



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair, Justice Committee
Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: SUB134611

2 June 2026

Dear Andy,

HMP DONCASTER OPERATOR COMPETITION

I am writing to provide you with an update on the operator competition for HMP Doncaster.

HMP Doncaster is a privately managed 'Manage and Maintain' prison currently operated by Serco. It is a Category B adult male local prison, currently contracted to serve a dual function as a reception prison serving the South and West Yorkshire Courts for those aged 18-20 and the South Yorkshire Courts for those 21+, and a Category B resettlement prison. HMP Doncaster has a focus on both remand and sentenced prisoners, supporting those held within the male estate during their early days in custody. HMP Doncaster's contract is due to expire on 30 September 2026.

The operator competition for HMP Doncaster launched in April 2025 and marked the first competition to be conducted as a stand-alone competition (i.e. not from the Framework) under the Procurement Act 2023. In August 2025, three bidders submitted initial responses to the competition, one of whom was a new entrant to the market, but only two bidders were taken through to submit final bids. This level of participation was expected, as other potential bidders had expressed a focus on stabilising their existing prison operations or on mobilising newly awarded contracts — decisions that were supported by HMPPS. This selective participation continues to reflect a mature and responsible market, with operators demonstrating the ability to assess their capacity and capability to engage in competitions and subsequently deliver operational services if successful.

Since the conclusion of Authority governance processes to conduct a contract award, a potential cross-Government issue has been highlighted that could impact the HMP & YOI Doncaster Prison Operator Competition.

As such, the Authority is required to conduct an investigation to ascertain the impact and determine next steps. In order to protect the contract mobilisation period, ensure the continued safety, security and stability of HMP & YOI Doncaster and allow sufficient time for an investigation to take place, the Authority has determined that the most appropriate course of action is to cancel the

current Competition and extend the existing contract in order to consider the options for the future delivery of prison operator services, one of which is a re-procurement.

The Authority is currently exploring options in relation to the continued delivery of prison services at HMP & YOI Doncaster and will be in a position to share details of the Authority's next steps with the market and stakeholders once an investigation into the above-mentioned potential issue has been concluded.

While the investigation is being undertaken, we will be unable to provide any further information.

Whilst this is disappointing, there has been a need to act quickly in order to protect the stability of the prison and ensure continued delivery of service to maintain security, safety and decency for all prisoners. It does not alter MoJ's approach and belief that private providers continue to play an integral role in the delivery of custodial services.

I trust this update is helpful and I will of course continue to keep you updated on future operator competition outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending