

Lloyd Griffiths  
Corporate Director (Homes & Communities)  
Worcestershire City Council  
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8 September 2022

Dear Lloyd,

Thank you for resubmitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Debra) for South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the QA Panel meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

The QA Panel felt that the DHR was concise, factual, and clear. There is meaningful family involvement, including a pen portrait at the start of the report with the support of Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) and the victim's family provided a portrayal of her with their dissatisfaction clearly stated.

The independence of the Chair and panel members is noted in the report and there is local Women's Aid and substance misuse representation on the panel which are commended. The report also does well to outline the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and cross references other DHRs in the area which share learning around mental health and domestic abuse and downgrading risk

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 development:**

- As a resubmission, the areas for development outlined by the Home Office in the previous feedback letter that have not sufficiently been addressed are:
  - 11.32 The working with people who struggle to engage section needs to be further explored. There is no consideration given as to how to better identify barriers, for example, she did not like the medication she

was on, yet it is not explored how this was responded to and addressed.

- *Revisions have been made to paragraph 12.38 and a new paragraph 12.39 has been added. (CSP response)*

The response now seems to focus on the decision making of the victim and an assumption that a reluctance to engage was unlikely to be overcome whilst Debra was in a relationship with the perpetrator. This lacks any exploration of what professionals/agencies could have done differently to improve engagement opportunities.

- Equality and diversity:
  - This section would benefit from being expanded as it is currently quite vague. It would help to include for both victim and perpetrator of domestic abuse the breakdown of the different protected characteristics e.g. what was their age, race, disability etc. It also states that disability and sex were discussed but does not explain this in any further detail.
  - *Some further details have been added to section 8, Debra's mother was reluctant for too many personal details about her daughter to be added. (CSP response)*

There is now some consideration of mental health issues obscuring agencies identification of domestic abuse. There is, however, no acknowledgement of the relevance of sex as a protected characteristic, with females as primary victims or consideration of research to support this.

- The review discussed the missed opportunity to refer to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) on professional judgement. There had been multiple incidents of domestic abuse reported to police (although they were not investigated) in a short period of time. It would be helpful to see a recommendation around MARAC as a process rather than solely as a meeting. The rationale for not sending through is disappointing – separation is a high-risk factor in domestic abuse so even attending refuge could increase it. This point should also be expanded to cover referrals to support services regardless of MARAC. The panel would have expected to see a recommendation linked to MARAC for all agencies, as mental health services or adult social care did not refer either.
- 16.1 mistakenly dates the Domestic Abuse Act as 2020, when this should be 2021.
- The Action plan remains incomplete with no action required, target dates or progress to date.

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 at [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