
- As far as the Board is able to comment, access to mental health services and some healthcare services remains a concern.
- The range and equitable access to truly purposeful activities.
- The continued influx of drugs and illicit items, with the seeming inability of the Prison Service to identify and restrict drone activity.
- The Board also queries the number of additional contractors working in the establishment, and the increased risks this may present for illicit items to be brought into the establishment.

3.1 Main findings

Safety

From the Board's observations, on the whole, the prison provides a calm and ordered environment and prisoners generally report feeling safe, despite some challenging behaviours.

Following their recent unannounced inspection, HMIP found that outcomes for prisoners were reasonably good for safety, with several areas of good practice relating to safety being cited in the 2023 HMIP report.

The Board remains concerned that the use of force (UoF) has increased over the reporting period, although there has been some improvement in the use of body worn video cameras (BWVC) to provide video footage of incidents. There has also been greater emphasis on this footage being reviewed so that lessons can be learnt, and training gaps identified.

The HMIP report, published in May 2023 found that despite the reduction in the population at HMP Gartree due to the ongoing fire safety works, UoF had increased since their last inspection, from 180 incidents to 231. The Board notes with interest that the HMIPP report stated that *'The governance and oversight of the use of force was robust'*.

The Board is aware that a Use of Force (UoF) Assurance and Practice Development Team visited HMP Gartree in July 2023. The aim of their visit was to test UoF practice and governance processes and to detail findings and recommendations on areas for improvement and positive practice. The Board had sight of the internal report in December 2023, so looks forward to monitoring how the actions are adopted during the next reporting year.

There have been several 'lockdown' searches throughout the reporting period, which unfortunately highlight the wide range of unauthorised items prisoners still manage to get hold of. The searches help to improve safety, but the Board still feels more should be done to prevent the items coming into the prison in the first place.

Fair and humane treatment

The Board considers that, on the whole, prisoners at Gartree are treated fairly and humanely. Relationships between prisoners and staff have been observed to be positive and fair.

Overall, the number of prisoners segregated in the SAPU and on residential wings has remained lower in the past year. However, there have still been a few prisoners held in the SAPU for several months, due to a lack of suitable alternative accommodation within the prison estate or a secure mental health unit/hospital. The Board remains concerned about the effects this has on the prisoners' mental health and also on the staff who are expected to look after them.

The Board remains extremely concerned about the poor fabric of the prison and the time it takes for repairs to happen. It appears there are still no clear plans for the improvement of showers and communal areas and the 2023 HMIP report itself commented, in its Easy Read Summary, that *'We want broken things in the prison to be fixed. We want the prison to be much cleaner'*.

Heating problems and leaking roofs continue to be a major issue affecting the daily lives of prisoners and staff. Repairs to the heating system do not appear to have fixed all of the issues, and in November 2023 the prisoners on the over 50s wing were without any heat for several weeks during a particularly cold spell. The Board is concerned that the 'fix' is not adequate, as the issues with the heating system persist.

In the SAPU, all prisoners eat 'in cell' and, generally, prisoners on wings tend not to eat in the communal association area but in their cells, with limited space and alongside an in-cell toilet. The Board questions the suitability of these living conditions. Is there anything that can be done to encourage prisoners to eat in better equipped communal eating areas?

Some prisoners have raised concerns about fire safety directly with the Board. Questions have been asked in weekly IMB rotas about the frequency of fire safety

drills/testing procedures and alarm testing at Gartree. Unfortunately, no information has been provided in response.

Health and wellbeing

The Board has continued to struggle to access healthcare data, so is unable to comment specifically on the provision of clinics and in-house GP services. We are hoping to gather data on, for example, how often outside hospital appointments were missed because there were not enough staff escorts available. This will enable us to measure prisoners' access to healthcare services in a way that is comparable to that provided in the wider community. With the recent arrival of a new head of healthcare, we are hoping that the issue concerning the lack of access to data will be addressed.

The emphasis on establishing a workable and fair regime has continued and there is an emphasis on ensuring that access to purposeful activity is maintained, wherever possible. This seems to have focused on ensuring that everyone can access regular exercise and outdoor space for a short period daily. The HMIP report indicated that it wanted prisoners to receive longer periods outside and that these should be at different times to other exercise and gym sessions. This is something the Board supports strongly, as prisoners advise that gym, exercise, and access to outdoor space is good for their wellbeing.

It appears to the Board that access to mental health facilities can often take time. However, when it is provided, staff appear attentive and try to accommodate the often challenging and acute needs of many of the prisoners, especially those who tend to be housed in the SAPU for long periods of time.

Progression and resettlement

The 2023 HMIP report was critical of the amount of purposeful activity available for prisoners and outlined the need for more classes and work to be made available. They also stressed the need for prisoners' skills to be made available at the right level to enable all prisoners to obtain qualifications and improve their reading skills.

Following the HMIP visit, there appears to have been a push to promote basic literacy, which is welcomed. However, the Board has been advised by some prisoners that some education sessions are now 'self-taught' in cells, which could reduce time out of their cells and opportunities for positive interactions with other prisoners and staff.

There has been a huge backlog of prisoners who have achieved category C status being unable to move on from Gartree in the reporting year. That said, towards the very end of the reporting period, some movements have been facilitated.

National reconfiguration of the prison estate had created new challenges for Gartree, as it now receives long-term prisoners much earlier in their sentences. This can cause challenges for prisoners who have been in Gartree a long time and are settled. It may also lead to issues for the staff managing the expectations of prisoners who are often focused on meeting the objectives on their sentence plan as early as possible.

3.2 Main areas for development

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

TO THE MINISTER

- Will the Minister confirm, again, that the necessary funding will be made available to Gartree to address the unacceptable state of the showers? In the response to the IMB's 2021-2022 annual report, the Minister advised that *'shower upgrades have been incorporated into the fire safety improvement programme...'*. The building work on B wing took much longer than advised and there was little evidence that the shower repairs were comprehensive. The Board was dismayed to see that where an accommodation block had been unoccupied for well over 12 months, the opportunity had not been taken to fully upgrade showers, decorate and replace dangerous flooring on stairs and landings, for example, let alone ensure the wing was returned to the prison by the main contractor in a clean and tidy condition. Can the Minister provide assurance that lessons have been learned from this as the fire safety programme moves throughout the other residential wings at Gartree?
- Can the Minister confirm that new funding bids will be supported, and budgets will be allocated to address the seriously deteriorating fabric and infrastructure of Gartree, regardless of the confirmation that a new prison will now be built next to Gartree?
- In the Minister's response to the Board's concern about the ageing fabric of Gartree raised in our 2021-2022 annual report, we were advised that *'over the past year improvements have been made to the heating and hot water pumps and valves linked to a new Building Management System continuing to be changed to improve control of these systems across HMP Gartree'*. It is disappointing to report that there are still major issues with the heating systems throughout the prison, which suggest that the original fix has not worked or been adequate to address the issues. Is it cost effective to deal with repairs in this way, when prisoners, including those on the over 50s wing, have been left for days during particularly cold periods with no heating at all? Can the Minister confirm that the overall responsibility for the fabric lies outside the control of the Governor and the LTHSE? When issues arise that cannot be resolved in a timely or satisfactory manner, who should be held to account?
- As the prison population continues to rise and age, the fabric of the buildings continues to cause problems with disability access for elderly and disabled prisoners. Even on Gartree's dedicated over 50s wing, there are not enough cells large enough to accommodate all wheelchair access requirements and full accessibility. What alternative provisions for this population are being considered?
- The Board posed questions to the Minister in the 2021-2022 report about the quality and performance of service providers and asked about governance and assurance. Although we were advised that contract managers and local

processes may be in place to allow stakeholder engagement, the Board remains concerned that with Facilities Management, in particular, there does not appear to be an effective way of ensuring issues are always dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

- The Board acknowledges the Minister's response to our last report, which advises that healthcare provision is monitored and reviewed by NHS England Midlands Clinical and Quality Team. The Board has continued to struggle to obtain meaningful data about healthcare provision to enable monitoring of waiting lists and patients' clinics, etc, so that we can ascertain whether or not they are being provided at a satisfactory level.
- We ask the Minister to explain how the Ministry of Justice perceives the performance of prisoner healthcare at HMP Gartree when compared against the performance specification in the contract.
- The Board is concerned that the length of time some prisoners have to wait to access specialist mental health services appears to be increasing. What can be done to improve the assessment and access to these services? Please can the Minister explain how the Government intends to address longstanding and yet unresolved problems with the assessment and transfer of prisoners who present with serious mental health and personality disorders from Gartree to suitable secure hospital (as per section 47, Mental Health Act 1983)?
- There has been some national discussion about indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP) prisoners over the past 12 months. Gartree continues to hold IPP prisoners who are now many years over their tariff. Frustration continues among these prisoners, who seem to make up a higher proportion of segregated prisoners and those experiencing the most complex mental health issues/behaviours. The Board urges the Minister for a further update about how prisoners at Gartree who are substantially over tariff and subject to the consequences of the now discredited 'sentences of imprisonment for public protection' (see Criminal Justice Act 2003) will be affected.
- In view of the 'cost of living crisis' affecting many people in the UK, will there be any financial support provided to prisons to cope with the rapidly increasing cost of living and increasing energy cost pressures?

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- Following the implementation of the new Prisoners' Property Policy Framework in September 2022, the Board is pleased to note that it has received fewer applications in the past reporting year regarding lost property, although there still appear to be some issues with property lost on transfer. However, the Board does still have some concerns about the manner in which property is recorded and dealt with during whole wing 'lockdown' searches, where staff may be brought in from other establishments to help the local staff. Following such searches, the Board tends to get a number of application requests from prisoners who claim that items have been removed or confiscated and remain unaccounted for. When the Board follows up such

requests, it appears that paperwork is often scant or non-existent. Are there clear procedures to be followed during such searches?

- It is also of concern to the Board that following a recent lockdown search in Gartree, a number of prisoners had chairs and items of furniture confiscated from cells. When we followed this up, we were advised that this was principally due to them not meeting fire safety regulations or because the prisoner should not have had the item in the first instance. Can the Prison Service confirm who ultimately is responsible for monitoring fire safety compliance in Gartree?
- On a number of occasions over the reporting year, prisoners have raised the issue of fire safety with the Board and indicated that fire drills and briefings are not taking place (and they advised have not done so for some years). It was concerning to note that on the over 50s wing, where there a number of prisoners with limited mobility and/or use wheelchairs/walking aids, there was no assurance that everyone knew either what a 'general' fire alarm sounded like or what should happen if one was heard. The Board acknowledges that some prisoners do have PEEPs (personal escape and evacuation plans), but when requests have been made by the Board for details of when fire drills have taken place, it has been impossible to obtain information. This is of great concern to the Board.
- For yet another year, the Board remains concerned that repair or replacement of essential equipment in the kitchen is still an issue. Can the Prison Service confirm that the service level agreement with the supplier/contractor is being adequately managed and reviewed? Can penalties be applied when, clearly, timely responses to address such issues at Gartree are not being addressed and adequately dealt with? The Board requests the Prison Service confirm the structure within the service that ensures that the contracts performance is being achieved in accordance with the signed contract.
- The following question is repeated from last year's annual report: will the Prison Service work with the Board to ensure that it has access to necessary information, such as healthcare data, for example, so that the Board is able to monitor more effectively how well the prison is meeting the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody?
- Can the Prison Service confirm that Gartree will receive sufficient ongoing budget and capital funding so that prisoners can live and staff can work within a safe, secure and decent environment? The Board has noted that other prisons have received substantial investment to improve their infrastructure, and the Board, based on the information provided over the years, fails to understand why Gartree has not received this level of investment.
- Will the Prison Service ensure that Gartree will be sufficiently funded so that prisoners' access to employment, purposeful activity, education and healthcare can be addressed as quickly as possible?

- Can the Prison Service confirm to the Board who has overall responsibility for the health and wellbeing of prisoners at Gartree?
- In last year's report, the Board asked again about money that we were told had previously been allocated to upgrade showers. In response, we were advised that this was to be incorporated into wider fire safety upgrades on some residential wings. Evidence to date is that this is the bare minimum and may not be a long-term solution. The Board is also concerned that a suitable planned procedure has been put in place to test for, and treat, legionella in all shower blocks. Several wings have had to rely on an outdoor shower block or prisoners showering in the gym. Can the Prison Service provide assurance that this will not be allowed to happen again?
- Will the prison's annual staffing budget be sufficiently increased to ensure that staffing levels can be maintained and increased, as any reduction ultimately impacts directly on safety in Gartree and the daily lives of prisoners. Will there be any review of staffing budgets in the coming year, and will the Prison Service continue to provide a sufficient number of detached, uniformed staff to ensure safety and fair and humane treatment for prisoners?
- What further support can be provided to ensure that key work is delivered consistently and to a high standard for all prisoners?
- Can the Prison Service clarify if the complaints' procedure for healthcare provision at HMP Gartree is audited in line with standard complaints made under the COMP1/2 procedures? The Board is concerned that some prisoners appear to be unhappy about the responses they receive with regard to healthcare complaints or concerns. Are the Prison Service and the Governor satisfied that the healthcare provider has a robust and transparent approach to deal with prisoner complaints and that responses are consistent with the principles of procedural fairness.

TO THE GOVERNOR

- We appreciate regular contact and good communication with the Governor and members of the senior management team and hope this will continue and can be built on. Can the Governor provide regular written updates on performance indicators and progress reports with regard to various initiatives?
- The Board is pleased to observe that staffing levels have improved and become more stable over the reporting year. However, we ask if plans are in place to ensure that this does not become an issue once the residential wings are full again (on completion of fire safety works). Will the staffing levels change if new wings are constructed inside Gartree?
- Lockdown searches and property issues generate a lot of complaints for the prison and the IMB. From the Board's observations, it appears that 'search' procedures may not always be followed and/or paperwork completed? Can the Governor explain why?
- Following searches, the Board is concerned that prisoners who have items 'confiscated' are not always advised fully of the reasons and the paperwork is

not always available. There are also some issues when prisoners don't receive 'in possession' property from Reception in a timely manner. This causes avoidable frustration on the residential wings for prisoners, staff and IMB members alike. Can the Governor assure the Board that these issues will be resolved?

- How does the Governor plan to rectify the problem of not providing prisoners with purposeful activity? The Board is concerned that too many men are not meaningfully engaged in education or work opportunities.
- The Board is concerned that some prisoners are in receipt of lower levels of pay than at other establishments (for similar work) or by virtue of their educational attainment. What does the Governor intend to do about prisoners' pay inconsistencies?
- Will the Governor continue to push for improvements to the security systems to help prevent the influx of illicit items through the gate and/or via drones, etc? What additional steps is the Governor taking to reduce the importation of illicit items, including drugs and mobile phones?
- Will the Governor ensure that, during the forthcoming year, the fabric of the kitchen will be renovated to an acceptable standard to ensure hygienic food production and that all unreliable and unserviceable kitchen appliances are properly repaired or replaced without delay?
- Will the Governor confirm that there will be no further losses of those workshops (such as the Studio), which provide higher-quality employment opportunities?
- Can the Governor give further assurance that staff will be adequately trained to ensure they challenge all and any prisoners who cover their observations panels? This has been raised in a number of PPO reports about Deaths in Custody.
- Can the Governor give full assurance that all residential wings and other functional areas of the prison are fully compliant with the requirements for fire drills to be held and tested and that all staff and prisoners are aware of what to do in the event of a fire alarm sounding?

3.3 Progress since the last report

Once again, the Board acknowledges support given by the senior management team. There have, however, been a lot of changes of functional heads/roles during the reporting year so it would be good to see more stability before the next reshuffle. At the time of writing (December 2023), the Deputy Governor is now acting up to cover for the Governor's secondment to another HMPPS establishment.

Prisoners who self-isolate are now being monitored more closely and referred for proactive challenge, support, and intervention plans (CSIP), used to support and manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence, when appropriate.

Communication about which dedicated staff member is the lead on a prisoner's assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) plan (used to support those who

at risk of self-harm and suicide) and/or CSIP is available through the daily briefing sheet (DBS). The introduction of a single case management system for ACCT put this in place.

Complaint handling and quality assurance monitoring appears to have improved: now, only dedicated administrative staff have access to the complaints box and a similar approach has been adopted for discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs).

Following recategorization, a large number of prisoners were 'stuck' at Gartree awaiting moves. It is acknowledged that this was a national issue, outside the control of Gartree itself, and many prisoners have now been moved on.

The new gate-security initiatives allow scanning and searching of all persons entering the establishment. This is particularly important at a time when there is a growing number of external contractors entering the establishment daily. There are times, however, when this search room and the gatehouse is 'gridlocked'.

The Board acknowledges that recruitment and retention is a challenge across the whole of the NHS, but we are still concerned that there is still some reliance on healthcare agency staff.

The prison has worked hard on establishing a new core day and regime to enable prisoners to access education, work, activities, etc, in a way that also minimises opportunities for those with conflicts to meet in communal areas, off the wing.

Prisoners continue to brew hooch (illicit/illegally brewed or distilled liquids) and use illegal drugs, but proactive detection, through targeted searching and support from trained sniffer dogs, remains a priority.

A Young Adults Strategy has been introduced by the Psychology Department. The Board welcomes this new initiative, especially Gartree seems to be receiving a greater number of younger men earlier in their sentences, so it could potentially benefit their progression and rehabilitation.

Progress since the Minister's responses to specific issues raised in the last annual report.	
Seriously declining infrastructure	
Response from the Minister	<p>HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is continuing to improve the environment at HMP Gartree, with investment totalling over £13.5 million between 2020 and 2025.</p> <p>Improvements have been made and are ongoing with the heating and hot water pumps and valves. This is linked to a new Building Management System continuing to be changed to improve control over these systems across HMP Gartree. Temporary heating boilers have been installed in G and H wings whilst sustainability options are considered for a permanent solution.</p>

<p>Additional response given by the Minister in response to the Board's letter dated 4 September 2023</p>	<p>£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. 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.</p> <p>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 house block, 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.</p> <p>Estate-wide programme of fabric and infrastructure condition surveys is underway and on track to be completed 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.</p>
<p>Assurance sought that HMP Gartree will not be impacted by proposed new prison alongside Gartree.</p>	
<p>Response from Minister</p>	<p>Assurance given that a new prison will not impact on the maintenance of any existing prisons, nor does it change the bidding process for capital maintenance investment.</p>
<p>Quality and performance of services provided at HMP Gartree</p>	
<p>Response from the Minister</p>	<p>HMPPS has invested in ensuring there are appropriate governance and assurance frameworks with appropriate Contract Managers and Leads in place. Meetings are held</p>

	with relevant stakeholders and Terms of References with providers are identified to ensure consistency and effective stakeholder engagement. Local processes are in place to monitor services such as facilities management, education and healthcare and the Governor will be able to discuss those in more detail with the Board.
Response from the Minister	Education contract provision has delivered the required services in line with contractual requirements and quality assurance processes are in place.
Response from the Minister	<p>NHS England Midlands Clinical and Quality Team continues to review and monitor all clinical information alongside the Commissioning Team throughout the healthcare contract life cycle and further details about the performance and quality of the healthcare provider at HMP Gartree.</p> <p>In terms of performance, recent quality indicators, as of March 2023, confirm that the healthcare service at HMP Gartree regularly completes 100% of First Reception screens and 100% of Second Reception screens. There is an active programme of patient engagement, with no waiting lists for dental care or patients to see a GP, both of which are better than community services, and there are no patients waiting to see a primary care practitioner. It is recognised that there is a 26% vacancy rate. However, bank and agency staff are covering this shortfall and the recent Care Quality Commission inspection reported that these staff have been supported to integrate into the service successfully. In addition, any serious incidents are reported consistently and in a timely manner.</p>
Additional response given by the Minister in response to the Board's letter dated 4 September 2023	<p>Acknowledged the Board's query regarding equivalence of healthcare services and concerns about people in prison with complex health needs. The Ministry of Justice is committed to improving health outcomes for people in contact with the criminal justice system.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Offender behaviour programmes	
Response from the Minister	<p>The most recent review of the prisoner population at HMP Gartree identified the ongoing need to deliver interventions to address offending related to both general violence and intimate partner violence. It also highlighted a need to offer interventions to support the low levels of motivation within the prisoner population. HMPPS has, therefore, ensured that the suite of Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBP), identified and approved for delivery in 2023/34 at HMP Gartree, reflects these needs and will be reviewed regularly in line with the annual plan for OBP delivery. The prison also has three specialist units that can be accessed for treatment and progression, which are the Therapeutic Community, the Therapeutic Community Plus, for those with learning difficulties, and a Progression Psychologically Informed Planned Environment. In addition, the Psychology Services Group supports and delivers one-to-one bespoke interventions where there is no appropriate pathway.</p>
Sentence planning	
Response from the Minister	<p>HMP Gartree already has in place an ongoing action plan, with probation staff within the Midlands region offered overtime to complete Offender Assessment System (OASys) reports. The Long Term and High Security Estate Offender Management Unit Lead continues to work with HMP Gartree to monitor the OASys backlog and additional support has been identified with the impact of what this can achieve having been forecast. Progress will be monitored by the Prison Group Director through performance meetings with the Governor.</p>
Recruitment and retention	
Response from the Minister	<p>Overall staffing position at HMP Gartree is one that is kept under close review. Actions are being taken to increase the numbers of new recruits by continued marketing and the use of First Deployment, through which prison officers move temporarily to Gartree at the outset of their employment.</p> <p>Impact of building a new prison alongside HMP Gartree - opening of new prisons can have an effect on existing sites as new prisons and providers seek experienced staff. However, HMP Gartree will have already felt the impact of the opening of HMP Five Wells and the IMB may have in</p>

	<p>mind the opening of the new prison HMP Fosse Way near Leicester in 2023. At present the starting pay offered at HMP Gartree is competitive and thus far there has been no marked impact on HMP Leicester, a prison which is much closer to the new HMP Fosse Way.</p> <p>Recognised that there has been a long-term issue at HMP Gartree of poor retention, of which the opening of new prisons may be a small factor.</p>
Prisoners' property	
Response from the Minister	<p>The Prisoners' Property Policy Framework, which was implemented on 5 September 2022, is the result of extensive consultation, including with the IMB.</p> <p>Locally, HMP Gartree is already seeing a reduction in lost property compensation payments and better control of stored property and property in possession, especially since the framework was launched.</p>

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

4.1 Reception and induction

- Prisoner movements in and out of Gartree are infrequent, due to its categorisation as a 'lifer' prison. Most prisoners arrive from other prisons and have some knowledge of prison regimes.
- A body scanner in the Reception area is used 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.
- Reception staff are generally knowledgeable and helpful towards new arrivals. 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 on G wing or the next morning.
- Induction sessions to explain the regime, employment opportunities, gym, education, and library are co-ordinated through G wing staff and an orderly.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

- Those prisoners who are subject to ACCT reviews are recorded on the daily briefing sheet, with review dates and details of the case co-ordinator clearly listed. Prisoners on an ACCT are discussed at a weekly Safety Intervention Meeting (SIM) to ensure that prison staff and other professionals, such as psychology and healthcare, work together as a multi-disciplinary team (MDT). This is aimed at achieving full understanding of the issues and behaviours experienced by each complex prisoner and to discuss and agree the best approach to dealing with them.
- The number of ACCT documents opened over the past year has increased from 132 in 2021-2022 to 185 in 2022-2023.
- The Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to offer confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners) provide a valuable service. The number of Listeners in Gartree fell throughout the reporting period, due to Listeners progressing onto other establishments, but new recruits have been successfully trained by the Samaritans.

Self-harm

- There has been an increase in the number of recorded incidents of self-harm, from 242 in 2022 to 266 in 2023 (see Table 1, below).
- Sometimes, acts of self-harm are carried out by a small number of prisoners who self-harm multiple times. They can often have complex mental health issues, which may contribute to and help explain their self-harming behaviours.

- The most frequent method of self-harm was cutting, although this was lower than in the previous year, whilst hanging/ligature has increased.
- Amongst the range of reasons given for ACCTs being opened was 'food refusal', which had jumped from none in the previous year to 16 in the reporting period. This may be due to issues reported when prisoners feel their special/medical dietary requirements are not acknowledged or are dealt with differently on arrival at Gartree to other establishments they have arrived from.
- Once again, as with the last reporting period, the number of acts of self-harm (266) was actually larger than the number of ACCTs opened (185), which supports the view that some individuals self-harm on more than one occasion.
- A breakdown of reasons for ACCT referrals is provided in Table 2 below.

Deaths in custody

- Unfortunately, there was one death in custody in the reporting year, believed to be from natural causes. This is a reduction from the previous reporting year. A number of recent deaths are still awaiting the outcome of a Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) report and/or a coroner's inquest.
- The Board is aware that family liaison officers engage with and notify relatives to provide appropriate and timely support.

Table 1: Safer custody statistics 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL Self-harm incidents	562	350	223	242	266
Serious self-harm incidents (near misses or hospital attendance required)	29	32	22	27	7
ACCTs opened (see Table 2, above, for reasons)	194	164	176	127	155
CSIP referrals	125	260	354	272	270
CSIP opened	39	80	180	98	49
Prisoner-on-staff assaults	78	52	39	58	69
Prisoners-on- prisoner assaults	81	48	43	53	24
Deaths in custody	2	5	3	9	1

Use of force incidents	262	218	234	228	326
Serious incidents – Command Suite opened					0

Table 2: ACCTs opened and reasons recorded

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hanging/ligature	10	6	3	6	10
Cuts minor	84	57	34	24	17
Cuts major	8	9	8	4	2
Overdoes / self-poisoning	15	5	11	6	9
Food refusal	2	0	0	0	16
Statement of intent	27	33	45	41	75
Low in mood	48	53	75	48	26
TOTAL	194	164	176	127	155
Transferred on open ACCT	7	1	7	7	Not available

Figures provided by safer custody team at HMP Gartree

All statistics referred to are for the calendar year 1.1.2023 – 31.12.23, which the Board acknowledges does not tally exactly with the reporting year of 1.12.22 – 30.11.23

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

- On the whole, the Board believes HMP Gartree is committed to providing and maintaining a safe environment for all who live, work, and visit this establishment.
- There is a challenging population mix and the changing profile and influx of younger prisoners, who now arrive much earlier in their sentences, can cause concerns amongst the longer established, more settled and compliant elderly population with regards to bullying and harassment.
- A large number of prisoners are supported via CSIPs, which were launched in Gartree during 2022. Prisoners on CSIP referrals are noted on the DBS, with their support workers and review dates highlighted. They are also discussed at the weekly SIM and at a monthly safer custody meeting.
- There are reported affiliations within Gartree, and non-associates are managed through location on separate wings. Some of the influx and supply of drugs and

other illicit items is linked to known individuals and wing moves are managed to intercept supply wherever possible.

- The Isolated Prisoner Strategy 2022-23, implemented last year, has resulted in a reduction of prisoners who self-isolate. They are now reported on the DBS with an allocated support officer identified and review dates noted. There seems to have been a greater focus on supporting these individuals to integrate them back into the normal regime.

4.4 Use of force

- The number of use of force (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 was a total of 230 UoF incidents; in 2019, there were 262; in 2020, 218; in 2021, 234; and for 2022, it was 228. For the past year, the number was 326. This represents a significant (nearly 50%) increase on the previous year and those preceding it. No explanation has been offered for this. The increased figures are a concern, bearing in mind that there has been a reduced prison population from around 2020 onwards, due to ongoing building improvement works. This resulted in one vacated wing and approximately 100 fewer men in the prison (a reduction of 15% of the total population).
- Officers sometimes have to use force for a variety of reasons, including non-compliance with a given order, threatening behaviour, breaking up an assault and preventing self-harm. A guiding principle is that a minimum of force is used to achieve the desired aim. As might be expected, incidents involving UoF are carefully recorded and monitored. All such incidents are analysed at the monthly UoF meeting, comprising a multi-disciplinary team, which is chaired by a Governor and attended by an IMB member. This meeting aims to review unplanned and planned events and ensure that lessons are learned, and training gaps identified.
- All officers are trained in the appropriate use of force, but some officers are given extra training and are issued with protective equipment for use in situations that have escalated or where a planned UoF is necessary, such as if a prisoner is refusing to move cell to another wing, for example. In such a planned UoF incident, a member of the healthcare staff and, sometimes, an IMB member are present. (The Board is exploring means by which those organising planned UoF incidents can be made aware of the presence in the prison of an IMB member.)
- Hand-held video equipment is used to record such planned events. Body worn video cameras (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 reporting 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 a training course.
- During the reporting 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 IMB during the monthly UoF meetings suggests that this is happening.

- If a prisoner continues to exhibit violent behaviour during a UoF incident, he can be placed in a special accommodation cell in the SAPU and/or placed in a body belt. Neither facility has been used in the reporting year.
- After any UoF incident, all participating officers are required to complete a form recording their participation in the incident. Non-completion of these forms had been a significant problem in previous reporting years and there were often 50 or more outstanding. However, during the reporting year, the number of non-completions has fallen considerably and is, typically, four or five each month. Most of these occur when an officer is absent from the prison for leave, illness, etc, following participation in an incident.
- The issue of PAVA spray (an incapacitant) continues to be rolled out. This is a spray canister, carried by an officer, which contains a lachrymatory substance (a chemical which irritates the eyes), with a spray range of about ten feet. It would only be used when an officer felt they were about to be attacked by a prisoner. Initially, it was only being carried by the dedicated search teams' (DSTs) officers, as uncovering an illicit substance, phone, etc, in a cell is often a trigger for violent behaviour towards staff. PAVA spray has been drawn five times during the reporting year.
- The staff are frequently reminded to wear BWVCs. Their use has increased over the reporting year and is generally considered to help prevent and de-escalate incidents.
- There is one special accommodation cell (which contains no furniture to prevent self-injury) and it is situated in the SAPU. It has only been used on a limited number of occasions in the reporting year.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

- The body orifice security scanner/BOSS (which identifies small objects using sensors) in Reception has proved effective in both detecting some illicit and secreted items. Hand-held 'wand' scanners are now used far more frequently to check prisoners leaving and returning to their wings. Mail is scanned on a Rapiscan machine and may also sniffed by trained dogs, while inward property and mail order items are scanned and searched in reception.
- A scanner and searching screens are now consistently used in the gatehouse for all staff and visitors entering into the establishment. Some training gaps have been identified and are being addressed.
- The Board remains concerned that drugs and other illicit items continue to infiltrate the prison by a variety of means. Their prevalence is closely linked to the levels of debt, violence and bullying that occur in Gartree. As in previous years, this reporting period has seen items such as hooch, distilled liquid, phones, SIM cards, chargers, smoking paraphernalia, tattooing equipment, and weapons frequently 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. This concern is echoed by HMIP in its 2023 report (following an unannounced visit in January 2023), where they note, as a priority concern, that: *'Too many illicit items, including drugs, were entering the prison. Although security measures had been improved, further action was needed to reduce supply.'*

- In spite of stringent vetting procedures, it is unfortunate that illicit items may still be reaching prisoners through staff, contractors or others with clearance to enter the prison. However, the Board is not aware of any convictions (following dismissals) relating to illicit items during the reporting year.
- Drone siting's continue to be frequently reported around the prison, particularly at night, as a means of attempting to deliver prohibited items to specific wings of the prison. Some drones are detected or their drops intercepted. It is not known what percentage successfully deliver 'ordered' items.
- A wide range of 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.
- Over the 2022-2023 year, it has been reported that illicit drug use by prisoners has continued, which also included inappropriate use of prescribed medicines that may be passed or traded to other prisoners. The monitoring and review of substance misuse is taken seriously by the prison, with routine random prisoner testing by the drug management team and regular searches by the team's trained dog.
- The Board is aware of the problem of drug debts, which can lead to violence between prisoners and/or the manipulation of some prisoners' canteen sheets so that prisoners may be bullied to buy items for other prisoners or put in debt.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

- In many past reports the Board has highlighted concern about the ongoing deterioration of Gartree's physical infrastructure due to a lack of investment, particularly on the older wings (A to E). In its report following an unannounced inspection in January 2023, HMIP noted as a priority concern that: *'The prison environment was poor, and the fabric of the buildings was in a state of disrepair.'*
- The Board has raised the issue of inadequate heating at Gartree on numerous occasions in the past and is now extremely concerned that prisoners are often living on wings where there is no working heating. This is totally unacceptable and indefensible, especially during cold winter months.
- Towards the end of the reporting period, several wings were also faced with the closure of almost all showers, most probably linked to issues around the detection of Legionella. We have been advised by the Ministry of Justice Property Directorate *'that quarterly testing of samples is in place, and upon elevated readings, remedial action is instigated, with temporary facilities provided where necessary'*. However, the Board had not seen evidence that quarterly sample testing was, or is, in place. In the future, the Board will seek to understand the Property Directorate's definition of temporary in relation to providing facilities, and the outcome of any quarterly sample testing.
- The HMIP inspection also noted, as a priority, concern that: *'Many communal areas were dirty. Standards were not high enough and monitoring of day-to day-cleaning was not robust.'* Despite the poor fabric and condition of the establishment, prisoners and staff continue to make efforts to maintain clean and tidy living conditions as best they can.
- Once again, the Board remains disappointed that there still 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.
- The Board remains concerned as to whether the fixes to the infrastructure being implemented are of a temporary nature and whether a more permanent solution needs to be sought to avoid the unease about the whole infrastructure of establishment. It is extremely disappointing to report that even following a wing closure of over 12 months, the expected repairs to showers on B wing were somewhat rudimentary and appeared to be an afterthought. No opportunity had been taken to even repair and replace dangerous and worn-out flooring or to paint the wing and undertake a thorough deep clean before it was handed back by the contractor.
- Prisoners have asked the Board about fire safety on several occasions this reporting year and the Board has been unable to obtain a clear response from the prison about when and how fire safety training and drills have taken place over recent years. Some prisoners who have been at Gartree for a number of

years have reported to the Board that they have never had a fire drill or been told what to do should such an event happen. This is of concern to the Board.

Food

- The Board has observed food to be of an acceptable standard and appears to cater for all dietary requirements. Religious festivals are recognised, with special menus and appropriate dietary arrangements. This is commendable at a time when there are ever increasing budgetary constraints and supply issues with some products.
- However, the Board does receive some comments and complaints about the quality and availability of food. Some prisoners have asked for more variety and access to fresh fruit and vegetables. There have also been issues with prisoners who feel they should access to special diets. These have been provided by other establishments, so when prisoners have arrived at Gartree and there is no evidence of medical need for a special diet, problems arise because they then need to wait for a dietary assessment.
- As noted in previous annual reports, and despite the fact that the Board was told that significant funds had been allocated in previous years to address this issue, the kitchen continues to face the challenges of lack of adequate working equipment. For too long, the kitchen has been without essential equipment due to maintenance issues and there have also been problems with the heating system and a leaking roof.
- Amey continues to have a backlog of maintenance and repair work, which has an adverse impact on prisoners and staff. It has been reported that some of these issues are due to staff shortages, but as these problems affect everyone, it is not an excuse.
- The self-catering facilities on the residential wings still require some investment and replacement of items.

5.2 Segregation

- The SAPU comprises 11 cells (and 1 special cell) and has remained consistently full over the reporting period, which has resulted in some prisoners also being segregated on residential units. This can often result in issues or late unlocking of other prisoners on residential wings, because staff may have to facilitate the regime of those who were segregated on landings.
- The SAPU continues to manage prisoners who present with complex and volatile behaviour, which can often result in violence against staff and/or self-harm. The Board remains concerned about the effects of long-term segregation on prisoners in a block that is in disrepair and with poor natural light and ventilation. Also, the showers in SAPU are the worse for wear and repairs to cells can often take a long time. Where flooring, paintwork, sinks and toilets are damaged, cells appear unkempt and unclean.

- The time taken to address the mental health issues of certain individuals and those who have spent an extraordinary amount of time in segregation remains a concern for the Board.
- Daily management and strategic oversight of SAPU and segregation now sits with the Safer Custody function. The psychology team provided support, advice and guidance to staff and prisoners in segregation, which includes individual one-page plans to help staff understand prisoners' behaviour and highlight 'care' plans to encourage reintegration into normal location.
- Regular group and one-to-one supervision was also in place to help staff manage the most challenging prisoners.
- The Board notes that staff working in SAPU tend to show high levels of care towards the prisoners, despite challenging circumstances. This is particularly the case where numbers of prisoners regularly require either two-officer or three-officer unlocking, often in full PPE.

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

- The Board is aware of positive relationships between prisoners and staff, and agrees with the situation, as evidenced in the HMIP report, where it was noted: *'Relationships between staff and prisoners were generally good. In our prisoner survey, an impressive 85% said that staff treated them with respect compared with 64% in similar prisons. Fifty-three per cent of prisoners said that a member of staff had asked them how they were getting on, against the comparator of 27% and the response of 25% at our previous inspection. On the larger wings, most staff were friendly and approachable, although interactions were usually brief and mainly responses to specific needs or requests.'*
- There remain staff shortfalls, although over the reporting year new officers have been appointed, along with a high number of officer support grade staff (OSGs) so, in most cases, the regime has not been adversely affected. But concerns have been raised by HMIP, following their inspection, about attrition rates for operational staff within the first two years of being appointed. However, this improved towards the end of the reporting period, perhaps due to pay increases.
- The staffing levels are probably not having a significant effect currently as fire safety works are ongoing and one residential wing (currently A wing) remains fully closed.
- The prison remains committed to providing an effective and fair regime, and there have been changes made over the reporting year to allow access to work, education, gym sessions and time out of cell, etc.
- Key worker support has reduced, as some officers seem to report that they do not have enough time to carry out the role fully.

5.4 Equality and diversity

- The appointment of a dedicated equality officer has helped to ensure more rigorous consideration when prisoners submit discrimination incident reporting forms (DIRFs) meet the correct criteria before investigation.

- Equality action team (EAT) meetings are held regularly to address issues raised by identified groups, including armed forces' veterans, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, LGBTQ+, and older prisoners.
- Efforts have been made to recognise, publicise and celebrate events such as Pride and Black History Month. Notices are also publicised throughout the year to make staff and prisoners aware of special dates and celebrations relating to various faith groups.
- There is currently no dedicated foreign national officer at Gartree, despite this group comprising around 20% of the population: as of 30 November 2023, there were 113 foreign national prisoners. Their needs are dealt with via staff in the Offender Management Unit (OMU).
- The age breakdown of prisoners in Gartree shows a relatively stable pattern – see the Table 3, below.

Table 3: Age breakdown of prisoners in Gartree							
	2021		2022			2023	
Age breakdown							
18-24	0	0%	23	3.8%	21-25	32	5.5%
25-29	112	18.5%	79	13.3%	26-29	59	10.2%
30-39	181	30.0%	176	29.7%	30-39	182	31.5%
40-49	125	20.7%	139	24%	40-49	142	24.5%
50-59	110	18.2%	101	17%	50-59	88	15.2%
60-69	59	9.7%	61	10.2%	60-69	60	10.4%
70+	16	2.6%	14	2.3%	70+	15	2.6%
Total	603		593			578	

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

- Faith provision at Gartree is considered to be good by the Board.
- In their recent report, HMIP noted that *‘over 87% of prisoners said they could attend religious services weekly. There were chaplains for all major faiths, although there had been difficulties in recruiting Buddhist and Rastafarian chaplains.* The Board is aware that chaplains for Buddhist and Rastafarian faiths are still not available to visit the prison.
- The chaplaincy team provides good pastoral care for prisoners, which is visible throughout the prison and appears to be valued by staff and prisoners alike.
- A duty chaplain sees all new arrivals and makes daily face-to-face visits to prisoners in the SAPU, to men segregated on wings and to some of the more vulnerable prisoners such as those on open ACCTs and those socially isolating.

The HMIP report noted that *‘The support provided to recently bereaved prisoners was particularly good. As well as facilitating video attendance at funerals for prisoners, the chaplaincy collected donations from prisoners throughout the year*

that could be used to buy a wreath or book of condolence for prisoners or their families; this fostered a sense of community and altruism’.

5.6 Complaints

- Over the reporting year, a total of 2,747 complaints were recorded as being submitted by prisoners to the prison between 1 December 2002 and 30 November 2023. (see Table 4, below)
- Residential issues accounted for the highest number of complaints for eight of the past 12 months, averaging 13% but ranging from 16-23% of all complaints received in the months where it was recorded as the highest category of complaint. In the Board’s view, this can probably be explained by the numerous issues with heating, showers, poor fabric, etc.
- There were also two months (February and March 2023) when complaints about the canteen were high, which correlates with some issues reported to the IMB about the provider, DHL. These problems appear to have been resolved through liaison between prison staff and DHL. So, now all canteen deliveries must be collected and signed for by the prisoner who has ordered them.
- There were 53 complaints regarding security in August 2023, which corresponds to the month when a lockdown search was conducted. A number of prisoners spoke to the IMB about subsequent issues with property and the manner in which the search had been carried out.
- In line with national changes introduced during the reporting period, the Board no longer deals with COMP 2 (confidential) complaints from prisoners. These must now be referred to the Governor or the Director Prison Service (unless the prisoner opts to have this dealt with simply as an application to the IMB).

Table 4: Summary of complaints submitted to HMP by prisoners during reporting period		
<i>Data provided by HMP Gartree</i>		
Month	Number of complaints received	Subjects most complained about
Dec 22	190	Residential issues – 44 (23%)
Jan 23	231	Finance/Cash – 38 (16%)
Feb 23	247	Canteen – 56 (23%)
Mar 23	276	Canteen – 70 (25%)
April 23	189	Residential issues – 43 (23%)
May 23	184	Residential issues – 43 (23%)
June 23	183	Residential issues – 30 (16%)
Jul 23	190	Residential issues – 41 (21%)
Aug 23	271	Security – 53 (20%)
Sept 23	229	Residential issues – 49 (21%)
Oct 23	255	Residential issues – 44 (17%)
Nov 23	302	Residential issues – 61 (20%)
TOTAL	2,747	

5.7 Property

- Property continues to generate applications to the IMB, although these have reduced considerably over the past few years.
- More often than not, complaints to the IMB involve missing property following a transfer in. These are difficult to investigate and are rarely resolved.
- The Board has also received a number of complaints this reporting year following wing lockdown cell clearances, where prisoners have reported that items of property have been removed and not accounted for. Some clarification on what and how paperwork is used to record such searches would be helpful for everyone.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

Healthcare services are provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS 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.

6.2 Exercise, regime

- The published regime at Gartree provides those engaged in work, training, or education with up to 8.5 hours a day out of their cell. This reduces to 3.5 hours for prisoners who were unemployed or to 2.5 hours for those on the Basic level of the incentives scheme, which allows prisoners to earn extra privileges. (There are three levels: Basic, Standard and Enhanced.)
- Prisoners are given 45 minutes of outdoor exercise each day. The exercise time for prisoners on A, D, G and H wings coincided with the core afternoon activity time, which meant that those choosing to exercise missed at least half a session of their allocated work or education or did not attend at all.
- Most exercise takes place on a large all-weather football pitch by the gym or a large separate area in front of G and H wings. Although these areas are spacious, there is no seating or fixed exercise equipment. Some of the older prisoners on H wing have reported that the tarmacked exercise yard is hard on their joints and that it is uninspiring with no planting or trees.
- The gym is open daily and offers a wide range of sessions to all prisoners.
- Prisoners were entitled to between one and four sessions of gym a week, depending on whether they were in employment or education and their level on the prison's incentives scheme. The gym had good links with healthcare, and substance misuse treatment staff and prisoners were referred for tailored programmes to meet their specific needs.
- The most popular activities are weight-based activities, football and the cardiovascular exercise facility. Healthcare refers individuals to the gym if they feel that exercise or physiotherapy would be helpful in, for example, recovery from an injury or as part of a weight loss regime.
- The smaller specialised units (PIPE, TC, TC+ and I wing) seem to offer a good range of leisure activities for prisoners, including groups for reading, chess, draughts and music. On the larger wings, this tends to be limited to pool, snooker and board games.
- On the SAPU, there are limited facilities, although some books are made available on the wing and others can be 'ordered' from the library. The exercise yards in the SAPU are particularly stark, with no greenery.
- Prison-wide groups included a choir, music tuition and a drama and book club. There are also opportunities for activities on the prisoner-produced *Grapevine* magazine.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education

- Education continues to be provided by Milton Keynes College, which has a large suite of offices and classrooms on the first floor of the main building.
- 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, as many of the prisoners come from backgrounds where these skills have been little in evidence. The department staff describe these programmes as 'careers in custody'.
- The department also offers English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, supports NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) programmes in the prison's kitchen, and offers courses in food safety and cleaning.
- Some prisoners have raised concerns with the Board during the reporting year regarding a movement towards a reduced offer of courses and in-person lessons.
- As part of their visit earlier in 2023, HMIP was critical of the provision of educational facilities in Gartree. Some of their key concerns were:
 - *'There were far too many interruptions to education, skills and work activities. We evidenced poor attendance and delays in the completion and achievement of qualifications in education. Similar issues also undermined the efficiency and working ethos of workshops.'*
 - *'There was insufficient support for prisoners with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with low reading ability.'*
 - *'The curriculum did not fully meet the needs of the prison population. Key concerns were:'*
 - *'The quality of learning and skills' provision had not been improved promptly or effectively. Leaders' improvement plans did not effectively identify and drive improvement and none of the recommendations from the previous inspection had been fully met.'*
 - *'The collection and analysis of data were underdeveloped. Data were not used well to evaluate the performance of education, skills and work.'*

Library

- The library is run by Leicestershire County Council and staffed by two library assistants supported by prisoner peer workers. The library manager post is currently vacant.
- The library is situated in the main residential block between A and D wings. It is housed in a light, airy room with an attached office and a meeting room. It houses a selection of books – fiction and non-fiction – and a stock of DVDs. The facilities are available to staff and to all prisoners.

- The library is open every weekday and at weekends for dedicated wing sessions, allowing access to books and 10 computers, which prisoners can use for non-online activities, and photocopying facilities (to be paid for).
- 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.

7.2 Vocational training, work

- A local 'Pay, Activity and Employment Policy' for Gartree was published in June 2023, which seeks to highlight the crucial link between sentence planning and progression and the allocation of meaningful activities.
- The prison has 11 workshops, which offer a range of employment activities with different skills levels, including bicycle refurbishment, textile manufacture and textile recycling, braille work, laundry, IT, waste management, gardening, etc. Additionally, employment is offered to some prisoners as wing cleaners/servers or in the main kitchen. Some segregated men are also able to access in-cell work, which tends to be repetitive and simple, such as the packing of tea/coffee/sugar sachets for distribution across the prison estate.
- A weekly employment allocation allocates prisoners to vacant positions, taking into account risks associated with any individual prisoner and their incentives scheme status.
- Rates of pay range from £2.30 per session for Band 1a roles (kitchen and laundry workers post-six months, peer mentors, classroom assistants) through to £2 per hour for Band 1 roles (laundry and kitchen, prisoners studying Maths and English, wing/prison council reps), through to £1.70 Band 2 roles (education classes and skilled workshop workers) to £1.40 for Band 3 (orderlies, cleaners, unskilled workers, non-vocational education or in-cell workers).
- The national minimum pay rate for work and education activity is £4 per week, based on attendance at nine sessions. Unemployed prisoners get £2.50 per week, while those refusing to work get nothing. Retired prisoners at HMP Gartree get £7 per week, but they also have the opportunity of working.
- Currently, about 10% of prisoners are unemployed (this does not include those who are of retirement age).

7.3 Offender management, progression

- The HMIP report noted that: *'Too many OASys (offender assessment system) assessments were overdue. Nearly 200 prisoners needed an assessment completed to inform their management and progression. Prisoners who were recategorised to category C were not being transferred to lower category prisons, delaying and restricting their opportunity to progress through their sentence. There were over 100 category C prisoners at Gartree.'*
- Fortunately, throughout the reporting year, many have now been moved on to more suitable locations.

- OMU staff requirements through the reporting year have generally been met, although OMU probation staff are dealing with 60-70 cases each and OMU prison staff are dealing with 40-50 cases each, which limits the time they are able to spend on individuals.
- Prisoners are allocated an appropriate prison or probation officer manager (POM) based on their risk profile under offender management in custody (OMiC). POMs comprise a mix of probation officers and prison staff and the more risky and complex prisoners are assigned probation officer POMs.
- 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, although they are not as widely available as prisoners would like. Prisoners make The Board aware that, whilst they are 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.
- Gartree houses a large number of men with indeterminate sentences and life sentenced prisoners (IPP – imprisonment for public protection), and it is not uncommon for all or a very high proportion of these prisoners to be in the SAPU. They can often have complex needs and severe mental health issues, making their progression very difficult. The HMIP report stated that within the population of the prison *‘of those serving IPP sentences, 94% presented a high or very high risk of self harm’*.
- As in recent years, the make-up of the prisoner population continues to change because the prison is housing an increasing number of younger, riskier, more complex, and violent prisoners who are more likely to have links organised crime. The prison is now far more likely to house prisoners who are at the start of their sentences and less accustomed and settled into prison life. This provides additional challenges for the OMU and the prison’s operation, generally.

7.4 Family contact

- The prison recognises the importance of helping prisoners maintain family/friend relationships, as they can benefit progression, reduce reoffending on release and, to some extent, reduce inter-generational crime. The Board considers that prisoners are generally supported to maintain and develop relationships with their family and friends.
- Social visits take place in the visits’ hall from 2pm to 3.30pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Prisoners generally report that there is enough capacity within these time slots to accommodate all the social visits they want to book. There have been recent improvements to the visits’ hall, and it is bright and spacious with a designated play area and snack bar serving cold food and refreshments.
- The Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) operates the family visits’ centre, which sits just outside the main prison gate. They are able to offer support and

advice to those coming for visits and to help the prison staff by ensuring visitors have somewhere secure to leave items that are not allowed through the gate.

- Social visits are booked online and by telephone, but there is currently no facility to book a subsequent visit while at the prison.
- Where prisoners prefer, or if family members are unable to travel to Gartree, a social video calls system, called Digital Prisoner Video, can be used in the visits' hall. This is especially helpful for foreign national prisoners.
- The Board is pleased to report that a number of planned Family Days held again this year, when activities and specialised staff help to provide activities for the visiting children and family members. The Board agree with the HMIP recommendation for more planned Family Days.
- In-cell phones continue to allow prisoners to maintain regular contact with friends and family, although the IMB does receive occasional complaints about the time it takes for new phone numbers to be added to a prisoner's authorised list of dialable phone numbers.

7.5 Resettlement planning

- During the reporting year, only two prisoners were released directly.
- 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 (COM), 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

Board statistics

	20-21	21-22	22-23
Recommended complement of Board members	14	14	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7	8	5
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8	7	6
Total number of visits to the establishment	188	313	286
Total number of segregation reviews attended	177	231	206

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	2020-21 (Covid-19)	2021-22	2022-23
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	2	1	11
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	3	4	3
C	Equality	5	2	8
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, time out of cell	4	5	13
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection, restrictions	4	5	4
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends		5	5
F	Food and kitchens	3	0	8
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	18	17	32
H1	Property within the establishment	19	16	17
H2	Property during transfer or in another facility		14	5
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogues		11	4
I	Sentence management, including HDC, ROTL, parole, release dates, re-categorisation	7	13	3
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	13	14	13
K	Transfers	2	5	2
L	Miscellaneous	13	21	11
M	Inappropriate	1	4	2
	Total number of applications	94	137	141

Annex A

Glossary of terms

- ACCT assessment, care in custody and teamwork
- BWVC body worn video 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 HM Inspectorate of Prisons
- HMPPS HM 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
- PEEP personal escape and evacuation plan
- PIPE psychologically informed planned environment
- POELT prison officer entry level trainee
- PPO Prisons & Probation Ombudsman
- SAPU separation and progression unit
- SMT senior management team
- UoF use of force



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