



Councillor Michael Hill OBE
Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

17 March 2021

Dear Councillor Hill,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Martin) for Kent Community Safety Partnership to the Home Office. Due to the Covid 19 situation the Quality Assurance (QA) Panel was unable to meet as scheduled on 26th January 2021 therefore the report was assessed by a virtual process. For the virtual panel, Panel members provided their comments by email, the Home Office secretariat summarised the feedback and the Panel agreed the feedback.

The QA Panel felt that this is a sensitively written, easy to read report which identifies a number of individual and system level failures. Despite the family not wanting to engage, the report was thorough and the victim's voice came through. The report is appropriately critical of the agencies involved and there appears to be a good understanding of adolescent to parent violence.

It is positive to see that Gypsy Roma and Traveller is recognised as part of the Equality and Diversity section and although there was not a Gypsy Roma and Traveller specialist on the panel, this seems to be well considered throughout the report and the analysis.

The action plan is clear and has some thoughtful comments on national learning points. The importance of rigorous risk assessment around safeguarding is an important learning point, albeit that this review highlighted deficits in this respect. The close connection between safeguarding and domestic abuse risks are clear in this review. The report clearly highlights changes to policy and practice which have already been made.

The QA Panel felt that there are some aspects of the report which would benefit from further revision, but the Home Office is content that on completion of these changes, the DHR may be published

Areas of final development include:

- It would have been helpful if a specialist organisation who understand challenges and hurdles within the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community was part of the panel. The panel said it was considered, but it is not clear if they were consulted.

- Did the coroner's inquest take place in April 2020? If so, can the outcome be included in the report.
- There is some victim blaming language which may benefit from being changed such as reference to Martins ex-partner "refusing".
- The report refers to incidents of domestic abuse as "volatility within a relationship" – this can minimise the abuse and/ or trivialise it. It would be preferable to identify examples of abuse instead. This will then enable to reader to understand dynamics of domestic abuse (DA) and raise awareness. It would also benefit from referencing Adverse Childhood Experiences in relation to Martin within the analysis section, to pull out further learning here as opposed to labelling him as having complex needs.
- All acronyms should be used in full on first use e.g. MARAC is not used in full anywhere throughout report. Perhaps a glossary of terms would also assist the reader with all of the acronyms on one page.
- It is unclear how the pseudonyms were chosen, especially as all pseudonyms have both a first name and surname. Confirmation that the two siblings are adults, and not children would be useful as their genders are included and the exact date of death should be removed (5.2.45, 6.6.8, 7.9, 6.7).
- The Action Plan – Recommendation 4 includes an outcome involving client support, but there is no indication how this will be overseen, and what difference it is intended to make.
- The Panel felt that more could have been done to consider barriers to reporting. It was also felt that more research could be referenced on adolescent to parent violence.
- The correct language needs to be used when explaining legal interventions. 5.2.30 mentions a without notice injunction and having a power of arrest attached, is this a non-molestation order? If so, the Domestic Violence Crimes and Victims Act 2004 (DCVA) states that a breach of a non-molestation order 'without reasonable excuse' is now a criminal offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonments (s1 of the DVCVA introduces the new section 42A, Family Law Act 1996). Consequently, it is no longer possible to attach a power of arrest to a non- molestation order, it having being thought that this would be confusing for the police as they would need to know if they were arresting an individual for a crime or under civil powers.
- There are some typos and inconsistencies – the report needs a thorough proof read. For example, 3.4 states the first panel meeting was on 19/10/19, but then states they met on 14/2/19. Paragraph 4.2.4 repeats much of 4.2.3. The table at 1.2 in the executive summary says Martin Douglas rather than Martin Brown. There is no glossary, despite 1.7 stating the glossary is in Appendix B. Similarly, 3.5 mentions a Coroner's Inquest in April 2020, but this has not been updated.

Once completed the Home Office would be grateful if you could provide us with a digital copy of the revised final version of the report with all finalised attachments and appendices and the weblink to the site where the report will be published. Please ensure this letter is published along the report.

Please send the digital copy and weblink to DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk. This is for our own records for future analysis to go towards highlighting best practice and to inform public policy.

On behalf of the QA Panel, I would like to thank you, the report chair and author, and other colleagues, for the considerable work that you have put into this review.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Abrams

Chair of the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel