

22 February 2023

Reference: FOI 449 Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your email, which we received on 7 February 2023. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked us:

To provide information from HMP Swaleside on the following questions:

- During the past five years, how many prisoner deaths were self-inflicted?
- During the past five years, how many prisoners were murdered?
- During the past five years, how many prisoners have died in any circumstance?

Our response:

We have searched our records and hold the requested information. A copy of the information that you requested is shown below.

For the purposes of this request, we have considered the past five years to be from 7 February 2018 to 7 February 2023.

Please refer to the 'About the data' section below which outlines our definitions for how we categorise our fatal incident investigations.

The table below details the number of deaths in custody at HMP Swaleside for the past five years by death category.

Death category	Number of deaths between 7 February 2018 and 7 February 2023
Natural causes	19
Self-inflicted	10
Other non-natural	4
Total	33

In the past five years, there have not been any deaths in custody by homicide.

For a further breakdown of deaths at HMP Swaleside, please refer to our Annual Reports, which can be found at <https://www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports/>, and our Annual Statistics Summary, which can be found at <https://www.ppo.gov.uk/about/latest-statistics/>.

You asked us:

To provide information from HMP Swaleside on the following questions:

- During the past twelve months, how many prisoners have missed in-house doctor's appointments and how many have attended?
- During the past twelve months, how many prisoners have attended hospital appointments?

Our response:

Following a search of our records, the information you requested is not held by us. We suggest you contact HM Prison and Probation Service, as they may be able to provide this data, and their details are as follows:

Disclosure team
Postal Point 10.25, Floor 10
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ
United Kingdom

Alternatively, their email address is data.access@justice.gov.uk

You have the right to appeal against our response if you think it is incorrect. Details can be found in the 'How to Appeal' section attached at the end of this letter.

Email: PPOMailFreedomofInformationRequests@ppo.gov.uk

About the data

Data is based on when the PPO were notified of the death.

The PPO does not determine the cause of death. This is determined by a coroner following an inquest. Cases are separated into administrative categories, but these categories may differ from a coroner's conclusions. Classifications may change during an investigation. However, they are not altered following the conclusion of the inquest. A small number of classifications for previous years have been updated for this publication, so may not match what has previously been published.

Self-inflicted deaths: The death of a person who has apparently taken their own life and the circumstances suggest this was deliberate, irrespective of whether this would meet the legal definition of intent (i.e. suicide).

Homicide: Where one person has killed another, irrespective of their level of intent.

Natural causes: Any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process that is organic and not triggered by something non-natural.

Other non-natural: These deaths have not happened organically; they are non-natural but cannot be readily classified as self-inflicted or homicide. They include accidents and cases where the post-mortem has not ascertained a cause of death. This category also includes drug-related deaths where there is not enough evidence to classify them as a self-inflicted death.

Awaiting classification: These are deaths where there is currently no indication of the cause of death.

COVID-19 related fatal incident investigation: A death in a person where COVID-19 is mentioned on the death certificate or post-mortem report. Deaths are recorded as COVID-19 from the outset of the investigation if there appears to have a COVID-19 element. If information provided later shows the death does not fit our definition, it will be re-categorised. It is important to note, death certificates are not always consistently filled in.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carries out **independent investigations** into complaints and deaths in custody. The detailed role and responsibilities of the PPO are set out in our office's Terms of Reference. The PPO has three main duties:

- to **investigate complaints** made by prisoners, young people in detention (prisons and secure training centres), offenders under probation supervision and individuals detained under immigration powers (detained individuals)
- to **investigate deaths** of prisoners, young people in detention, approved premises' residents and detained individuals due to any cause, including any apparent suicides and natural causes
- to **investigate deaths of recently released prisoners** that occur within 14 days of release from prison (except homicide)

The purpose of these investigations is **to understand what happened, to correct injustices and to identify learning** for the organisations whose actions we oversee so that the PPO makes a significant contribution to safer, fairer custody and offender supervision.

We may use or share your data only to the necessary extent when conducting our independent investigations in the exercise of our official authority. We will share your data with third parties (e.g. the prison) in order to make sure the information is accurate; to prevent or detect failings; and to identify lessons learnt. We may sometimes need to share your data with third parties if required by law. We only keep your personal data for as long as it is needed, as set out in our data retention policy. If you need any further information about how your data is used, please contact us.

How to Appeal

Internal Review

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to an internal review. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone who was not responsible for the original case, and they will make a decision as to whether we answered your request correctly.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's office **within two months of the date of this letter**, at the following address:

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
Third Floor
10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU
E-mail: Mail@ppo.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner is an independent regulator who has the power to direct us to respond to your request differently, if he considers that we have handled it incorrectly.

You can contact the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Internet address: <https://ico.org.uk/>