

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

14 December 2022

Dear Councillor Michael Hill,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Jean) for Kent Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 23rd November 2022. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The QA panel concluded that the review was well considered, comprehensive and specific to the victim. Analysis is intelligently considered and backed up with academic references giving weight to the findings. The review includes reference to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which recognises children as direct victims of domestic abuse which is very relevant to this review.

The fact that many professionals were at cross purposes with Jean, because of their failure to understand, or practise, a trauma-informed approach, is very evident. In 18.3 it states that all professionals focussed on a different aspect and failed to take a holistic and trauma-informed approach. There was a lack of an understanding of intersectionality.

The Equality and Diversity section is thorough and draws well on supporting research including consideration around substance needs and mental health. The QA panel advised that they gained some insight into the course of Jean's life and the lifelong consequences of the childhood abuse that she experienced. There is clear evidence of just how far-reaching adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can be, as Jean's consequent multiple vulnerabilities demonstrated.

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:

- Greater detail of the circumstances of the death and immediate background events would be helpful. It would be helpful to identify all the possible

catalysts to the victim's actions given that she had talked about suicide and had self-harmed previously.

- The children should not be referred to as subjects of the DHR. There are different processes for child reviews.
- Agencies need to adopt a more trauma informed /strengths-based approach in supporting victims of domestic abuse and harm. Recommendations 7 and 8 have national application but the action plan needs further work to do justice to the rigour of the review and its whole system finding including adding outcome measures.
- It would be helpful to know more about David's evidence to police as there have been no subsequent charges.
- There is reference to friends commenting that Jean was subject to David's controlling behaviour from the start of their relationship. It would have been helpful if we knew if these friends gave that information to the police.
- Adverse childhood experiences regarding Jean's early life experience of sexual abuse and time spent in care and the impact these experiences have had in Jean's adult life is under-developed within the review.
- There have been missed opportunities across agencies to be more professionally curious with Jean and the domestic abuse incidents.
- The month and year of death on the title page is missing. The use of surnames as part of the pseudonyms seems unnecessary and risks reflecting someone else's real name. The review is lacking a statement of independence regarding the panel members.
- The explanation of why there was a new chair/author appointed is not given especially as this added another year onto the review process.
- It seems a missed opportunity not to have explored whether the (alleged) perpetrator's background had any relevance to the case.

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.

Please also send a digital copy to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner at DHR@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

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