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Dear Katie,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Adult A) Dacorum Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The QA Panel felt that the review is overall sensitive and well written. It opens with condolences and whilst there was limited family involvement, does well to keep the victim at the heart of the review, for example when using a quote from the victim impact statement of Adult A's eldest child. This is a thoughtful and probing review in which the panel has sought expert advice from various organisations such as Latin American Women's Rights Services, For Baby's Sake and Refuge which were chosen to better understand the victim's history. The review also asked supplementary questions of Individual Management Review (IMR) authors, to gain as full a picture as possible.

The review features a good equality and diversity section which explores the protected characteristics, including sex. It also explored gender, language and cultural issues, including discussions about the use of interpreters. There is reasonable exploration of some of the barriers to reporting, such as the victim being a foster carer and the impact this would have had on her profession. The report also appropriately highlights the gaps and makes a relevant recommendation around housing providers reporting anti-social behaviour concerns and safeguarding referrals to children's services for tenants who have foster children. The review also reinforces that separation heightens the risk of domestic abuse which is commended.

The QA Panel felt that there are some aspects of the report which may benefit from further revision, but the Home Office is content that on completion of these changes, the DHR may be published.

### **Areas for final development:**

- Analysis:
  - Whilst financial control is briefly referred to, the economic abuse that Adult A was experiencing needs to be named and recognised fully. 13.15 states that Adult B would try to control Adult A by withholding finances and 13.16 refers to him controlling the family finances. As well as this, the debt that was discovered but not explored by the housing team (14.3) may have been evidence of economic abuse and coerced debt. Adult A had also disclosed to a friend that her share of the selling of the family home in Spain would provide her with the financial independence needed to leave Adult B, and the review also recognises that Adult A losing her income from being a foster carer could have been a barrier for her disclosing experiencing abuse. This all could have been all brought together to recognise the economic abuse and the lack of access to economic resources as a barrier to leaving.
  - This review raises the “bystander” issue, given that others did know of the abusive nature of the relationship. More analysis should be focused on this regarding what people could have done to intervene, including barriers to reporting and specific learning points regarding education on the ways in which people can help for the future. here is evidence of positive practice, the J9 initiative, for example, 16.45, but this is not engaging all those who would benefit.
  - Although there was some analysis and related recommendation around the need for children’s services to explore the nature of the relationship of foster carers, there needed to be further exploration and stronger recommendations in this area. This section could be strengthened with:
    - A) Analysis of the serious safeguarding implications for placing vulnerable babies and children, often those who have suffered neglect and abuse, in the home with a violent perpetrator. The report did not put adequate emphasis on the enormous safeguarding implications for these children. At one point in the report, it was mentioned that Adult A was caring for a 3-month-old baby at the time of her murder, but there was no mention of where the baby was when she was killed or if the baby was safe.
    - B) This section could use more research on routine enquiry and why it is so important to sensitively ask direct questions about domestic abuse and ensuring that women are in a safe space away from their partners when these questions are asked. The related recommendations discuss “exploring the nature of the relationship”

when there should be a firmer requirement for routine enquiry and related training for social workers in carrying this out safely.

- Action Plan, Learning and Recommendations:
  - The action plan has not been completed and much information is missing.
  - The evidence that came to light post-homicide clearly presented professionals with a very different picture of the nature of the relationship. The action plan falls short of identifying all the actions needed to ensure that professionals have the cultural competence needed to progress beyond taking things at face value.
  - The action plan lacks outcomes and timelines and where it is populated, concentrates largely on inputs. Training, webinars and awareness raising are important but to what intended purpose or outcome and how will members of the public be able to assess the progress needs to be included.
  - There is a specific issue in the need to help migrants to the UK gain an understanding on how domestic abuse is viewed in this country and how that approach may differ from the culture in their country of birth. An action around this should be included.
  - In the recommendation section there is a section for learning by 'all agencies'. It would be better if these were attributed to each agency individually to avoid diffusion of responsibility.
  
- DHR Participation:
  - Given that Adult B told a colleague that he thought Adult A was going to leave him the week before the murder, colleagues could have been given the opportunity to contribute to the review.
  - There is no mention of any DHR training for either the chair or the author. If they have completed relevant training, it would be useful to know.
  - There are only statutory services on the panel. Whilst specialist organisations were consulted, it is unclear why these or the local domestic abuse organisation were not on the panel.
  - 6.2 refers to a letter sent to Adult B (presumably to invite him to take part in the review), but there is no further information here whether he declined or whether any more attempts at contact were made.

- Language, Formatting and Anonymity:
  - Whilst the overall tone of the report is sensitive, there are some instances of language being used which masks the perpetrator. For example, 11.10 and 17.6 in the overview refers to Adult A being in an 'abusive relationship' – the perpetrator was abusive. Similarly, 17.1 states 'She lost her life because she made the decision to gain her independence and leave the relationship, a decision which could not be accepted by Adult B.' The victim lost her life because Adult B made the decision to murder her. This can be linked to the risk following separation whilst still naming the perpetrator.
  - There is some specific wording that could be considered inappropriate, for example, 17.6 (page 36) refers to the victim's death as being both tragic and ironic. Whilst the death is undoubtedly tragic, ironic seems like a poor choice of words.
  - 17.1 (page 36) includes a quote from the judge in the trial stating Adult B is 'cold hearted and evil'. This should be removed as infers that this is why he has committed murder when of course it is far more complex than that. If it is not able to be removed then a sentence should be included here that this is not a rationale or valid justification.
  - The phrase "toxic masculinity" could be seen as an insensitive criticism of the Colombian community, and given the extremely helpful, and skilfully articulated, insight into the use of domestic violence and abuse to embed a patriarchal system in societies, it risks detracting away from the insightful description in 11.15. A rephrase should be considered in this paragraph.
  - The date of death should be removed from 1.1, 1.3 and 13.19, only the month and year are required, and the trial dates removed from 2.3 and 13.23.
  - The formatting needs to be addressed throughout and the report should be proofread for typos.
  - The report details BAME. In March 2021, the Commission of Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME.

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.

Please also send a digital copy to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner  
[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,

**Lynne Abrams**

Chair of the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel