



HM Prison & Probation Service

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Dear Charlie,

HMIP report on an independent review of progress at HMP Garth 12th - 14th May 2025

Thank you for your Independent Review of Progress report at HMP Garth, whereby you followed up six priority/key concerns and four Ofsted themes from your most recent inspection in July/August 2024.

I am encouraged to note that you have seen good/reasonable progress being made across three priority/key concerns and two Ofsted themes, and note the following:

- The Governor and his team have taken significant steps to improve absence management which has resulted in a significantly reduced level of absenteeism with fewer regime curtailments for prisoners.
- Working with a new health provider, with improved healthcare staffing, the prison has prioritised access to health appointments through improving access to wing-based clinics, the use of in-cell telephony and the introduction of profiled enabling staff.
- The improvement in cleanliness and hygiene, alongside the shower refurbishment and general repairs have been welcomed in the prison and will remain under scrutiny to insure it doesn't slip back.
- Through meeting prisoners, carrying out learning walks and observations of classrooms, workshops and prison work, senior leaders now have oversight in the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and the development of skills.

In respect of the three priority/key concerns and two Ofsted themes where you found no meaningful/insufficient progress, I can confirm that the IRP findings have been carefully considered, and steps will be taken to address them as appropriate. These will include the following:

- A review of the Incentives Policy including consultation with prisoners will be undertaken with a view to implement meaningful ways to increase differences between incentive levels. The process governing incoming property will also be reviewed to ensure property is distributed in a timely manner. Recent work undertaken by the standards coaching team will

be built upon through the creation of a staff prisoner relationship ambassador to improve relationships.

- Assurance around the delivery of the regime for self-isolators will now be gained at the daily operations meeting and the Safer Custody team will undertake a weekly regime assurance check. Information pertaining to the regime for those prisoners subject to constant supervision will be published and the Safer Custody team will undertake a twice weekly assurance check to ensure a meaningful regime is being offered to this group of prisoners.
- The curriculum in existing activity areas will be reviewed with a focus on delivering higher skills for the more able and qualifications for all. Two new workshops (furniture upcycling and gate alarm production) will be implemented by July 2025 which will improve the curriculum offer.

The Governor, with the support of the Prison Group Director, will continue to progress the full action plan covering all the original priority/key concerns.

I remain committed to ensuring continued progress against the HMP Garth agreed action plan and I can assure you that through my operational assurance function and the support of Performance and Assurance and Risk (PAR) group we continue to closely monitor progress.

Whilst I acknowledge that there is still much work to be carried out at the prison, I am encouraged that progress is being made and that our monitoring of the prison is in line with your findings.

Richard Vince

Executive Director – Directorate of Security

CC: Michelle Jarman-Howe, Interim Director General Operations, HMPPS