

# **Independent investigation into the death of Mr Leigh Brydges on 25 August 2022, following his release from HMP Humber**

**A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

## 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. Since 6 September 2021, the PPO has been investigating post-release deaths that occur within 14 days of the person's release from prison.
3. We carry out investigations to understand what happened and identify how the organisations whose actions we oversee can improve their work in the future.
4. Mr Leigh Brydges died from drug abuse on 25 August 2022, following his release from HMP Humber the previous day. He was 47 years old. We offer our condolences to those who knew him.
5. We found that Mr Brydges had not been referred to a community-based substance misuse service before his release from prison, despite it being a condition of his licence that he engage with them. Mr Brydges' community offender manager thought that the prison's substance misuse service had referred him, but Mr Brydges was not under the care of the substance misuse team at Humber.

## Recommendations

- The Local Delivery Unit Manager of North & Northeast Lincolnshire Probation Service should ensure that community offender managers check that necessary referrals have been made to community-based support services prior to release.

## The Investigation Process

6. The PPO investigator obtained copies of relevant extracts from Mr Brydges' prison and probation records.
7. We informed HM Coroner for Lincolnshire of the investigation. He gave us the results of the post-mortem examination. We have sent the coroner a copy of this report.
8. The investigator wrote to Mr Brydges' sister to explain the investigation and to ask if she had any matters she wanted us to consider. She did not respond to our letter.
9. We shared our initial report with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). They found no factual inaccuracies but pointed out that probation records were in the name of Leigh Brydges, rather than Lee Bridges. The coroner confirmed that they were using the name Leigh Brydges, so we have amended the name in this report.

## Background Information

### HMP Humber

10. HMP Humber is a Category C prison in Yorkshire that holds approximately 1,000 men. Spectrum Community Health C.I.C. provides healthcare services.

### Probation Service

11. 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, as well as prepare reports to advise the Parole Board and have links with local partnerships to whom, where appropriate, they refer people for resettlement services. Post-release, the Probation Service supervises people throughout their licence period and post-sentence supervision.

## Key Events

12. On 11 February 2022, Mr Leigh Brydges was sentenced to 18 months in prison for possession of a weapon and sent to HMP Hull. On 9 March, he was moved to HMP Humber.
13. Mr Brydges had a history of alcohol and substance misuse. When he arrived at Humber, he told the reception nurse that he had not used drugs within the last three months. Therefore, the nurse did not refer Mr Brydges to the prison's substance misuse services.
14. On 20 May, during a visit, a prison officer saw Mr Brydges retrieve something from his visitor's waistband and put it in his mouth. The officer searched Mr Brydges, while another officer checked the CCTV. The CCTV confirmed that Mr Brydges' visitor had passed him two small parcels. Mr Brydges had a body scan, which revealed a package prison staff believed to be Subutex (an opioid used to treat opioid dependency and pain), and he was escorted to the segregation unit. The Drugs Strategy Manager was made aware, but Mr Brydges was not referred to the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (DART).

## Pre-release planning

15. On 8 August, Mr Brydges' community offender manager (COM) and his prison offender manager (POM) met Mr Brydges to discuss pre-release planning. The COM went through his licence conditions, which included drug testing, and offered him help in applying for benefits, which he said he did not need.
16. The same day, the COM approved Mr Brydges' proposed release address, his partner's address.
17. On 19 August, Mr Brydges was given a copy of his licence with the conditions of his release. The licence instructed him to attend Grimsby Probation Office on the day of his release, that he would be subject to drug testing and would have to engage with a community-based drug and alcohol support service, We Are With You.

## Post-release planning

18. On 24 August, Mr Brydges was released from prison and reported to Grimsby Probation Office, where the duty officer conducted an induction appointment.
19. Mr Brydges provided his partner's number as his primary contact number until he was able to buy a phone. The duty officer told him his next appointment would be a home visit on 26 August.

## Circumstances of Mr Brydges' death

20. On the morning of 25 August, Mr Brydges' partner noticed that Mr Brydges was not breathing. She called the emergency services and began CPR. Paramedics attended and pronounced that Mr Brydges had died.

## Post-mortem report

21. The post-mortem concluded that Mr Brydges died of drug abuse. It also listed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (the term for a collection of serious lung diseases) as a contributory factor.

## Findings

### Lack of referral to community-based substance misuse service

22. Mr Brydges' licence had a condition to address his drug and alcohol use by attending appointments with We Are With You, a community-based drug and alcohol support service.
23. The COM thought that Mr Brydges was under the care of the prison's substance misuse team and that they had referred him to We Are With You. However, this was not the case, so no-one referred Mr Brydges to the community-based substance misuse service before his release. We recommend:

**The Local Delivery Unit Manager of North & Northeast Lincolnshire Probation Service should ensure that community offender managers check that necessary referrals have been made to community-based support services prior to release.**

**Susannah Eagle**  
**Deputy Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

**April 2023**

## Inquest

The inquest, held on 1 April 2025, concluded that Mr Brydges' death was drug related.



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