

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Andrew Savage, a prisoner at HMP Channings Wood, on 24 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. On 20 March 1986, Mr Andrew Savage was sentenced to life in prison for sexual offences. He died in a hospice of metastatic adenocarcinoma of the bowel (advanced bowel cancer that has spread to other parts of the body) on 24 February 2026, while a prisoner at HMP Channings Wood. He was 64 years old. We offer our condolences to those who knew Mr Savage.
4. No next of kin were identified following Mr Savage's death.
5. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Savage's clinical care at HMP Channings Wood. The clinical reviewer's report is attached as Annex 1.
6. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Savage received at Channings Wood was of a reasonable standard and was equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. She found that following Mr Savage's transfer to hospital, and latterly to a hospice, good communication was maintained between healthcare staff at Channings Wood and the hospital and hospice staff. The clinical reviewer made one recommendation not related to Mr Savage's death that the Head of Healthcare will wish to address.
7. The PPO investigator investigated the non-clinical issues relating to Mr Savage's care. We did not find any non-clinical issues that warranted a recommendation but bring the Governor's attention to the below.
8. We shared the initial report with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and Oxleas NHS Foundation trust. They did not find any factual inaccuracies.

Governor to note

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

9. The Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) Policy Framework sets out that a Special Purpose Licence (SPL) can be issued in response to a specific event or circumstances that would not usually require release. It says that an SPL may be granted for prisoners to attend medical outpatient appointments, or inpatient requirements.
10. The policy framework says that if a prisoner is subject to a restricted ROTL (which sets limitations on ROTL due to sentence, offence, or risk) they are still eligible for a SPL for medical treatment, providing:

- the prisoner needs essential medical treatment in the community; and
 - a senior manager chaired ROTL board has sat; and
 - the Governor or deputy governor has agreed SPL is appropriate in all the circumstances.
11. On 19 February 2026, Mr Savage was admitted to a hospice, where he remained until he died on 24 February. While prison staff appropriately started to complete an application for early release on compassionate grounds (ERCG - the means by which prisoners who are seriously ill, usually with a life expectancy of less than three months, can be permanently released from custody before their sentence has expired), no consideration was given for ROTL. (Mr Savage died before the application for ERCG was completed.)
 12. Prison staff told the investigator that there was no time to consider other measures such as ROTL, and so Mr Savage's case was proceeded directly to consideration under ERCG. Staff added that given the nature of Mr Savage's conviction, and the level of risk he posed towards children, approval for ROTL (which would have meant Mr Savage would not be under escort by prison staff at the hospice) would not have been granted.
 13. However, in applying for ERCG, both prison and probation staff recorded that given Mr Savage was bed bound and unable to move without assistance, the level of risk he posed to others was sufficiently reduced to support early release. In addition, prison staff told us that Mr Savage was in a single room at the hospice and had no contact with other residents.
 14. Given that prison and probation staff were in support of early release, it would have been appropriate for them to consider ROTL for Mr Savage at the same time that they completed his application for early release on compassionate grounds. In many instances ROTL, can be expedited sooner than ERCG and therefore should have been considered.
 15. In March 2026, our report into the death of a prisoner at Channings Wood recommended that the Governor should ensure that decisions for ROTL are based on the prisoner's individual circumstances. The prison accepted this recommendation and identified that the Head of Safety has now created a multidisciplinary team meeting agenda item to consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether ROTL is applicable for prisoners with a terminal diagnosis. We do not therefore make a further recommendation.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

June 2026

Inquest

16. At an inquest held on 28 July 2026, the coroner concluded that Mr Savage died from natural causes.



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