

Sarah Fines
Domestic Abuse Review Co-ordinator
Cambridgeshire Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership
4 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1BY

21st April 2026

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Ava) for South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Board. The report was considered at the QA Board meeting on 26 February 2026. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Please find the QA Board's feedback in the form below. On completion of the changes suggested the DHR may be published.

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 and the feedback form 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.

The DHR report including the executive summary and action plan should be converted to a PDF document and be smaller than 20 MB in size; this final Home Office QA Board letter and feedback form should be attached to the end of the report as an annex; and the DHR Action Plan should be added to the report as an annex. This should include all implementation updates and note that the action plan is a live document and subject to change as outcomes are delivered.

Please also send a digital copy to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner at DHR@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

On behalf of the QA Board, 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,

Home Office DHR Quality Assurance Board

DHR QA Board Feedback for the Community Safety Partnership

TITLE OF DHR	Ava
COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP	South Cambridgeshire
DATE REVIEWED BY QA BOARD	26 th February 2026
DECISION	Publish with amendments
GOOD PRACTICE COMMENDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are meaningful condolences provided to family and friends of Ava, and it is good practice that the pseudonyms were agreed with by Ava's mother. • It is good practice that one of the review panel members attended a Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide conference, which highlighted significant learning opportunities around importance of wording and subtleties in this area. • The Chair met with the alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse. • There is good reference to leaning from other relevant DHRs.
FEEDBACK FOR FUTURE DHRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider numbering paragraphs so that it is easier to reference feedback. • Please follow the structure of the statutory guidance, for example, details about pseudonyms should be in the confidentiality section and not the background section. • The report contains a great deal of valuable detail, reflecting the complexity of the case. However, the inclusion of large portions of copied-and-pasted emails made it longer than necessary. Future reports could benefit from summarising this information to enhance focus and accessibility.

	DHR SECTION	DHR QA BOARD FEEDBACK (improvements required before publication)
	Title Page	No amendments required.
1	Contents Page	No amendments required.
2	Pen Portrait	It would be helpful for a pen portrait to be included to ensure Ava's voice is heard. There is information at 1.8.1 which could be drawn on if Ava's family decide not to write a pen portrait.
3	Condolences	No amendments required.

4	Confidentiality and Anonymity	No amendments required.
5	Terms of Reference	Please state if Ava's family was involved in developing the Terms of Reference.
6	Equality and Diversity	Please state the age and ethnicity of both Ava and Len.
7	Background Information	<p>There are several concerning details that do not appear to be addressed here and should be added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ava was heard at MARAC as the primary perpetrator yet is described as being subjected to severe abuse. • There is reference to Ava becoming homeless after being evicted from the hostel. This was a week before her ex-partner was to be released from prison and she was highly fearful of him. It is not clear why she was evicted as the narrative describes Len forcing her to take him there and Ava immediately disclosing this and asking another resident to call the police. • It is also not clear if the hostel was a specialist in domestic abuse. Please clarify if alternative accommodation was found for her, and if the hostel was a specialist domestic abuse service.
8	Combined Chronology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chronology is very detailed but also holds some analytical content. Please consider keeping this section factual to allow for analysis in the relevant section. • The chronology would benefit explaining that the Ava and Len must be viewed through the lens of coercive control and trauma.
9	Overview	No amendments required.
10	Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis at section 4.4 could also reference language used by professionals which is not trauma-informed and understanding of coercive control, such as at 3.11 where Ava is described as 'burning bridges' as well as 'playing down' risk. • Section 4.6 could consider how offering to rehome Len and Julian could have played into Len's coercive control using their child. This may have increased Ava's sense of helplessness and her lack of trust in agencies to support her and keep them safe. • Section 4.19 could reference joint multi-agency training which would increase understanding of the different roles agencies hold and build relationships which would help facilitate joint-working in the way this review has identified as important.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please clarify if there is any evidence of the impact of awareness raising as outlined at 4.21 – for example, an increase in self-referrals. • As set out above, the inclusion of large sections of correspondence, detailed operational text and copied information from other sources makes it somewhat hard to navigate. It may be helpful to review this section and focus on summarising only the most relevant points, without repetition which would help reduce the overall length of the report.
11	Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At section 5.4, the point about multiple social workers should also include how this would have made it difficult to build trust with Ava. Please consider including this. • At section 5.6, it should be noted that non-statutory agencies can provide support to mothers whose children have been removed from their care. Please consider including this.
12	Lessons learnt and recommendations	Lesson one – Stop and Think should include a domestic abuse specialist as per the review comments about the difficulties around counter-allegations. Please consider including this.
13	Timescales	No amendments required.
14	Involvement of family / friends / community	Please state whether the Home Office and AAFDA leaflets were shared.
16	DHR contributors	No amendments required.
17	DHR Panel	Please could the author clarify that the panel members were independent.
18	DHR Author	No amendments required.
19	Parallel Reviews	No amendments required.
20	Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please add the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to this list. • Please state whether Ava’s family will get a copy of the report, if you have spoken to Ava’s family about key dates to avoid publishing the review and if you have ascertained whether the family will need any support.
21	Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure that completion dates and updates are added prior to publication. • One of the single Probation actions is ‘That where evidence of Domestic Abuse that Spousal Risk Assessment is undertaken in all circumstances’. The Domestic Abuse Policy Framework already states that “SARA is completed in every

		<p>case where intimate partner abuse has been identified” so the practice in this case did not adhere to policy. Please clarify this point in the action plan and in section 4.13.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Single Agency Recommendations for Children’s Social Care includes ‘raise awareness of the joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Suicide Prevention Strategy, with consideration for training to be offered to practitioners’. However, there is missing information compared to other areas of the action plan. Please ensure this is added.
22	<p>Has there been a request to withhold publication?</p> <p><i>If Yes, include the reason for the request. Is it proportionate and appropriate?</i></p>	<p>No – although consideration may be needed with regard to Ava’s young child.</p>
23	<p>Any other comments</p>	<p>Please add page numbers to the executive summary.</p>