

CASE STUDY



PRISON CCTV – A View on the Inside

Prison CCTV is no different than any other organisation or company's needs when it comes to relying on CCTV.

Gartree Prison opened in 1965 as a category C training prison. Situated in Leicestershire, the facility has steadily grown in capacity and in 1997 became a main lifer centre, accommodating nearly five hundred long term prisoners. The complex of buildings that make up Gartree vary in use and include residential blocks as well as areas for workshops and education. There are also gardens where prisoners work and spend recreation time. As the prison has increased its capacity and the category of its prisoners has changed, new buildings have been added to the site. Consequently, the security needs of the complex have also changed, with new demands on CCTV and networked security measures to maintain safety. AMG Systems, a leading CCTV solutions provider, was approached to help answer Gartree's new security needs.

Gartree Prison in Market Harborough, Leicestershire is an excellent example of the modern prison system in action. First opened in 1965 as a category C training prison, it quickly changed its role and came within the high security system, with responsibility for high risk and dangerous prisoners. It was regraded to a category B prison in 1992 and has since seen its prisoner population increase year on year. In 1997 it was categorized as a main lifer centre with an expected operational capacity of 476 and now houses first and second stage life sentence prisoners. The prison is run on an ethos of keeping the inmates busy and productive, with a fully operational education system, gardens and workshops providing opportunities for personal advancement and productive pastimes.

This varied and developing history has brought with it changing demands on the security network at Gartree. In 2005, new accommodation blocks were built to accommodate the growth in inmate numbers, with the new complex encompassing a 'marshalling area' between the new and old buildings. However, like any complex of buildings, the changed layout brought with it new needs for security and surveillance.

Much expanded solution

CCTV had been a feature of the prison facility for a long time, giving staff the extra support they needed in maintaining full control over the prison whilst meeting the needs of the inmates to move about the prison complex. However, to achieve adequate supervision over the whole of the increased complex, Gartree needed a much expanded solution. Uppermost in their minds was reliability, video picture quality, and making use of the current equipment and infrastructure, wherever possible.

“We have worked with many clients where CCTV is absolutely critical to ongoing operations and where information content and availability is paramount”, says Alan Hayes, Managing Director of AMG Systems. “In this respect, the needs of a prison CCTV system are no different to those of the many organisations and companies who come to rely on CCTV to maintain operations and provide essential support and back up to personnel on the ground. The high levels of surveillance, image quality and system reliability are common to all our products and, for us, it was a question of choosing the optimum configuration of cameras and network for Gartree, rather than viewing them as a high security prison with unique needs”.

“However, we were aware at all times that not only would the staff at Gartree be using the system to manage inmates across the complex, we would be their first line of defence in the event of trouble”.

Working with ADT, the main contractor for the project, AMG selected their Vision™ 2000 single channel transmission system to meet the increased operating demands. This allowed many elements of the existing system to be incorporated into the new network, giving Gartree a significant investment benefit. A number of new PTZ and fixed line cameras were installed around the facility. New optical fibre runs and terminations for the 48 existing cameras were laid and all the feeds brought into a new control room. From here, staff have an unrivalled view of the entire prison complex together with image capture and archiving capabilities.

Available in single or dual fibre variants, the Vision™ 2000 range is a very cost effective solution for local area camera networks where all the cameras are within 8 km of the control room. Acknowledged as one of the most reliable video transmission systems available, Vision™ 2000 transmits video, audio and data signals over multimode optical fibre. It has been designed with ease of installation in mind and the inclusion of an auto gain control within the receivers gives the Vision™ 2000 range a unique 'plug 'n play' capability.



“We chose a system with a first class reputation for reliability and flexibility and with the inherent capability to add on new cameras in the future if called for”

Real time view

As the Vision™ 2000 does not rely on any video signal compression technologies, the video images displayed in the control room are of the same quality as the direct output from the cameras. In addition, the compressionless transmission equipment does not introduce any delay to the signal. Therefore, what is seen in the control room is a real time view of the situation within the complex, maximising incident management capabilities.

“CCTV systems for prisons are mission critical networks and, as such, the room for failure is minimal”, commented Andy Loydell at ADT, who worked with AMG Systems on the installation of the system. “The prison has a duty of care to the inmates and staff to safeguard them 24/7 and CCTV is the only way to ensure this obligation is met”.

“At Gartree we worked closely with AMG to make sure that the positioning and feedback from the cameras answered the particular needs of the staff. We also chose a system with a first class reputation for reliability and flexibility and with the inherent capability to add on new cameras in the future if called for”.

“Gartree enjoyed an excellent reputation. We were keen to consolidate and enhance this reputation with a second to none security network”.



Birds eye view of the prison

“At Gartree we worked closely with AMG to make sure that the positioning and feedback from the cameras answered the particular needs of the staff”



Highlights

- Vision™ 2000 used for video collection from local cameras
- Digital video recording for each camera
- No compression is used on the video feeds to ensure that latency is eliminated from the network and high quality signals are delivered to the DVRs and control room operators
- Control room can access any camera in real time
- System retains capacity for further expansion

“Gartree enjoyed an excellent reputation. We were keen to consolidate and enhance this reputation with a second to none security network”



D14376-01