

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# Independent investigation into the death of Mr William Reddican a prisoner at HMP Dovegate on 18 September 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*



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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. 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 William Reddican, who was 66 years old, died of lung cancer on 18 September 2019 at HMP Dovegate. We offer our condolences to Mr Reddican's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care that Mr Reddican received was equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. The clinical reviewer made one recommendation linked to Mr Reddican's death.
5. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern.

## Recommendations

- **The Head of Healthcare should consider how syringe driver set up and care can be delivered on site for end of life care if required.**

## Investigation Process

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Reddican's clinical care at HMP Dovegate. The clinical review is attached to this report as Annex 1.
7. The PPO has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Reddican'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 our family liaison officers wrote to Mr Reddican's next of kin, his sister, to explain the investigation. She did not respond to our letter.
9. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies and their action plan is annexed to this report.

## Previous deaths at Dovegate

10. Mr Reddican was the 11th prisoner to die at Dovegate since September 2017. Of the previous deaths, three were from natural causes, three were self-inflicted, three were drug-related and one is awaiting classification. There are no similarities between our findings in the investigation into Mr Reddican's death and the other deaths.

## **Key Events**

11. On 26 May 1982, Mr William Reddican was sentenced to life imprisonment with a tariff of 20 years. He was moved to HMP Dovegate on 3 March 2014.
12. In September 2015, Mr Reddican was diagnosed with diverticular disease (a bowel condition). He initially declined to attend follow-up scans to exclude other issues, but on 22 January 2016, he was diagnosed with 'probable' lung cancer (having agreed to a CT scan and a bronchoscopy).
13. After surgery in April, to remove part of his lung, Mr Reddican was given the all clear. In July 2018, Mr Reddican reported that he was coughing up blood and short of breath. He was taken to hospital and on 9 August, after further investigation, he was diagnosed with non-curable, metastatic cancer (cancer that has spread within the body). Mr Reddican was in contact with his family and the prison arranged visits.
14. Mr Reddican undertook a course of palliative chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and he was cared for in the inpatient unit at Dovegate from 15 August 2019 until his death.
15. Prison staff had started the application process for Mr Reddican's early release on compassionate grounds a year before his death. However, towards the end of his life, Mr Reddican decided he would prefer to die at Dovegate rather than a hospice and the process was discontinued.
16. Mr Reddican died at Dovegate on 18 September 2019. A prison GP pronounced his death at 11.26am.
17. There was no post-mortem examination as the coroner accepted the cause of death as lung cancer.

**Louise Richards**  
**Assistant Ombudsman**

**March 2020**