

Suzanne Harris
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County Hall
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25 November 2021

Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Penny) for Somerset Community Safety Partnership to the Home Office. The report was assessed by the Quality Assurance Panel on 27 October 2021.

The QA Panel felt this is well written and easy to follow report that makes efforts to establish Penny's voice and that of her children. The review shared the story of Penny well and outlined the complexities in her life – which included her own mental health challenges. Consideration and attempts to involve the victim's children in the DHR were appropriate.

The analysis and lessons learnt sections are thorough and appropriate and the report also reflected well the number of agencies involved and the support they offered. There was good use of the local substance misuse service Turning Point as a critical friend and the description of what Alex experienced as a child living in a home with Domestic Abuse (DA) does come through within the review.

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:

- The report should be clear that pseudonyms are being used and how these were chosen. The children's genders should not be identified in the report. Section 7 uses a redacted date of birth; it would be easier for the reader to instead use the age at the date of death for all individuals in the table. This makes it easier for the reader to follow but also protects anonymity.
- It is best practice when using acronyms to first use them in full (in the main body of the report) however at present they appear as footnotes. In addition, the

same acronym is used for two separate meanings – RO is used to refer to the responsible officer and restraining orders interchangeably.

- The page numbers in the contents list do not always match to where the text is in the body of the report.
- It is unclear if an initial family assessment was completed by Child Social Care when a referral was received or what the outcome was.
- Penny was clearly a vulnerable adult – there is no consideration of vulnerable adult / adult social care and early intervention/support for her. Was a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) considered under professional judgement after the DA incident as although one incident, there are other factors present that affect the risk level – alcohol, mental health, debt, and child custody.
- It is of concern that a rep from adult social care is not on the panel along with a mental health expert (e.g. Mind) or a suicide prevention group/safeguarding adults board representation. Community and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is also mentioned for Penny's eldest child during the Terms of Reference (TOR) period but they were not invited to participate in the review. Please note for future DHRs.
- The Panel would have liked to see a more specific timeframe in the review. The TOR state from 2011 – 2019 to cover Penny's pregnancy but it is not clearly explained as to why this period is chosen and no contacts are included as to Penny's use of maternity services (a key time for professionals to ask about DA). Pregnancy is not noted as relevant in the equality & diversity section, which it should be if the TOR are including the period Penny was pregnant.
- Section 7 refers to Serious Case Review (SCR) subjects. If this is a joint DHR/SCR this needs to be explained at the beginning of the report and considered throughout and included in the parallel reviews section.
- There are many examples of economic abuse identified within the main body of the report, but these do not get identified and considered in this context e.g. dispute over child maintenance and selling of property. It would be helpful to name these as they arise in the review.
- A thorough proofread is required as there are spelling and typos throughout. The report also needs checking for tenses as some Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) appear to be a direct copy and paste and read as though the victim is still alive.

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.

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