

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. Information gathered whilst undertaking this review demonstrates that Tamana and her family were private people and did not readily discuss their personal lives outside their own family network. This has meant that limited information has been available to the agencies involved in this review. Combined with the family's decision not to engage, although understandable, has meant that there seems like many unanswered questions. It is always hoped that such reviews as this can provide a rich and full picture of the lives and circumstances leading up to an individual's death, but unfortunately in the case of Tamana's untimely and horrific death this has not been possible. What we do know is that Tamana's ability and ambition has never been in doubt, and the school reports describe her as a vibrant, intelligent and ambitious young woman. However, the complexities of her life through cultural expectations are not fully understood, and the opportunity to overlay them against her ambition and ability have not fully been realised within this report. From the information provided and the valuable assistance of the imam and panel members, this report has reflected on the evidence, the broader background information, and the views of those with similar lived experience to Tamana. This allowed for the identification of lessons to be learned and recommendations with the sole motivation of assisting in protecting young women like Tamana in the future.
- 8.2 Information available to the review panel demonstrate that Tamana was a victim of domestic abuse before the actions that led to her death. There is information that suggests Shamas tried to influence the decisions Tamana was making regarding her life. Zabih, in his evidence to police, stated that he believed Shamas wanted to control Tamana and he had told him that he did not want her to either work or undertake further study. It is therefore fair to conclude that coercion and control, clear elements of domestic abuse, can be attributed to Shamas' behavior towards Tamana.
- 8.3 Honour based violence is defined by the National Police Chiefs Council as being;
- "An incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), which has or may have been committed to protect the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community's code of behaviour"*
- 8.4 On this basis, and applying it to the circumstances of Tamana's death, the definition of an honour-based killing has been fulfilled. Although the evidence of admission is not available, the test is proven by the inclusion of the term "*which has or may have been...*". In considering all of the information provided within this review, it could be concluded that Shamas killed Tamana because he believed he was protecting the honour of his family. What is not known is the role, if any, the wider family played in Tamana's death. It does however appear that Shamas' father was very directive of his son, and in particular what was expected of him, as Tamana's husband, should she not obey his instructions.

- 8.5 Evidence provided in this review demonstrates that the cause of Tamana's death was not related to faith or religion. It related to tribal and cultural beliefs surrounding honour, and the role and expectation of women within the family unit in Afghanistan. Although Tamana's father tried to stop the wedding as he was concerned for her safety, he did not feel it in his power to do so and would not go against the will of the family. On this occasion the sense of honour and duty, in following tribal customs ultimately led to Tamana's brutal death.
- 8.6 The school Tamana attended was exemplary in providing an environment in which she could thrive. It is clear through the evidence provided that there was a collective feeling of pride in Tamana's academic achievements, and the sense of great loss at her horrific death. This review identified that Tamana did not share or confide in staff, but the panel felt confident that if she had raised any concerns that the school staff would have reacted supportively and appropriately. However, Tamana did provide some insights into her personal life and did share information about her forthcoming wedding and her passionate views within her statements about women's oppression. When she returned to the school to complete her second application this could have provided an ideal opportunity to further discuss with her why she did not take up the offer of a place to study law the previous year, what had changed to now make it possible, and whether she had any concerns about fulfilling this ambition.
- 8.7 Tamana had regular appointments with health care professionals, and all of these interactions were thorough, supportive and considered her wider needs in regard to her vitamin D deficiency. She benefited from ongoing appointments to monitor her condition and was provided with advice to try and counter the symptoms. However, In December 2018 Tamana made 6 separate contacts to Health Services, a visit to A&E, a call to Out of Hours, a visit to the GP and 3 calls to the GP surgery, in the space of 13 days. This related in the main to her recurring back pain. The back pain she referred to was linked to the investigations 2 years previously that had identified her low levels of vitamin D, although Tamana presented this as due to a fractured vertebra. The notes presented within the chronology demonstrate a difference in Tamana's view from that of the original diagnosis. It is fair to conclude that all these factors combined could have triggered a greater level of professional curiosity, and whilst accepting this view is speculative and borne from the opportunity of hindsight, it may have provided the opportunity for Tamana to share any concerns she had about her welfare.
- 8.8 This review presents the picture of a young Muslim woman living in an environment where there is a clash of cultures. We can assume that Tamana was experiencing a level of inner turmoil in her attempts to keep her family happy, in respecting the traditional values and customs of her upbringing in Afghanistan, whilst also balancing her own now lived experience of being educated and exposed to a very different culture in the UK. Tamana developed her own very advanced aspirations, voiced her ambitions and worked hard to achieve these. We also know that she did not give up easily and was able to challenge certain aspects of her life when others were trying to make decisions for her. We note this in particular regarding her second application to

university and her attempts to delay moving in with Shamas in the final days before her brutal death. Tamana did not directly share her thoughts or concerns with anyone. In meeting with the imam, his views were strongly felt that there was a gap in the support offered to young Muslims in his community once the structured teaching ends at 13 years. Up to the age of 13 years children are taught the ways of the Quran at the mosque, but following this support and guidance is provided by parents. For Tamana we do not know if she had any friends or network outside of the family where she could safely and freely discuss her situation, aspirations, dreams, fears and concerns, with a person who may understand and have a similar lived experience to her. Included for reference are two of the many organisations that exist which provide information, offer support and campaign for the rights of people in similar circumstances to Tamana.

Muslim Women's Network UK. <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>

Muslim Youth Helpline. <https://www.myh.org.uk>

Further details regarding these organisations and how to contact them are contained within *Appendix B* at the end of the document.

- 8.9 Agencies from Town B demonstrated a good level of engagement and care in supporting Shamas upon his arrival in the UK in 2007 and the subsequent years until he was closed to Leaving Care Services in 2013. However, what is now known is that he was in fact an adult when he came to the UK. Had this fact been known his application may have been refused as his claims of escaping Afghanistan were not accepted. It could be concluded that he would not have been accepted into the UK.
- 8.10 This review identifies good practice with respect to the support and care shown to Tamana during her time at school. Her arrival in the UK, not able to speak English, coming from a country in turmoil and continuous war, would have meant a difficult beginning for any child. The level of attainment achieved by Tamana was outstanding and the staff and school must be praised for the work they did in supporting Tamana to realise her potential.

9 Lessons to be learnt

- 9.1 This review identified a disconnect between Tamana's life at school and her religious and cultural upbringing. Awareness and understanding of the cultural norms and potential pressures Tamana was facing was not established within the school network. As no issues were raised this didn't present as an overt problem, but had staff been aware of the potential diverse cultural differences and had there been knowledge of support groups and organisations that can offer information and advice, this would have provided for the opportunity of a different conversation. The imam also identified that there was a gap in the active support the mosque provides for young Muslims and hoped to develop support groups to address this in the future. If there had been a link between the mosque and the school this could have provided an opportunity for

discussion and for staff to gain a wider understanding of the issues of not just the Muslim faith, but of current issues regarding culture and custom.

- 9.2 The cultural influences identified within this review are not only significant but pivotal factors that contributed to the death of Tamana. Her death was an honour killing believed to have been carried out due to her unwillingness to give up on her own ambition and comply with the cultures and values that existed outside the UK in Afghanistan. In learning lessons, it seems that agency staff were not equipped, confident or willing to speak about, or question aspects of Tamana's life. We know that the fear of being accused of at worst racism or at least being judgmental, can lead to a lack of questioning or professional curiosity. This has been identified before and was a feature in the report following the child sexual exploitation cases in Rotherham. An understanding of different cultures, forced marriages and honour based violence, would assist all practitioners in being better equipped to question and sensitively explore aspects of people's culture. In equal measures front line staff need to be supported by their line managers and senior managers when identifying such issues or areas of concern.
- 9.3 We know that domestic abuse and in particular the elements of coercion and control were emerging features of the relationship between Shamas and Tamana. This may have initially been identified as social norms by some within many relationships, communities and some traditional cultures. However, it is important not to conflate the two and ensure that it is dealt with as domestic abuse appropriately under national guidelines and legislation.
- 9.4. This review identified that traditional practices surrounding honour were present in the actions and communications leading to Tamana's death. It is unlikely that this knowledge would have been apparent to any of the services that came into contact with Tamana prior to her death and has only become evident from the subsequent investigation. In understanding and assisting practitioners and communities to identify incidents and deal with the harm caused by honour based crime a robust investigation of the facts leading to the offence being committed should be carried out. A flagging system within national crime recording processes allows all crimes linked to honour to be recorded as such. This review identified that in this case the recorded crime did not flag the link to honour. This omission is not uncommon and is particularly prevalent in more serious crime offences such as murder. In a bid to understand the extent of honour based crimes committed, a fuller review of the facts should be undertaken, then in circumstances where honour is shown to be a factor the report flagged following national crime recording principals. Only by doing this will a clear picture as to the extent of honour based crimes in the UK be understood.
- 9.5 The panel has outlined 4 recommendations based upon the findings of the IMRs and reports submitted.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The review panel makes the following 4 recommendations from this DHR:

	Recommendation	Organisation
1	Schools should be supported where appropriate, with understanding and recognising cultures and customs which may lead to family conflict, honour based violence and domestic abuse for students from minority communities. This should include support regarding how to appropriately respond.	Kent Education
2	Primary health care staff should be trained in understanding and recognising cultures and customs which may lead to family conflict, honour based violence and domestic abuse for patients from minority communities. This should include support regarding how to appropriately respond.	Health Care Kent
3	Raise awareness of the supportive services available to young people from different cultural and religious backgrounds through a system of information sharing.	Kent Community Safety Partnership
4	To raise awareness of crime recording flagged markers for honour based offences.	Kent Police

Kent & Medway Domestic Homicide Review

Victim – Tamana

Terms of Reference - Part 1

1. Background

- 1.1 In December 2018, Police Officers attended an address in town A. They discovered the body of Tamana lying on the kitchen floor. A knife and a large amount of blood was also present. She was the victim of a ferocious and sustained knife attack in her kitchen resulting in numerous wounds.
- 1.2 Shamas was arrested for murder and was subsequently charged and remanded in custody.
- 1.3 In accordance with Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, a Kent and Medway Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Core Panel meeting was held on 29th January 2019. It confirmed that the criteria for a DHR have been met.
- 1.4 That agreement has been ratified by the Chair of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (under a Kent & Medway CSP agreement to conduct DHRs jointly) and the Home Office has been informed. In accordance with established procedure this review will be referred to as DHR 32.

2. The Purpose of the DHR

- 2.1 The purpose of this review is to:
 - i. establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide of Tamana regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims;
 - ii. identify clearly what those lessons are, both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result;
 - iii. apply these lessons to service responses, including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate;
 - iv. prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a coordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity;
 - v. contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse; and

UK Organisations supporting Muslim Women & Girls

Muslim Women' s Network UK (MWNUK)

Connecting voices for change.

MWNUK was formally established in 2003 to give independent advice to Government on issues relating to Muslim Women and Public Policy. It was set up to;

- To talk openly talk about difficult issues that are often to swept under the carpet - only when they are discussed that they can be tackled
- Ensure the concerns and voices of Muslim women and girls reach decision makers
- To research and highlight the lived experiences of Muslim women
- To inform Muslim women and girls about their rights and the support and help that exists
- To promote Muslim female role models

They are contactable through their website, Facebook, and twitter.

MWN Helpline. 0800 999 5786 & 0303 999 5786

Muslim Youth Helpline

Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH) was set up in 2001 and provides anonymous and confidential advice and support. They are contactable via their website at info@myh.org.uk or twitter and Facebook.

Phone Number 0808 808 2008

