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30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Sophie,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Laura and Ella) for Gloucester City 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 18<sup>th</sup> August 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 this was a well-written, rigorous and well researched report that incorporates the voice of the family throughout, particularly through the emotional and moving tributes to both victims at the start of the report which help to underscore the scale of the tragedy, setting the right tone for a sensitively conducted review. The Panel also commended the full panel meeting with the family as good practice rarely seen in DHRs. It is easy to follow both the DHR and Safeguarding Children Review elements of the case and the Panel note that the recognition of the need to hear the voice of the child directly is such an important finding in this review. The inclusion of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Executive Business Unit manager on the panel to make sure all sectors of child abuse and child death were included is also highlighted as good practice.

The review also clearly analyses the features of economic abuse. The equality and diversity section of the review highlights the gendered nature of the crime of domestic abuse. The review also sufficiently considered the independence of the chair and report author.

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 family knew something about Ella's unhappiness at the time. It would be useful to understand what they might have found helpful in seeking help or guidance.
- The action plan includes a significant number of actions across the agencies. It would be useful, however, to see explicit reference to the expected outcomes as they all are underpinning input and process improvements. This case raises so many issues in respect to the safety and well-being of women and girls that warrant clear outcomes, ownership against those, milestones identified and the means of tracking out in the public domain.
- Shortly before the murder the younger sibling reported a violent incident in the home to school, but this was not referred on to services. This could be explored further in the report.
- Anonymity:
  - Recommendation on page 110 in the action plan uses initials for Ella (ED) which refer to her surname, which has not been included elsewhere in the report. This needs to be removed.
  - Gendered pronouns for one of Laura and the perpetrator's children are used at 1.1.3 towards the end of the judge's sentencing remarks. This should be removed to improve anonymity.
  - This review has so much learning that it warrants being put into the public domain in some form, subject to the updating of the action plan etc. The identities of Laura's two younger children could be deduced from the fact that Laura and Ella are referred to using their actual names, however, and care should be taken with this. Consideration should be made as to whether it would be possible to publish a suitably anonymised learning report.

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.

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