Prisons & Probation Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Colin Clapham, a prisoner at HMP Littlehey, on 7 February 2026

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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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.

3. In June 2022, Mr Colin Clapham was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for sexual offences. He died in hospital of pneumonia on 7 February 2026, while a prisoner at HMP Littlehey. He was 91 years old. We offer our condolences to Mr Clapham's family and friends.

4. The Ombudsman's office wrote to Mr Clapham's next of kin to explain the investigation and to ask if they had any matters they wanted us to consider. They asked for a copy of our report. They had no questions but said Mr Clapham told them how happy he was at Littlehey, and how well staff there looked after him.

5. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Clapham's clinical care at HMP Littlehey.

6. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Clapham received at Littlehey was of a good standard and was equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. She found that Mr Clapham's medical records contained evidence of excellent individualised end of life care planning, support and condition monitoring.

7. The PPO investigator investigated the non-clinical issues relating to Mr Clapham's care.

8. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.

9. We wish to highlight the good level of support staff at Littlehey gave to Mr Clapham. Mr Clapham was an elderly prisoner who rarely left his cell or engaged with prisoners or staff. His key worker persisted in persuading Mr Clapham to leave his cell with some success, and he used some key work sessions to accompany Mr Clapham on walks around the prison. He prompted Mr Clapham to improve his self-care by setting him tasks, reminded him to change clothes and helped convince him to accept the help he needed.

10. Mr Clapham's key worker, his family liaison officer and wing staff supported Mr Clapham through his increasing frailty. They supported him to maintain his dignity and regularly updated healthcare staff with concerns about Mr Clapham's ability to manage himself.

11. We shared our initial report with HMPPS and the prison's healthcare provider, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. They found no factual inaccuracies.

12. We sent a copy of our initial report to Mr Clapham's next of kin. They did not notify us of any factual inaccuracies.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman **August 2026**

Inquest

At the inquest, held on 3 November 2026, the Coroner concluded that Mr Clapham died from natural causes.

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