

**Prisons &
Probation**

Ombudsman
Independent Investigations

Independent investigation into the death of Mr Kenneth Lea, a prisoner at HMP Risley, on 4 January 2025

A report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

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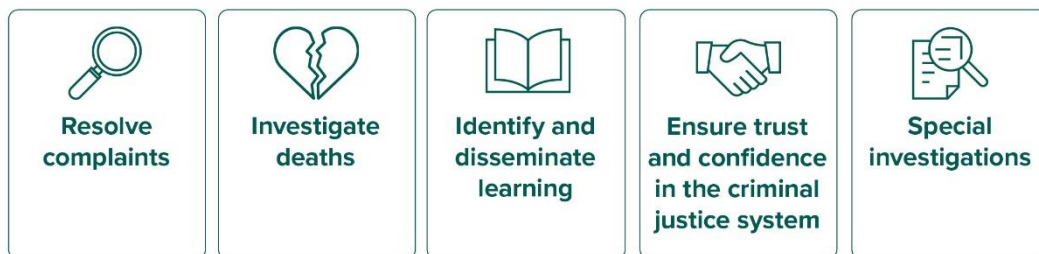
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OUR VISION

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 31 May 2016, Mr Kenneth Lea was convicted of sexual offences and was sentenced to 16 years in prison and an extended licence period of one year.
4. Mr Lea died in hospital of cholangitis (inflammation of the bile duct system that results from infection) caused by gallstones, with frailty, moderate aortic stenosis (aortic valve narrows and blood cannot flow normally) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD - group of lung conditions that cause breathing difficulties) contributing factors on 4 January 2025, while a prisoner at HMP Risley. He was 82 years old. We offer our condolences to Mr Lea's family and friends.
5. The Ombudsman's office contacted Mr Lea's daughter to explain the investigation and to ask if she had any matters she wanted us to consider. She had no questions but asked for a copy of our report.
6. We also shared the initial report with Mr Lea's family. They did not make any comments.
7. We shared the initial report with HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). HMPPS did not find any factual inaccuracies.
8. NHS England commissioned an independent clinical reviewer, to review Mr Lea's clinical care at HMP Risley.
9. The clinical reviewer concluded that the clinical care Mr Lea received at Risley was of a reasonable standard and equivalent to that which he could have expected to receive in the community. He found that Mr Lea was diagnosed with several long-term conditions, all of which appeared to be managed well and in line with national guidelines. The clinical reviewer made two recommendations not related to Mr Lea's death that the Head of Healthcare will wish to address.
10. The PPO investigator investigated the non-clinical issues relating to Mr Lea's care.
11. We did not find any non-clinical issues of concern. We make no recommendations.

Inquest

12. The inquest into Mr Lea's death concluded on the 4 August 2025. The coroner confirmed that Mr Lea died of natural causes.

Adrian Usher
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

October 2025

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