

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Kerim Saparov, on 27 November 2024, following his release from HMP Belmarsh

A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

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OUR VISION

To deliver high quality and timely independent investigations and work closely with partners to achieve tangible benefits for the safety and confidence of those in custody and under community supervision.

WHAT WE DO



WHAT WE VALUE



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Summary

1. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman aims to make a significant contribution to safer, fairer custody and community supervision. One of the most important ways in which we work towards that aim is by carrying out independent investigations into deaths, due to any cause, of prisoners, young people in detention, residents of approved premises and detainees in immigration centres.
2. If my office is to best assist His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in ensuring the standard of care received by those within service remit is appropriate, our recommendations should be focused, evidenced and viable. This is especially the case if there is evidence of systemic failure.
1. Since 6 September 2021, the PPO has investigated post-release deaths that occur within 14 days of the person's release from prison.
2. Mr Kerim Saparov died from mixed drug toxicity on 27 November 2024, following his release from HMP Belmarsh on 26 November 2024. He was 31 years old. We offer our condolences to those who knew him.
3. We did not identify any significant learning relating to the pre-release planning or post-release supervision of Mr Saparov.
4. We make no recommendations.

The Investigation Process

5. HMPPS notified us of Mr Saparov's death on 28 November 2024.
6. The PPO investigator obtained copies of relevant extracts from Mr Saparov's prison and probation records.
7. The Coroner gave us the results of the post-mortem examination. We have sent the Coroner a copy of this report.
8. The Ombudsman's office contacted Mr Saparov's family to explain the investigation and to ask if they had any matters they wanted us to consider. They wanted to know about the medical care Mr Saparov received whilst in prison, accommodation after release and his admission into hospital. They also asked for a copy of our report. We have answered Mr Saparov's family's questions in this report and in separate correspondence.

Background Information

HMP Belmarsh

9. HMP Belmarsh is a category A prison and part of the long term and high secure estate which holds convicted and high-profile prisoners. It is managed by HMPPS. Practice Plus Group health and Rehabilitation Services Limited provides physical and mental healthcare services.

Probation Service

10. The Probation Service works with all individuals subject to custodial and community sentences. During a person's imprisonment, they oversee their sentence plan to assist in rehabilitation, prepare reports to advise the Parole Board and have links with local partnerships to which they refer people for resettlement services, where appropriate. Post-release, the Probation Service supervises people throughout their licence period and post-sentence supervision.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

11. The most recent inspection of HMP Belmarsh was in June 2024. Inspectors reported that their principal concern remained in purposeful activity. They found that not enough prisoners were allocated to education or work, and attendance was poor. Cleanliness across the prison had also deteriorated, access to children and families was insufficient and there were gaps in services for remand prisoners.

Key Events

Background

12. On 27 March 2024, Mr Kerim Saparov received a fixed term sentence of 14 days for possessing a sharp pointed article in a public place. He was sent to HMP Wandsworth.
13. Mr Saparov had a history of substance misuse and diagnoses of paranoid schizophrenia and psychotic disorder.
14. On 9 May, Mr Saparov was released from Wandsworth. His licence conditions required him to be of good behaviour, not to commit any offence and to keep in touch with his supervising probation officer.
15. On 21 June, Mr Saparov was sectioned under the Mental Health Act and was admitted to Edgware Community Hospital.
16. On 11 September, Mr Saparov was discharged from the hospital following police involvement. The Probation Service initiated his recall to prison. On 27 September, the police arrested Mr Saparov and he was sent to Wormwood Scrubs. He was due to be released on 26 November.
17. On 13 November 2024, Mr Saparov was transferred to Belmarsh.
18. On his arrival, healthcare staff carried out a reception screen. Mr Saparov said that he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia. He was prescribed risperidone and a long-acting antipsychotic medication delivered by depot injection once a week.
19. On 14 November, Phoenix Futures (psychosocial substance misuse team, responsible for offering one to one and group interventions around substance misuse) saw Mr Saparov. Mr Saparov said that he had no issues and declined the offer of support. Staff gave him a harm minimisation leaflet which included information about naloxone (a medication that can reverse the effects of an opiate overdose) kits and how to use them. There were no concerns about Mr Saparov and substance misuse issues during his time at Belmarsh.

Pre-release planning

20. On 25 November, Mr Saparov's mental health social worker saw him for his release planning. The mental health social worker discussed what was expected of him once he was back in the community. The mental health social worker contacted Mr Saparov's Community Offender Manager (COM) to confirm his discharge plans and accommodation. The mental health social worker referred Mr Saparov to the community mental health team.
21. Because Mr Saparov was being released the following day, the Community Offender Manager urgently referred Mr Saparov to the Lambeth Short Term Support Team for support with accommodation, re-integrating back into the community and to help with compliance with his depot medication. Mr Saparov had been offered emergency CAS3 accommodation (a service offering temporary

accommodation of up to 84 nights to adult prison leavers at risk of homelessness). This was on the agreement that he was in contact with a community mental health team.

22. Mr Saparov's Prison Offender Manager (POM) and Community Offender Manager had a handover meeting and confirmed that Mr Saparov was encouraged to attend his probation appointment upon release. The plan was that when he attended his scheduled appointment on 26 November, he would be referred to Change Grow Live (CGL) and Turning Point (local drug and alcohol services) to discuss and decide what additional support he needed in the community.

Release from Belmarsh

23. On 26 November, prior to his release, the prison mental health team saw Mr Saparov and was satisfied that his mental state was stable and he had been compliant with taking his medication. A nurse administered his depot injection.
24. That day, Mr Saparov was released from Belmarsh. He was given seven days' supply of his medication and a letter to give to his GP for his next prescription. Mr Saparov was not issued with a naloxone kit.
25. Mr Saparov did not attend his initial appointment with his local probation office.

Circumstances of Mr Saparov's death

26. On 27 November, a member of the public found Mr Saparov in an alleyway, near Charing Cross police station in London. The ambulance and police were called, and he was found with drug paraphernalia around him. At 4.22pm, paramedics pronounced life extinct.

Post-mortem report

27. The post-mortem report gave Mr Saparov's cause of death as mixed drug toxicity, including synthetic cannabinoids, morphine and cocaine.

Findings

28. Mr Saparov had a history of substance misuse but declined support from the substance misuse teams at Wandsworth and Belmarsh. He was not issued with a naloxone kit upon release because he had not been working with the substance misuse team.
29. He was appropriately referred to services for general and mental health support in preparation for his release and had secured CAS3 accommodation. Once released, a plan was in place for him to engage with Change, Grow, Live, and Turning Point for additional support if he needed it. We are satisfied that both the prison and probation services did all they could to support Mr Saparov.
30. We make no recommendations.
31. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.
32. This version of my report, published on my website, has been amended to remove the names of staff and prisoners involved in my investigation.

Inquest

33. At the inquest held on 9 March 2026, the coroner concluded that Mr Saparov's death was drug related.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

October 2025



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