



Home Office

Violent and Youth Crime Prevention Unit
2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF

Switchboard 020 7035 4848 Fax: 020 7035 4745 Textphone: 020 7035 8515
E-mail: DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk Website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Carole Gibson
Business Manager - Safeguarding Adults
Safer Communities
Gateshead Council
Civic Centre
Regent Street
Gateshead
NE8 1HH

20 August 2012

Dear Ms Gibson,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review overview report for Gateshead to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel.

The QA Panel would like to thank you for conducting this review and for providing them with the final overview report. The QA Panel judges reports as either adequate or inadequate. It is clear that a lot of effort has gone into producing this report and I am pleased to tell you it has been judged by the panel as adequate. The QA Panel has some feedback in terms of areas of the report that they believed were completed well and also some suggestions for improvement.

The aspects of the report that were judged to have been done well were;

- the report demonstrated a very methodical approach and was completed within the recommended six month timeframe;
- the report was very well presented and set out, with separate chronologies for each agency in the body of the report;
- the appendix showing an integrated chronology listing all contacts sequentially was very helpful;
- IMR authors were interviewed, and;
- the report included good practice by agencies.

It is commendable that the family were invited to be involved in the review and the report also stated that they were given the Home Office leaflets.

The aspects of the report which the QA Panel suggested could be improved were:

- The DHR report stated that agencies “could not have done anything to prevent the homicide” and concluded that “there were no indications to any agencies that Adult A was in danger or at risk of violence from Adult B at any time leading up to Adult A’s death”. It is felt that these statements are difficult to reconcile with the learning points and missed opportunities identified in the overview report. We suggest that the statements around preventability be reworded to perhaps say: “We may never know if the homicide could have been prevented, however, this report has identified learning ”.
- It was noted by the QA panel that when the victim, aged 88 and with Parkinson’s disease, became a missing person, the risk was graded only as medium. The QA Panel queried whether this was appropriate and if this should have been considered high risk. A piece of additional analysis may be required here to assess if this risk grading was appropriate.
- The report states that in 2010 the British Crime Survey “identified that over a quarter of men were the victims of domestic violence incidents”. It is important to remember when quoting this figure to state that it is a yearly figure. It may be appropriate to add that if we consider the lifetime prevalence rates of domestic violence, for women the rates would remain the same, but for men, the prevalence would tend to be reduced.

I would be grateful if you would consider making some minor changes to the wording of the overview report, based on our feedback above, before publication. Thank you again for your efforts in completing this report which we feel is thorough, well set out and an example of effective practice.

Sincerely,

Mark Cooper

Acting Head of the Violent and Youth Crime Prevention Unit