

28 February 2024

To whom it may concern,

My name is Richard Tucker and I have been appointed by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) as the Senior Investigator for Operation Deerness, the independent special investigation into the abuse suffered by detainees at the Medomsley Detention Centre (Medomsley) between 1961 and 1987.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman carries out independent investigations into complaints and deaths in custody. The PPO was commissioned to undertake this independent investigation by the Secretary of State for Justice, the Right Honourable Alex Chalk MP on 24 October 2023.

We are in the preliminary stages of our investigation, but I want to be clear that we are working for all the people affected by the abuse to find the truth of what happened.

We are reaching out to ask that anyone who wants to share their experiences or has any knowledge of what occurred at Medomsley to contact my investigative team via the following email: ppomedomsleyinvestigation@ppo.gov.uk. Access to the mailbox is restricted and all correspondence is strictly confidential. Any information shared with us will be handled confidentially and will not be shared without your consent. Alternatively, you can call or text 07511 165 266.

The investigative team is working closely with Durham Police to access the large amount of material they hold relating to the previous police investigations into abuse of detainees at Medomsley.

The scope of the Operation Deerness investigation is to determine what authorities knew about the abuse that took place at Medomsley, whether there were opportunities for authorities to have taken action or intervened at that time, and what actions (if any) were taken in such instances.

I am acutely aware that for some of you, recalling the time you spent in or working at Medomsley will be distressing. If you do require help and support, I would encourage you to speak to a loved one or an agency which can provide professional support. You can find a list of support agencies on our website under the Operation Deerness page.

Please reach out to us if you would like to engage with our investigation.

I appreciate there will be many out there with feelings of mistrust for the authorities, but I urge you to come forward as it is never too late to share your story.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Tucker
Senior Investigator, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

The Terms of Reference for the investigation are available on the PPO website via the following link:

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f/uploads/sites/34/2023/10/Annex-B.-Medomsley-Detention-Centre.-PPO-special-investigation.-Terms-of-Reference.pdf>