

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Alec Walker a prisoner at HMP Manchester on 3 July 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 Alec Walker, who was 56 years old, died of cancer on 3 July 2019 at Bolton Hospice, while a prisoner at HMP Manchester. We offer our condolences to Mr Walker's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Walker received 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 Walker's clinical care at HMP Manchester. The clinical review is attached to this report as Annex 1.
7. The PPO has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Walker'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 Walker's next of kin, to explain the investigation. She did not respond.
9. The initial report was shared with the Prison Service. The Prison Service did not find any factual inaccuracies.

Previous deaths at Manchester

10. Mr Walker was the 14th prisoner to die at HMP Manchester since July 2017. Of the previous deaths, five were from natural causes, six were self-inflicted, one was drug related and one awaits classification.

Key Events

11. In May 2014, Mr Alec Walker was sentenced to 12 years in prison for sexual offences. He was moved to HMP Isle of Wight on 19 September 2018.
12. In May 2019, Mr Walker was diagnosed with cancer in his lung and liver. He was told that his cancer was terminal and he only had weeks or months to live. Treatment was not considered appropriate as the cancer was too advanced, so he received palliative care instead.
13. On 29 May, a Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) order was discussed with Mr Walker who agreed that if he stopped breathing he did not want to be resuscitated.
14. On 31 May, the prison started the process for early release on compassionate grounds. Unfortunately, Mr Walker died before this process had been completed.
15. On 26 June, Mr Walker was transferred to HMP Manchester so that he could be nearer to his family and have regular visits.
16. Mr Walker's health rapidly deteriorated. On 2 July, he was transferred to Bolton Hospice, where he died the following day.
17. There was no post-mortem examination as the coroner accepted the cause of death provided by the hospice doctor. The doctor gave the cause of death as metastatic adenocarcinoma (cancer that had spread throughout the body).

Louise Richards
Assistant Ombudsman

September 2019