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Suzanne Harris  
Senior Commissioning Officer (Interpersonal Violence)  
Somerset County Council  
Public Health, B3S  
County Hall  
Taunton  
TA1 4DY

3 January 2017

Dear Ms Harris,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review report for Somerset to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered at the Quality Assurance Panel meeting on 13 December 2016.

The QA Panel would like to thank you for conducting this review and for providing them with the final report. The Panel found this to be a solid report with some understanding of domestic abuse. However, the Panel had concerns with the independence of the Chair given their service in the relevant Police Force at the time of the homicide. The Panel suggested an independent source should have a thorough check of the report ahead of publication (and that this is reflected in the commentary of the Report) as otherwise readers may perceive that the lack of independence has compromised the review.

There were also some other aspects of the report which the Panel felt could be revised, which you will wish to consider before publication:

- The Panel would like the Report to include more explanation as to why the time scale for the terms of reference was chosen;

- The Panel felt it would be helpful to have the terms of reference from the IPCC report to be drawn out in the review;
- Please confirm whether the family were shown the final report prior to being submitted to the Home Office;
- The Panel were keen to see acronyms explained in the body of the report e.g. NMO and OO. ;
- The Panel suggested that you may want to consider including a recommendation for the police around disclosing sensitive personal information about victims (e.g. safe addresses) to perpetrators;
- While The Panel felt the Report represented the victim well, they did ask that you revisit some of the language in the Report which could be perceived as victim blaming (for example references to the victim “refusing” to go into a refuge);
- Please remove the date of death and the gender of the children to increase anonymity;
- The Panel thought that the narrative of the Report clearly indicated that the victim met the statutory definition of ‘homeless’ and suggested the recommendations should be revisited to reflect this status;
- The Panel asked you to consider whether you think recommendations around reviewing housing policies should be captured in the Report and action plan.

The Panel does not need to review another version of the report, but I would be grateful if you could include our letter as an appendix to the report.

I would be grateful if you could email us at [DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) and provide us with both a copy of the final report and the URL to the report when it is published.

The QA Panel felt it would be helpful to routinely sight Police and Crime Commissioners on DHRs in their local area. I am, accordingly, copying this letter to the PCC for Avon and Somerset for information.

You may wish to be aware that the Home Office has published updated Statutory Guidance on the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews which can be found using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>. We have also published key findings from analysis undertaken by Home Office researchers on a sample of 40 DHRs from across

England and Wales completed between 2013 and 2016. The report can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-homicide-review-lessons-learned>

Yours sincerely

**Christian Papaleontiou**  
Chair of the Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Panel