



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

14 July 2021

Dear Councillor Michael Hill,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Connie) for Kent Community Safety Partnership to the Home Office. I apologise for the delay in responding to you. Due to the COVID-19 situation the Quality Assurance (QA) Panel was unable to meet as scheduled 26th May therefore the report was assessed by a virtual process. For the virtual 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 the report was thoughtful, thorough and easy to read. Connie's voice came through and the Panel gained some sense of all the areas of vulnerabilities facing her. The DHR highlighted the need to take a holistic approach and the need for professionals to practise professional curiosity to gain a holistic view.

There was good family engagement from Connie's mum and the action plan is fully SMART. There is good evidence of early learning with many of the actions marked completed. The QA Panel felt that there are some aspects of the report which may benefit from further revision, but the Home Office is content that on completion of these changes, the DHR may be published.

Areas for final development:

- To improve anonymity the sex of children should be removed.
- The use of surnames to refer to people throughout the review can be confusing as the same surname is shared by all the female adults mentioned (the victim, her sister and mother) so it is unclear which Mrs Smith the Author is referring to. E.g. Para 4.6.
- Equality & Diversity – this would benefit from referencing all protected characteristics within the Equality Act and all which applied to Connie. For example, sex is not considered within this section and should be.

- Terms such as “committed suicide” imply criminality and it would be more appropriate to make reference to these as “made attempts to take their life”.
- Use of “refused” would be better replaced with declined as it can be construed as victim blaming.
- Examples are given of good practice when they are in fact expected practice - in 11.8.6, the health visitor is commended for good practice in asking questions about domestic abuse. These are termed routine enquiries for a purpose and professionals are expected to make them as part of their role. It would be helpful if the CSP could take another look at expected and good practice.
- The Panel are not convinced by the rationale not to approach Ryan, particularly as that there is so much reference to him in the review. Alternatively, it would be helpful to understand whose decision this was.
- The roles of the panel members are not stated therefore it is difficult to be able to comment on their seniority and suitability.
- Please confirm the result of the criminal proceedings.
- There is no mention of the inquest and if the Coroner was informed about the DHR. The Coroner should also be on the dissemination list.
- Connie should be presented on its own on the front page and not as ‘Connie/2018’ as it is not personable in this format.
- This is a DHR and should be titled as such.
- The report requires a thorough proofread

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 alongside 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

