

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# Independent investigation into the death of Mr Carl Haddock, a prisoner at HMP Altcourse, on 21 January 2021

**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 Carl Haddock died in a hospice from cancer on 21 January 2021, while a prisoner at HMP Altcourse. He was 57 years old. We offer our condolences to Mr Haddock's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that overall, the clinical care Mr Haddock received at Altcourse was equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. She made one recommendation but as it did not relate to Mr Haddock's death, we have not repeated it in this report.
5. We found no non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.
6. This version of my report, published on my website, has been amended to remove the names of staff and prisoners involved in my investigation.

## Investigation Process

7. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer, to review Mr Haddock's clinical care at HMP Altcourse.
8. The PPO investigator has investigated the non-clinical issues in Mr Haddock's care, including his location, the security arrangements for his hospital escorts, liaison with his family and whether compassionate release was considered.
9. The PPO's family liaison officer wrote to Mr Haddock's next of kin, his mother, to explain the investigation. She had no questions.
10. The initial report was shared with Mr Haddock's mother. She did not make any comments.
11. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.

## Previous deaths at Altcourse

12. Mr Haddock was the 12th prisoner to die at Altcourse since January 2019. One of the previous deaths was self-inflicted, one was from an unascertained cause, and all the others were from natural causes.

## Key Events

13. On 27 June 2018, Mr Carl Haddock was recalled to custody for breaching his licence for an earlier sentence and sent to HMP Altcourse. On 22 August, he was sentenced to a further 10 years and five months imprisonment for burglary and robbery.
14. Mr Haddock was not receiving treatment for any significant medical conditions on arrival at Altcourse and he was only an occasional user of the healthcare services until August 2020.
15. On 24 August, he asked to see a doctor as he said he had sore kidneys and had blood in his urine in the mornings. Tests were carried out the next day for a suspected urinary tract infection (UTI) but were negative.
16. At the beginning of October, Mr Haddock visited a healthcare clinic and said that he was experiencing pain in his kidneys and liver and after a nurse consulted with a doctor about this, further tests were undertaken. On 9 October, after being seen by a prison GP, Mr Haddock was sent to hospital for further investigation of his abdominal pain.
17. He was kept in hospital for tests and he was thought to possibly have gallstones. However, a scan and biopsy (a tissue sample taken from the body for examination and to check for abnormalities) showed he had bowel and liver cancer.
18. Mr Haddock returned to prison on 30 October. He had a high temperature and a cough during the night, and following a test, was discovered the next day to have caught COVID-19.
19. Mr Haddock's health profile before his cancer diagnosis did not indicate he was someone who should be shielding to protect him from catching COVID-19. Following his return from hospital he was protectively isolated, but unfortunately he had already caught the virus. Although it remains unknown, the likelihood is that Mr Haddock contracted COVID-19 in hospital. The clinical reviewer was satisfied that Altcourse followed COVID-19 protocols.
20. On 18 November, Mr Haddock went to hospital to discuss his treatment, but was told that his cancer was too far advanced to be cured. Palliative chemotherapy (treatment aimed at relieving symptoms and/ or prolonging life when a cure is not possible) was suggested. However, Mr Haddock's health deteriorated quickly and on 3 December, the hospital told him that he was not well enough to undergo palliative chemotherapy. Early release from prison on compassionate grounds had been discussed with Mr Haddock, who had said that he would like to be released into the care of his mother. However, with the rapid decline in his health this was no longer a realistic option and not pursued any further.
21. From this point, Mr Haddock's preference was to go to a hospice. Unfortunately, he returned a positive result from a COVID-19 test on 4 December, which ruled him out of going to his chosen hospice. However, an interim placement at a different hospice was arranged and he went there on 6 December. On 22 December, Mr Haddock tested negative for COVID-19 and was able to transfer to the hospice of his original choice. He remained there until he died on 21 January 2021.

22. There was no post-mortem examination as the coroner accepted the cause of death provided by the hospice, and recorded that Mr Haddock had died from liver metastases (cancer of the liver which has spread from another part of the body), caused by colorectal cancer (cancer of the bowel). Although he caught COVID-19 several weeks before he died, it was not recorded as a factor in his death.

**Louise Richards**  
**Assistant Ombudsman**

**June 2021**