

Mandi George
Lead Officer
Safe Accommodation & Domestic Abuse
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PE29 3TN

13th February 2024

Dear Mandi,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Louise) for Huntingdon District Council Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 10th January 2024. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The QA Panel notes the positive engagement with Louise's mother and friends who contributed to the DHR process. The tributes to Louise throughout the report help provide a sense of her as a person. There are condolences provided to Louise's family and it is understood the pseudonym for the victim was chosen by Louise's mother and her children.

There were aspects of the report which the Panel felt needed further revision. On completion of these changes the DHR should be resubmitted to the Home Office for review by **13th April 2024**.

Areas for development:

- The date of completion of the review is missing from the front page of the overview report.
- It would be useful if the 'involvement of friends and family section' set out the contribution from family and wider testimonial networks. To better support the structure of the review, the panel might consider summarising, in section 6, exactly who took part in the review. This section as it stands mentions the victim's mother only, it is not until later we learn that a range of friends contributed, but it is not clear how they did this and whether they were offered advocacy support etc.
- The family tribute at page 5 might be better placed right at the start of the review.

- The panel raised the issue of redactions, flagging miscomprehension as to why this was required.
- The overview report contains a lot of quoted policy, facts and figures which, if needed to include for context, should be reduced and checked for accuracy.
- Panel members are stated at 1.35, job titles are missing for both police representatives. This is duplicated in the executive summary.
- At 1.54 'Age difference' is discussed which is confusing as at 1.53 the victim's partner is described as being of a 'similar age' at the time of her death. This requires clarification.
- 3.17 and 3.18 are inaccurate regarding the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS). Right to Know is the option open to the police, and Right to Ask is the option open to Louise. DVDS guidance was placed on a statutory footing under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which should instigate improvements to the volume, speed and quality of disclosures. This is not mentioned in the report and therefore the mention feels out of date.
- There are no specific terms relating to suicide or self-harm – this is an important consideration in a case where the victim has taken their own life. In future reviews relating to suicide, the CSP and panel might consider this line of enquiry. Of note, this is mentioned in the executive summary as being one of the aims of the review, yet the terms do not reflect that.
- In the equality and diversity section there is a discussion around sex and suicide – the Chair and panel might consider drawing on available research on female suicide and its relationship to IPV, for example:
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(22\)00151-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(22)00151-1/fulltext)
- Analysis in 3.22 and 3.23 is confusing and appears factually inaccurate. It states that Louise was assaulted by Paul, but there is only one mention of an assault allegation against the ex-husband in 2015.
- In 3.24, the incidents with Paul would not have reached the threshold for multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC).
- The victim's children were not invited to add to the review; it would be helpful to understand why.
- The date of the victim's previous marriage is included, as well as the date of birth for two of the victim's children. These compromise anonymity. Additionally, it would have been helpful to have chosen gender-neutral names for the children as their gender and ages are disclosed. Footnote 22 also discloses the real name of Louise's mother. All mentions of where the victim worked, the date of death, the children's age/gender should be removed.

- It would have been beneficial to have a public health/suicide prevention representative on the panel, to provide the lens of domestic abuse and increased links to suicidality.
- The chronology should be combined, any additional contacts from other agencies should be added if applicable.
- The key issues are not sufficiently identified in this review because of a lack of probing. The executive summary identifies coercive control and a lack of disclosure, but the panel raised other issues of economic abuse and a lack of routine enquiry in health services (e.g., Louise's interactions with her GP).
- The duration of the relationship is unclear. At points, the review reports four years and eight years in different areas.
- It is not clear why details on the front page of the executive summary are redacted.
- The executive summary directs the reader to the full terms in the overview report and states that the review sets out to '*Explore the specific nature of suicide, and what can be learned from this case to protect others in the future.*' – there is no term or line of enquiry in the full terms of reference in the overview report that relates at all to suicide. The executive summary does not align with the overview report.
- The family should be included in the dissemination list and the CSP might wish to also include the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.
- The Action Plan requires revision in line with Appendix Five of the statutory guidance.
- The CSP might consider adding the final copy of the review to the children's social services file if they now have one. It will ensure they can access their mother's story if they wish to as they get older.
- The report requires a thorough proofread for typos and grammar issues.
- There are typos and spelling mistakes throughout the review.

On resubmission, please clearly indicate where changes have been made by using a different colour font or highlighting the added or amended text in the report. If paragraph numbers have changed, please give revised location of the answer to the feedback comment. Please make it clear in the subject line of your email that the documents contained are revised versions for reconsideration. The deadline for this resubmission is 13th April 2024.

I look forward to receiving an updated report.

Yours sincerely,

Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel