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No Protest Link to Arrest of Wigan Man Who Later Died in Custody

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A 26-year-old man who died in police custody in Wigan was not arrested in connection with a protest, as some early speculation suggested. Instead, Greater Manchester Police have confirmed the arrest was made on suspicion of a drug-related offence, and a separate assault warrant was issued in London.

Ellis Rocks was taken into custody by officers from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) at approximately 8:35pm on 31 July 2025 outside the Britannia Hotel on Almond Brook Road, Standish. He was detained following suspicion of involvement in a drug offence, alongside

an active warrant for an alleged assault case under investigation in the capital. GMP officers transported Mr Rocks to a local custody suite, where he remained overnight.

At around 2:30 am on 1 August 2025, custody officers discovered Mr Rocks unresponsive in his cell. Emergency medical assistance was immediately requested, and he was transported by ambulance to hospital. A cardiac arrest occurred during transport, and despite medical intervention, Mr Rocks died at 7:20 am on 3 August.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), the statutory body responsible for overseeing police complaints and conduct across England and Wales, was notified shortly after the incident. The IOPC began an initial assessment before launching a formal investigation on 3 August at 10:18 am. According to the IOPC, the inquiry will review Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) footage from the custody suite, body-worn video recordings, and statements from all officers involved.

A spokesperson for the IOPC confirmed that Mr Rocks's family has been contacted and will receive regular updates throughout the process. The IOPC stated that its investigation aims to establish whether proper procedures, including those set out under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), were followed while Mr Rocks was in custody.

In a public statement posted online, believed to be from Mr Rocks's mother, the family expressed grief over his passing and raised concerns about the circumstances surrounding his death. "My beautiful boy Ellis has sadly passed away... and it's something that could have been avoided," the post read. The family has also indicated that they are conducting their inquiries independently of the formal investigation.

Local newspaper *Wigan Today* reported that two GMP officers have been issued formal misconduct notices, a procedural measure commonly used to inform officers that their actions are under review. The IOPC clarified that such notices do not imply guilt, nor do they indicate that disciplinary action will necessarily follow.

To date, Greater Manchester Police have not made any additional public statements. The IOPC has reiterated its commitment to ensuring a full, fair, and independent investigation conducted without external influence.

Further updates will be issued upon the completion of the IOPC's review. Until then, the matter remains under official examination, with all findings subject to public disclosure by

statutory guidelines.