

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Anthony Payne, on 8 April 2024 following his release from HMP Forest Bank

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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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 investigated post-release deaths that occur within 14 days of the person's release from prison.
3. 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.
4. In December 2023, Mr Anthony Payne was sentenced to six months imprisonment for failing to comply with sex offender police registration requirements. He was released on 29 February 2024, but failed to comply with his licence conditions. He was recalled to HMP Forest Bank on 7 March and released again on 2 April. Mr Payne failed to attend his mandatory appointment with probation on the day of his release, so his licence was revoked again and there was a warrant outstanding for his arrest when he died.
5. On 3 April, a member of the public found Mr Payne and his partner at the bottom of some communal stairs they had fallen down. Paramedics took them both to hospital. Mr Payne did not recover consciousness and died on 8 April. A post-mortem concluded that Mr Payne died from head injuries. At an inquest into Mr Payne's death on 28 November 2024, the Coroner concluded that Mr Payne had fallen as a result of being intoxicated with alcohol and had died by accident.
6. Mr Payne was 66 years old when he died. We offer our condolences to Mr Payne's family and friends.
7. The Ombudsman's office spoke to Mr Payne's next of kin to explain the investigation and to ask if he had any matters he wanted us to consider. He asked several questions which will be addressed in separate correspondence.
8. The PPO investigator investigated the pre-release planning and post-release supervision of Mr Payne. We did not find any issues of concern related to either aspect of his management. We make no recommendations.
9. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.
10. Mr Payne's next of kin received a copy of the draft report. He did not make any comments.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

March 2025

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