

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# **Independent investigation into the death of Ms Amanda Fitzpatrick, a resident of Edith Rigby House Approved Premises, on 19 March 2025**

**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.
3. Ms Amanda Fitzpatrick died from aspiration of gastric content (fluids or solid particles go into the windpipe or lungs) caused by dihydrocodeine (a strong opioid painkiller) overdose on 19 March 2025, while a resident of Edith Rigby House Approved Premises (AP). She was 39 years old. We offer our condolences to those who knew her.
4. Ms Fitzpatrick had a history of substance (crack cocaine, heroin, cocaine, cannabis, pregabalin) and alcohol use. She worked with Inclusion at HMP New Hall to address her substance use, and remained drug free following her recall to prison in December 2023. Following her release to Edith Rigby House, there is no evidence that Ms Fitzpatrick used illicit drugs or consumed alcohol in the time before her death.
5. On 18 March, Ms Fitzpatrick left Edith Rigby House and did not return for her curfew. AP staff tried to contact her by telephone, but did not consider contacting the electronic tagging system providers to establish Ms Fitzpatrick's location.

## The Investigation Process

6. HMPPS notified us of Ms Fitzpatrick's death on 26 March 2025.
7. The PPO investigator issued notices to staff and residents at Edith Rugby House Approved Premises informing them of the investigation and asking anyone with relevant information to contact her. No one responded. She obtained copies of relevant extracts from Ms Fitzpatrick's prison, probation and AP records.
8. We informed HM Coroner for Greater Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire and Grimsby of the investigation. He gave us the results of the post-mortem examination. We have sent the Coroner a copy of this report.
9. The Ombudsman's office contacted Ms Fitzpatrick's father to explain the investigation and to ask if he had any matters he wanted us to consider. He did not respond.
10. We shared the initial report with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS pointed out some factual inaccuracies and we have amended this report accordingly.

## Background Information

### Edith Rigby House Approved Premises

11. Edith Rigby House Approved Premises opened in March 2012. It houses up to 14 women in single rooms. It is a psychologically informed planned environment (PIPE) and an enabling environment. This involves working with women released from prison on licence with personality disorders/personality difficulties. The PIPE model is heavily focused on a relational approach, and as such there is an expectation of engaging/working even more closely with staff and residents.
12. Residents are responsible for their own healthcare, including registering with a GP. ERH staff sign the residents up with the GP, they have a good relationship with the GP practice and work together with regular meetings etc. Residents' licence conditions can include a specific curfew, in addition to which Edith Rigby House requires that residents must be present between 11.00pm and 6.00am. Residents are required to sign in and out when they leave the premises.
13. Ms Fitzpatrick was the first resident of Edith Rigby House to die since 2012.

### Probation Service

14. 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.

## Key Events

15. On 26 July 2007, Ms Amanda Fitzpatrick was charged with murder and remanded to HMP New Hall. On 1 August, Ms Fitzpatrick was convicted and sentenced to a mandatory life sentence with a minimum term of 15 years. Her sentence was later reduced on appeal to 13 years and 4 months.
16. On 8 August 2022, Ms Fitzpatrick was released from prison on licence.
17. On 28 December 2023, Ms Fitzpatrick was recalled to HMP New Hall for breach of licence conditions. At the reception health screening she engaged well with healthcare staff and stated she had no thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Ms Fitzpatrick told staff she had been using cocaine every other day and hoped while in New Hall to become drug free. She was referred for substance use support.
18. Ms Fitzpatrick's community offender manager (COM) told us that she met Ms Fitzpatrick and her prison offender manager (POM) regularly, both in person and via video call during the 14 months she was in prison.
19. On 19 November 2024, Ms Fitzpatrick completed a 16-week Inclusion programme (intense drug treatment support).
20. On 2 January 2025, Ms Fitzpatrick completed her agreed care plan objectives and therefore finished her drug treatment in prison. Later in the month, Ms Fitzpatrick told prison staff that she was okay and felt fine having completed her drug treatment. There is no record that Ms Fitzpatrick used illicit drugs following her recall to prison.
21. In January and February, Ms Fitzgerald completed GOALS (a prison programme run by the gym encouraging healthy living and fitness) and engaged well with the programme and other participants. She also completed a family resettlement appointment and spoke positively about her release.
22. On 31 January, Ms Fitzpatrick's POM confirmed her release to Edith Rigby House Approved Premises, which was set for 10 March.
23. On 28 February, prison staff spoke with Jobcentre staff in Ms Fitzpatrick's home area and arranged for her to attend a drop-in session following release to claim Universal Credit.

## Edith Rigby House Approved Premises

24. On 3 March, Ms Fitzpatrick was released from prison on licence to Edith Rigby House AP. The COM said that a benefit of this AP was that it was close to where Ms Fitzpatrick's family lived, who were a significant source of support for her. Ms Fitzpatrick said she was happy to be at the AP and staff had made her feel welcome. As part of her licence conditions, Ms Fitzpatrick was fitted with an electronic monitoring tag. The COM was on leave when Ms Fitzgerald was released.

25. On 4 March, Ms Fitzpatrick attended two induction sessions at Edith Rigby House. She told staff she no longer had drink and drug issues and was not currently engaging with substance use support.
26. On 4 March also, the COM returned from leave and completed an initial appointment with Ms Fitzpatrick via a video call. They discussed whether Ms Fitzpatrick required substance use support services in the community. Ms Fitzpatrick had worked with Inclusion at New Hall to address her drug use, and had remained substance free since, so felt that she did not require additional support at this stage. The COM said that Ms Fitzpatrick was also concerned that attending substance use support would place her in contact with other substance users, therefore increasing her risk of relapse. Ms Fitzpatrick appeared highly motivated to maintain abstinence from substances and AP staff also supported this assessment of her.
27. Ms Fitzpatrick was to engage in the therapeutic elements of the AP to assist with her rehabilitation. She had also been referred to the IIRMS (Intensive Intervention and Risk Management Service) and Bridging the Gap (aims to break the cycle of offending, homelessness and addiction by offering trained volunteer mentors to people at risk of offending, including people who are homeless or addicted). While the work they would be able to undertake with Ms Fitzpatrick during her stay at the AP was limited to online contact, it was anticipated that Bridging the Gap intervention, or an alternative IIRMS provider, would commence once Ms Fitzpatrick had left the AP. Ms Fitzpatrick's AP key worker and COM had discussed supporting Ms Fitzpatrick to develop her personal training qualifications, which would have benefitted Ms Fitzpatrick in terms of her emotional wellbeing and self-esteem, and future employment prospects.
28. On 6 March, Ms Fitzpatrick attended another AP induction. AP staff noted that she was not engaged with substance use services as she was not actively using drugs and said that she had no need for drink or drugs. Ms Fitzpatrick said she had made an online Universal Credit claim with a follow up appointment scheduled for 11.00am on the same day. Ms Fitzpatrick also said that she had registered with a GP.
29. Ms Fitzpatrick told AP staff that she had not used drugs since she was recalled to prison. Ms Fitzpatrick said that she understood the transition back into the community could present more opportunity to access illicit substances. AP staff noted that they would complete three additional welfare checks overnight and, as a precaution, issued Ms Fitzpatrick with naloxone (to reverse the effects of opiate overdose).
30. Ms Fitzpatrick provided a drug test which was negative and stated she had not had cravings. She said that she was not currently engaging with Inspire (local drug and alcohol service), but said she would let AP staff know if this changed. Staff said that Ms Fitzpatrick was coping well and attended PIPE meetings and engaged with staff and other residents.
31. Ms Fitzpatrick's father told the Coroner that, on 16 March, Ms Fitzpatrick had said that she wanted to be with her son (who was deceased). However, she did not make any threats to take her own life or imply any plans to do so and said she had recently started going to the gym.

32. On 18 March, Ms Fitzpatrick left the AP and said that she was visiting Scunthorpe to collect some belongings. She also said that she would visit her family if she had time.
33. Ms Fitzpatrick did not return by her 7.00pm curfew. The AP manager said she attempted to call Ms Fitzpatrick as she was surprised given the progress she had made with them. She asked her team to send Ms Fitzpatrick a text to say that they were worried about her as she was not back for curfew, and for her to call them back. The AP manager made further unsuccessful attempts to call Ms Fitzpatrick and advised her team to allow her until 10.00pm in case of travel issues. However, she learnt the next day that Ms Fitzpatrick had not returned and had been recalled.

### **Circumstances of Ms Fitzpatrick's death**

34. On 19 March, Ms Fitzpatrick visited her father's address. He left the house at around 1.15pm. Ms Fitzpatrick's brother returned home from work at 4.00pm and found her asleep in the bedroom. At around 5.30pm, he entered the bedroom and saw Ms Fitzpatrick had fallen onto the floor. She had vomited profusely while laid on her back. Ambulance staff attended and commenced CPR. They transferred her to hospital where a doctor later pronounced life extinct.

### **Post-mortem report**

35. The post-mortem report concluded that Ms Fitzpatrick died from aspiration of gastric content (fluids or solid particles go into the windpipe or lungs) caused by dihydrocodeine (a potent opioid painkiller) overdose.

## Findings

### Substance use support

36. Ms Fitzpatrick worked consistently with Inclusion at New Hall to address her substance use and she seemingly remained drug free during her time in prison following recall. AP staff said she had a good understanding of the triggers that threatened her recovery. There is no indication that Ms Fitzpatrick used illicit drugs or alcohol during her time at Edith Rigby House, or was suspected of doing so, before her death. AP staff said that she appeared to be progressing well. We are satisfied that prison and probation staff took appropriate action to support Ms Fitzpatrick to remain drug free.

### Events of 18-19 March 2025

37. On 18 March, Ms Fitzpatrick did not return from her visit to Scunthorpe. Although AP staff tried to contact her by phone several times, nobody considered that Ms Fitzpatrick was wearing an electronic tag as part of her licence conditions. Staff did not discuss contacting the electronic monitoring service provider (EMS) to ask if they could locate her.
38. In a recent investigation following the death of a resident of a different AP, we asked EMS if such a request was possible. The EMS Service Manager confirmed that data can be requested to check someone's location or trail data. They said an external agency request would need to be submitted with clear justification for data to be released, which could be quickly accessed depending on the urgency of the request.
39. Our report into this death recommended that the Probation Service and EMS should explore the feasibility of developing an AP protocol to quickly identify the whereabouts of a resident who does not report for curfew. The recommendation was accepted and the Probation Service said that work was underway to establish a direct escalation route to EMS.

## Inquest

40. The inquest into Ms Fitzpatrick's death concluded on 23 December 2025. The coroner confirmed that Ms Fitzpatrick's death was drug related.

**Adrian Usher**  
**Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

**March 2026**

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