

24 April 2023

**Reference: FOI 463 Freedom of Information Request**

Thank you for your email, which we received on 24 March 2023. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**You asked us:**

For information on the number of male and female suicides from the last five years at HMP Birmingham, HMP/YOI Forest Bank, HMP Hewell, HMP/YOI Hindley, HMP/YOI Lewes, HMP Manchester, HMP Oakwood, HMP Thameside, HMP Wakefield and HMP Wandsworth.

For these suicides, you also asked for the prisoner's age, gender, length of sentence and if they were diagnosed with a mental health condition.

**Our response:**

We have searched our records and we hold the requested information on the above questions.

A copy of the information that you requested is shown below and is enclosed with our response.

For the purposes of this request, please note the following:

- We have considered the last five years to be from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2023.
- Our definition of a self-inflicted death is: The death of a person who has apparently taken their own life and the circumstances suggest this was deliberate, irrespective of whether this would meet the legal definition of intent (i.e. suicide).
- This information is based on the date the PPO were notified of the death.

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2023, we were notified of and began investigations into 41 self-inflicted deaths at HMP Birmingham, HMP/YOI Forest Bank, HMP Hewell, HMP/YOI Hindley, HMP/YOI Lewes, HMP Manchester, HMP Oakwood, HMP Thameside, HMP Wakefield and HMP Wandsworth. All 41 deaths were of male prisoners and we have relied upon the prisoner's medical record to identify any mental health diagnosis or condition.

Of these 41 cases, seven are ongoing investigations. The remaining 34 cases are detailed in the attached document. The anonymous report is available for 18 cases. For the remaining 18 we have provided details based on the initial or final report in our case management system.

You have the right to appeal against our response if you think it is incorrect. Details can be found in the 'How to Appeal' section attached at the end of this letter.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) carries out **independent investigations** into complaints and deaths in custody. The detailed role and responsibilities of the PPO are set out in our office's Terms of Reference. The PPO has three main duties:

- to **investigate complaints** made by prisoners, young people in detention (prisons and secure training centres), offenders under probation supervision and individuals detained under immigration powers (detained individuals)
- to **investigate deaths** of prisoners, young people in detention, approved premises' residents and detained individuals due to any cause, including any apparent suicides and natural causes
- to **investigate deaths** of **recently released prisoners** that occur within 14 days of release from prison (except homicide)

The purpose of these investigations is **to understand what happened, to correct injustices** and **to identify learning** for the organisations whose actions we oversee so that the PPO makes a significant contribution to safer, fairer custody and offender supervision.

We may use or share your data only to the necessary extent when conducting our independent investigations in the exercise of our official authority. We will share your data with third parties (e.g. the prison) in order to make sure the information is accurate; to prevent or detect failings; and to identify lessons learnt. We may sometimes need to share your data with third parties if required by law. We only keep your personal data for as long as it is needed, as set out in our data retention policy. If you need any further information about how your data is used, please contact us.

## How to Appeal

### Internal Review

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to an internal review. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone who was not responsible for the original case, and they will make a decision as to whether we answered your request correctly.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's office **within two months of the date of this letter**, at the following address:

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman  
Third Floor  
10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf  
London  
E14 4PU  
E-mail: Mail@ppo.gov.uk

### Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner is an independent regulator who has the power to direct us to respond to your request differently, if he considers that we have handled it incorrectly.

You can contact the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Internet address: <https://ico.org.uk/>