

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Stephen Wade a prisoner at HMP Forest Bank on 26 April 2019

A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

Our Vision

To carry out independent investigations to make custody and community supervision safer and fairer.

Our Values

We are:

Impartial: *we do not take sides*

Respectful: *we are considerate and courteous*

Inclusive: *we value diversity*

Dedicated: *we are determined and focused*

Fair: *we are honest and act with integrity*



© Crown copyright 2020

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

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. We carry out investigations to understand what happened and identify how the organisations whose actions we oversee can improve their work in the future.
3. Mr Stephen Wade, who was 60 years old, died from lung cancer on 26 April 2019 at HMP Forest Bank. We offer our condolences to Mr Wade's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Wade received at Forest Bank was of a good standard and equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. She made no recommendations.
5. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.

Investigation Process

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Wade's clinical care at HMP Forest Bank. The clinical review is attached to this report as Annex 1.
7. The PPO has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Wade's care, including his location, the security arrangements for his hospital escorts, liaison with his family and whether compassionate release was considered.
8. One of the PPO's family liaison officers wrote to Mr Wade's partner to explain the investigation. She did not respond to our letter.
9. We shared our initial report with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). They did not identify any factual inaccuracies.

Previous deaths at Forest Bank

10. Mr Wade was the seventh prisoner to die at Forest Bank since April 2017. Of the previous deaths, three were from natural causes, one was self-inflicted and two are awaiting classification. There are no similarities between our findings in the investigation of Mr Wade's death and the other deaths.

Key Events

11. Mr Stephen Wade arrived at HMP Forest Bank on 31 August 2018, after being sentenced to nine years and six months in prison for sexual offences.
12. Mr Wade had been diagnosed with lung cancer in June 2017. He completed a course of chemotherapy before entering prison.
13. On 21 September 2018, Mr Wade was escorted to hospital to receive the results of a scan he had undergone around three weeks before he was sent to prison. The scan showed that the cancer had spread within his lungs. He was told that his condition was terminal, that he was too unwell for further treatment and that he had less than six months to live.
14. Mr Wade said he wanted to die in a local hospice. The prison contacted Bolton Hospice a few days after Mr Wade's terminal diagnosis but were told that he would only be accepted when he was in the last stages of his life.
15. Mr Wade's condition deteriorated in March 2019 and the prison started an application for early release on compassionate grounds. The application was submitted on 17 April, but was not considered before Mr Wade died.
16. On 24 April, a prison GP sent Mr Wade to hospital after his blood oxygen level was found to be very low. The GP suspected a blood clot on the lung. After being admitted to hospital, Mr Wade was diagnosed with pneumonia (a serious lung infection). Mr Wade did not recover and died in hospital at 6.55pm on 26 April.
17. The coroner gave Mr Wade's cause of death as pneumonia caused by lung cancer.

Simon Stanley
Assistant Ombudsman

November 2019