

HM Coroner H J Connor
Berkshire Coroner's Office
Blagrove Street
Reading
RG1 1QH

3rd October 2024

Dear Ms Connor,

I write on behalf of the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in relation to paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, in relation to the prevention of future deaths report sent via email to the NPCC dated 13th August 2024.

The notice sets out concerns that arose from the information received during the inquest into the death of Angela Mittal. I am very sorry to read of the circumstances of Angela's death. My sympathies are with her family and friends.

Domestic Abuse (DA) is a priority for the NPCC and key partners and much work has taken place in this area to drive improvements and consistency in the policing response. The College of Policing sets national standards for learning and development for UK Policing and provides guidance and advice in various forms including Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

A programme of work was developed to improve the policing response to DA, including a project to examine existing risk assessment processes for victims of DA, a review of the existing training curriculum and the development of APP for this area of work. In 2015 with the inception of new legislation for the offence of coercive and controlling behaviour, several products were made available on the College learning network (College Learn) aimed at embedding knowledge of the legislation. Using a video briefing, two victims provide an insight of their lived experience of controlling and coercive behaviour, while advice and guidance is also given on the legislation. In addition, forces were provided with a new training guide and content for a half-day classroom session so that there was an option for face-to-face inputs. Although this was not centrally delivered forces were encouraged to deliver against the national curriculum using the specific products available.

Simultaneously, the College of Policing used the DA curriculum to underpin a course for first responders. The DA Matters course is focussed predominantly on understanding, identifying and

responding to coercive and controlling behaviour, the impact of such behaviours on victims, including the clear links to victim suicide and the heightened risk posed by suspects who use coercion and control in their abuse of victims. This consists of a one-day course for responders and a two-day course for 'champions,' those with a more involved, mentoring role. DA Matters was developed with the support of 'Safelives,' (a national service for victims of DA), and other key stakeholders including Women's Aid, Suzy Lamplugh Trust, and other specialist support services. The course was piloted and evaluated in 2016 and a model of delivery, (which included co-delivery with a DA specialist) is promoted through the licensing of the product (essentially outlining the conditions by which forces must use the training course). Safelives, Welsh Women's Aid and Women's Aid are now the licensed providers for the course, delivering to 75% of frontline workforce and training force/partner trainers to continue delivery thereafter. Our providers are part of our Editorial Board whereby we ensure maintenance of the product.

This course is highly regarded and included as required learning for the policing of domestic abuse within the Government Domestic Abuse Strategy. Many forces have received Government funding to deliver the programme, with all but one Home Office force having delivered or under contract to deliver the course.

In 2022 further funding from the Home Office to build on the DA Matters first responder course to deliver learning for investigators of 'course of conduct' offences including coercive and controlling behaviour, stalking and harassment. This learning will be delivered through Hydra, an immersive learning platform which takes officers through cases in a simulated environment. Train the trainer events were tested and delivered and concluded in April 2024 before the course was rolled out nationally.

More broadly DA is embedded in the curriculum for all entry routes into policing with various supporting products available to deliver against the curriculum (for example, areas such as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS), Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs), response to DA /Stalking (Abusive Relationship digital learning, Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA/DASH) are catered for).

Simultaneous to the learning products, the College carried out a review of the implementation of domestic abuse , stalking and honour based crime (DASH) risk assessment 'tool' introduced into policing in 2009. Working alongside Cardiff University the review findings and report prompted the development of a new tool for use by initial responders, more focussed on patterns of behaviour with a focus on coercion and control rather than incidences of specific behaviours. The Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) and aligned training was piloted and evaluated in three forces, with subsequent testing in further forces to ensure effectiveness The evaluation found that the DARA uncovered more cases of coercive and controlling behaviour (CCB), and gave officers more accurate information to use professional judgement to assess and respond to risk. This training also provides the information on the harmful impacts of CCB.

The DARA was launched nationally in November 2022. Unfortunately, implementation has not been as smooth as anticipated due to competing demands for amending the various IT systems used for recording the risk assessment process, however, the NPCC and the College have been working closely with forces and relevant IT providers to drive implementation.

I hope the information provided will go some way to address your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further action or information in relation to my response.

Yours sincerely,



Chair
National Police Chiefs' Council