

13 October 2025

Reference: FOI 695 Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your email, which we received on 1 October 2025. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked us:

To provide information on the number of deaths of prisoners per year at HMP Elmley from 2010 to 2025.

Our response:

We have searched our records and we hold the requested information. A copy of the information that you requested is shown below.

| Year | Number of deaths |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 2010 | 1 |
| 2011 | 4 |
| 2012 | 4 |
| 2013 | 2 |
| 2014 | 9 |
| 2015 | 3 |
| 2016 | 7 |
| 2017 | 10 |
| 2018 | 3 |
| 2019 | 3 |
| 2020 | 6 |
| 2021 | 8 |
| 2022 | 3 |
| 2023 | 5 |
| 2024 | 2 |
| 2025 | 3 |

| Cause of death by year | Number of Deaths |
|--|-------------------------|
| 2010 | |
| Hanging | 1 |
| 2011 | |
| End-stage liver cirrhosis | 1 |
| Lung cancer | 1 |
| Congestive heart failure | 1 |
| Ischaemic heart disease | 1 |
| 2012 | |
| Heart attack | 1 |
| Hanging | 2 |
| Overdose of non-prescribed medication | 1 |
| 2013 | |
| Hanging | 2 |
| 2014 | |
| Cancer | 1 |
| Lung cancer | 1 |
| Bronchopneumonia | 1 |
| Pulmonary thromboembolism and deep vein thrombosis | 1 |
| Methadone toxicity | 1 |
| Hanging | 4 |
| 2015 | |
| Bronchopneumonia and cancer | 1 |
| Heart disease | 1 |
| Liver disease | 1 |
| 2016 | |
| Bronchopneumonia caused by lung cancer | 1 |
| Heart attack | 1 |
| Heart disease | 1 |
| liver and pancreas disease | 1 |
| Lung cancer | 1 |
| Pneumonia | 1 |

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|--|---|
| Self-inflicted wound to abdomen | 1 |
| 2017 | |
| Blood infection due to blood and bone cancer | 1 |
| Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease | 1 |
| Heart attack | 2 |
| Oesophageal cancer | 1 |
| Stomach cancer | 1 |
| Urosepsis and peripheral vascular disease | 1 |
| Gabapentin and methadone poisoning | 1 |
| Lack of oxygen to the brain, most likely caused by co-codamol toxicity | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |
| 2018 | |
| Bronchopneumonia | 1 |
| Heart failure | 1 |
| Ischaemic heart disease and an overdose of prescribed medication | 1 |
| 2019 | |
| Bronchopneumonia caused by ampullary cancer | 1 |
| Oesophageal cancer | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |
| 2020 | |
| Aspiration pneumonia and pneumonitis due to gastric cancer | 1 |
| Cardiomyopathy (a disease of the heart muscle) and fatty liver disease | 1 |
| Heart failure | 1 |
| Pneumonia as a result of the spread of cancer | 1 |
| Pulmonary embolism (a blood clot), caused by deep vein thrombosis | 1 |
| Aspiration of vomit after taking illicit drugs | 1 |
| 2021 | |
| Haemopericardium caused by a heart attack | 1 |
| Bleed on brain | 1 |
| Haemorrhage as a result of a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm, systemic hypertension and atherosclerosis | 1 |
| Heart disease | 1 |
| Sepsis caused by bowel cancer | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Morphine toxicity | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |
| Hypoxic ischaemic brain injury, due to cardio-respiratory arrest | 1 |
| 2022 | |
| COVID-19 pneumonia | 1 |
| Lung infection | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |
| 2023 | |
| Multiple organ failure caused by biliary sepsis | 1 |
| Respiratory failure caused by bronchopneumonia | 1 |
| Cocaine toxicity | 1 |
| Multi-organ failure caused by cocaine toxicity | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |
| 2024 | |
| Asphyxiation | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |
| 2025 | |
| Acute Ischaemia of Bowel, Liver and Spleen | 1 |
| Seizure | 1 |
| Hanging | 1 |

You asked us:

To provide a breakdown of the causes of death for prisoners at HMP Elmley from 2010 to 2025.

Our response:

We have searched our records and we hold the requested information. A copy of the information that you requested is attached with our response.

You asked us:

To provide a national average for prison deaths to allow the data to be comparative.

Our response:

Following a search of our records, the information you requested is not held by us.

You have the right to appeal against our response if you think it is incorrect. Details can be found in the 'How to Appeal' section attached at the end of this letter.

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The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carries out **independent investigations** into complaints and deaths in custody. The detailed role and responsibilities of the PPO are set out in our office's Terms of Reference. The PPO has three main duties:

- to **investigate complaints** made by prisoners, young people in detention (prisons and secure training centres), offenders under probation supervision and individuals detained under immigration powers (detained individuals)
- to **investigate deaths** of prisoners, young people in detention, approved premises' residents and detained individuals due to any cause, including any apparent suicides and natural causes
- to **investigate deaths of recently released prisoners** that occur within 14 days of release from prison (except homicide)

The purpose of these investigations is **to understand what happened, to correct injustices and to identify learning** for the organisations whose actions we oversee so that the PPO makes a significant contribution to safer, fairer custody and offender supervision.

We may use or share your data only to the necessary extent when conducting our independent investigations in the exercise of our official authority. We will share your data with third parties (e.g. the prison) in order to make sure the information is accurate; to prevent or detect failings; and to identify lessons learnt. We may sometimes need to share your data with third parties if required by law. We only keep your personal data for as long as it is needed, as set out in our data retention policy. If you need any further information about how your data is used, please contact us.

How to Appeal

Internal Review

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to an internal review. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone who was not responsible for the original case, and they will make a decision as to whether we answered your request correctly.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's office **within two months of the date of this letter**, at the following address:

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
Third Floor
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU
E-mail: Mail@ppo.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner is an independent regulator who has the power to direct us to respond to your request differently, if he considers that we have handled it incorrectly.

You can contact the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Internet address: <https://ico.org.uk/>