

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Stephen Gedge, a prisoner at HMP Onley, on 9 September 2024

A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

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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 5 July 2024, Mr Stephen Gedge was sentenced to 20 months in prison for stalking. He was initially remanded to HMP Wormwood Scrubs and then, on 11 July, transferred to HMP Onley.
4. Mr Gedge died of metastatic oesophageal cancer (cancer that started in the food pipe and spreads to other parts of the body) on 9 September 2024. He was 48 years old. We offer our condolences to Mr Gedge's family and friends.
5. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer to review the clinical care Mr Gedge received at Onley. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Gedge received at Onley was of a reasonable standard and was equivalent to that which he could expect to receive in the community.
6. The Ombudsman's office contacted Mr Gedge's mother, his nominated next of kin, to explain the investigation and to ask if she had any matters she wanted us to consider. She asked when Mr Gedge was diagnosed with cancer and about the care he received at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. These questions are addressed in the clinical review.
7. The PPO investigator investigated the non-clinical issues relating to Mr Gedge's care. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.
8. The inquest into Mr Gedge's death concluded on 25 September 2024 and returned a verdict of natural causes.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

July 2025

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