

**A report by the Office of the Inspector of
Prisons into the circumstances surrounding
the death of Prisoner O
on 3 September 2015 while on Temporary
Release from Mountjoy Prison**

***Please note that names have been removed to anonymise this Report**

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**A report by the Office of the Inspector of Prisons into the
circumstances surrounding the death of Prisoner O on 3
September 2015 while on temporary release
from Mountjoy Prison**

Presented to the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality
pursuant to Part 5 of the Prisons Act 2007.

Helen Casey
Office of the Inspector of Prisons

28 March 2017

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Preface

The deceased was a 27 year old man from the Leinster area who died while on temporary release from Mountjoy Prison.

He is survived by his parents, partner, children and extended family.

I wish to offer my condolences to the deceased's family on their sad loss.

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Office of the Inspector of Prisons Investigation Report

General Information

1. The deceased was a 27 year old man from the Leinster area. He is survived by his parents, partner, children and extended family.
2. The deceased was committed to Mountjoy Prison on 16 July 2015 and had a remission date of 30 November 2015. He had served a number of short sentences in prison previously.
3. On 14 August 2015 the deceased was released from prison having been approved Reviewable Temporary Release to the Community Support Scheme and under the supervision of the Probation Service.
4. As part of the conditions of his temporary release he was to link in with:
 - *Care after Prison* (a peer led charity organisation which provides information, referral and support services to people who have been affected by imprisonment);
 - Addiction Services and attend any appointments arranged by his Community Support Worker; and
 - He had to sign on daily at his local Garda Station and return to the prison on dates and times specified.

He was under the supervision of the Probation Service and had to reside at a specified address.

5. On 31 August 2015 the Community Support Worker in *Care after Prison* received a phone call from the deceased's partner stating that the deceased was seriously ill in Intensive Care in Tallaght Hospital.
6. He passed away on 3 September 2015.

Status of the deceased in Prison

7. The deceased was an 'ordinary prisoner' on the standard level of the Incentivised Regime and associated freely with other prisoners. The deceased had almost daily contact by telephone with his partner and also telephoned his mother. The deceased had a number of visits from both his mother and partner while in prison.

Meeting with the deceased family

8. In meeting with the deceased's family they gave a short background and history of the deceased. They explained that the deceased had been a "troubled person" for a number of years. He had suffered depression, had a drug problem and was alcohol dependent. He had received treatment in a Psychiatric Unit following an incident of self harm and he also attended a methadone clinic.
9. The family raised the following concerns which they wanted examined: -
 - (a) What assessments were done on the deceased before his release given he was a "danger to himself"?
 - (b) Why was he released to the same environment that he left?
 - (c) What help and treatment was afforded to him while in prison stating they were led to believe that he would get help?
 - (d) What level of methadone was he on in the prison? Did he take his methadone?
 - (e) Why were the family not informed by the prison that he was going to be released so soon?

Temporary release of the deceased

10. The deceased was referred to *Care after Prison* on 25 July 2015 to be assessed for placement on the Community Support Scheme.
11. The deceased was assessed on 27 July 2015. The assessment shows that “*he presented well and spoke frankly about a number of personal issues that had befallen him over the last number of years*”. The deceased informed the Community Support Worker that these issues had resulted in alcohol dependence which he stated was mainly used as a coping mechanism. A basic care plan was compiled for the deceased which included linking in with Counsellors as a therapeutic intervention to address his alcohol dependence. The deceased was further discussed at a Community Support Scheme meeting on 29 July 2015 where it was agreed that he could benefit from partaking in the Community Support Scheme. Consequently, the Community Support Worker in *Care After Prison* contacted the deceased’s partner, whose address the deceased had nominated as a place to reside on release. His partner confirmed that he could reside with her and their two children on release.
12. On 14 August 2015 the deceased was approved Reviewable Temporary Release under the supervision of the Probation Service and to engage with the Community Support Scheme.
13. On 21 August 2015 the deceased, as part of his temporary release conditions, met with his Primary Key Worker in *Care After Prison* where a Counselling Service was discussed and contact details provided to the deceased. During this meeting with the Key Worker short term goals and options were also discussed. A referral was made to the Community Response Alcohol Education and Stabilisation Programme on his behalf to support him in addressing his alcohol dependency. The deceased did not make contact with that Service prior to his death. In addition, an appointment was made with his Community based Probation Officer in consultation with the Prison based Probation Team which was scheduled for 4 September 2015. The deceased

did not display any suicidal ideations or behave in a manner that would give rise to any concerns to the Key Worker.

14. A follow up appointment was made for the deceased with *Care After Prison* on 28 August 2015. He did call the *Care After Prison* office on 27 August 2015 looking for a copy of his temporary release form. We are informed that he appeared to be “in good form”.
15. The deceased ‘signed on’ at Mountjoy Prison on 14 August 2015 and 21 August 2015. He was also due to sign on at Mountjoy Prison on 28 August 2015. The deceased reported to the Gardaí as part of his temporary release on 14 August 2015 and daily thereafter until 25 August 2015.
16. On 28 August 2015 the deceased’s partner rang the *Care after Prison* team to say that he would not be attending his scheduled meeting as he had attempted to take his own life using a ligature and was in Tallaght Hospital. *Care after Prison* kept in touch with the family over the following days.
17. The deceased passed away on the 3 September 2015.
18. The cause of death is a matter for the Coroner.

Addressing the concerns of the family

19. In paragraph 9, I set out the concerns raised by the family that they wished to have investigated. For ease of reference, I address these hereunder using the same numbering sequence as in paragraph 9
 - (a) The deceased was referred to *Care after Prison* for assessment on 25 July 2015 as set out in Paragraph 11 of this report. He presented well and stated that he was willing to engage with *Care after Prison* and the addiction services. He was approved temporary release for the Community Support Scheme with a number of conditions as set out in

Paragraph 4. He was assessed as a “moderate risk of re-offending” and was the subject of an active Probation Order.

- (b) The deceased was released to his partner’s address as this was his nominated address and the address which was on his temporary release form. This address was checked by *Care After Prison* prior to his release and his partner confirmed that he could reside with her and their two children following his release from prison.
- (c) The deceased had a committal interview with the medical staff on committal to prison on 16 July 2015. He confirmed that he was on methadone but denied any history of alcohol abuse. He was seen by the Prison Doctor on 17 July 2015 who, *inter alia*, recorded the following “*committal – 6 months, on methadone – CLAC 70 mls, no medical problems, Normal, chest clear,, no mental illness*”. In Paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 I outline the assessment and care plan details.
- (d) The deceased was on 70 mls of methadone in the prison. Except for one day, records confirm that he availed of his methadone treatment during his detention.
- (e) The nominated address given by the deceased was that of his partner and contact was made with her prior to his release, paragraph 11 refers.

Findings

20. The deceased had a history of substance misuse.
21. The deceased was serving a short sentence. He was linked in with support services on release to assist him in addressing his addiction issues.
22. On 14 August 2015 the deceased was released on Reviewable Temporary Release, with conditions, to the Community Support Scheme and under the supervision of the Probation Service.
23. The deceased linked in with his Key Worker in *Care After Prison* and was abiding by the terms of his temporary release.
24. He died in Tallaght Hospital on 3 September 2015.
25. I am satisfied that there are no further issues which I should investigate.