

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

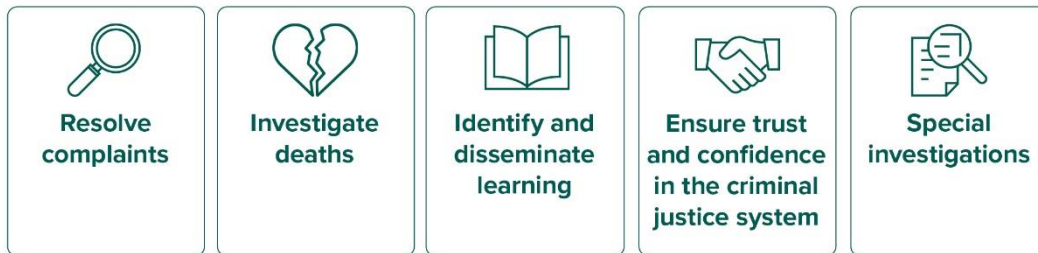
Independent investigation into the death of Mr Lee Parkinson on 6 July 2022, following his release from HMP Leeds

A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

OUR VISION

To deliver high quality and timely independent investigations and work closely with partners to achieve tangible benefits for the safety and confidence of those in custody and under community supervision.

WHAT WE DO



WHAT WE VALUE



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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. Since 6 September 2021, the PPO has been investigating post-release deaths that occur within 14 days of the person's release from prison.
3. We carry out investigations to understand what happened and identify how the organisations whose actions we oversee can improve their work in the future.
4. Mr Lee Parkinson was found hanged on 6 July 2022, following his release from HMP Leeds the day before. He was 40 years old. I offer my condolences to his family and friends.
5. We are satisfied that Mr Parkinson gave no indication to prison or probation staff that he was at risk of suicide or self-harm. We make no recommendations.

The Investigation Process

6. The PPO investigator obtained copies of relevant extracts from Mr Parkinson's prison and probation records.
7. We informed HM Coroner for Leeds of the investigation. He gave us the results of the post-mortem examination. We have sent the coroner a copy of this report.
8. The Ombudsman's family liaison officer contacted Mr Parkinson's next of kin, his sister, to explain the investigation and to ask if she had any matters she wanted us to consider. She had questions about the support Mr Parkinson received in prison, as well as questions about his medication. We have covered these issues in the report.
9. We shared our initial report with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). They found no factual inaccuracies but found a misspelling of the Probation Officer's name. This has been amended in the report.
10. We sent a copy of our initial report to Mr Parkinson's sister. She did not notify us of any factual inaccuracies, however had questions regarding Mr Parkinson's recall. These have been addressed in a separate letter.

Background Information

HMP Leeds

11. HMP Leeds is a local prison holding up to 1,218 prisoners who are on remand, convicted or sentenced. The prison serves the courts of West Yorkshire. Practice Plus Group (PPG) provides health care at the prison with subcontracted services for substance misuse, mental health specialisms and dentistry. The prison has 24-hour primary healthcare cover.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

12. The most recent full inspection of HMP Leeds was in June 2022. Qualified health professionals screened new arrivals in reception and undertook comprehensive health assessments within the first 72 hours. Referrals to other services were made as required. Patients had access to a GP who was also available in reception until at least 9.00pm, who made sure that any immediate risks were addressed, including a review of first night medication. Prisoners arriving with drug and alcohol needs, including those experiencing withdrawal symptoms, received thorough assessment and prompt access to relief and treatment. Night nurses used the prison information system to identify patients being released and arrange pre-release consultations. Wherever possible, patients were registered with a community GP so that discharge information could be transferred promptly.

Probation Service

13. The Probation Service works with all individuals subject to custodial and community sentences. During a person's imprisonment, they oversee their sentence plan to assist in rehabilitation, as well as prepare reports to advise the Parole Board and have links with local partnerships to whom, where appropriate, they refer people for resettlement services. Post-release, the Probation Service supervises people throughout their licence period and post-sentence supervision.

Key Events

14. On 24 May 2022, Mr Lee Parkinson was convicted of assaulting a police officer. He was sent to HMP Leeds while he awaited sentencing.

HMP Leeds

15. During his reception screen, Mr Parkinson told an officer that he had no thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Later that day, a prison GP prescribed Mr Parkinson with citalopram (an antidepressant), which Mr Parkinson was prescribed in the community.
16. The next day, the prison Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (DART) saw Mr Parkinson for an initial assessment. They identified that Mr Parkinson was withdrawing from alcohol, so they started him on an alcohol detox. This included prescribing him seven days' worth of diazepam (a medication used to treat anxiety and to help with the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal).
17. On 31 May, a member of the prison resettlement team completed a release assessment. Mr Parkinson told them that he had anxiety and depression and was prescribed medication for this. Mr Parkinson agreed to continue to work with the healthcare team in prison. He also said that he had issues with alcohol and agreed to work with DART.
18. On 7 June, a member of the DART assessed Mr Parkinson. Mr Parkinson told them that he had now finished his alcohol detox and declined any further help from the prison DART. The DART worker told Mr Parkinson about the community DART services available to him and how he could access this support on release. As Mr Parkinson did not want any more help in custody, the prison DART worker closed his file.

Release on 21 June

19. On 21 June, Mr Parkinson went to court and was sentenced to four weeks in custody. As he had already served this time in prison, he was immediately released on licence. (His licence was due to expire on 4 July, 14 days later.)
20. On the day of his release, Mr Parkinson went to Leeds Probation Office. As Mr Parkinson was given immediate release from prison, he had not yet been allocated a probation officer. He was seen by the duty probation officer, who completed his induction and noted that alcohol misuse was an issue for Mr Parkinson. She completed a referral to the community DART. The duty probation officer said that there was no indication during the induction appointment that Mr Parkinson was at risk of suicide or self-harm.
21. The next day, Mr Parkinson was allocated to a probation officer. She issued Mr Parkinson with his next probation appointment for 28 June.
22. On 28 June, Mr Parkinson failed to attend his appointment. The probation officer contacted the local police to see if they knew where Mr Parkinson was. The police

told her that Mr Parkinson had been arrested for an assault on his partner and was in police custody.

23. The same day, Mr Parkinson was released from police custody without charge. However, the probation officer was still concerned that Mr Parkinson had breached his licence and about the ongoing risk that he posed to his partner. She spoke with her senior probation officer about the possibility of recalling Mr Parkinson to prison. During their conversation, they considered alternative options to recalling Mr Parkinson. They agreed that Mr Parkinson posed a very high risk of imminent harm to his partner which could not be managed in the community. They agreed that he should therefore be recalled to prison. The probation officer completed the recall paperwork, and the police issued a warrant for Mr Parkinson's arrest.

Recall - HMP Leeds

24. On 1 July, the police arrested Mr Parkinson and he returned to HMP Leeds. A prison officer completed his induction and Mr Parkinson raised no issues or concerns.
25. The same day, Mr Parkinson was seen by a prison GP who started him on another alcohol detox. He was prescribed seven days' worth of diazepam. He was also prescribed 28 days' worth of citalopram.
26. Healthcare staff checked on Mr Parkinson daily to check for withdrawal symptoms. They had no concerns.

Release – 5 July

27. On 5 July, as Mr Parkinson's licence had ended and having served an extra day for being unlawfully at large before his arrest, he was released from HMP Leeds. As he had his citalopram in possession, he was able to take this with him upon his release. He was not given diazepam as this must be safely administered and monitored by healthcare staff (as consuming alcohol alongside diazepam can be very dangerous). He was released at around 4.00pm and told to attend an induction appointment at Leeds Probation Office the next day at 11.00am.
28. On 6 July, Mr Parkinson failed to attend his induction appointment. His probation officer sent a first warning letter to Mr Parkinson, and he was issued his next appointment for 13 July.

Circumstances of Mr Parkinson's death

29. We understand that Mr Parkinson went to his partner's house on the evening of 5 July and that they drank heavily. His partner last saw him between 9.30pm and 10.00pm when she went to bed.
30. At around 6.40am on 6 July, a member of the public rang the police to tell them she could see a man hanging from the side of a garden shed at a property in Leeds. Police and paramedics arrived at the property, and Mr Parkinson was pronounced dead at 6.54am. The police informed the Probation Service later that day.

Post-mortem report

31. The post-mortem report concluded that Mr Parkinson died of a lack of oxygen to the brain due to hanging.

Findings

32. We are satisfied that Mr Parkinson received prompt and appropriate treatment for his alcohol use and depression. There was no indication that Mr Parkinson was at risk of suicide or self-harm while he was in prison or at any point after his release.
33. We are satisfied that neither prison nor probation staff could have foreseen or prevented Mr Parkinson's death.

Kimberley Bingham
Acting Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

April 2023

Inquest

At the inquest held on 20 October 2023, the coroner concluded that Mr Parkinson died by suicide.

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