

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Michael Morrissey a prisoner at HMP Liverpool on 30 July 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 Michael Morrissey died of lung cancer at St Joseph's Hospice on 30 July 2020, while a prisoner at HMP Liverpool. He was 68 years old. I offer my condolences to Mr Morrissey's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Morrissey received at Liverpool 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 Morrissey's clinical care at Liverpool.
7. The PPO investigator has investigated non-clinical issues, including Mr Morrissey's 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 Morrissey's next of kin, a friend, to explain the investigation. He 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 Liverpool

10. Mr Morrissey was the 12th prisoner to die at Liverpool since July 2018. Of the previous deaths, six were from natural causes, four were self-inflicted and one is awaiting classification.

Key Events

11. On 23 January 2020, Mr Michael Morrissey was sentenced to seven years in prison for sexual offences. He was taken to HMP Liverpool where he had been on remand.
12. In September 2019, after being diagnosed with lung cancer, Mr Morrissey had an operation to remove part of his lung. He began a course of chemotherapy treatment that continued after his admission to Liverpool. Appropriate care plans were implemented, and he had further tests and blood transfusions. In May 2020, Mr Morrissey began radiotherapy treatment but on 27 May, following the rapid progression of his cancer, his oncologist gave him a life expectancy of less than six months. Healthcare staff began end of life care planning with specialist palliative care support.
13. Mr Morrissey was located on the healthcare wing at Liverpool until 28 May, when he was moved to the palliative care suite.
14. On 1 June, an application for Mr Morrissey's early release on compassionate grounds was submitted to the Governor. The Governor did not support the application due to the high risk of Mr Morrissey reoffending.
15. On 17 June, Mr Morrissey was admitted to St Joseph's Hospice. He died there on 30 June. There was no post-mortem examination as the Coroner accepted the cause of death provided by a doctor. The doctor gave the cause of death as lung cancer.

Louise Richards
Assistant Ombudsman

November 2020

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