



Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Gartree

**For reporting year
1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024**

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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 (Gartree) first opened in 1965 as a category C training prison for men. It then became a category B prison for men in 1992, with an emphasis on housing prisoners serving indeterminate and long-term sentences. It remains a category B prison and is now part of the long-term and high security estate (LTHSE). The prison is located north of Market Harborough, in Leicestershire, roughly equidistant between Northampton and Leicester. The prison remains within the public sector and is operated by the HM Prison Service.

The certified normal accommodation, or CNA (the number of prisoners that can be held without the prison being crowded) for Gartree is 708¹, with the 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 prison) dropping to 608 in July 2020, due to an ongoing programme of fire safety works taking place throughout the older wings within the establishment.

The layout of the establishment is based around nine residential wings, the original four being laid out in '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, accommodating 58 prisoners, with the other spur dedicated as an over-50s wing.

The separation and progression unit (SAPU) is housed in E wing and provides a 12-cell segregation block. F wing is now home to Gartree's therapeutic community (TC) and therapeutic community plus (TC+), which houses prisoners with particular learning disabilities and difficulties.

The main providers of contract services to the prison are:

- Maintenance: Amey
- Healthcare:
 - Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (from 1 December 2023 to 31 March 2024)
 - Practice Plus Group (from 1 April 2024 onwards)
- Education: Milton Keynes College

The Board acknowledges that these contracts may be awarded by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and that they are not controlled, or their performance managed, by the Governor at Gartree.

The ongoing fire safety improvement works also require large numbers of contractors to work within the prison. In addition, work has commenced on the construction of a new prison (which will accommodate over 1700 prisoners) on land near Gartree.

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 undertaken monitoring duties between 1 December 2023 and 30 November 2024 and acknowledges the continued drive to provide a consistent regime at Gartree through stable leadership and improved uniformed staffing levels.

Despite a reduced number of IMB members, the Board continues to monitor all areas including safety, fair and humane treatment, health and wellbeing, routine purposeful activity, prisoners' progression and staff training.

The provision of a safe and decent environment for prisoners continues to be hindered by deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate repairs and maintenance.

The Board remains very concerned about:

- The ageing fabric and building infrastructure at Gartree, particularly the issue with heating and leaking roofs and broken showers, etc.
- Healthcare provision, generally, and lack of response to prisoners' complaints about this service.
- Inadequate access to mental health services.
- The continued influx of drugs and illicit items.
- Prisoners being allowed to keep observation panels obscured, which is not challenged by staff or they don't seem to feel confident to challenge
- Inadequate facilities for some of the older and/or disabled prisoners.
- Access to truly purposeful activities for all.
- The support and help available to rehabilitate prisoners prior to release.

3.1 Main findings

Safety

From the Board's observations, the prison, on the whole, continues to provide an ordered environment, where prisoners report that they feel safe, despite an increase in the challenges facing the prison. For example, access to illicit items such as drugs and mobile phones, some of which appear to be delivered by illegal drones, still poses a threat to safety and control by fuelling an illicit prisoner economy, leading to debt, bullying and violence. It also poses a risk to life for those prisoners who use or test these unlicensed drugs.

The Board notes that the incidence of use of force (UoF) has increased by almost 50% (see comparisons, below) for those UoF incidents defined as 'control and restraint':

- 2024: Guiding holds = 77; other low-level force = 42; control and restraint = 198; application of handcuffs only = 32.
- 2023: Guiding holds = 79; other low-level force = 47; control and restraint = 134; application of handcuffs only = 66.

However, there has been a significant improvement in the methodology and capture of information regarding each incident, and an external quality assurance report in October 2024 gave favourable indications. Changes have since been implemented in those areas requiring improvement.

During the reporting period, applications to the Board (prisoners' written representations) about concerns relating to 'staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying' have increased from 13 (in 2022-2023) to 41. However, this has been skewed by a small number of prisoners making repeated applications. This will be more closely monitored by the Board in the next reporting year to see if it relates more to staff and prisoner or prisoner and prisoner issues, both of which we are concerned about.

Fair and humane treatment

The Board considers that, on the whole, prisoners at Gartree are treated fairly and humanely and relationships between prisoners and staff have been observed to be fair and generally positive. However, there have still been issues with the provision of key worker sessions throughout the period.

The segregation unit at Gartree is small compared with other LTHSE sites and leads to the segregation of prisoners on residential wings remaining high; there are still prisoners held in the SAPU for many months, due to the lack of suitable alternative accommodation within the prison estate or secure mental health units/hospitals. The Board remains concerned about the effects this can have on prisoners' mental health and also on the staff responsible for their care and custody.

The increasing deterioration of the general building fabric and infrastructure fails to provide a decent environment for prisoners, in the Board's view. There have been continued issues with a lack of heating, non-working showers and leaking roofs. Also, the Governor has stated that legionellosis has been detected (which can lead to a serious form of pneumonia and is caused by exposure to the Legionella bacteria found in contaminated water). The Board remains extremely concerned about the poor fabric of the prison and the time it takes for repairs to be effected; this is an area of concern we have highlighted on numerous previous occasions, to little or no effect. We also continue to be concerned about the conditions and cleanliness of the prison. Despite this, prisoners and staff still make an effort to maintain clean and tidy living conditions as best they can.

Attempted repairs to the heating system have proved ineffective and since our last report, prisoners (including those on the over 50s wing) have continued to experience periods where they remain without heating for extended periods.

We were advised by the Governor in October 2024 that £500,000 of funding had been secured to replace heating boilers across the site to eradicate the temperamental and unreliable system; this work was in progress during the reporting period. Issues with showers have been extremely serious this year. Not only are some in a very poor state of repair, with inadequate flooring and mould/poor ventilation, but there is also a huge issue with legionellosis, which has resulted in the closure of entire shower blocks on numerous residential wings and in the SAPU. The installation of a Genox filtration system (a type of disinfectant that destroys Legionella and Pseudomonas) will, hopefully, eliminate the Legionella issue.

Health and wellbeing

In the view of the Board, there have been significant issues with the provision of stable healthcare services and facilities, exacerbated by the change of healthcare provider in the middle of the reporting period. Since the changeover, the Board has received an increased number of prisoners' complaints about healthcare. We have significant concerns about the ability of the healthcare provider, Practice Plus Group (PPG), to fulfil their contractual obligations and provide a healthcare service fit for purpose.

The Board is pleased to note that the emphasis on establishing a workable and fair regime has continued; however, with the removal of in-cell work, maintaining purposeful activity for all is difficult.

It appears to the Board that access to mental health facilities is inadequate and there have been changes to staffing, particularly following the change in healthcare provider. This has a massive effect on individuals and can also then spread to the prisoners and staff who look after and associate with them.

The Board has also received an increase in the number of prisoner applications about disruptions to provision of prescribed medications and special dietary provisions, following the transfer in of some prisoners to Gartree. All requests for special diets are discussed at multi-disciplinary team meetings to ensure there is a medical need.

Progression and resettlement

Following the HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection in May 2023, there was a push to promote basic literacy. This has continued in the reporting year but seems to have caused issues for some prisoners who, having previously held jobs, are now told that the requirements for English and maths have changed, making them ineligible for some roles. With functional skills being an integral part of education at HMP Gartree, all prisoners have been added to the English and maths waiting lists unless they already possess the requisite qualification.

There have been some great initiatives in the library and it is commendable to see prisoners teaching and mentoring others in education and the library.

There has been movement in the wider prison system that has allowed some of the prisoners who have achieved category C status to move on from Gartree in order to progress through their sentences.

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 and for the staff who can have the challenge of managing expectations of prisoners who are often focused on meeting the objectives on their sentence plan as early as possible and yet not offered these courses as soon as they would perhaps like.

From the Board's observations, management and staff continue to work hard to facilitate social visits and family days (which bring together prisoners and their families outside of their statutory entitlement to social visits, usually in more informal settings), and there has been some positive work to improve the social visits' experience generally.

3.2 Main areas for development

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

TO THE MINISTER

- Will the Minister confirm when funding will be allocated to address the seriously deteriorating fabric and infrastructure of Gartree, including the unacceptable state of the residential blocks, showers and heating? The prison infrastructure is now so degraded that effective routine maintenance is no longer possible.
- Last year after the Board again raised concerns about the ageing fabric of Gartree, the Minister 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 there remain major issues with the heating systems throughout the prison, suggesting that the original fix has not worked. Is it reasonable for prisoners, including those on the over 50s wing, to be left for weeks with no heating? Can the Minister confirm that overall responsibility for the fabric lies outside of the control of the Governor and with the LTHSE? When issues arise that cannot be resolved in a timely or satisfactory manner, who is accountable?

- As the age of the prison population continues to rise, the fabric of the buildings continue to cause problems with a lack of suitable access for elderly and disabled prisoners. What alternative provisions are being considered for this group of prisoners?
- The Board raised questions with the Minister last year about the quality and performance of service providers and remains concerned, particularly with regard to healthcare. So, we ask, again, how the Minister plans to address these issues?
- The Minister has previously advised that healthcare provision is monitored and reviewed by NHS England Midlands Clinical and Quality Team. Despite numerous requests by the Board, the healthcare provider has steadfastly declined to provide any meaningful quantitative data for monitoring the healthcare provision and benchmark against the community equivalent. Again, we ask the Minister to explain how the Ministry of Justice perceives the performance of prisoner healthcare at HMP Gartree, compared with (a) the performance specification in the contract and (b) the equivalent in the local community?
- The Board remains concerned that many prisoners wait for long periods to access specialist mental health services and/or assessments. Can the Minister please explain how longstanding problems with the assessment and transfer of prisoners who present with serious mental health and personality disorders from Gartree to suitable secure hospital will be addressed (as per Section 47 of the Mental Health Act 1983).
- Gartree continues to hold a large number of prisoners sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP). Many of these IPP prisoners are now years over tariff and they make up a higher proportion of segregated prisoners and those with complex mental health issues and/or behaviour. The Board asks the Minister for a further update about how issues affecting IPP prisoners at Gartree will be addressed.

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

- The Board is still aware of issues with property lost on transfer and remains concerned that current rules for possession of property vary amongst prisons. As a national issue, are rules covering transfer and possession of property belonging to prisoners in the LTHSE to be standardised?
- For yet another year (and, in the case of the heating system in the kitchens, the fourth year running), essential equipment in the kitchen is not replaced or repaired. Can the Prison Service confirm that the service level agreement with the supplier/contractor is being adequately managed and reviewed?
- Can the Prison Service confirm 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?
- Which specific buildings and maintenance projects have been allocated funding for the next three years?
- Since the appointment of a new healthcare provider, the Board is aware that there have been numerous complaints about healthcare provision and the response time for prisoner complaints (this has increased from 20 working days to 60 working days). What measures are in place to ensure an acceptable level of patient care is provided and maintained at Gartree?

- Will the Prison Service ensure that Gartree will be sufficiently funded so that prisoners' can access employment, purposeful activity and education?
- What preventive measures are being taken to intercept and prevent frequent drone incursions, which deliver dangerous illicit items?
- In last year's report, the Board raised some issues about fire safety: there was no assurance that everyone knew either what a 'general' fire alarm sounded like or what should happen if one was heard. There have been some drills carried out in the past year and this is encouraging. Will the Board be allowed access to the report of the recent fire safety inspection? And if not, why not?

TO THE GOVERNOR

- We appreciate our regular contact and good communication with the Governor and members of the senior management team and trust that this will continue.
- Will the improved staffing levels remain? The Board is pleased to observe that staffing levels have improved and become more stable over the past year, but we ask if plans are in place to ensure that this does not become an issue once all residential wings are full again.
- 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 coming year, repairs to the fabric of the kitchen will be a priority to ensure hygienic food production and that all unreliable and unserviceable kitchen appliances will be repaired or replaced without delay?
- Please can the Governor give further assurance that staff will be adequately trained to ensure that they challenge any prisoner who covers their observations panels? This has been raised in a number of Prisons and Probation Ombudsman reports about deaths in custody.
- What further support can be provided to ensure that key work is delivered consistently and to a high standard for all prisoners?
- What additional steps can be taken to help keep the prison clear of litter and waste (which encourages vermin), often thrown out of cell windows by prisoners, and what measures are in hand to remedy the situation?
- Amey does not appear to have attended any of the quarterly health and safety meetings during the reporting period. Can the Governor confirm that the actions requiring their input are progressed, minuted and actioned accordingly?

3.3 Progress since the last report

The responses, below, summarise the issues raised in last year's annual report, as well as the responses given.

Issue raised	Response given	progress
To The Minister		
Issues around length of time taken for fire safety works to take place and disappointment that during this time, while the wing was empty, no opportunity	Advised that £13 million allocated to FSI [fire safety improvement] project. Building management service included provision of heating and hot water on wings, as well as fire	The Board considers that little progress has been made. Showers have not been available on house blocks due to legionellosis outbreaks.

<p>taken to repair showers, flooring, deep clean and redecorate, etc.</p> <p>Concerns about general deterioration of building fabric.</p>	<p>safety improvements.</p> <p>‘As mentioned in last year’s response, all requests from the establishment will be considered, noting that demands for maintenance are much greater than the available funding.’</p>	
<p>Poor quality and performance of service providers.</p>	<p>Service providers have monthly KPIs [key performance indicators]; where there is a failure, a financial penalty is applied. KPI scores are shared on a monthly basis with the Governor at tripartite meetings. Also, contractual mechanisms to raise concerns with regard to the performance of the service provider.</p>	<p>No evidence of progress.</p>
<p>Insufficient wheelchair access and wide cells to accommodate growing number of elderly prisoners.</p>	<p>Advised that exploring additional house blocks with improved accessibility. Generally, issue to be addressed as part of a new prison-building programme.</p>	<p>No update on progress of new house blocks to date.</p> <p>New prisons won’t help Gartree prisoners who experience issues now.</p>
<p>Board still not able to access meaningful data to allow us to monitor provision of, and access to, healthcare against the equivalent local community provision.</p>	<p>Healthcare contracts are managed/monitored by NHS England and issues can be discussed and raised by the healthcare provider as part of the local delivery board. In 2024, NHS England undertook a comprehensive review and consultation of all prison healthcare service specifications, ensuring the services meet the needs of those in justice system.</p>	<p>Board is still unable to access quantitative data to enable analysis of trends and has found it difficult to liaise with the healthcare provider.</p>
<p>Concern about IPP prisoners who are well beyond tariff – with complex needs and no hope.</p>	<p>Refreshed IPP Action Plan (April 2023) will renew focus on support for those serving IPP sentences. Senior executive directors to develop operational IPP delivery plans,</p>	<p>The Board remains concerned about the number of IPP prisoners at Gartree and is not convinced that there are clear sentence plans tailored for each individual, in place to</p>

	which commenced in June 2024, to ensure custodial IPP prisoners are located in an appropriate prison, based on an up-to date sentence plan that is tailored to their individual risks and needs.	address their needs and help them progress. No evidence that IPP Action Plan has been introduced.
Waiting times for prisoners to access mental health services.	Referred to draft Mental Health Bill, introducing a statutory 28-day time limit within which individuals with an assessed severe mental health need must be transferred from prison or detention centre to hospital under the Mental Health Act.	No clear evidence of this, and the main issue continues to be accessing the initial assessment. Difficult as Board denied access to healthcare statistics.
To the Prison Service		
Improvements to the building fabric and infrastructure Concerns about the lack of improvements to the showers. This is linked to this issues around the discovery of Legionella.	HMPPS will continue to bid for funds to improve the infrastructure at HMP Gartree, where appropriate. Because demands are greater than funding, the projects that are prioritised by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are those that make the best use of that funding and which focus on risk to life and risk to capacity and decency. HMPPS can confirm that the suspected outbreak was not Legionnaires' disease. All measures taken were precautionary, due to elevated readings in certain areas of the prison.	Major issues still remain, with leaking roofs, poor heating and broken showers (even on wings that are supposed to have been improved during fire safety works). As a result of legionellosis in the past year, the showers on some wings were out of action whilst testing took place, and temporary shower blocks had to be provided. In contrast to HMPPS, the Governor has stated: <i>'The installation of a Genox filtration system will hopefully eliminate the Legionella issue.'</i>
Lockdown searches: concerns were raised about the methods used and the lack of accountability for removing items and recording what property was removed, etc.	Clear procedures to be followed during whole-wing lockdown searches - and an 'F78' search record was completed for every search at HMP Gartree. Acknowledged that access to body worn video cameras (BWVCs) was raised as an issue for staff assisting from other establishments. This has been	No further lockdown searches carried out in the reporting period. The Board will continue to monitor.

	escalated and all staff attending lockdown searches should now have access to a BWVC.	
Fire safety: issues raised regarding the lack of drills and fire safety in general. Some PEEPs (personal emergency evacuation plans, which document assistance for prisoners who cannot get themselves out of the prison unaided in an emergency) are not in place and/or tested.	Responsible person for fire safety in an establishment is the Governor. Requirement is one fire drill per building annually and assurance is governed via the tripartite meeting. The Governor agreed compliance was previously lacking, which was attributed to staffing issues.	<p>The Board notes that there has been a visible improvement in the fire drills over the past year.</p> <p>We are now able to source information directly from the health, safety and fire lead at HMP Gartree.</p>
Staffing levels: can assurance be given that investment in staff to ensure current levels, once the fire safety works are complete and the prisoner numbers increase back to the certified normal accommodation (CNA) of 708.	HMPPS has created a retention strategy linked to wider activities around employee experience, lifecycle and staff engagement at work. These include establishments with the highest attrition rates and those that are a cause for concern due to increasing attrition.	Staffing levels and retention appear to have been more stable, but work needs to continue.
Healthcare complaints.	<p>Practice Plus Group (PPG) (and the previous provider Nottinghamshire Healthcare try to resolve complaints face to face in the first instance. If this is not successful, the standard NHS complaints' procedure is followed. NHS England receives complaints' data as part of the monthly quality schedule and can identify any regular themes. This is picked up as part of the quarterly contract review meetings, led by the commissioning managers. The Governor also monitors complaints linked to healthcare and the data is assured via the local delivery board/senior management team, with a contract review escalation process in place if</p>	<p>The Board has still not been provided with data when we have asked for and been promised it.</p> <p>The IMB is not requesting access to individual records and has not been provided with generic data, so there are no issues concerning access to confidential personal information.</p> <p>Since the new healthcare provider (PPG) took up post, the Board has received a far greater number of complaints about healthcare services. Also, PPG now has a policy of not needing to reply to a healthcare complaint for 60 working days, which is totally unreasonable, in the Board's</p>

	necessary.	view. Please can you confirm the escalation process.
To The Governor		
Purposeful activity: we are concerned that too many prisoners are not purposefully engaged in education or work.	Incentives to encourage all to seek opportunities include access to more gym sessions, etc. There are penalties for those who chose to remain unemployed.	Some improvement in efforts to reduce unemployment levels. However, there have been changes to numeracy/literacy requirements, which have hindered some prisoners accessing work.
Measures to prevent illicit items and drugs being brought in.	Part of a national project, which includes some work with Police. Some initiatives ongoing.	This is still a major issue and there has been no reduction in illicit items.
Staff challenging covered observation panels.	Several Notices to Staff (NTS) and Notices to Prisoners (NTP) published.	Problems still occurring, and sometimes staff don't challenge the prisoners.
Concerns about the fabric of the kitchen and the issues around equipment not being replaced/repared by service providers.	No response received during the reporting period.	Still issues with broken equipment and kitchen has continued to have issues with lack of heating
Employment and purposeful activity: will sufficient funding be made available to allow all prisoners to access opportunities? Key work: what further support can be provided to ensure this is delivered consistently and to a high standard?	The current provision for employment, purposeful activity and education will remain in place, pending funding allocation. At present, every prisoner at HMP Gartree can access some form of employment or purposeful activity, either on a part-time or full-time basis.	We understand that all prisoners have a key worker, but we are still aware that there are issues with staff fulfilling their targets in terms of key work. The Board continues to encounter prisoners who don't appear to know who their key worker is.

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, and most prisoners arrive from other prisons with knowledge of prison regimes.
- The body scanner in the reception area is used for new arrivals and prisoners returning from court or healthcare appointments, etc, to help detect secreted illicit items (generally drugs and weapons). In the past year, there has been an occasion where an item has been undetected. The prison addressed this by providing refresher training for staff.
- Face-to-face inductions and first night safety interviews help staff identify risks and vulnerabilities presented by new arrivals and provide prisoners with basic information until full inductions are then carried out on G wing the next day. All new arrivals should also be seen by healthcare.

4.2 Suicide and self-harm, deaths in custody

- Those prisoners who are subject to ACCT (assessment, care in custody and teamwork) reviews, which are used to support prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide, are recorded on the daily briefing sheet, with review dates and case co-ordinator listed. Prisoners on ACCTs (and in post-closure) are discussed at weekly a safety intervention meeting (SIM) to ensure prison staff and other professionals work together as a multi-disciplinary team to agree the best approach for dealing with the complex prisoners.
- The number of ACCT documents opened increased from 155 in 2022-2023 to 241 in 2023-2024, an increase of 55% (see Tables 1 and 2, below).
- It's not clear if this is, in part, due to an increased number of prisoners experiencing problems or whether there may, perhaps, be a higher number of prisoners permanently on and off ACCTs. However, one of the reasons given for opening an ACCT, 'low in mood', has almost doubled in 2023-2024 (from 26 in 2022-2023 to 50 in 2023-2024).
- There has also been a large increase in the number of ACCTs opened because of minor/major cuts, with figures showing a spike of 28 incidents in September 2024. This was largely attributable to one prisoner, who has now been transferred to a secure hospital.

Table 1: safer custody statistics, December 2023 – November 2024

	2021	2022	2023	Current reporting period
TOTAL	223	242	266	288
Self-harm incidents				
Serious self-harm incidents (near misses or hospital attendance required)	22	27	7	5
ACCTs opened (see Table 2, below, for reasons)	178	132	185	241
CSIP referrals	354	272	270	217
CSIP opened	180	98	49	45
Prisoner-on-staff assaults	39	58	69	55

Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults	43	53	24	75
Deaths in custody	3	9	1	1
Use of force incidents	234	228	326	349
Serious incidents – command suite opened	-	-	0	0
<i>Figures provided by the safer custody team, HMP Gartree</i>				

Table 2: ACCTs opened and reasons recorded, December 2023 – November 2024

	2021	2022	2023	Current reporting period
Hanging/ligature	3	6	10	17
Cuts: minor	34	24	17	83
Cuts: major	8	4	2	
Overdoses/self-poisoning	11	6	9	10
Food refusal	0	0	16	3
Statement of intent	45	41	75	80
Low in mood	75	46	26	50
TOTAL	176	127	155	243
<i>Figures provided by the safer custody team, HMP Gartree</i>				

- A Listener scheme operates in Gartree, whereby prisoners trained by the Samaritans offer confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners. Prisoners can also access a PIN number so that they can call the Samaritans directly from their in-cell phone.

Self-harm

- There has been an increase in the number of recorded incidents of self-harm, from 266 to 288 (see Table 1 above).
- It continues to be the case that acts of self-harm are carried out by a small number of prisoners, some of whom self-harm multiple times. These prisoners often have complex mental health issues, which may contribute to their self-harming behaviours.

Deaths in custody

- Following inquests into deaths in custody and Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) findings, healthcare staff and prison officers have, again, been reminded of the importance of ensuring that observation panels are unblocked and the unlocking procedures to be used for checking prisoners during the night state.
- Unfortunately, there has been one death in custody this reporting year, believed to be from natural causes.
- The prison has dedicated family liaison officers, who engage with and notify relatives and provide appropriate and timely support. There are also support mechanisms in place for prisoners and staff who may be affected.

4.3 Violence and violence reduction, self-isolation

- On the whole, the Board believes HMP Gartree is committed to providing and maintaining as safe an environment as possible for all who live, work and visit the establishment.

- In the past, the population mix at Gartree has been stable. However, with a greater number of younger prisoners now arriving much earlier in their sentences, there are new challenges and, sometimes, less compliance than with the more settled and older population.
- A number of prisoners are supported through challenge, support and intervention plans (CSIPs) - used to manage prisoners who pose an increased risk of violence - which have been used in Gartree for the past few years. Prisoners on a CSIP are noted on the daily briefing sheet (DBS), with review dates and support workers highlighted; they also may be discussed at the weekly SIM and monthly safer custody meeting.
- There are reported prisoner affiliations within Gartree and non-associates are managed by being housed on different wings. Reports from the prison show that some of the influx and supply of drugs and other illicit items is linked to known individuals, and some wing moves are managed in an attempt to disrupt the illicit economy.
- An 'isolated prisoner strategy 2022-2023' was introduced several years ago to focus on supporting these individuals towards integration back into the normal regime. It has been successful but, over the last few months, the number of prisoners self-isolating has started to increase. The prison has trialled a period where prisoners can be secured behind their door using the cell key rather than the courtesy key; this provides a higher level of safety and security for a prisoner who feels vulnerable or who does not wish to socialise with others. During the trial period, there was a small increase in the number of individuals who chose to isolate, as they felt less likely to receive pressure from their peers.
- Over the past year, a new category of prisoner, who are placed on 'wing restrictions', was noted on the DBS. The reason for this has been questioned by the Board and we have been advised that these are prisoners who are being isolated for observation or security reasons.

4.4 Use of force

- The Operational Response and Resilience Unit (ORRU) Insights and Assurance UoF and Status Report was published in October 2024. Detailed scores were given in three categories:
 - **Green** Systems are effective and embedded: Good
 - **Amber** Evidence of some good practice but ongoing development required: Reasonable
 - **Red** Systems are ineffective and require significant development: Poor
- Of the 17 criteria examined, five were deemed 'Good', eight were 'Reasonable' and four were 'Poor'. It should be noted that, of those deemed 'Poor', criticism related to post UoF actions, such as ensuring all documentation and debriefs were fully completed and immediate remedial action taken place.
- UoF incidents are carefully recorded and captured on either body worn video cameras (BWVCs) and/or handheld digital cameras. Each incident is reviewed at the monthly UoF meeting, which includes Governors, members of the UoF team and a member each from the psychology and chaplaincy teams. The Board observes these meetings. The meeting looks at a cross-section of both planned and unplanned events and also examines the monthly and annual trends by wing, age group, religion and ethnicity, the time of day when events occur and the officers involved. Any training outcomes identified are taken back to the relevant officers. All officers take refresher training annually. A weekly review by Governors has also been added, as required by the ORRU/UoF report.

- Within the LTHSE comparator group, Gartree remains at the lowest for the number of use of force incidents and next to lowest by percentage population.

4.5 Preventing illicit items

- The Board remains concerned that 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 in Gartree. As in previous years, this reporting period has seen items such as 'hooch' (illegally brewed prison alcohol), 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 social visits, and police arrests are made when such incidents have occurred.
- A body scanner (this is a BOSS chair, which features a non-intrusive scanning system) is used in the reception area and helps detect secreted items. However, there have been instances where items have still managed to 'slip through' unnoticed.
- The handheld 'wand' scanners are used when prisoners leave/return to their wings. Despite this, there are still occasions when staff allow prisoners to leave wings without a legitimate reason and/or with items of property they should not be taking off the wing.
- Mail is scanned and tested; in-bound property and mail order items are scanned and searched in reception. Drug-soaked correspondence continues to be identified and intercepted.
- A scanner and searching screens are now consistently used in the gate house for all staff and visitors entering the establishment.
- Despite stringent vetting procedures, some illicit items still appear to be reaching prisoners and drone activity continues to be reported, particularly at night. But it is not known how much of 'payload' is actually delivered into the hands of prisoners and then trafficked around the establishment.
- A range of homemade improvised weapons continue to be discovered in prisoners' cells, communal areas and the areas outside wings. These are found during intelligence-led or ad hoc searches of the establishment and prisoners by both wing staff and the dedicated search team (DST) and their sniffer dogs.
- Over the last year, illicit drug use by prisoners continues to be reported, despite targeted searches and routine random prisoner testing by the drug management team and DST's trained dogs. Drug usage is of particular concern when the type and strength of drugs is unknown and severe reactions can take place, causing extreme and often life-threatening behaviours and health effects.
- In October 2024, the Governor announced that Gartree had secured funding for an ISFL (incentivised substance free living unit), to be located on I wing. It will offer support to prisoners who actively wish to recover and desist from using drugs and illicit items. The Board welcomes this initiative.

5. Fair and humane treatment

5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food

- In previous 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. After the HMIP visit in January 2023, the inspection report noted, as a priority concern, that: *'The prison environment was poor, and the fabric of the buildings was in a state of disrepair.'* Little has changed.
- The Board has raised the issue of inadequate heating at Gartree on numerous occasions in the past. This year is no exception. Prisoners have been living on wings where there is no working heating. The continued failure to address the problem is unacceptable.
- Towards the end of the reporting period, several wings were also faced with the closure of almost all showers – again linked to issues around the detection of Legionella. Last year, the Minister stated that *'the suspected outbreak was not Legionnaires' disease'*. However, the continued closure of several wing shower blocks throughout the year suggests that legionellosis (water-borne bacteria) are a constant and continuing problem at Gartree.
- The most recent HMIP inspection, carried out in January 2023, 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.'* Since the report was published, the Board continues to be concerned about the conditions and cleanliness of the prison. However, 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.
- Yet again, the Board remains disappointed that still no plans have been 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 that 'fixes' to the infrastructure seem to be of a temporary nature and questions whether a more permanent solution needs to be sought to address concerns about the whole infrastructure of the establishment. It is extremely disappointing to report that, even following a wing closure of over 12 months, the expected repairs to showers on A wing were somewhat rudimentary, appeared to be an afterthought and have been affected by full closure over the past year.
- The Board has asked about fire safety in the past and been unable to obtain clear responses from the prison about when and how fire safety training and drills had taken place. This appears to have been addressed and there is evidence of drills and training. The Board looks forward to hearing about further improvements in this area.
- The Board has observed food to be of an acceptable standard and to cater for most 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.
- 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, as well as a lack of heating. Conditions in the kitchens are boiling in summer and freezing in winter; they are about to go into the fourth winter without heating. Broken door plates were removed by Amey and have never been replaced, giving free access to vermin. Additionally, a forklift accident resulted in an external conduit being damaged at its base. This has not been repaired and allows rats to access the plant room. In addition,

the area behind the kitchens is being used to dump grass cuttings and garden waste, which also gives cover for rats to breed.

- 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 issues affect everyone, it is not an excuse.
- There is a concern that wing serverly prisoners are not trained in food hygiene and this is compounded by the education department not offering such courses. In the meantime, kitchen supervisors have trained 72 prisoners to Level 1 Food Safety. However, they are struggling to recruit prisoners to work in the kitchens, largely due to the lower level of pay compared with other employment opportunities within the prison.
- The Board has continued to observe serveries and self-catering facilities on some residential wings, which are dirty, unhygienic and awaiting replacement items.

5.2 Segregation

- The SAPU (separation and progression unit) comprises 11 cells (and one special cell, where items such as furniture, bedding and sanitation are removed in the interests of safety) 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 unlock 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 have complex needs and present with challenging behaviour – which can often result in violence against staff and/or self-harm. The Board remains concerned about the effects long-term segregation can have on prisoners in a block that is in a poor state of repair and with poor natural light and ventilation. The shower in the SAPU is in a poor state and repairs to individual cells can often take a long time. It remains the case that flooring, paintwork, sinks and toilets are damaged, and cells appear unkempt and unclean.
- The Board is concerned about the time taken to address the mental health issues of certain individuals and those who spend long periods in segregation.
- Daily management and strategic oversight of the SAPU and segregation now sits with the safer custody function, and the Board notes positively a more consistent management approach over the past year. 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 the normal location.
- The Board notes that staff working in the SAPU tend to show high levels of care towards the prisoners, despite challenging circumstances, especially where numbers of prisoners regularly require either two-officer or three-officer unlock, often in full PPE (personal protective equipment).

5.3 Staff and prisoner relationships, key workers

- Staffing levels are good and officers have been trained and appointed, along with a high number of OSG (officer support grade) staff, to help deliver a fairly consistent regime, in the Board's view.
- The prison appears to remain committed to providing an effective and fair regime, and there have been changes made over the past year to allow prisoners to have greater access to work, education, gym sessions and time out of cell, etc.
- Key worker support remains an issue at times, with officers reporting that they do not always have enough time to fully carry out this element of their role. However, towards the end of the reporting period, there has been a visible attempt to allocate specific

time for officers to complete these activities.

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), to check they meet the correct criteria before investigation.
- Throughout the reporting year, DIRFs have increased from 120 (in the 2022-2023 reporting period) to 136. The Board is informed that quality assurance of DIRF reviews is undertaken by the Governing Governor and scrutinised by the senior management team (SMT), but we remain uncertain as to how these reviews are independently tested.
- Equality action team (EAT) meetings are held regularly to address issues raised by identified groups, including armed forces' veterans, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and LGBTQ+ communities, older prisoners and those with disabilities.
- Efforts are made to recognise, publicise and celebrate events such as Pride and Black History Month. Notices are also publicised throughout the year to help make staff and prisoners aware of special dates and celebrations relating to various faith groups.
- There are 37 different nationalities in a prisoner population of 558 at HMP Gartree, of which 85% (475) are British national prisoners. There is no dedicated officer for foreign national prisoners at Gartree, despite this group comprising 15% of the population (83, as at the end of the reporting period) compared with 113 in the previous reporting year. This represents a reduction of 17.7%. In the last 12 months, the total prison population 'headcount' has fallen by 20, which is exactly the same number as the fall in the number of foreign national prisoners, who have, in the main, been deported.
- Table 3, below, shows the age breakdown of prisoners in Gartree, which reveals a relatively stable pattern.

Table 3: Prisoner population by age								
	2022				2023			2024
Age	No.	%		Age	No.	%	No.	%
18-24	23	3.8		21- 25	32	5.5	81	14.5
25-29	79	13.3		26-29	59	10.2		
30-39	176	29.7		30-39	182	31.5	175	31.4
40-49	139	24		40-49	142	24.5	145	26
50-59	101	17		50-59	88	15.2	91	16.3
60-69	61	10.2		60-69	60	10.4	47	8.4
70+	14	2.3		70+	15	2.6	19	3.4
	593				578		558	

5.5 Faith and pastoral support

- Faith provision at Gartree is considered to be good by the Board.

- A high number of religious services are offered weekly. There are chaplains for all major faiths, although there have been difficulties in recruiting chaplains for the Buddhist and Rastafarian faiths.
- The chaplaincy team seems to provide good pastoral care for prisoners. This 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, those who are segregated on the wings and to the more vulnerable prisoners such as men on open ACCTs and those socially isolating.
- The chaplaincy team also offers support to bereaved prisoners and can help facilitate video attendance at funerals. They collect donations from prisoners to help buy a wreath or book of condolence for prisoners or their families, which helps foster a great sense of community and altruism.

Religion description	Total number of prisoners
Agnostic	2
Atheist	5
Buddhist	21
Church of Jesus Christ (LDS)	6
Christian	43
Church of Wales	1
Church of England (Anglican)	90
Church of Scotland	1
Eastern Orthodox	1
Hindu	4
Jehovah's Witness	2
Jewish	4
Methodist	2
Muslim	156
No Religion	104
Pagan	15
Pentecostal	3
Quaker	1
Rastafarian	5
Roman Catholic	84
Sikh	6
Spiritualist	1
Taoist	1
TOTAL	558

5.6 Complaints

- Over the past year, 3,201 complaints were received by the prison, an increase of 454 on last year's recorded complaints of 2,747 (see Table 4, below).
- Residential issues accounted for the highest number of complaints in every single reporting period (averaging 23%, a jump from 13% in the previous reporting year). This may be explained by the numerous issues with the structure and fabric of the building (heating, showers, poor fabric, etc).
- Frequently, complaints involving missing property, following a 'transfer in', are difficult to explore and rarely resolved. This is a national issue, requiring a resolution.

Table 4. Summary of complaints submitted to HMP by prisoners during reporting period (data provided by HMP Gartree)				
	Dec 2022 – Nov 2023		Dec 23 – Nov 24	
	No.	Most complained t	No.	Most complained about
Dec	190	Residential issues 44 (23%)	176	Residential - 22%, Finance/Cash - 13%, Property - 9%, Canteen - 9%
Jan	231	Finance/Cash 38 (16%)	219	Residential - 27%, Finance/Cash - 8%, Property - 7%
Feb	247	Canteen 56 (23%)	253	Residential - 24%, Finance/Cash - 13%, Property - 9%
Mar	276	Canteen 70 (25%)	277	Residential - 16%, Property - 13%, Finance/Cash - 12%
April	189	Residential Issues 43 (23%)	285	Residential - 22%, Property - 12%, Finance/Cash - 9%
May	184	Residential issues 43 (23%)	286	Residential - 20%, Finance/Cash - 10%, Property - 7%
June	183	Residential Issues 30 (16%)	243	Residential - 21%, Finance/Cash - 19%, Reception - 7%
Jul	190	Residential issues 41 (21%)	257	Residential - 22%, Finance/Cash - 14%, Reception - 6%, Work - 6%
Aug	271	Security 53 (20%)	229	Residential - 22%, Finance/Cash - 14%, Reception - 10%
Sept	229	Residential issues 49 (21%)	259	Residential - 19%, Finance/Cash - 15%, Work - 10%
Oct	255	Residential issues 44 (17%)	364	Residential - 32%, Finance/Cash - 10%, Reception - 6%
Nov	302	Res issues 61 (20%)	354	Residential - 25%, Finance/Cash - 12%, Reception - 8%
TOTAL	2747		3201	

5.7

Property

Prisoner property complaints continue to generate applications to the IMB, although these have reduced considerably over the past few years. Frequently, complaints involving missing property following a 'transfer in' are difficult to explore and rarely resolved. This is a national issue, requiring a resolution.

6. Health and wellbeing

6.1 Healthcare general

- Healthcare services are now provided by Practice Plus Group (PPG), which took over the contract from Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust on 1 March 2024. PPG is commissioned to provide integrated services to prisoners, including physical healthcare, mental healthcare, social care, and clinical and psychosocial substance misuse services.
- The Board is seriously concerned about the provision of healthcare at Gartree. Since PPG became responsible for the contract, there has been a significant increase in the number of healthcare complaints.
- The department is understaffed and relies on a third party to provide agency staff. The head of healthcare has confirmed to the Board that, frequently, the agency staff fail to report for duty or do not perform to the required standard. There are frequent gaps in the provision of night-time cover. In October - and without notice - PPG unilaterally increased their response time for complaints from 20 to 60 working days, without the knowledge of the Governor.
- Despite numerous requests by the Board, PPG has failed to provide any quantitative data to help us monitor trends and performance in healthcare provision. We stress that this relates only to quantitative data and not confidential data, which is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004, the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This, together with the significant increase in healthcare complaints since PPG took responsibility for the contract, means that it is the opinion of the Board that the healthcare provider is failing in its contractual obligations.

6.2 Time out of cell, 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 falls to 3.5 hours for prisoners who are unemployed or to 2.5 hours for those on the basic level of the incentives scheme.
- 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 large all-weather football pitch, the gym or a large separate area in front of G and H wings.
- The gym is open daily and offers a wide range of sessions to all prisoners, who are entitled to between one and four sessions of gym a week, depending on whether they are in employment or education and their level on the prison's incentives scheme. The gym had good links with the healthcare department and substance misuse treatment staff, with prisoners being referred for tailored programmes to meet their specific needs.
- However, parts of the gym cannot be accessed by less able and disabled prisoners, as the lift to the upper floor has been broken for over a year. Gym staff have advised that there are sessions they would like to run regarding topics such as nutrition or wellbeing. However, as the gym classrooms are upstairs, these would not be accessible to all.
- 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.

- There are limited facilities on the SAPU, although a good selection of books are made available on the wing and others can be 'ordered' from the library. The SAPU exercise yards are particularly stark and may be claustrophobic to some.
- Prison-wide groups included a choir, music tuition and drama and book club and activities are also offered in the *Grapevine*, the prison newsletter.

7. Progression and resettlement

7.1 Education

- Milton Keynes College is the education contractor. However, the contract expires in the next reporting period and will be out for re-tender.
- The department offers courses such as lifting and handling, food safety, cleaning and biohazard cleaning.
- The department continues to offer ESOL (English for speakers of a second language) programmes, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the prison kitchens and barbering and art workshops.
- There is also an emphasis on maths and English Level 2, in accordance with the concerns of inspectors in the HMIP 2023 visit. However, this has caused a problem with some prisoners who may have received these qualifications at other establishments but cannot prove their prior certification or find that it is not recognised. As a result, they have lost jobs in workshops where the qualification is mandatory or are barred from applying for those jobs. This has caused some resentment.
- Whilst there is a waiting list for access to some courses, the High Sheriff of Leicester recently presented 62 prisoners with Certificates of Achievement. One prisoner has completed an Open University degree course and will be formally presented with his degree at the prison in the next reporting period.
- The education pay scale is seen as a barrier for some prisoners, as they can earn more in the workshops or spend time in the gym or at other activities. Some prisoners question the worth of educational courses when serving lengthy life sentences. The education manager reported that she was not involved in any pay scale consultation with the governing body.
- Some of the prisoner themselves who work in the workshops and studio have asked why they are not offered more vocational courses or allowed to be involved in discussions about how some of their skills and the services they can provide could be more widely marketed to help the wider community.

7.2 Vocational training, work

- Work in the kitchens continues to cause problems due to several factors:
 - Morale is low due to poor maintenance of the fabric of the kitchens and general working conditions. A planned extension and upgrade has not gone ahead. Kitchen equipment is in a poor state of repair and users regularly complained of poor maintenance on the part of third-party contractors. In January 2024, the department was without hot water on nine occasions.
 - Pay for kitchen workers is the same as that for prisoners in the workshops, despite kitchen staff working longer hours.
 - Staff and prisoners complained of little support from the heads of departments.
 - The kitchen manager left the post in November 2024.
 - The kitchen block is about to go into its fourth winter with no adequate heating.
 - There are numerous complaints about the external food contractor, with orders either being short or unavailable; at least on one occasion, part of a delivery was for another (non-prison) establishment.
- The kitchen catered for 164 prisoners through Ramadan and regularly manages a list of 4,000 items.

- Workshop 5 (woodwork and carpentry) was closed following a fire. It was concluded that an extractor unit and fire suppressant system would be too costly to install, so the workshop closed on the grounds of health and safety.
- There continues to be a waiting list for work in the tea packing workshop and managers informed the IMB that there is a possibility of a warehouse operative qualification being implemented soon. Other workshops include the laundry, Sue Ryder cycle repair workshop, print studio, gardening, airline headphone refurbishment and textile manufacture.
- General observations are that all workshops are run by enthusiastic and well-informed staff and that prisoners were happy in their work (albeit some of the tasks they perform are not high-level and don't allow them to gain skills training/qualifications).
- The activities hub advertises lists of vacancies on the wings noticeboards each week and there is generally work available for those who want it.

7.3 Offender management, progression

- Following criticism of the OASys assessments (which evaluate the needs of and risk of a prisoner) in the HMIP 2023 report, the offender management unit (OMU) has worked hard to bring these up to date, completing 198 in the last year. There are now only 39 outstanding. Staff have taken steps to ensure that OASys reports accompany transferring prisoners. Most difficulties arise when prisoners are brought into Gartree from secure hospitals or direct from sentencing and reports are incomplete.
- There are currently 50 category C prisoners in Gartree, with 30 on hold for parole reviews. Nine category C prisoners were transferred to other establishments in November 2024.
- Staffing levels in the OMU have remained roughly the same, although there has been a small increase in the number of prison offender managers (POMs). Although there is a need for more POMs, there seems to be no capacity to accommodate this. Key workers have also been retrained, where necessary, and prisoners now have more appropriate key workers who should meet with their designated prisoners twice per month.
- From the Board's observations, progression work continues to be challenging, with the number of resettlement courses being limited. This is exacerbated by the ever-increasing length of sentences and the earlier in their sentence plan that prisoners are entering into Gartree. One prisoner complained that he had been moved to successive prisons, with no opportunity to progress.
- In accordance with new Recategorisation Index (RCI) guidelines, reviews now only take place every three years. This has caused some disquiet amongst prisoners who have come from prisons where they still take place annually.
- IPP prisoners continue to be a cause for concern. At the end of the reporting year, the prison held 38 IPP prisoners, while six were released during the last year; but, of those remaining, all are significantly over-tariff. It is common to find a high proportion of IPP prisoners in the separation and progression unit (SAPU) and many have decreasing hope of meaningful progression, which adds to their complex mental health needs.
- The Board is concerned about the propensity for a gang culture and associated drug culture to thrive among younger prisoners transferring into Gartree. Likewise, those transferring in much earlier in their sentences have made the dynamics much more challenging for the OMU. Older prisoners who have settled themselves into prison life and have been at Gartree for some time, complain to the IMB that they do not want to be associated with that part of the regime. However, they add that they find it difficult to distance themselves, largely due to the geographical layout of the prison and make-up of the wings. There seems to have been an increase in the number of men socially

isolating on the wings. We are also concerned about vulnerable prisoners being radicalised.

- Prisoners have complained that they do not believe that applications (prisoners' written representations to the IMB Board) are always leaving the wings and some find their legal paperwork difficult to access.
- Certain areas have proved to be very successful. Gartree's therapeutic community (GTC) and therapeutic community plus (TC+) are small units (25 on GTC and 12 in TC+) and have an enviable track record. There is a waiting list to access these therapy wings from both inside and outside the prison. The over-50s wing houses a number of older, often less mobile, prisoners with additional medical needs and the IMB has observed them to be treated sensitively and with care. The PIPE wing is the largest in the LTHSE and, again, has a waiting list. From the Board's observations, the psychology team and prison staff are dedicated and should be commended for this.

7.4 Family contact

- Problems remain with some social visitors not abiding by the clearly publicised dress codes.
- The number of weekday social visitors is generally low, perhaps due to Gartree's rural location, with little or no public transport and the cost of transport, taxis, etc, in general. The lack of accessibility is seen as having a significant bearing on prisoners, especially those serving very long sentences. A total of 48% of prisoners had not had a social visit in a 12-month period.
- There have been some complaints about the length of time taken for visitors to get through security and into the visits' hall. Gartree has one small security entrance to accommodate all staff and visitors, which can create a bottleneck at certain times (such as, for example, during a change of shift just as visitors are arriving).
- The Board was pleased to be invited to monitor a review of the 'visits experience'. The visits' centre welcomes the families and visitors before they enter the prison. It is run by Prisoner Advice and Care Trust (PACT), a charitable organisation with some staff but also volunteers. In the Board's view, it provides an excellent service and support for those who use it.

7.5 Resettlement planning

- During the past year, only 3 prisoners were released directly from Gartree.
- 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.

7.6 Library

- The library continues to be well used. It has capacity for 33 prisoners, with an average of 28 at any one time.
- Opening hours have been increased to include the last Friday afternoon of each month, to accommodate prisoners who struggle to access the library when they are at work in the workshops. The staff have also set up 'quiet time' to help prisoners who are neurodivergent.
- The library can also be used by those undertaking educational courses.
- An author-led reading event took place in September, which was well received and was followed by requests for a creative writing course.

- A book club and an origami class are new additions to the library's services.
- Some prisoners with poorer reading skills have undertaken an incentivised programme to read six books and provide commentary in return for a bar of chocolate and a book to keep.
- Sadly, the library staff learned in November that Prison Education Services (PES) had withdrawn funding for the library until April 2025, with no guarantee that this will be reinstated. Coming so soon after such a successful reading week, this has been a huge blow to the morale of both staff and prisoners. However, the Board is pleased to hear that local contingency plans are in place if the funding is not reinstated.

7.7 HMP Gartree young adult strategy

- HMP Gartree has developed a range of measures to support the young adult population (aged 21-25). Young adult forums have been implemented to help support evidence-based progression for those young adults involved and to encourage them to have a voice on how the establishment can improve support for the prisoner population at HMP Gartree as a whole.
- The IMB Board at HMP Gartree can report that the staff management team has developed and is implementing a local young adult delivery plan against the following strategic objectives:
 - **Safety:** Safety intervention meetings (SIMs) are held weekly, with full safety meetings held monthly. These examine a range of supporting mechanisms for the young adult prison population.
 - **Wellbeing:** A localised transition induction document has been implemented. This is forwarded to establishments about to transfer young adults to Gartree and provides support during this transition period. In addition, early induction support is provided via the OMU and an assigned key worker. All POMs are trained to support young adults and a bespoke training package has been developed for operational officers who look after young adults as key worker champions.
- Gartree's Prisoner Advice and Care Trust team (PACT) routinely meets with new reception young adults and those identified as not having social visits, to discuss and support what prisoners can do to rebuild family ties.
- **Sentence planning and care management:** Gartree has a 14-day timetable, where all functions deliver face-to-face induction, including young Adults and peer support from an induction representative. Young adults can apply for employment whilst completing induction and, thereby, have the opportunity to commence employment immediately rather than becoming unemployed. The social activity representative integrates young adults into on-wing activities.

8. The work of the IMB

Board statistics

	2022	2023	Current reporting year
Recommended complement of Board members	14	14	14
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8	5	6
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7	6	5
Total number of visits to the establishment	313	286	326
Total number of segregation reviews monitored	231	206	217

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	2021-22	2022-23	Current Reporting period
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	1	11	23
B	Discipline, including adjudications, incentives scheme, sanctions	4	3	17
C	Equality	2	8	13
D	Purposeful activity, inc. education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	5	13	12
E1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	5	4	15
E2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	5	5	15
F	Food and kitchens	0	8	8
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	17	32	56
H1	Property within this establishment	16	17	25
H2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	14	5	10
H3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	11	4	2
I	Sentence management, including HDC (home detention curfew), ROTL (release on temporary licence), parole, release dates, recategorisation	13	3	8
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	14	13	41
K	Transfers	5	2	4
L	Miscellaneous, including complaints system	21	11	25
M	Inappropriate	4	2	0
	Total number of applications	137	141	274

Annex A

Glossary of terms

- ACCT: assessment, care in custody and teamwork
- BWVC: body worn video camera
- CCTV: closed-circuit television
- CSIP: support intervention programme
- DBS: daily briefing sheet
- DIC: death in custody
- DIRF: discrimination incident reporting form
- DST: dedicated search team
- 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: Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (healthcare provider from 1 December 2023 to 31 March 2024)
- OASys: offender assessment system
- OMU: offender management unit
- PACT: Prisoner Advice and Care Trust
- PEEP: personal Escape and Evacuation Plan
- PIPE: psychologically informed progression environment
- PPG: Practice Plus Group (healthcare provider from 1 April 2024 onwards)
- PPO: Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
- SAPU: separation and progression unit
- SIM: safety intervention meeting
- SMT: senior management team
- UoF: use of force



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