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Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (John) for Cumbria Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 23rd November 2022. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The QA Panel was complementary of how this DHR engaged with the victim's family, in particular how they were consulted and the fact a meeting was held to discuss the draft version of the report. The Panel also noted a good use of research in regard to parricide, mental health and interactions with substance misuse.

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:

- Although this was a joint report, the QA Panel commented that it felt more like a Mental Health Homicide Review rather than a DHR, particularly in its tone and format. The terms of reference, findings and recommendations relate overwhelmingly to the health components of the review. To redress the balance, the CSP might consider joint authorship with a domestic abuse expert and following the DHR statutory guidance in relation to style of the report.
- The QA Panel suggest including a combined chronology, as this would reduce repetition of single agency chronologies. The DHR benefits from detailed agency input, which the QA panel commends the author for obtaining,

however a combined chronology would aid in understanding the overall timelines of events. The report would benefit from brevity in regard to findings and recommendations, which are cited twice in the report.

- The QA Panel felt that greater consideration could have been given to the ability of the victim's family and agencies to identify domestic abuse and coercive control. Whilst the report identifies agencies' lack of awareness of inter family violence', it is not explored further. As there are a significant number of homicides where mental health issues are present, the report would benefit from outlining the learnings that relate to better understanding the dynamics of adult family violence and the tactics that family members may adopt to minimise risk. The report states that a number of health professionals in different parts of the health system did not understand the family dynamics or recognise the features of; this learning should be disseminated more widely than the local CSP.
- The QA Panel note some instances of victim blaming language within the DHR which should be amended. For example, on page 68, it states '*staff were concerned that Mr D might be exposed to the risk of allegations of sexual misconduct from the female patient and to manage this he was placed on enhanced observation when she was on the ward*'. It would be beneficial to review how this comment is phrased, making it clear that the concern should have been around the sexual misconduct against the female patient rather than the risk he would be exposed to allegations from her.
- The action plan could be improved to give more clarity on when actions had been completed, e.g. for recommendations 10 -13. The report would also benefit from using the action plan template provided in the DHR statutory guidance.
- The QA Panel suggests amendments are made to ensure anonymity within the report. There is reference to the perpetrator's family member which needs removing to obscure the child's sex. In the perpetrator's mother's statement, the exact date of the homicide is given. Whilst recognising this is the family members exact words, and the family wish to use the victim's real name in the review, it is advised to have the month and year only to increase anonymity.
- The DHR would benefit from an independence statement by the chair and panel member.

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. 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 at 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