

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

30 March 2015

Dear Cllr Hill OBE,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) overview report for Kent to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The review was considered at the February Panel meeting.

The QA Panel would like to thank you for conducting this review and for providing them with the final overview report. In terms of the assessment of reports, the QA Panel judges them as either adequate or inadequate. It is clear that a lot of effort has gone into producing this report and I am pleased to tell you that it has been judged as adequate by the QA Panel.

The QA Panel would like to commend you on a well considered report which represented the victim well. The Panel felt that the report might benefit from consideration of the following points prior to publication:

Report-specific comments:

- Draw out the elements of coercive and controlling behaviour to adequately capture that domestic abuse is not just physical.
- Consider removing paragraph 6.2a.78 as the Panel did not feel that this added to the analysis of how the review was undertaken (Ref: paragraph 6.2a.78, pg. 23 OR).
- The Panel suggested that the sections on MAPPA/MARAC could be shortened to focus more on how these specifically relate to this case (Ref: section 6.6a and 6.6b, pgs 50-54).
- Clarification is sought around the investigation of the drink driving offence. Make clear that separation does not make the perpetrator incapable of exercising control (Ref: paragraph 8.1.2, pg. 56 OR).
- The report states that 'Harassment and stalking amounting to criminal behaviour, which by their nature are less likely to happen when parties cohabit...'. The Panel requested clarification on the points being made

around stalking and harassment, and cohabitation and the relevance of this statement in this particular case (Ref: paragraph 8.1.3, pg. 56 OR).

- Clarify preventability/predictability to ensure the conclusion follows on from the facts presented.
- Recommendation 14 of the report suggests that the CPS should consider replacing their definition of domestic violence with the cross-Government definition of domestic violence and abuse. While the cross-Government definition is non-statutory, it *is* the definition currently used by the CPS. See <http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/domestic/domv.html#a02>.

Approach to DHRs:

- The Panel considered that future reviews need to ensure an appropriate understanding of stalking and harassment behaviours, and a better understanding of complex VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) dynamics to avoid an oversimplification of the process from non violent abuse to violence to murder.
- The Panel would like to emphasise the role that the voluntary sector can play and that for future reviews, voluntary sector representation should always be included on a DHR Panel.
- The Panel was concerned by the statement contained in 6.2a.94 (page 26 of the Overview report) which stated that the recommendations of previous a DHR have not been implemented and that it is impossible to do so. The purpose of the DHR is to identify *and* implement learning. It is essential that action plans include mechanisms to ensure that lessons are learned from domestic homicides and monitoring processes are put in place to ensure this happens.

Syntactical comments:

- Ensure that all acronyms used in the report are explained.
- Please ensure that any changes made to the OR are reflected in the executive summary as required.

The Panel does not need to see another version of the report, but we would ask you to include our letter when you publish the report.

I would like to thank you once again for providing this report for consideration by the Home Office Domestic Homicide Review Quality Assurance Panel.

Yours sincerely,

Christian Papaleontiou, Chair of the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel
Head of the Interpersonal Violence Team, Public Protection Team