

Dear Mahala,

Thank you for consideration of this DHR. We appreciate the time taken and the high level of scrutiny given to this particular DHR. We do wish to address the comments made by the reader/QA panel as there are some confusing aspects, and some mixed messages. I feel this is important because the family are distressed, and potentially re-traumatised at the actions they have now been asked to take as a result of this critique, and the very long time it is taking to publish the report. It should be mentioned that the DHR panel are also disappointed at the level of scrutiny given to this report and are quite unable to account for it.

It was noted by the panel/reader that the report was well written and analysed, and that there had been good engagement with the family and good knowledge around domestic abuse. The whole DHR panel is disappointed, given this, that things have taken so long, and that the pre QA failed. We now have a re-traumatised family.

So to address your points and our concerns:

1. Pen portrait: Extensive negotiations were gone into with the AAFDA advocate and the family about whether to write a pen portrait. The family decided that they did not want to do that. It was agreed with all of us that I would write something in the introduction. Pen portraits are not compulsory, so there was no need to write in the report or elsewhere that the family didn't want to do this.
2. The biography of the chair has always been put in the main body of the report, and this is seen across many DHR reports. I am assuming this is because the independence of the chair and their knowledge of domestic abuse is crucial. If the guidance is changed and the bio must now go in the appendices then please could that be made clear. However, we have moved it into the appendices.
3. It is stated that we perhaps, should not have included the history of the former partner in the review and started the analysis in 2010. We felt that this history was really important as the behaviours of the perpetrator/killer were repeated. This shows he has a history. The IOPC report had extensive information about the history, and the fact that the history could have had an impact if it had been known by police and used to inform decisions. Because the IPPC was so detailed, we decided the police IMR focused on the relationship with Missy.
4. The next comment questions why a MARAC did not take place in 2009. This is contrary to the previous comments that we should not be analysing the previous partner, and should start at 2010. The reason we did not fully interrogate everything that happened in 2009 is because we were looking at the similarities and history. It is a bit confusing to tell us not to speak of anything before 2010 and then criticise for not going deep enough in 2009.
5. It is stated that in April 2013 Missy suffered a miscarriage. It is clearly stated that Missy did not tell her doctor. This would explain why there is no mention in health records.
6. With reference to the Silent Solution the reader/panel states there should be a recommendation. This was discussed and because the coroner and the IPCC had made such strong recommendations we did not feel it necessary. This is a matter for

debate and we are happy to make a recommendation if necessary. Please see s17.13 and 17.14 where there are considered comments about the silent solution. These comments were discussed with the family.

7. The panel state that we do not address economic abuse and again there is confusion. The comments refer to the perpetrator/killer's former wife and not Missy. We were not analysing in any detail what happened to Marie. As you the QA panel have already stated, analysis of Marie and her relationship to such a level is not appropriate. It was suggested to us that we not talk about her at all. There was no evidence to suggest economic abuse of Missy – that is not to say it wasn't happening, or that many other forms of abuse like sexual, psychological or violent abuse were not happening also. We had no cause to discuss economic abuse of Missy or to make any recommendations. The criminal damage to Missy's car was not linked to the perpetrator at the time.
8. It is stated that I have not discussed every one of the protected characteristics – notably age and sexual orientation. This must be my mistake – I thought that only the relevant characteristics should be discussed. I will look through other DHRs to take some guidance on this as again I feel this is a very small criticism for a report that has already been through a pre- QA process.
9. It has been raised that Sue Haile, who is a part time advocate for AAFDA should state there is no conflict of interest in her activities. A note has been added to the effect that she was not the advocate in this case, a different AAFDA advocate supported this family, who has since retired. This also felt a little over-critical of the independence of the author and her assistant. AAFDA have representation on the QA panel, in the cadre of Readers and on the board of the company running the QA process. I am baffled as to why this was raised.
10. There is a suggestion that Tecsos should have been recommended for Marie. Again – are we supposed to talk about Marie in this report? Tecsos was not relevant to Missy, or was at least as relevant as MARAC, or a panic alarm but these are not mentioned.

I am sure you can feel the frustration in my comments that is felt by myself, but also the family and the DHR panel. I do hope my responses are adequate and that we can progress this overview report.

With kind regards

Jane Monckton Smith