

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# Independent investigation into the death of Mr Ian Wilson, a resident at Trent House Approved Premises, on 9 February 2021

**A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**





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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 Ian Wilson died from COVID-19 pneumonia in hospital on 9 February 2021 while a resident at Trent House Approved Premises. He also had cerebrovascular disease (a reduced blood flow to the brain after a series of strokes) and ischaemic heart disease which contributed to but did not cause his death. He was 62 years old. We offer our condolences to his family and friends.
4. We do not know where Mr Wilson contracted COVID-19 as he was free to leave the approved premises, and we know that he had, for example, been to a local supermarket in the days before he tested positive for COVID-19.
5. We found that the Approved Premises Manager implemented suitable control measures in line with National Probation Service guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Trent House. We make no recommendations.

## The Investigation Process

6. The investigator issued notices to staff and residents at Trent House Approved Premises informing them of the investigation and asking anyone with relevant information to contact him. No one responded.
7. The investigator obtained copies of relevant extracts from Mr Wilson's approved premises records.
8. The investigator interviewed three members of staff by video on 4 June 2021.
9. We informed HM Coroner for Nottinghamshire of the investigation. She told us that she did not consider that there was a duty to report the death to her.
10. The Ombudsman's family liaison office wrote to Mr Wilson's daughter to explain our investigation. She did not respond.
11. We shared the initial report with the National Probation Service. There were no factual inaccuracies.
12. This version of our report, published on our website, has been amended to remove the names of staff and prisoners involved in our investigation.

# Background Information

## Trent House Approved Premises

13. Approved premises (formerly known as probation and bail hostels) mostly accommodate offenders released from prison on licence and those directed there by the courts as a condition of bail. Their purpose is to provide a supportive and structured environment. Residents are responsible for their own healthcare and are expected to register with a GP.
14. Trent House is situated on the outskirts of Nottingham and has 20 single rooms. A key worker is allocated to each resident to discuss their progress and wellbeing. The key worker also ensures that residents adhere to their individual licence conditions and the rules of the approved premises.

## Previous deaths at Trent House

15. The last death at Trent House was in November 2012, when a resident died from natural causes. There were no significant similarities between our findings in the two investigations.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

16. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that affects the lungs and airways. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic.
17. COVID-19 can make anyone seriously ill but some people are at higher risk of severe illness and developing complications from the infection. People at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) include those who have had an organ transplant, have severe lung or kidney disease or have certain types of cancer or other treatment which significantly increases the risk of infection. Examples of those at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) are people over 70, people under 70 with an underlying health condition, such as diabetes, or chronic respiratory, heart, liver or kidney disease, those with a weakened immune system or who are very overweight. (These lists are not exhaustive.)
18. In May 2020, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) published guidance on how approved premises should respond to COVID-19. If a resident showed symptoms of COVID-19, they were expected to be placed in protective isolation for ten days. The guidance, which was updated in February 2021, provided operational recommendations for approved premises managers and staff on preventing and managing outbreaks of COVID-19, including specific advice on social distancing, what to do if a resident or staff member developed symptoms and the use of personal protective equipment.

## Key Events

19. In July 2013, Mr Ian Wilson was sentenced to fourteen years in prison for sex offences. On 18 June 2020, he was released on licence from HMP Littlehey to Trent House Approved Premises. The prison gave him comprehensive information about COVID-19, including about the current Government rules and guidance for those living in the community.
20. Mr Wilson had several health conditions, including hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He had had a number of strokes in 2016.
21. On 18 June, an offender manager completed his induction at Trent House and explained to Mr Wilson the terms of his licence. He told her that he only had partial use of his left arm and that his left leg was weak after a stroke. Mr Wilson was given a fully adapted room, with en suite facilities.
22. On 17 July, Mr Wilson registered with a GP, and from August, he received local authority social care support for his daily care needs. The Approved Premises Manager said that Mr Wilson's GP would have identified if he was at high risk of complications from COVID-19 but that he was not aware that this was the case.
23. On 6, 14 and 25 January 2021, Mr Wilson tested negative for COVID-19.
24. On 31 January, Mr Wilson went to a local supermarket. A residential worker received a telephone call to say that Mr Wilson had had either an asthma or panic attack at the supermarket. Mr Wilson returned to Trent House by taxi and told the Approved Premises Manager that he did not need medical help, that he had had a panic attack and would relax in his room. The following day, he told a probation officer, that he had had a panic attack because there were too many people pushing into him at the supermarket.
25. On 3 February, Mr Wilson had a routine COVID-19 test.
26. On 4 February, Mr Wilson collapsed. Two residential support workers put him in the recovery position in his room. Mr Wilson told them that while he was sitting in the residents' lounge, his vision had become blurred and he felt dizzy and nauseous. He said that he tried to return to his room to lie down but his legs gave way and he collapsed in the doorway to his room. A residential support worker telephoned the NHS helpline and the operator spoke to Mr Wilson. A residential support worker telephoned Mr Wilson's community GP who said that they would inform the emergency duty GP. We do not know if the duty GP spoke to Mr Wilson.
27. On 5 February, Mr Wilson tested positive for COVID-19 (following his test of 3 February). That day, another resident at Trent House tested positive and self-isolated. Mr Wilson told the probation officer that he was unable to move or get out of bed. Because Mr Wilson had tested positive for COVID-19 and had recently collapsed, the probation officer telephoned the NHS helpline. Mr Wilson was taken to hospital by ambulance.

28. On 7 February, Mr Wilson returned to Trent House, where he self-isolated in his room. He told the Approved Premises Manager that he was breathless after walking. The Approved Premises Manager told him that if he needed help, he should telephone the staff on duty at Trent House or pull the emergency cord in his room.
29. At 2.00am on 8 February, a residential support worker, went into Mr Wilson's room because she could hear him coughing. Mr Wilson told her that he was short of breath, had chest pains and would not be able to get up in the morning. A residential support worker telephoned the NHS helpline and told the operator that Mr Wilson had been released from hospital the previous day and that his breathing had deteriorated. Ambulance paramedics attended at 2.30am and found that Mr Wilson had a low blood oxygen saturation level and a high temperature. They took him back to hospital, where he died at 5.30am on 9 February.
30. A consultant anaesthetist established that Mr Wilson had died from COVID-19 pneumonia. He also had cerebrovascular disease and ischaemic heart disease which contributed to but did not cause his death. No post-mortem examination was conducted.

#### **Contact with Mr Wilson's family**

31. After Mr Wilson's death, hospital staff told Mr Wilson's daughter that he had died. The Approved Premises Manager, telephoned Mr Wilson's daughter and offered his condolences. Mr Wilson's funeral took place on 10 March. The National Probation Service (NPS) contributed to its cost in line with national instructions.

#### **Support for residents and staff**

32. The Approved Premises Manager posted notices informing residents and staff of Mr Wilson's death. Residents had one-to-one key worker support sessions, and staff were also offered support.

**Elizabeth Moody**  
**Deputy Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

**November 2021**

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