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9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Nicole) for Test Valley Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel.

The Home Office would like to apologise for the significant delay in responding to you. Following our last meeting in August 2022, officials agreed to follow up on this report and set out proposed next steps. However, our understanding is that due to an error this was not completed. Please accept our sincere apologies for this.

The QA Panel noted in their review that the DHR featured extensive engagement with Nicole's family and network, including a previous partner of the victim and the perpetrator in prison, which helped to contextualise Nicole's fear of engaging with agencies, because of her children. They also commented that it features good use of condolences in the beginning of the report.

There is a comprehensive and clear chronology of events in the review, and it features some good recommendations which highlight the need for police improvements around domestic abuse investigations. The number of missed opportunities and lack of action on the part of several agencies also came through clearly, including the lack of professional curiosity, lack of information sharing including effective risk assessment and management and a limited understanding of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Due to the significant amount of time that has passed, the Home Office agree that the executive summary may now be published. The QA Panel have noted that there are children involved and therefore advise against publishing the full DHR. The QA Panel also request that the date of death should be removed as well as the children's genders to ensure anonymity before publication.

As set out in our previous correspondence on this DHR, the QA Panel and Home Office also felt that there were a number of aspects of the report which the CSP and Chair of the DHR should note for future DHRs:

- It would have been useful to use existing literature to further unpick the barriers that Nicole was facing. For example, referring to adverse childhood experiences as a way of trying to understand some of Nicole's lived experiences.
- Similarly, looking at multiple and complex needs research linked to trauma and how domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health are often overlapping may have been beneficial.
- Consideration of the use of a genogram to assist with the understanding of family structure.
- Clearly distinguishing what information was sourced directly from the family, friends and colleagues of the victim and what came from agencies.
- Further analysis of coercive and controlling behaviour.
- Including substance misuse representatives on the panel where this issue is relevant (as was the case in this DHR).
- Additional information about the perpetrator and what opportunities there may have been to intervene at an earlier stage, as well as further challenge and/or analysis of perpetrator behaviour, including manipulation of professionals and systems.
- Additional analysis of how much professionals, as well as the family and community, understand about domestic abuse and where to seek support. This includes education and the school's involvement with children who may be at risk.
- Sensitive language should be used throughout reports to ensure there is no sense of victim blaming.
- Inclusion of action plans with clear trackers in place to ensure actions are completed and that there is clear accountability for each action.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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