

[REDACTED]  
DCS Office  
County Hall  
Penrhyn Road  
Kingston Upon Thames  
Surrey  
KT1 2DN

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

***Sent via email***

21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

Dear Madam,

**Inquest touching upon the death of [REDACTED] Regulation 28 Report**

I refer to the Regulation 28 Report dated 9 November 2020. Thank you for providing Surrey County Council an extension of time for responding to the Report.

I note the main concerns you have raised at section 5 of the Report and respond as follows;

Points 1-5 relate specifically to the MARAC. Surrey Police are the lead agency and chair the MARAC. Surrey County Council does have a responsibility to ensure that our relevant employees attend and are prepared for MARAC meetings. I am aware that the police are carrying out a detailed review of the workings of the MARAC. Surrey County Council is actively assisting with and contributing to that review from a Children's Services perspective. Surrey County Council is committed to working as required with Surrey Police as the lead agency to effect the necessary improvements.

In relation to Point 6, Surrey County Council recognises the importance of informing agencies involved with a family about the removal of a child. Our practice has strengthened considerably since 2017 and Children's Services has implemented an Improvement Plan in order to secure continuing improvement over time. This includes improving the way in which information is shared with partner agencies. When a child moves into our care we routinely notify our health colleagues and this would ensure that the GP would now be informed. However, this would be the GP for the children, rather than the GP for the parents and we recognise the focus in this situation was on the needs of the mother and her increased vulnerability in the light of the removal of her children. This was a point of learning identified early within the Domestic Homicide Review and action was taken immediately to share this learning across our service and to strengthen practice. We now ensure that when we are making plans to remove children into our care we consider how to manage any increased risk to the parents. If the agencies working with them are part of the children's core group we would always contact them. If they are not we would ask the consent of the parents to contact them, or support them to make contact with them themselves. This would include GPs as well as domestic abuse services or adult services.

Our practice in recognising and supporting the needs of parents has been further strengthened by the rolling out of our new practice model. In circumstances where Children's Services are supporting a family under a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, we have now implemented the Family Safeguarding Model. This was developed for families where there are issues around domestic abuse, adult mental health and substance use and with this we now have adult specialist workers within the Children's Social Care teams. This includes domestic abuse practitioners, domestic abuse officers (seconded from probation), adult mental health workers and drug & alcohol support workers. The focus is to enable parents to meet their needs so that they are able to safely meet the needs of their children. The adult mental health specialists are equipped to understand the behaviours of parents, bring this focus to the work with the family, and to liaise with partner agencies working with parents. The adult mental health specialists also provide training to other colleagues in order to improve the approach to information sharing from the perspective of the parents on a wider basis. These specialist workers will often liaise with GPs or others supporting parents, and were

we to have a similar situation now the actions of these workers would ensure a very different experience for families. They are able to focus on the needs of the parents whilst the children's social worker focuses on the needs of the child. This ensures a far more holistic approach.

All practitioners and managers within our safeguarding teams have been provided with training on the Family Safeguarding Model and completing the parenting intervention programme, in order to focus on the family unit as a whole (including the parents). The implementation of Family Safeguarding has received significant funding from the Department for Education in Surrey and is part of our Improvement Journey. The effectiveness of the model, and the difference it makes to families is being independently evaluated by York Consulting.

I trust this response meets the requirements of the Regulation 28 Notice. However, if there is anything further I can assist you with please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning  
Surrey County Council