

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# Independent investigation into the death of Mr Roy Stott, a prisoner at HMP Stafford, on 3 March 2020

**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 Roy Stott died in hospital on 3 March 2020 of respiratory failure caused by hospital acquired pneumonia, after surgery for bowel cancer, while a prisoner at HMP Stafford. Mr Stott was 78 years old. I offer my condolences to Mr Stott's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Stott received at Stafford was equivalent to that he could have expected to receive in the community. She made no recommendations.
5. We found no non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.

## The Investigation Process

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Stott's clinical care at Stafford.
7. The PPO investigator has investigated non-clinical issues, including Mr Stott's location, the security arrangements for his hospital escorts, liaison with his family and whether compassionate release was considered.
8. The PPO's family liaison officer wrote to Mr Stott's next of kin, to explain the investigation. She did not have any specific questions for us to consider.
9. Mr Stott's family received a copy of the initial report. They did not raise any issues, or comment on the factual accuracy of the report.
10. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.

### Previous deaths at HMP Stafford

11. Mr Stott was the sixth prisoner to die at Stafford since March 2018. All the previous deaths were from natural causes. There are no similarities between our findings in the investigation into Mr Stott's death and our investigation findings for the previous deaths. There have been two deaths since Mr Stott's, both apparently from natural causes, which are still under investigation.

## Key Events

12. Mr Roy Stott was serving time in prison for sexual offences and had been at HMP Stafford since 22 July 2016.
13. In September 2018, Mr Stott complained of rectal bleeding, black tarry stools and problems with a previous colonic polyp (a small growth in his bowel). Healthcare staff referred him to a colorectal doctor at a hospital for tests. Prison staff took him to hospital, unrestrained and escorted by two officers.
14. After extensive tests, Mr Stott was diagnosed with colon cancer on 19 January 2020. He had surgery on 5 February to remove the diseased part of his bowel and re-join the two healthy parts of the bowel back together (a hemicolectomy). However, he deteriorated after surgery and died in hospital on 3 March.
15. On 7 November 2019, the Parole Board began the process for considering a parole application for Mr Stott's release as he was eligible for consideration at the half way point of his sentence. His parole hearing was scheduled for April 2020.

### Cause of death

16. The Coroner concluded Mr Stott died of respiratory failure caused by hospital acquired pneumonia, after a hemicolectomy for bowel cancer. He also had frailty and old age which did not cause but contributed to his death. No post-mortem examination was carried out.

**Sue McAllister, CBE**

**Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

**September 2020**

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## **Annex 1 Clinical Review into the death of Mr Roy Stott**