

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Stephen Horrill, a prisoner at HMP Exeter, on 19 June 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 Stephen Horrill, who was 63 years old, died of lung cancer on 19 June 2020 at HMP Exeter. We offer our condolences to Mr Horrill's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Horrill received was good and equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. The clinical reviewer commented on some good practice by healthcare staff and made two recommendations not linked directly to Mr Horrill's death.
5. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern.

Investigation Process

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer, to review Mr Horrill's clinical care at HMP Exeter.
7. The PPO has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Horrill's care, including his location, the security arrangements for his hospital escorts, liaison with his family and whether compassionate release was considered.
8. Mr Horrill's family were informed the initial report was available but, did not wish to receive a copy or make any comment.
9. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.

Previous deaths at Exeter

10. Mr Horrill was the 13th prisoner to die at Exeter since June 2018, and the seventh foreseeable death due to natural causes in that time. One more prisoner has died from natural causes at the prison since Mr Horrill and there has been another apparently self-inflicted death.

Key Events

11. On 3 July 1999, Mr Stephen Horrill was given an indeterminate sentence for murder. Mr Horrill had several health conditions, including heart disease, irritable bowel disease and pressure ulcers. In April, Mr Horrill was admitted to hospital from HMP Dartmoor after he collapsed in his cell. On 9 May, he was diagnosed with lung cancer, which had spread to his brain. He was eventually given a three-month prognosis.
12. Mr Horrill was discharged from hospital to the palliative wing at HMP Exeter for end of life care on 3 June. He was not restrained for any hospital visits in the latter stages of his illness.
13. HMP Dartmoor applied for Mr Horrill's early release on compassionate grounds while Mr Horrill was still in hospital on 1 June. However, due to the pandemic, suitable accommodation was not found before Mr Horrill died.
14. The prison maintained good communication with Mr Horrill's family, following the restrictions in place due to the current pandemic.
15. On a number of occasions, healthcare staff discussed putting a Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) in place as Mr Horrill was receiving end of life care. However, even the day before his death, Mr Horrill told staff that he wanted to be resuscitated. Staff respected his wishes.
16. Mr Horrill died at HMP Exeter on 19 June at 9.36am, after healthcare staff attempted to resuscitate him.
17. The post-mortem examination confirmed that Mr Horrill died from lung cancer, with heart disease listed as a contributory factor.

Karen Johnson
Assistant Ombudsman

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