

# **Domestic Homicide Review Tamana 2018 Executive Summary**

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Commissioned by:  
Kent Community Safety Partnership  
Medway Community Safety Partnership

Review Completed: 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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## The Review Process

*(In this report the real names of all persons involved have been anonymised)*

This domestic homicide review (DHR) examines the circumstances surrounding the death of Tamana.

The review panel considered which family members, friends, and members of the community should be consulted and involved in the review process. The panel was made aware of the following family members and friends. All the names of family and friends have been anonymised. The family have read the Overview Report and did not raise any concerns over the pseudonyms that were selected.

| <b>Name</b>     | <b>Relationship with Tamana</b> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Aris            | Father                          |
| Masoma          | Mother                          |
| Zabih           | Brother                         |
| Malika          | Sister                          |
| Younger Sibling |                                 |
| Younger Sibling |                                 |

Following a meeting of the Kent and Medway Domestic Homicide Review Core Panel on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 it was agreed that the criteria for a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) had been met and the chair of the Community Safety Partnership duly notified who agreed to hold a DHR.

This Overview Report is an anthology of information gathered from Independent Management Reports (IMRs) prepared by representatives of the organisations that had contact and involvement with Tamana and/or Shamas between 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2011 and Tamana's death.

The report also addressed the nine protected characteristics (age, disability including learning disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, ethnicity, sex and sexual orientation) prescribed within the public sector equalities act duties, and considered if they were relevant to any aspect of this review. The review considers whether access to services or the delivery of services were impacted upon by such issues, and if any adverse inference could be drawn from the negligence of services towards persons to whom the characteristics were relevant.

A Letter was sent to senior managers in each of the agencies, bodies, or organisations identified within the scope of the review, requesting the commissioning of the IMR's. The aim of the IMR is to:

- a. Allow agencies to look openly and critically at individual and organisational practice and the context within which professionals were working (i.e. culture, leadership, supervision, training etc.) to see whether the homicide indicates that practice needs to be changed or improved to support the highest standards of work by professionals.
- b. Identify how and when those changes or improvements will be brought about.
- c. Identify good practice within agencies.
- d. The IMR is written by a member of staff within the organisation subject to review, and by someone who has not had involvement with anyone subject of the review. It is signed off by a senior manager of that organisation before being submitted to the DHR review panel.

### **Contributors to the Review**

The review panel consisted of an Independent Chair and senior representatives of the organisations that had relevant contact with Tamana and /or Shamas. This included a senior member of Kent County Council Community Safety team. In addition, a senior member of a Domestic Abuse Charity was invited to sit on the board.

The members of the panel were:

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Job Title &amp; Agency</b>   |
|-------------------|---|
| DI Ian Wadey      | Kent Police   |
| Shafick Peerbux   | Head of Community Safety<br>Kent County Council Community Safety            |
| Andrew Rabey      | Independent Chair   |
| Henu Cummins      | Chief Executive Officer<br>Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services        |
| Kulbir Pasricha   | Manager<br>Kent Police Community Engagement & Hate Crime                    |
| Catherine Collins | Strategic Safeguarding Manager<br>Kent County Council Adult Safeguarding    |
| Lesley Gould      | Service Manager<br>Kent County Council Integrated Children's Service        |
| Claire Ray        | Head of Service<br>The Education People commissioned by Kent County Council |

| <b>Name</b>        | <b>Job Title &amp; Agency</b>   |
|--------------------|---|
| Claire Axon-Peters | Designated Professional for Safeguarding Adults<br>Clinical Commissioning Group |
| Goumana Synadinou  | Independent Panel Member  |
| Rich Clarke        | Head of Audit Partnership<br>Town A Borough Council                             |
| Shafi Khan         | Kent Independent Advisory Group   |
| Vicki Paddison     | Strategic Domestic Abuse Service Manager<br>Town B City Council                 |

The Independent Chair of the review panel is a retired senior police officer having retired in 2014. He has experience and knowledge of domestic abuse issues and legislation, along with a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the multi-agency approach to dealing with domestic abuse. He has a background in serious crime investigation, reviews, multi-agency panel working groups and the chairing of strategic and multi-agency meetings. He has been an Independent Chair for Domestic Homicide Reviews since 2015, and is also a trustee of two charities, one being a domestic abuse charity. The Independent Chair has no connection with the Community Safety Partnership other than being commissioned to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

In addition to the above IMRs the imam from Tamana's local mosque, where she and her family worshiped, was invited to contribute, and his views recorded in a short report. He was able to provide valuable insight into the cultural and religious aspects of Tamana life. He also assisted in the recognition of the part culture, not religion, played in what happened to Tamana, and expressed the shock and significant feeling of loss felt within the Muslim community in Town A following Tamana's brutal death.

At the initial Terms of Reference meeting the Chair discussed with the panel the cultural make-up of the members in relation to Tamana and her family, and it was agreed in a bid to ensure a better understanding of the specific cultural and religious beliefs, customs and practices, that representation from the Muslim community should be sought to join the panel. It was also felt important to include a panel member of a similar age, gender and background to assist in the understanding of any additional issues or pressures that may have existed for Tamana and/or Shamas. As a consequence, two additional members joined the panel who had a similar background, lived experience and knowledge of the community and culture that Tamana and Shamas lived in.

For the period Shamas lived in the UK, he has almost exclusively lived in Town B. The

panel felt it important to identify whether there was any information available from that area that could assist with the review. The Independent Chair contacted a member of the Community Safety Partnership in Town B and it was agreed that Individual Management Reports would be provided by agencies who had had involvement with Shamas from his entry into the UK. The Independent Chair met with representatives of the agencies to discuss the findings of those reports and a representative member from Town B community safety partnership remains a part of the panel.

## **Terms of Reference for the DHR**

### **Background**

#### Events surrounding the death of Tamana

In late December 2018 Tamana's younger sibling, was found outside the flat where Tamana and Shamas had recently moved. They were alone, distressed and confused. The neighbours who found them did not know them and subsequently called the Police. Enquiries located his family home and Police spoke to his parents who said they had been trying to contact Tamana but could not get a reply.

Police Officers attended Tamana's flat. There they discovered the body of Tamana lying on the kitchen floor. A knife and a large amount of blood was also present. She was the victim of a ferocious and sustained knife attack in her kitchen resulting in numerous wounds.

Her husband Shamas was subsequently tracked down having left the area in his car. He was arrested, charged and detained in custody. At Crown Court Shamas pleaded guilty to the murder of Tamana. He offered no evidence or mitigation and was sentenced to 16 years and 82 days imprisonment.

#### The Purpose of the DHR

The purpose of this review is to:

- i. Establish what lessons are to be learned from the death of Tamana in terms of the way in which professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims.
- ii. Identify what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales that they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result.
- iii. Apply these lessons to service responses for all domestic abuse victims and their children through intra and inter-agency working.
- iv. Prevent domestic abuse homicide and improve service responses for all domestic abuse victims and their children through improved intra and inter-

agency working.

- v. Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse; and
- vi. Highlight good practice.

## **The Focus of the DHR**

This review will establish whether any agency or agencies identified possible and/or actual domestic abuse that may have been relevant to the death of Tamana.

If such abuse took place and was not identified, the review will consider why not, and how such abuse can be identified in future cases.

If domestic abuse was identified, this review will focus on whether each agency's response to it was in accordance with its own and multi-agency policies, protocols and procedures in existence at the time. In particular, if domestic abuse was identified, the review will examine the method used to identify risk and the action plan put in place to reduce that risk. This review will also take into account current legislation and good practice. The review will examine how the pattern of domestic abuse was recorded and what information was shared with other agencies.

## **Methodology**

Independent Management Reports (IMRs) must be submitted using the templates current at the time of completion.

This review will be based on IMRs provided by the agencies that were notified of, or had contact with, Tamana and/or Shamas in circumstances relevant to domestic abuse, or to factors that could have contributed towards domestic abuse, e.g. alcohol or substance misuse. Each IMR will be prepared by an appropriately skilled person who has not any direct involvement with Tamana, Shamas, or any other family members. The reviewer cannot be an immediate line manager of any staff whose actions are, or may be, subject to review within the IMR.

Each IMR will include a chronology, a genogram (if relevant), and analysis of the service provided by the agency submitting it. The IMR will highlight both good and poor practice, and will make recommendations for the individual agency and, where relevant, for multi-agency working. The IMR will include issues such as the resourcing/workload/supervision/support and training/experience of the professionals involved.

Each agency required to complete an IMR must include all information held about Tamana and Shamas from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011 until the date of her death in December 2018. If any information relating to Tamana being a victim, and Shamas being a perpetrator, of domestic abuse before the 1st of January 2011

comes to light, that should also be included in the IMR.

Information held by an agency that has been required to complete an IMR, which is relevant to the homicide, must be included in full. This might include for example: previous incidents of violence (as a victim or perpetrator), alcohol/substance misuse, or mental health issues relating to Tamana and/or Shamas. If the information is not relevant to the circumstances or nature of the homicide, a brief précis of it will be sufficient (e.g. In 2015, X was cautioned for an offence of shoplifting).

Any issues relevant to equality, for example disability, cultural and faith matters should also be considered by the authors of IMRs. If none are relevant, a statement to the effect that these have been considered must be included.

When each agency that has been required to submit an IMR does so in accordance with the agreed timescale, the IMRs will be considered at a meeting of the DHR Panel and an overview report will then be drafted by the Chair of the panel. The draft overview report will be considered at a further meeting of the DHR Panel and a final, agreed version will be submitted to the Chair of Kent CSP.

#### Specific Issues to be addressed

Specific issues that must be considered, and if relevant, addressed by each agency in their IMR are:

- i. Were practitioners sensitive to the needs of Tamana and knowledgeable about potential indicators of domestic abuse and aware of what to do if they had concerns about a victim or perpetrator? Was it reasonable to expect them, given their level of training and knowledge, to fulfil these expectations?
- ii. Did the agency have policies and procedures for the ACPO Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH) risk assessment and risk management for domestic abuse victims or perpetrators, and were those assessments correctly used in the case of Tamana and Shamas. (as applicable)? Did the agency have policies and procedures in place for dealing with concerns about domestic abuse? Were these assessment tools, procedures and policies professionally accepted as being effective? Was Tamana subject to a multi-agency risk assessment conference? (MARAC)?
- iii. Did the agency comply with information sharing protocols?
- iv. What were the key points or opportunities for assessment and decision making in this case? Do assessments and decisions appear to have been reached in an informed and professional way? v. Did actions or risk management plans fit with the assessment and decisions made?



Were appropriate services offered or provided, or relevant enquiries made in the light of the assessments, given what was known or what should have been known at the time?

- vi. Were procedures and practice sensitive to the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and gender identity of Tamana and Shamas (if these factors were relevant)? Was consideration of vulnerability and disability necessary (if relevant)?
- vii. Were senior managers or other agencies and professionals involved at the appropriate points?
- viii. Are there ways of working effectively that could be passed on to other organisations or individuals?
- ix. Are there lessons to be learned from this case relating to the way in which an agency or agencies worked to safeguard Tamana and promote their welfare, or the way it identified, assessed and managed the risks posed by Shamas? Are any such lessons case specific or do they apply to systems, processes and policies? Where can practice be improved? Are there implications for ways of working, training, management and supervision, working in partnership with other agencies and resources?
- x. How accessible were the services to Tamana. (as applicable)?
- xi. To what degree could the death of Tamana have been accurately predicted and prevented?
- xii. What was the impact of Tamana's intention to apply for a place at University, and were school staff aware of any potential impact of her application?

## **Summary Chronology**

Tamana and Shamas were cousins and had lived together in Afghanistan. In 2007 Shamas came to the UK. At the time of entering he declared he was 15 years old and had left Afghanistan to escape a blood feud, in which his father was murdered. He was accommodated in Town B, where he was assessed as being 15 years old. He was granted leave to remain in the UK until he reached the age of 18. Tamana together with her mother and siblings came to the UK in 2011 and moved to Town A where they joined her father who had lived in the UK since 2001. Tamana's family has a strong Muslim faith and regularly attend the mosque in Town A. Tamana wore traditional clothes relevant to her beliefs as a young Muslim woman.

Shamas was supported in Town B by Younger Persons Support Services (YPSS). Reports provided to this review describe Shamas as doing well, he made friends,

attended college and worked within restaurant deliveries. He also attended the local mosque in the town where he lived. In 2012 he was granted a further 3 years leave to remain in the UK. Tamana started school in 2012 and quickly learnt to speak English. Tamana flourished at school and enjoyed learning. She was ambitious and did well in all of her examinations. Despite her late start in education Tamana's grades in her exams allowed her to apply to study law at University. In Tamana's application to university she said that she wanted to become a lawyer so she could support people who needed help and in particular women. She outlined how she wanted to change the situation for women who came from Afghanistan.

Tamana rarely spoke of her own life outside school but on one occasion she told a member of her teaching staff that she was engaged to marry her cousin.

In 2014 following the agreement of both sets of parents Shamas and Tamana became engaged to be married. Although they lived in different towns information provided states that they kept in contact through text and phone calls. Both Tamana and Shamas had settled well into their respective lives. They had developed their own independence and ambitions for their future lives. Tamana pursued an academic future with plans for a career. Shamas worked as a taxi driver and had purchased his own home through the local authorities right to buy scheme.

Tamana suffered from a vitamin D deficiency. Her GP notes explain this as being caused through her lack of exposure to sunlight. The cause for this being her choice of traditional dress associated with her faith. She was advised to spend more time in the sunlight and was prescribed supplements to improve her vitamin D levels. A symptom of her low levels of vitamin D levels was that Tamana was susceptible to joint pains and in particular to her lower back, about which she attended to see her GP on a number of different occasions.

Although Shamas had declared his father to be dead, this was not the case and he was in regular contact with him. In 2016 he attended his GP for travel injections. He told the nurse that he was travelling to Afghanistan to see his father and brother. From the information provided to this review it is clear that his father provided Shamas with guidance and instruction about his forthcoming marriage to Tamana. In the months leading up to their wedding this involvement caused a rift between Shamas and Tamana's father. Information provided to the police investigation into Tamana's death showed that Shamas was becoming increasingly aggressive in his language and threats towards other family members. Tamana's father attempted to stop the wedding but was overruled by other family members.

In August 2018 Tamana and Shamas were married in Afghanistan.

Following the wedding Tamana and Shamas remained in Afghanistan and stayed with Shamas's family. Upon their return in September 2018 Shamas went to Town B and Tamana back to her family home in Town A. It was expected that Shamas would join

his new bride in Town A following the sale of his house and car. However, he remained in Town B and tried to persuade Tamana to join him there. She refused and her father said that Shamas would need to return to Town A as agreed prior to the wedding. During this time and while Shamas was in Town B Tamana contacted her school requesting help to re-apply to university as she had withdrawn her application the previous year. In her application she described how becoming a lawyer would help people who were downtrodden and women who came from environments where they were unable to fulfill their potential. She wrote powerfully about her aspirations and reflected upon her own situation as it was, and how it could have been if she had remained in Afghanistan. During this same time Tamana successfully rented a flat obtained through a private rental agreement.

In November 2018 Shamas moved into the family home in Town A to be with Tamana. From the limited information available it seems that Shamas continued in his attempts to move Tamana to Town B and his father in Afghanistan continued to urge him to take control of Tamana or divorce her. During the middle of December Tamana made six separate calls into health care services linked in the main to her back problems, but she did contact her GP seeking an appointment to discuss birth control options. Shamas moved out of the family home in late December 2018 at the request of Tamana's father. Information provided to the review suggests that he moved into the flat obtained by Tamana and stayed there alone. Later on in December 2018 Tamana joined him and stayed at the flat together with her younger brother. It was during this time that Shamas brutally murdered Tamana.

## **Key Issues arising from the Review**

Evidence and information available to the review panel indicate that Tamana may have been a victim of domestic abuse at the hands of Shamas prior to the events that led to her death. Although there is no evidence available to suggest Shamas had been previously physically violent towards Tamana, evidence presented does suggest that Tamana was a victim of domestic abuse through coercion and control. During the police investigation some family members said they had concerns about Shamas, and that he had displayed some aggressive tendencies. Shortly after the marriage there is evidence that shows Shamas made threats towards family members in an attempt to persuade Tamana into moving to Town B and control her future. There is very limited information to inform to what extent he knew of Tamana's plans to go to university and her future career ambitions, and her request for birth control. It is unfortunate that family members did not feel able to contribute to the review so that these issues could have been explored further, but it is fair to assume that these issues were central to the argument that ultimately resulted in the brutal attack and her death. The incident in Town B involving the sexual assault of a female in a night club also raises concerns regarding his character, but the case was not pursued due to the victim declining to support a prosecution and limited records were available to review.

It is difficult to fully understand the part culture played in Tamana's family life.

However, from the information provided by agencies, through the police investigation, and the views of the imam, culture was clearly a key factor in many of the decisions made affecting the life of Tamana. An overview of this is provided by the imam who highlights the different lifestyles and values of Muslim families within his congregation. The imam presented a picture that defined Afghan culture as being based upon the religious culture within the country from which they came, as opposed to religious belief. His view being that a lack of education and tribal practice often directed decisions, not the teachings of the Quran.

As evidenced during the police investigation, the influence of extended family members living in Afghanistan appears apparent. Evidence provided suggests Shamas was influenced by his father in Afghanistan and based some of his decisions and views upon his father's guidance. Text messaging from Shamas to Tamana suggests that his father's advice was directive, inflexible, and lacked any understanding or appreciation of what his son or daughter-in-law's lives, and circumstances were in the UK. It does seem that these views were based upon practice at that time in Afghanistan relating to the relationship between men and women, the dominant role of a husband in a marriage, and the expectations of how a woman should behave after marriage. Shamas was said to express his view that women should not work, or study and he did not want Tamana to do these things. This is clearly in contrast to everything that Tamana believed in and wanted for herself and her future. Tamana was a young woman whose faith was strong and central to her life. She followed the teachings of the Quran and dressed in the traditional way as was the culture of her family. She respected her parents and clearly sought and valued the view of her father which influenced her own decision making. At school she spoke positively about being a Muslim and staff observed that she followed religious festivals in keeping with her faith. Tamana was also influenced by her life in the UK. She valued education and the opportunities it presented. She embraced the more liberal culture and became ambitious for her own future. Tamana wrote about her desire to support change for oppressed people which included Afghan women. It is not too far a leap to think that if her views and aspirations were openly expressed to Shamas and others from the traditional Afghan community, that this would have caused disagreement, conflict, even anger, as well as engendering some feelings of dishonour. This would have presented a difficulty for her parents with regards to the views of extended family members. It is believed that a clash of cultures emerged, and this was a contributory factor to the difficulties Tamana had in trying to balance her own aspirations with that of her extended family.

During the 4-year engagement both Shamas and Tamana were developing their own plans outside the expectation of their families, and these did not revolve around them being together. In the lead up to the wedding accounts provided within the police investigation describe Shamas as becoming increasingly volatile in his demands for Tamana to move to Town B. Inevitably this could have driven them further apart and increase the animosity between them. The information available makes clear that this

was an arranged marriage, and both Tamana and Shamas agreed to it. Prior to the wedding Tamana's father attempted to stop it. This was because of the concerns he had about the suitability of Shamas to be Tamana's husband, and his increasing aggression shown towards other family members. This action would have been unpopular within the extended family and demonstrates how concerned he was for her safety. His closeness to Tamana and his knowledge of her ambition for a future career suggests that he knew of the conflict and difficulties that lay ahead. In spite of this he was unable to stop the wedding and it seems he was overruled by other family members in Afghanistan.

It is clear from the reports provided about Tamana's education that she enjoyed school. She quickly developed her abilities in a new and very different country and culture to the one she had come from in Afghanistan. Not only could Tamana not speak English when she started school, but it can also be assumed that due to the lack of educational opportunities in Afghanistan for girls, that she had received little to no formal education. Tamana came from a background where the education of girls and women was not allowed. She was a bright intelligent girl and wanted to grow, develop and learn, and it was evident to her teachers that she had thought through and developed ambitions for the future. Additionally, her family, and in particular her father, was very supportive of her ambitious future. He was clearly involved, together with Tamana, in discussing and shaping her decisions and choices in both education and career. This in contrast to the life he had lived in Afghanistan and demonstrated his support, forward thinking, and desire for Tamana to achieve her dreams. Information provided to the Police from Zabih shows that Shamas did not share this view and felt that Tamana should not be concentrating upon an education or career.

Tamana's examination results were excellent and she was rightly pleased. They reflected the hard work and dedication displayed by her, and also showed the effort school staff had demonstrated in helping her achieve so much in such a short time. Tamana rarely spoke about her home life to staff at school, and without information from friends at school it is difficult to know if she discussed this with anyone. The review identified two incidents at school that gave an insight to Tamana's life outside of school. The first relating to a conversation she had together with a teacher about her marriage to Shamas. The second being her application to university to study law. In this application she outlines her desire to change the lives for women in Afghanistan and to challenge and stand up for women's rights. In particular she wrote "*this difference could affect my own life or even things that happen in the world*" and "*I want to cross boundaries that I come across that could stop me from going forward*". With the benefit of hindsight both of these examples could have been explored with her, and may have provided an opportunity to identify how Tamana felt about the situation of her marriage. Although in this case the marriage appears not to have been forced, speaking to her about it could have provided an insight as to the additional pressures emerging for Tamana around her future aspirations. The fact that she did not take up the

university placement, but then later returned to the school to make further applications, did provide an opportunity to discuss what happened last time and what would be different this time. Also exploring her statement and the very powerful words she had written, could also have been an opportunity to have discussed with her whether she too was experiencing any challenges, or felt any sense of oppression in her own life.

Whilst we know her to be a private young woman and respectful of her faith and culture, we also know she would speak out if she did not agree. The circumstances of this review have not afforded us this opportunity of real insight, but we can imagine the very real and growing difficulties that Tamana was facing in trying to balance her own aspirations and desires for her future life, with those expectations of her family, extended family members and that of her new husband Shamas.

The review of the chronology shows that Shamas was well supported by services in Town B. He had regular contact with key workers who supported him in education and provision of both supported and independent living accommodation. There is limited information about any contact he had with Tamana or his uncle Aris who were living in Town A. The reports provided showed that in 2012 over a six-month period Shamas made 3 separate attempts to move to Town A. It is unclear why and to whom he referred when he stated he had friends in Town A. However, this was a short time after Tamana, her mother and siblings had arrived from Afghanistan and it may be assumed that he was attempting to move in to live with them as he had in Afghanistan. Although Shamas claimed at the point of entry into the UK that his father had been killed, later information provided showed his father was still alive and living in Afghanistan. Further information showed that Shamas was in contact with him.

In 2016 Shamas obtained vaccinations enabling him to travel to Afghanistan with the intention of visiting his father and brother. Information from the investigation into Tamana's death showed the level of contact Shamas had with his father, and also demonstrated the level of involvement his father had in his life, which was significant. It also demonstrated the influence he had over the decisions being made around the future lives of both Tamana and Shamas. At times the language used by Shamas's father with regards to the wider family, stoked the growing aggression and animosity between Aris and Shamas. The life Shamas had built in Town B was established, and he had become successful in keeping a regular job and buying his home through the local authorities right to buy scheme. It is clear that upon being married to Tamana he was keen to move back to town B but was prevented through concerns Tamana's family had over his attitude and aggression. Within the relationship between Tamana and Shamas this was a point that was regularly the subject of conflict and argument.

There are moments outlined within the chronology that provide evidence of Tamana and Shamas being in a good relationship. There is evidence of ongoing contact

between them both by phone and text, and they both accepted their marriage as the will of their combined families. In planning a future together Tamana applied for housing securing a flat through a private rental agreement. It appears the conflict about their future was influenced by traditional practice and custom derived through a history of Afghan practice and took no account of how living within a UK culture had upon both of them.

Tamana suffered from a vitamin D deficiency. This was identified by her GP and considered to have been caused by her cultural choice of dress and her diet. This in Tamana's community is not uncommon but is easily managed by regular exposure to the sun and supplements. The GP practice arranged regular appointments to check her condition and progress of improvement. A consequence of this condition was that she suffered from severe joint pain. Within the chronology are numerous occasions where she presented to both hospital and GP with severe pains in her body. In the month of her death Tamana contacted primary care on six separate occasions. Of particular note was an injury to her lower back which had previously been treated as a suspected broken vertebra, but upon closer examination was found to have been caused by the lack of vitamin D. In Late 2018 and within a couple of weeks before Tamana's death she made 3 separate calls to health services within a period of 6 days. Later in the same month Tamana contacted her GP requesting an implant for birth control and stating she did not wish to use the pill. She was referred to family planning and an appointment made. Tamana's reason for requesting an implant are not known. However, in considering her ambition to attend university, her marriage to Shamas, and the expectations upon her as a woman and wife in an Afghan culture, this may have been an attempt to covertly ensure she did not become pregnant. It is fair to say that the number of times Tamana contacted and accessed health services during this period was high, but it is difficult to put any inference upon this as she had reasons for all the contacts. However, looking at this within the wider context, and with hindsight, it could pose the question that she was wanting more questions to be asked of her, and given the opportunity may have shared some concerns with a professional outside of the family network.

## **Conclusions**

Information gathered whilst undertaking this review demonstrates that Tamana and her family were private people and did not readily discuss their personal lives outside their own family network. This has meant that limited information has been available to the agencies involved in this review. Combined with the family's decision not to engage, although understandable, has meant that there seems like many unanswered questions. It is always hoped that such reviews as this can provide a rich and full picture of the lives and circumstances leading up to an individual's death, but unfortunately in the case of Tamana's untimely and horrific death this has not been possible. What we do know is that Tamana's ability and ambition has never been in doubt, and the school reports describe her as a vibrant, intelligent and ambitious

young woman. However, the complexities of her life through cultural expectations are not fully understood, and the opportunity to overlay them against her ambition and ability have not fully been realised within this report. From the information provided and the valuable assistance of the Imam and panel members, this report has reflected on the evidence, the broader background information, and the views of those with similar lived experience to Tamana. This allowed for the identification of lessons to be learned and recommendations with the sole motivation of assisting in protecting young women like Tamana in the future.

Information available to the review panel demonstrate that Tamana was a victim of Domestic Abuse before the actions that led to her death. There is information that suggests Shamas tried to influence the decisions Tamana was making regarding her life. Zabih, in his evidence to police, stated that he believed Shamas wanted to control Tamana and he had told him that he did not want her to either work or undertake further study. It is therefore fair to conclude that coercion and control, clear elements of domestic abuse, can be attributed to Shamas' behaviour towards Tamana.

Honour based violence is defined by the National Police Chiefs Council as being;

*“An incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), which has or may have been committed to protect the honour of an individual, family and/or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and/or community’s code of behaviour”*

On this basis, and applying it to the circumstances of Tamana's death, the definition of an honour-based killing has been fulfilled. Although the evidence of admission is not available, the test is proven by the inclusion of the term *“which has or may have been...”*. In considering all of the information provided within this review, it could be concluded that Shamas killed Tamana because he believed he was protecting the honour of his family. What is not known is the role, if any, the wider family played in Tamana's death. It does however appear that Shamas' father was very directive of his son, and in particular what was expected of him, as Tamana's husband, should she not obey his instructions.

Evidence provided in this review demonstrates that the cause of Tamana's death was not related to faith or religion. It related to tribal and cultural beliefs surrounding honour, and the role and expectation of women within the family unit in Afghanistan. Although Tamana's father tried to stop the wedding as he was concerned for her safety, he did not feel it in his power to do so and would not go against the will of the family. On this occasion the sense of honour and duty, in following tribal customs ultimately led to Tamana's brutal death.

The school Tamana attended was exemplary in providing an environment in which she could thrive. It is clear through the evidence provided that there was a collective



feeling of pride in Tamana's academic achievements, and the sense of great loss at her horrific death. This review identified that Tamana did not share or confide in staff, but the panel felt confident that if she had raised any concerns that the school staff would have reacted supportively and appropriately. However, Tamana did provide some insights into her personal life and did share information about her forthcoming wedding and her passionate views within her statements about women's oppression. When she returned to the school to complete her second application this could have provided an ideal opportunity to further discuss with her why she did not take up the offer of a place to study law the previous year, what had changed to now make it possible, and whether she had any concerns about fulfilling this ambition.

Tamana had regular appointments with health care professionals, and all of these interactions were thorough, supportive and considered her wider needs in regard to her vitamin D deficiency. She benefited from ongoing appointments to monitor her condition and was provided with advice to try and counter the symptoms. However, In December 2018 Tamana made 6 separate contacts to Health Services, a visit to A&E, a call to Out of Hours, a visit to the GP and 3 calls to the GP surgery, in the space of 13 days. This related in the main to her recurring back pain. The back pain she referred to was linked to the investigations 2 years previously that had identified her low levels of vitamin D, although Tamana presented this as due to a fractured vertebra. The notes presented within the chronology demonstrate a difference in Tamana's view from that of the original diagnosis. It is fair to conclude that all these factors combined could have triggered a greater level of professional curiosity, and whilst accepting this view is speculative and borne from the opportunity of hindsight, it may have provided the opportunity for Tamana to share any concerns she had about her welfare.

This review presents the picture of a young Muslim woman living in an environment where there is as a clash of cultures. We can assume that Tamana was experiencing a level of inner turmoil in her attempts to keep her family happy, in respecting the traditional values and customs of her upbringing in Afghanistan, whilst also balancing her own now lived experience of being educated and exposed to a very different culture in the UK. Tamana developed her own very advanced aspirations, voiced her ambitions and worked hard to achieve these. We also know that she did not give up easily and was able to challenge certain aspects of her life when others were trying to make decisions for her. We note this in particular regarding her second application to University and her attempts to delay moving in with Shamas in the final days before her brutal death. Tamana did not directly share her thoughts or concerns with anyone. In meeting with the imam, his views were strongly felt that there was a gap in the support offered to young Muslims in his community once the structured teaching ends at 13 years. Up to the age of 13 years children are taught the ways of the Quran at the mosque, but following this support and guidance is provided by parents. For Tamana we do not know if she had any friends or network outside of the family where she could safely and freely discuss her situation, aspirations, dreams, fears and

concerns, with a person who may understand and have a similar lived experience to her. Included for reference are two of the many organisations that exist which provide information, offer support and campaign for the rights of people in similar circumstances to Tamana.

Muslim Women's Network UK <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>

Muslim Youth Helpline <https://www.myh.org.uk>

Further details regarding these organisations and how to contact them are contained within *Appendix B* at the end of the document.

Agencies from Town B demonstrated a good level of engagement and care in supporting Shamas upon his arrival in the UK in 2007 and the subsequent years until he was closed to Leaving Care Services in 2013. However, what is now known is that he was in fact an adult when he came to the UK. Had this fact been known his application may have been refused as his claims of escaping Afghanistan were not accepted. It could be concluded that he would not have been accepted into the UK. This review identifies good practice with respect to the support and care shown to Tamana during her time at school. Her arrival in the UK, not able to speak English, coming from a country in turmoil and continuous war, would have meant a difficult beginning for any child. The level of attainment achieved by Tamana was outstanding and the staff and school must be praised for the work they did in supporting Tamana to realise her potential.

## **Lessons to be learnt**

This review identified a disconnect between Tamana's life at school and her religious and cultural upbringing. Awareness and understanding of the cultural norms and potential pressures Tamana was facing was not established within the school network. As no issues were raised this didn't present as an overt problem, but had staff been aware of the potential diverse cultural differences and had there been knowledge of support groups and organisations that can offer information and advice, this would have provided for the opportunity of a different conversation. The Imam also identified that there was a gap in the active support the mosque provides for young Muslims and hoped to develop support groups to address this in the future. If there had been a link between the mosque and the school this could have provided an opportunity for discussion and for staff to gain a wider understanding of the issues of not just the Muslim faith, but of current issues regarding culture and custom.

The cultural influences identified within this review are not only significant but pivotal factors that contributed to the death of Tamana. Her death was an honour killing believed to have been carried out due to her unwillingness to give up on her own ambition and comply with the cultures and values that existed outside the UK in Afghanistan. In learning lessons, it seems that agency staff were not equipped,

confident or willing to speak about, or question aspects of Tamana's life. We know that the fear of being accused of at worst racism or at least being judgmental, can lead to a lack of questioning or professional curiosity. This has been identified before and was a feature in the report following the child sexual exploitation cases in Rotherham. An understanding of different cultures, forced marriages and honour based violence, would assist all practitioners in being better equipped to question and sensitively explore aspects of people's culture. In equal measures front line staff need to be supported by their line managers and senior managers when identifying such issues or areas of concern.

We know that domestic abuse and in particular the elements of coercion and control were emerging features of the relationship between Shamas and Tamana. This may have initially been identified as social norms by some within many relationships, communities and some traditional cultures. However, it is important not to conflate the two and ensure that it is dealt with as domestic abuse appropriately under national guidelines and legislation. This review identified that traditional practices surrounding honour were present in the actions and communications leading to Tamana's death. It is unlikely that this knowledge would have been apparent to any of the services that came into contact with Tamana prior to her death and has only become evident from the subsequent investigation. In understanding and assisting practitioners and communities to identify incidents and deal with the harm caused by honour based crime a robust investigation of the facts leading to the offence being committed should be carried out. A flagging system within national crime recording processes allows all crimes linked to honour to be recorded as such. This review identified that in this case the recorded crime did not flag the link to honour. This omission is not uncommon and is particularly prevalent in more serious crime offences such as murder. In a bid to understand the extent of honour based crimes committed, a fuller review of the facts should be undertaken, then in circumstances where honour is shown to be a factor the report flagged following national crime recording principals. Only by doing this will a clear picture as to the extent of honour based crimes in the UK be understood.

The panel has outlined 4 recommendations based upon the findings of the IMRs and reports submitted.

## **Recommendations from the Review**

The review panel made the following four recommendations from this DHR.

|   | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Organisation</b>               |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Schools should be supported where appropriate, with understanding and recognising cultures and customs which may lead to family conflict, honour based violence and domestic abuse for students from minority communities. This should include support regarding how to appropriately respond. | Kent Education                    |
| 2 | Primary health care staff should be trained in understanding and recognising cultures and customs which may lead to family conflict, honour based violence and domestic abuse for patients from minority communities. This should include support regarding how to appropriately respond.      | Health Care Kent                  |
| 3 | Raise awareness of the supportive services available to young people from different cultural and religious backgrounds through a system of information sharing.  | Kent Community Safety Partnership |
| 4 | To raise awareness of crime recording flagged markers for honour based offences.   | Kent Police                       |