

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# **Independent investigation into the death of Mr Richard Wardley, a prisoner at HMP Norwich, on 30 September 2022**

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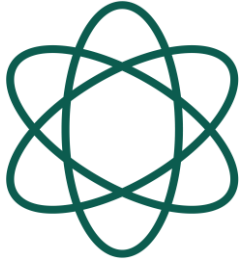
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## Our vision

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

**OGI**

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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 Richard Wardley died in hospital of heart failure on 30 September 2022, while a prisoner at HMP Norwich. He was 51 years old. We offer our condolences to Mr Wardley's family and friends.
4. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Wardley received at Norwich was equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. However, she made two recommendations.
5. We found no non-clinical issues of concern.

## Recommendations

- The Head of Healthcare should ensure that staff follow respiratory care plan instructions and escalate appropriately in line with the instructions.
- The Head of Healthcare should ensure that critical health information is handed over from one healthcare shift to another.

## **The Investigation Process**

6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review Mr Wardley's clinical care at HMP Norwich.
7. The PPO investigator investigated the non-clinical issues relating to Mr Wardley's care, including Mr Wardley's location, the security arrangements for his hospital escorts, liaison with his family and whether compassionate release was considered.
8. The PPO family liaison officer wrote to Mr Wardley's next of kin, his partner, to explain the investigation and to ask if she had any matters she wanted us to consider. She did not respond to our letter.
9. The initial report was shared with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS found no factual inaccuracies.

## **Previous deaths at HMP Norwich**

10. Mr Wardley was the eleventh prisoner to die at Norwich since September 2020. Of the previous deaths, seven were from natural causes and three were self-inflicted. We have previously made recommendations about the monitoring and escalation processes in cases of serious illness.

## Key Events

11. On 14 September 2021, Mr Richard Wardley was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for sexual offences and was sent to HMP Chelmsford. He had significant health problems, including chronic kidney disease (a long-term condition where the kidneys do not work as well as they should) and chronic hypersensitivity pneumonitis (an allergic reaction that causes inflammation in the lungs that can cause irreversible damage and scarring). Mr Wardley had to have supplementary oxygen available at all times, as his lungs did not work properly.
12. On 9 December, Mr Wardley was sent to HMP Bure. On 1 April 2022, Mr Wardley became extremely breathless after a big drop in his blood oxygen levels and he was taken to hospital. When he was discharged from hospital on 8 April, he was sent to HMP Norwich, as it had more suitable healthcare facilities for caring for Mr Wardley's long-term health conditions.
13. Mr Wardley's lung function continued to deteriorate and from the beginning of May, his blood oxygen levels declined abruptly on the slightest exertion. Norwich continuously updated Mr Wardley's in-cell and on wing equipment in line with his increasing needs for supplemental oxygen.
14. On 9 June, a blood test showed that Mr Wardley had possible heart failure and he was referred to hospital for tests.
15. On 28 June, Mr Wardley had a hospital appointment with a respiratory consultant. The consultant told him that there was no further treatment that could improve his lungs and the only remaining option was a lung transplant. Mr Wardley said he would like that if possible, and the consultant referred his case to a specialist unit at Papworth Hospital.
16. On 10 August, Mr Wardley attended a cardiology hospital appointment and was diagnosed with cor pulmonale (a type of heart failure with an abnormal enlargement of the right side of the heart as a result of disease of the lungs, which impairs the heart's ability to pump blood around the body).
17. On 25 August, a prison GP informed Mr Wardley of Papworth Hospital's decision that he was not suitable for a lung transplant because of his other health conditions.
18. On 29 September, a prison GP examined Mr Wardley following an episode of breathlessness and prescribed antibiotics and steroids. Later that morning, a nurse took Mr Wardley's clinical observations and recorded that his blood oxygen level was 87%. (The normal range is 95-100% but it was much lower for Mr Wardley because of his lung condition.) That evening, Mr Wardley's blood oxygen reading fell to 79% but increased to 85% overnight. Mr Wardley's respiratory care plan said that an urgent GP review should be requested if his blood oxygen reading fell below 88%. There is no evidence that staff did this in response to his low readings. There was also no handover to day staff.
19. On the morning of 30 September, Mr Wardley's condition deteriorated further, and staff called for an ambulance. At around 12.00pm, an ambulance took Mr Wardley to hospital. He died later that afternoon at around 2.35pm.

## **Cause of death**

20. The Coroner accepted the cause of death provided by a hospital doctor and no post-mortem examination was carried out. The doctor gave Mr Wardley's cause of death as cor pulmonale caused by chronic hypersensitivity pneumonitis. Chronic kidney disease was given as a factor which contributed to the death but did not cause it.

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

**February 2023**

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