

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

# **Independent investigation into the death of Mr Matthew Scott, on 17 June 2024, following his release from HMP Lincoln**

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

Third Floor, 10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf, London E14 4PU

Email: [mail@ppo.gov.uk](mailto:mail@ppo.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.ppo.gov.uk](http://www.ppo.gov.uk)

T | 020 7633 4100

## 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



© Crown copyright, 2025

This report is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

## 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 investigated post-release deaths that occur within 14 days of the person's release from prison.
3. If my office is to best assist His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in ensuring the standard of care received by those within service remit is appropriate, our recommendations should be focused, evidenced and viable. This is especially the case if there is evidence of systemic failure.
4. Mr Matthew Scott died from multiple drug toxicity on 17 June 2024, four days after his release from HMP Lincoln. He was 27 years old. We offer our condolences to those who knew him.
5. We consider that Mr Scott should have been offered naloxone (to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose) on release.

## Recommendation

- The Head of Service Delivery for substance misuse should satisfy themselves that the local policy on the offer and issue of naloxone on release captures prison leavers with previous opiate use and other relevant risk factors.

## The Investigation Process

6. HMPPS notified us of Mr Scott's death on 3 July 2024.
7. The PPO investigator obtained copies of relevant extracts from Mr Scott's prison and probation records.
8. We informed HM Coroner for South Yorkshire West of the investigation. They gave us the results of the post-mortem examination. We have sent the Coroner a copy of this report.
9. The Ombudsman's office contacted Mr Scott's parents to explain the investigation and to ask if they had any matters they wanted us to consider. They asked for details of the support Mr Scott had received with his substance misuse while in prison and the support he received prior to his release. We address these issues in the report.
10. We shared our initial report with HMPPS and the prison's healthcare provider, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and We Are With You Substance Misuse Service. They found no factual inaccuracies. We Are With You provided an action plan which is annexed to this report.
11. We sent copies of our initial report to Mr Scott's parents. They did not notify us of any factual inaccuracies.

## Background Information

### HMP Lincoln

12. HMP Lincoln is a category B prison which holds men who have been convicted. Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare, including mental health services, at the prison. We Are With You provides substance misuse services.

### 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, prepare reports to advise the Parole Board and have links with local partnerships to which they refer people for resettlement services, where appropriate. Post-release, the Probation Service supervises people throughout their licence period and post-sentence supervision.

## Key Events

### Background

14. On 2 September 2022, Mr Matthew Scott was convicted of arson and sentenced to 20 months in prison. He was sent to HMP Moorland.
15. On 1 March 2023, Mr Scott was released from HMP Moorland on Home Detention Curfew.
16. On 26 January 2024, Mr Scott was recalled to prison for breaching his licence conditions. He was sent to HMP Lincoln.
17. Mr Scott had a history of drug and alcohol misuse. He was referred to the prison's substance misuse service at Lincoln, but he did not engage.

### Pre-release planning

18. Mr Scott's prison offender manager (POM), community offender manager (COM) and his accommodation support worker (from the charity Roundabout) were in contact with each other while Mr Scott was at Lincoln. The COM completed safeguarding and police checks to ensure his accommodation was still suitable. The prison confirmed to Mr Scott his accommodation in the community was still available on release.
19. On 14 February, Mr Scott attended a video link call with his COM to discuss his upcoming release. They discussed his feelings about being released, what had been happening when he was recalled to prison and how they were going to work together. When we spoke to Mr Scott's COM, she said Mr Scott said he was confident he was accessing the right support. He told her he had self-referred to a substance misuse service in the community.
20. Mr Scott's POM and COM did not have a handover meeting before his release, but they were in contact by email.
21. On 10 June, Mr Scott's COM provided the prison with his licence conditions (which included drug testing) and instructions to attend the probation office at 2.00pm on 13 June.

### Release from HMP Lincoln

22. On 13 June, Mr Scott was released from Lincoln. Mr Scott reported to the probation office as instructed and was accompanied by his accommodation support worker from Roundabout.
23. Mr Scott's licence expired on 15 June. His post-sentence supervision period began on 15 June and was due to expire on 16 August.

## Circumstances of Mr Scott's death

24. Mr Scott was found deceased in his accommodation on 17 June. He was found by a member of staff.

## Post-mortem report

25. The post-mortem report concluded that Mr Scott died from multiple drug toxicity. The toxicology report found evidence of recent use of cocaine, synthetic cannabinoids ('Spice'), morphine (an opioid), pregabalin (a prescription drug used to treat anxiety and nerve pain but also widely abused as it enhances the euphoric effects of opioids), benzodiazepines (prescription drugs used to treat anxiety but also widely abused) and alcohol. The pathologist noted that each was at lower than fatal levels on its own, but the combined cardiorespiratory effects of each would be highly likely to cause death.

## Findings

26. Mr Scott was not offered naloxone (a medication that can rapidly reverse opioid overdose) prior to his release as he had declined support from the prison's substance misuse team in line with local policy. We are concerned that the provision of naloxone to prison leavers with a history of substance misuse is inconsistent. We consider that Mr Scott would have been a suitable candidate for naloxone on release and make the following recommendation:

**The Head of Service Delivery for substance misuse should satisfy themselves that the local policy on the offer and issue of naloxone on release captures prison leavers with previous opiate use and other relevant risk factors.**

27. Mr Scott's COM identified that Mr Scott's offending was linked to his substance misuse, and she agreed to include drug testing as a condition of his licence. However, there was little time to implement this as his licence ended two days after he was released.
28. Mr Scott had self-referred to a substance misuse service in the community. We do not know if he engaged with them during the four days between his release and his death as it is outside the scope of our investigation.

**Adrian Usher**  
**Prisons and Probation Ombudsman**

**April 2025**

## Inquest

The inquest, held on 15 May 2025, concluded that Mr Scott's death was drug related.

**Prisons &  
Probation**

**Ombudsman**  
Independent Investigations

Third Floor, 10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf, London E14 4PU

Email: [mail@ppo.gov.uk](mailto:mail@ppo.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.ppo.gov.uk](http://www.ppo.gov.uk)

T | 020 7633 4100