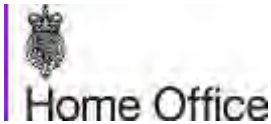


Feedback letter from the Home Office



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Clare Stratford
North Cumbria Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator
Eden District Council
Mansion House
Penrith
Cumbria
CA11 7YG

31 July 2019

Dear Ms Stratford

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report for North Cumbria (Karen) to the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel. The report was considered by the Panel on 26 June 2019.

The Panel would like to thank you for conducting this review and for providing them with the final report.

The Panel found this to be an honest, transparent review which, overall, appropriately catalogues, probes, and challenges agency errors in what was a tragic case. The final report contains a joined-up narrative chronology, demonstrates a sound understanding of domestic abuse, and is written in a way which powerfully represents the voice of the victim. The Panel also noted the strong summary of the children's experiences and asked whether the report could be placed on their records, so they can learn more about the victim's life should they so wish.

The Panel commended the review's efforts to contact the victim's family and the chair's acknowledgment of the contribution from the victim's neighbour who provided particularly insightful information. The Panel felt, however, that it was not clear whether the review had obtained explicit approval from the friend for the quotes attributed to them to be included in the final report. If approval has not already been given, it should be sought before publication.

There are other areas of the review which the Panel felt would also benefit from your further consideration, namely:

- Recognising the potential impact of gender and cultural factors, especially in terms of understanding domestic abuse in Hungarian society and identifying any potential care and support barriers the victim may have faced because of their relatively short residence in the UK. The DHR would have benefited here, for example, from having a cultural specialist on the review panel.

- Providing a more robust challenge where misuse of authority is identified. Paragraph 16.95, for example, noted the police pressure on the victim to report the abuse or be treated as a hostile witness, but could go further in terms of naming specific errors.
- Strengthening the scrutiny of the MARAC process, both in terms of why it was not followed in this instance and identifying potential wider learning on handling emergency cases and quality assuring referral decisions. While the report noted that the MARAC referral was refused by a temporary detective inspector, a stronger recommendation on accountability would be appropriate.
- Clearly listing all the housing options explored and presented to the victim.
- Writing the panel list agency names in full. Providing a brief explanation of the role performed by any of the lesser known organisations involved in this review would also help the reader.
- Including the coroner's inquest and its outcome in the 'parallel reviews' section of the report.
- Providing a full reference, at paragraph 20.8, to 'The multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse, September 2017'. To enable the reader to follow up for their learning, it would help to know whether this is a research or policy document.
- Removing, in accordance with the statutory guidance, the gender and ages of the victim's children from the report to help protect their identity. Further consideration should also be given to whether the date of the victim's death needs to be included in the final report.

The Panel does not need to see another version of the report, but I would be grateful if you could please email the report URL to DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk when published.

The QA Panel feels it is helpful to routinely sight Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) on DHRs in their local area, so I am copying this letter to your PCC for information.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Buckley

Joint Chair of the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel