

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# Independent investigation into the death of Mr Barrie Jones, a prisoner at HMP Holme House, on 24 November 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. Our office carries out investigations to understand what happened and identify how the organisations whose actions we oversee can improve their work in the future.
3. Mr Barrie Jones, who was 52 years old, died of lung cancer on 24 November 2019 at Teesside Hospice, while a prisoner at HMP Holme House. We offer our condolences to Mr Jones' family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care that Mr Jones received after his cancer diagnosis was of a standard equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. She has not made any recommendations about clinical issues.
5. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern.

## Investigation Process

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Jones' clinical care at HMP Holme House. The clinical review is attached to this report as Annex 1.
7. The PPO investigator has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Jones' 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 Jones' next of kin, his parents, to explain the investigation. They 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.

## Previous deaths at HMP Holme House

10. Mr Jones was the 14<sup>th</sup> prisoner to die at Holme House since November 2017. Of the previous deaths, ten were from natural causes, two were self-inflicted deaths and one was a drug-related death. There are no similarities between our findings in the investigation of Mr Jones' death and the other deaths.

## **Key Events**

11. Mr Barrie Jones was serving time in prison for sexual offences and spent most of his sentence at HMP Northumberland. He was diagnosed with lung cancer in October 2018 and had chemotherapy until June 2019. When his condition deteriorated and it was evident he was nearing the end of his life, he was transferred to the palliative care suite at HMP Holme House on 28 October.
12. Staff at Holme House began the process to apply for early release on compassionate grounds on Mr Jones' behalf. However, because he had limited contact with family members and did not have a suitable release address, the application process was stopped.
13. Mr Jones told staff that he wanted to die in a hospice. He was transferred to Teesside Hospice on 20 November.
14. On 24 November, it was confirmed that Mr Jones had died.
15. The Coroner gave Mr Jones' cause of death as metastatic squamous cell lung cancer (lung cancer that had spread).

**Sue McAllister CB  
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

**March 2020**