

Press release: Birmingham prison contract ended

- Mutual agreement with G4S to end contract early
- The costs of the '[step-in](#)' have been covered in the settlement we will receive from G4S
- Improvements to the prison continue at pace

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) took over the running of the prison for an initial six-month period in August 2018, which was extended in February until the end of the summer.

HMPPS has now decided, with the full agreement of G4S, to end the contract and bring HMP Birmingham back in-house.

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

I am confident that HMP Birmingham has made good progress since the 'step-in' but to build on this, the prison needs stability and continuity.

That is why we have mutually agreed with G4S that the public sector is better placed to drive the long-term improvements required and the contract will end.

Our priority remains the safety of prisoners and staff but this move to restore and consolidate order at one of our most challenging jails will ultimately make sure that we are better protecting the public.

Minister Stewart emphasised that this move was a response to the specific circumstances faced by HMP Birmingham and the Urgent Notification received by the Secretary of State from HM Chief Inspector of Prisons.

He added:

We need to be absolutely clear that we still believe in a mixed economy of providers with some of our private prisons among the best performing in the country.

Indeed, G4S itself is running excellent prisons at Altcourse and Oakwood, and this Government believes passionately that private

providers should continue to play a crucial role in our system.

As part of the decision to bring HMP Birmingham back into the public sector:

- HMPPS has agreed a settlement with G4S paying £9.9 million to cover the additional cost of the 'step-in' action – including additional HMPPS staff. This meets the department's commitment to recover 'step-in' costs in accordance with the contract and includes a sum to cover essential maintenance works.
- G4S staff at Birmingham will transfer to HMPPS contracts on 1 July and are being supported through the transition. Trade unions are involved in this process.
- Experienced Governor Paul Newton, who took command of the prison last August at the time of the 'step-in', will remain in post to lead the prison and steer the transformation process.

Work continues to drive-up standards at the prison and the action taken includes:

- The introduction of a new dedicated search team to detect and deter those responsible for bringing contraband into the establishment. A recent full lockdown search was highly successful in addressing contraband.
- A bolstered senior management team and more than 30 additional, experienced prison officers supporting the team on the ground.
- New safety initiatives including the roll-out of the key worker model – ensuring that each prisoner has dedicated support from a prison officer, and a refreshed violence strategy to tackle the causes of violent behaviours.
- Additional training for staff in managing vulnerable and violent offenders.
- The refurbishment of one wing which is now being repopulated. The visitors centre is also undergoing renovation and a new family strategy has been introduced.

Notes to editors:

- The Government [announced its 'step-in'](#) action in August following an Urgent Notification by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. This was for an initial six-month period.
- In February, the Prisons Minister confirmed that the 'step-in' period had been extended until the summer.