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Nuala O'Rourke
Head of Service
Safeguarding and Learning
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Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

4 September 2018

Dear Ms O'Rourke,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report for Stockport ('Sarah') to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 25 July.

The QA Panel would like to thank you for conducting this review and for providing them with the final report. The Panel concluded that this was a good report which does well to capture the spirit and humanity of the victim despite the lack of family engagement in the review. The Panel noted the efforts made by the chair/author to contact the family overseas through various means and praised the offer of specialist advocacy services to assist them. The Panel particularly commended the engagement of the victim's employer in the review, both through providing an IMR and being interviewed, which they agreed has provided an independent view of the victim in the absence of family contact.

There were, however, some aspects of the report which the Panel felt may benefit from further analysis, or be revised, which you will wish to consider:

- Whilst the Panel welcomed the interview with the perpetrator, they were concerned that the weight given to his views in the report could be regarded as overshadowing the limited voice of the victim. They also felt his recollection of events appear to minimise his behaviour. The Panel suggested a shortened version using quotations where appropriate may help provide a more balanced narrative;
- Related to the above point, the Panel questioned the relevance and appropriateness of the perpetrator's sentiments expressed in the paragraph following 4.2.16 (incorrectly numbered as 4.2.1) given he was convicted of her murder;

- The Panel felt the review could have more explicitly recognised that, whilst the dynamics did not appear to meet the definition of honour-based violence, factors around honour and marriage were a feature of this case;
- The Panel could find no exploration around the role of the victim's immigration status and whether it affected her decisions;
- You may wish to draw out more clearly the findings in paragraph 8.1.3 (lesson 3) which the Panel concluded was the clearest indication of the increasing financial independence of the victim, the perpetrator's efforts to keep her dependent and potentially the catalyst to the homicide. To evidence this behaviour, the Panel suggested you may wish to cite research which highlights the increasing risk of domestic abuse experienced by working women whose partners dislike their contact with men whilst working;
- You may wish to review some of the language used in the report which could be regarded as minimising abusive behaviour. For example, "sometimes stormy" (paragraph 4.1.6) and "snapped" (4.2.15);
- The Panel noted that no executive summary was provided in line with the requirements of the statutory guidance;

The Panel does not need to review another version of the report, but I would be grateful if you could include our letter as an appendix to the report. I would be grateful if you could email us at DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk and provide us with the URL to the report when it is published.

The QA Panel felt it would be helpful to routinely sight Police and Crime Commissioners on DHRs in their local area. I am, accordingly, copying this letter to the PCC for information.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Buckley

Chair of the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel