

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Sebastian Szlaski, a prisoner at HMP Long Lartin, on 17 May 2024

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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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. 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.
3. On 19 July 2018, Mr Sebastian Szlaski was sentenced to life in prison for murder. On 6 March 2019, Mr Szlaski was transferred to HMP Long Lartin.
4. Mr Szlaski died at Long Lartin on 17 May 2024. His cause of death was recurrent oesophageal cancer with lymph node involvement (recurrent oesophageal cancer means the cancer came back in the food pipe; lymph node involvement means the cancer spread to small glands that help fight infections). He was 41 years old. We offer our condolences to Mr Szlaski's family and friends.
5. The Ombudsman's office contacted Mr Szlaski's former partner to explain the investigation and to ask if she had any matters she wanted us to consider. She had no questions.
6. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review the clinical care Mr Szlaski received at Long Lartin. The clinical reviewer's report is attached as Annex 1.
7. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Szlaski received at Long Lartin was of a good standard and was equivalent to that which he would have received in the community. She found that Mr Szlaski received a good and compassionate standard of palliative and end of life care at Long Lartin.
8. The PPO investigator investigated the non-clinical issues relating to Mr Szlaski's care.
9. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.
10. The initial report was shared with HMP Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.
11. The inquest into Mr Szlaski's death concluded on 16 December 2024 and returned a verdict of natural causes.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

December 2024

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