

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

27 November 2023

Dear Cllr Michael Hill,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Louise) for Kent and Medway Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 25th October 2023. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The QA Panel finds that the review feels honest and transparent, with the family's contributions providing an insight into the victim as a person and giving her a voice. The review displays a good level of understanding of domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour, and the impacts of alcohol and mental health issues within an abusive relationship.

The QA Panel found that the review has identified relevant learning and made some useful recommendations. The review has identified some important learning and has identified specific areas for agencies to improve, for example in Section 18, where it mentions identifying a few organisations that have not been following their own policy and procedures. The Panel commended the use of research to support the analysis.

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:

- There are some suggestions of victim-blaming in places. For example, in section 14, where the report states that the victim did not want further help. The term 'toxic trio' is also used in the report which is not appropriate as the term is outdated.
- There do not appear to be any recommendations regarding Clare's Law and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) for Kent Police.

- The analysis in section 16 does not specifically address the Terms of Reference and is set out per agency. This makes it repetitive and unnecessarily lengthy.
- The front title page needs to show the month as well as the year of death.
- There is no preface to the report.
- The sentencing date in section 1 should be removed to preserve anonymity.
- Section 5 identifies the link between alcohol dependence and domestic abuse and that it is well established. It would be helpful if more research to support this could be included.
- GP practices should need robust processes in place to ensure that when information from other agencies directs an action for primary care that these requests can be promptly actioned. This should include the acknowledgment to referring agencies when a requested action cannot be met due to non-engagement.
- There is no mention of the independence of Panel members.
- The report needs to be more specific in identifying which protective characteristics are relevant to the case.
- It is unclear why a Mental Health Homicide Review was not conducted. it would have been helpful to understand the decision making regarding this.

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.

The DHR report including the executive summary and action plan should be converted to a PDF document and be smaller than 20 MB in size; this final Home Office QA Panel feedback letter should be attached to the end of the report as an annex; and the DHR Action Plan should be added to the report as an annex. This should include all implementation updates and note that the action plan is a live document and subject to change as outcomes are delivered.

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,

Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel