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Menara Ahmed

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Co-ordinator

VAWG and Hate Crime Team

Directorate of Health, Adults and Community

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

 8 June 2021

Dear Menara,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Sajwa) for Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership to the Home Office. Due to the COVID-19 situation the Quality Assurance (QA) Panel was unable to meet as scheduled on 28th April therefore the report was assessed by a virtual process. For the virtual Panel, members provided their comments by email, the Home Office secretariat summarised the feedback and the Panel agreed the feedback.

The QA Panel felt that the DHR is thorough, with the victim’s voice being heard despite the limited familial and friend involvement and condolences being offered to the victim’s friends and family. The engagement with Sajwa’s partner and Amir provides helpful insights. Whilst the attempts to engage the victim’s employer were unsuccessful, the review provides recommendations for employers to review their own procedures around domestic abuse and engagement with DHRs. The review features a strong equality and diversity section, considering all relevant protective characteristics. It also features intelligent and thoughtful recommendations, especially given the lack of overt signs of violence from the defendant towards the deceased.

The review panel members were of the appropriate level of expertise and were independent of the case featuring good representation from the voluntary sector and community expertise, such as Naz Project and London Muslim centre. The review includes good consideration and discussion around economic abuse, intersectionality, and Adult Family Violence (AFV).

The issues facing each agency are set out clearly in the report, key learning identified and systematic issues, including the need to review what is happening around multiple tenancies and increasing awareness of AFV illustrated. The reference to previous DHRs in the review and the input from a DHR expert are also commended as good practice.

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 proofread for typos, including wrong dates, and grammatical errors, particularly in the executive summary.
* Whilst the specific date of death is not included in the report, the report narrows it down considerably making it quite easy to deduce the date of death. This needs to be addressed so that the date of death is not as obvious to the reader.
* The pseudonyms of the victim and perpetrator were mixed up several times.
* The report is very long and hard to follow at times. It is worth considering if certain points are necessary and addressing the structure of the report to provide more clarity.
* It would be useful to see a summary of all the learning from previous DHRs used and how this has been applied.
* The action plan is missing a number of updates and is not outcome focussed.
* There are several references to professionals not having the opportunity to hear from Sajwa about any possible concerns. However, the fact that the professionals concerned, including the GP practice, London Ambulance Service (LAS) and Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), did not make routine enquiries and their lack of professional curiosity is a concern. There should be a recommendation for the GP practice around reviewing their approach to making routine enquiries.
* Barriers to reporting and seeking help could be reviewed more thoroughly, accepting that Sajwa did contact the LAS and MPS, particularly in 2016 about Amir becoming violent after taking crystal meth. This is identified as a missed opportunity. It would be useful to see more exploration of how Sajwa could have been better supported.

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