

4 April 2023

Reference: FOI 459 Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your email, which we received on 9 March 2023. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked us:

To provide details of the timelines associated with the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) investigation into the death of Mr Lee Gamble at HMP Forest Bank, which included:

1. What date were you informed of the death?
2. What date did you commence your investigation into the death?
3. What date was your investigation completed?
4. What date did you submit your initial and final report to the prison?
5. What date did the Inquest conclude?
6. What date did you publish your report on the internet?

Our response:

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

1. What date were you informed of the death? 26 April 2017
2. What date did you commence your investigation into the death? 26 April 2017
3. What date was your investigation completed? 10 January 2018
4. What date did you submit your initial and final report to the prison? The initial report was issued on 17 October 2017 and the final report was issued on 10 January 2018
5. What date did the inquest conclude? 28 October 2022
6. What date did you publish your report on the internet? 9 March 2023

You asked us:

What was the reason for a six-year delay between the death and the publication on the PPO website?

Our response:

Each coroner's office works independently, and inquests can occur a considerable time after we have shared our final report with stakeholders. Our records show that the inquest concluded on 28 October 2022. We publish reports after the inquest has concluded.

Our records show that on 6 March 2023 we identified the report had not been sent for publication. We published the report on our website on 9 March.

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.

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/>