

Executive Summary

Domestic Homicide Review into the death of Ms FC

Introduction

1. This Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) examines the circumstances surrounding the sudden unexpected death of Ms FC in Wandsworth. We know that Ms FC died sometime between her last contact with her mother on the Saturday (29th June) afternoon and the call to police on the Monday (1st July) morning. On 1st July 2013 at 10am police were called to the home of Ms FC following an emergency call from her ex-boyfriend, Mr HS, to report that there had been a stabbing and that he believed the occupier was dead. He had stabbed Ms FC 26 times with a multi tool which he called a Swiss army knife. Her multiple stab wounds spread over her body were consistent with an attempt to defend herself. He initially told police that he had stabbed her because he thought she was having an affair and his defence case rested on the contention that he had snapped when he found out about the new man in her life and that her relationship with him was over.
2. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter with diminished responsibility but this plea was not accepted and he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. The judge accepted that the murder was not premeditated otherwise the sentence would have been for 25 years.

The Review Process

3. This summary outlines the process undertaken by the Wandsworth Domestic Homicide Review Panel in reviewing the murder of Ms FC.
4. The Metropolitan Police made a recommendation to the Wandsworth Community Safety Partnership (WCSP) that a Domestic Homicide Review take place, as this homicide met the criteria for a review whereby the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom he/she was related or with whom he/she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship'. The WCSP took responsibility for this review as prescribed by relevant legislation and guidance, appointed Patrick Watson as independent chair and author of this report and instigated the forming of a panel consisting of suitably qualified members. A full list of panel members is included in the full report. At the request of the police the review was paused until after the trial which concluded on 19th March.
5. The Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) panel commenced on 18th September 2013, (working within the Home Office Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicides), to establish what lessons are to be learnt to prevent domestic violence and abuse homicides and improve service responses. DHRs are not enquiries into how the victim died or into who is culpable, that is a matter for coroners and criminal courts, respectively to determine as appropriate. The rationale for the review process is to ensure that agencies are responding appropriately to victims of domestic violence and abuse by offering and putting in place appropriate support mechanisms, procedures, resources and interventions with an aim to avoid further incidents of domestic homicide and violence. The review also assesses whether agencies had sufficient and robust procedures and protocols in place, which were understood and adhered to by their staff.

6. The DHR panel contacted a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies regarding this review to ascertain any involvement they may have had with the victim or perpetrator. A list of all the agencies contacted is included in the full report. Of all those contacted only the Metropolitan Police had interaction with the victim or perpetrator to submit. We collected data from the GPs of the victim and perpetrator. In addition we carried out colleague interviews at her place of work and interviewed the Head of Human Resources to obtain information on workplace policies for staff. We invited Victim Support Wandsworth to submit a statement setting out the support mechanism currently available to victims and to make recommendations for their enhancement.
7. Family members of the deceased were contacted and given the opportunity to participate in this review.
8. Terms of Reference (ToR) were agreed by the panel and these will be set out in greater details below where they will be subjected to an analysis stage.
9. The MPS, as the only agency with any involvement with the victim or perpetrator, was required to:
 - a) Provide a chronology of their involvement with Ms FC and Mr HS during the time period (1st January 2007 to 1st July 2013) agreed by the panel.
 - b) Search all their records outside the identified time periods to ensure no relevant information was omitted.
 - c) Provide an individual management review if necessary: identifying the facts of their involvement with Ms FC and/or Mr HS, critically analysing the service they provided in line with the specific terms of reference; identifying any recommendations for practice or policy in relation to their agency.

Background: The victim – Ms FC

10. Ms FC was a white British female aged 40 at the time of her death. Friends and colleagues described her as a very well educated and highly intellectual woman. She gained a BA in languages from Cambridge in 1995, an MPhil in European literature two years later followed in 2003 with an MSc in Public Policy and Management from London University.
11. Ms FC lived in rented accommodation in various locations in London until 2005/06 when she bought a small studio flat in South London. She was not cohabiting with Mr HS who lived in North London. Her father attached some significance to her purchasing a property in South London and speculated retrospectively that she wanted to separate herself from Mr HS who lived in North London.
12. She held a range of senior positions in the public sector managing a variety of research and organisational development projects where her strategic skills were utilised. She was clearly seen as a high flier who would excel at whatever tasks she would take on. She demonstrated a strong commitment to public service and in standing up for the rights and interests of those who were less well off or in need. She worked as an external consultant with a London local authority from 2007 to 2009. In 2009 she was recruited as a full time employee by the same local authority. At the time of her death she held the position of joint SSSSSSS. She was at heart a strategic analyst or problem solver who developed policies and solutions to high level problems.

13. After collecting a great deal of information from family, friends and colleagues we were left in no doubt that she was universally considered a very caring and compassionate woman who always put the welfare of others at the top of her agenda of priorities. One friend described her as “an extraordinary person based on her levels of empathy and sympathy for others. Very selfless”. She had a strong yearning to have children preferably her own but she also researched options such as adopting or fostering.
14. When discussing Ms FC with friends and colleagues there was one consistent theme that was voiced every time and this was that despite her friendliness and caring she was a very private person. She guarded her private life and would always subtly turn conversations around away from discussions about her and towards how others were doing. Her life appeared to be compartmentalised and this was particularly true in respect of her relationship with Mr HS. Despite a relationship stretching twelve years it was surprising how few of her friends or colleagues had actually met him or knew anything about him. She always wanted her family to have a positive image of Mr HS and concealed the negativities of the relationship from them.
15. Throughout this report there is a recurring theme of Ms FC being very private about the nature of her relationship with Mr HS. We saw this as her way of coping with the situation she found herself in. To live with domestic violence can be extremely emotionally demanding and draining and many women cope with the strain by developing coping strategies. Keeping her problems and concerns to herself was her way of keeping this problematic relationship self-contained and partially controlled by excluding others.
16. In addition, it appeared to us that not actively pursuing a path of resistance and retaliation (likely to trigger violence against her) was a coping strategy for keeping safe because she knew there would be consequences.

Background : The perpetrator – Mr HS

17. Mr HS was born in 1967 and was aged 46 when he murdered Ms FC. His mother was from Sierra Leone and his father was from Uganda. His father arrived in the UK from Gambia in 1962 with “only a suitcase and the clothes on his back”. Mr HS had three siblings – one brother and two sisters. He was born in the UK and was Black British.
18. Both his mother and brother had mental health problems and each had been sectioned and detained under the Mental Health Act. The date of his mother’s sectioning is not known but his brother was sectioned in 2005. His mother had an affair when he was 15 and this was the beginning of the breakdown of the family. The affair was taking place within the family home and he witnessed it taking place. He recalled that this was the beginning of the end for the family and he hated his mother for that and blamed her for destroying the family relationship. His mother returned to Sierra Leone two years later and died in 2001. He described his mother’s behaviour as revealing to him the aspects of trust and betrayal that he was later to attribute to Ms FC when he felt he had been let down.
19. When Mr HS was 14 his father was diagnosed as having an asbestos disease and was in ill health. His father could not cope on his own when his wife left the family home and two siblings were put into boarding school. Mr HS contended that the breakup of the family led to his siblings “having problems with the law”.

20. At aged 17 he found himself in the position of having to try to keep the family together. He wanted to improve himself and worked hard and determinedly on this. He went to further education classes and on to university gaining a long range of engineering and electrical qualifications and gained a MBA in 2005. He was someone who clearly worked hard to improve himself in life and given his troubled childhood this was a considerable achievement. He worked for London Underground as a signal engineer and left in 2001 to join a consultancy firm specialising in underground railways. He left this company in 2006 and joined another consultancy firm. His father who he described as his inspiration died in 2004 and this had a tremendous impact on him.
21. He set up a limited company, AAAA, in 2007 to work for himself. Ms FC became the company secretary as the rules at this time required that this position was filled. He held 51% of the ownership with Ms FC holding 49%. Ms FC later worked as a consultant for a local authority under the umbrella of AAAA (for tax purposes) for a period before she became a full time employee of the Council. She resigned from the company in March 2009 and had nothing further to do with it since that date.
22. When working as a consultant Mr HS was highly paid and some of his payment slips indicated an annual salary in excess of £100k. Under his own limited company his finances were not so stable and at times he struggled to find work and had periods of unemployment. It was conjectured at the trial that Mr HS overestimated his own skills and ability and this was not reciprocated by others who were in a position to offer him work.
23. He was described as a very intelligent, hardworking and calm person by his boyhood best friend (PB). He described him in his witness statement as a calm person, not the type to lose his temper quickly or be violent. Another friend (GW) also spoke up for him at the trial describing him as a kind person, always wanting to do things for other people. Usually calm but if you pressed the wrong buttons then he might become less calm.
24. He had married in 1996 and was later divorced (finalised in August 2000). This failed marriage is referred to in more detail later in the report.
25. He bought a flat in North London in 1998 and lived there until 2011 when he rented it out as he was planning to take up a two year employment contract in Australia. He experienced problems getting the flat vacated at the end of the lease period.
26. Mr HS had been in another unsatisfactory relationship before he met Ms FC which resulted in marriage followed by separation one year later. His former wife was reluctant to testify and did not want her details to be released and requested no contact. We respected this desire not to be involved and have only reported events here that were referred to in open court. We felt it was important to include details of this failed relationship as it demonstrated that the abuse of Ms FC was not the first time that he had abused a female partner and in this context Mr HS was a repeat abuse perpetrator. We have included details of this previous abusive relationship that the perpetrator was in because a history of abuse is a prime indicator that it will happen again.
27. The relationship was difficult and was described as volatile and tempestuous. It lasted six years and ended in a marriage that almost immediately failed. We heard that he was a controlling man who was prone to outbursts of ill temper, lacking in emotional intelligence with fixed points of view. He was volatile and prone to arguing, something she dealt with by shutting herself

away in the bedroom with the door locked. He broke the door down on one occasion when she refused to open it. He never physically assaulted her during the relationship. She described how his short temper meant it was like “living with a giant toddler at times in terms of temper tantrums”. He controlled her financially. Friends did not come to the wedding because they did not agree that she should marry him.

28. In terms of why she married him, she stated that she did not have the strength of character at the time to pull out. One morning she decided that this was not how she wanted her life to be and developed an escape plan because she knew he was possessive and would never agree to end the relationship. She got him to agree to a month apart to refocus and reinvigorate their relationship but she knew that once she had left she was never coming back.
29. He made contact persistently at her work and because of his behaviour she was forced to resign from her job. Her work and health suffered. He would contact her friends and hassle them and would turn up at places he knew she was going to. She met a new partner and left London as the behaviour of Mr HS had become so irrational that she feared he would harm her or her new partner.
30. There was one incident of physical violence but this was when the relationship had ended. She went back to the flat to collect an electronic organiser. He had accessed this and had contacted friends etc. to gather information on what she was doing and where she was going and searched for the names of other men. He grabbed her by the throat and held her down on the bed with his hand over her throat. He could not take rejection. She remained passive and he eventually let her go. She did not report this to the police and she just want to get away and live a normal life.

Narrative Chronology

31. It has not been possible to develop accurate dates for the events that took place because of the lack of official records and the need to have reliance on the memories of friends going back over a very long period.
32. They met in Spring 2001. They met on the “Tube” and Ms FC was slightly embarrassed about how they had met on the escalator. Mr HS described it as a “whirlwind romance” and “I was smitten”. By 2003 the relationship had started to turn sour and Ms FC wanted it to end. An incident was experienced separately by two friends who she telephoned to ask for help moving out of Mr HS’s flat. She said that she needed to move out of his flat urgently and secretly when he was at work, because she felt unsafe living with him in his flat. She did not want to do the moving out alone because she was frightened of what he would do if he arrived back in the middle of her packing up. It was understood by the friends that he intimidated her physically and psychologically and that she was in danger. She spoke in whispered conspiratorial tones as if to avoid being overheard. One of the friends helped her moved and checked later that day that everything was alright but Ms FC did not want to talk about it. She was very embarrassed. Her friend asked if he had hit her and she said no but added that he had an explosive temper. After this the friend found that any discussion about Mr HS was a taboo subject.
33. The relationship was back on again before long (dates uncertain) but seems to have ended again in 2004. Mr HS admitted that this separation was due to the intensity of problems he was facing and she made the break. There followed a pattern of the relationship being on/off. Around this

time Ms FC discussed her relationship with a friend (ES) and said she was very unhappy and wanted to end the relationship and how he was jealous of her and how he wanted to control who and when she saw people. How he had a temper. She had lost confidence in herself in the relationship but she wanted to end it gently without hurting him.

34. The next most significant and serious break in the relationship was in 2009. Ms FC discovered he had been using online dating and told her friend that she had made a decision to tell him that the relationship could not continue and had decided to get a friend to help her move out as she was scared to do it on her own. Around the same time in March 2009 she informed her friend and line manager KJ of financial issues with Mr HS involving the company AAAA she jointly owned with him and how he was controlling the money held by the company and not allowing her access. Mr HS started to hassle officers at the Council claiming they did not process Ms FC's invoices fast enough and threatening court action which caused Ms FC to be very apologetic and embarrassed and to admit she was anxious because he was being difficult and controlling.
35. Friends and colleagues recalled Ms FC confiding her concern about the relationship and how he was threatening and had been making abusive phone calls and sending texts to her phone asking her to come outside the building to meet him. She said that she felt "boxed in". AQ told of an incident when Mr HS had kicked down Ms FC's front door and that she had to get the locks changed as they had been damaged but could not afford this work because he would not let her have any money. AQ advised her to take out an injunction but Ms FC said that the thought of going to court and having to talk about her personal problems publicly put her off this course of action. AQ told how Mr HS would come to the Town Hall reception and/or wait outside the building for her. To stop him following her Ms FC would leave the office at random times and take different routes to try and avoid him. She would also vary the times she came to the office. Friends of Ms FC recalled that during this period she was clearly stressed and looked it. Her hours of work were erratic and she was not her usual focussed self. Her level of concentration was not as good as she appeared pre-occupied. She had good supportive work colleagues who gave her some space during this stressful period. She had established a good solid work reputation and this stood her in good stead to the extent that work colleagues speculated that anyone else other than her would have had their performance questioned.
36. Ms FC contacted her father who she was now re-acquainted with and asked if she could come and stayed with him because Mr HS was harassing her by hanging around outside her flat and workplace and she felt frightened of him and did not feel safe at home.
37. At the end of March 2009, Ms FC asked a lawyer friend for some advice about the problems with AAAA and told how her "ex-partner" was refusing her access to funds and related that he had threatened to kill her. He advised her to report the threats to the police. Ms FC appears to have taken the advice to contact the police and reported a domestic related incident but she did not want Mr HS contacted by police and refused to provide his telephone number. He had not made threats to physically harm her but had made many calls and sent emails to her. The content of the threats were him texting – "Don't think you are safe". She did not want to press charges and simply wanted police to be aware of this harassment and would call back if the situation escalated.
38. She confided to a friend/colleague that she worried about his mental health. She spoke of him as a liability, as someone who was damaged and who was not well connected socially.

39. We know that they were back together again in 2010 but the difficulties were not fully resolved. There were examples of him becoming paranoid about what Ms FC was getting up to, expressing jealousy and seeking to control and manage her relationship with others. SV told how in 2010 he had received a strange email purporting to come from Ms FC which said that he had made inappropriate remarks and advances and she wanted to cut all relationships and communication with him and court action was threatened if he persisted. SV, shocked by this email, contacted Ms FC and she told him that Mr HS had hacked into her computer and sent the email. We also learned that he was paranoid about her friendship with another ex-colleague (JK), displayed passive aggressive behaviour when they met and tried to get her to abandon the friendship. Ms FC asked him not to mention her or tag her on Facebook because Mr HS was looking at any social media involving her.
40. He began to contemplate a new start working abroad and we were informed there was a little friction between them when they were talking about emigrating. Her friend SO told of a discussion about whether she should go to Australia where Mr HS was planning to work on a two year contract. They talked about her job in London and about how she would be so far away from all her friends and family. She gave the impression that she did not really want to go and by the end of this discussion she had resolved that she would not go to Australia. In a separate conversation with her friend QM she alluded that she felt trapped and still seemed embarrassed talking about her situation. She mentioned that Mr HS was going abroad and expressed huge relief that she could have a life without him.
41. A long standing friend ((ES) of Ms FC told of a spa weekend away with her in East Grinstead in January 2010 and how she received a phone call from Mr HS who he said that he wanted to establish the circumstances leading up to them going away for the weekend – who was there, who paid for it etc. She felt that he was checking up on Ms FC who was highly embarrassed when told of his call.
42. The emigration to Australia was set for April 2011 and the plans were made for them both to go. Mr HS had put all his belongings in storage and rented out his flat in North London unfurnished. Ms FC's ticket had been booked and she had given him the money. Approximately 48 hours before departure she told him that she had doubts about going so far away from family and friends and she was not going to Australia. There was no evidence that Ms FC had ever intended to go to Australia as she had not made any arrangements about her flat if she had gone, not resigned her job and no farewell event was planned. Friends speculated that this was an escape – with him gone she could get on with her life.
43. Mr HS did not want to be in Australia without her and returned to the UK four weeks later. His flat was rented out and his possessions were in storage. He had nowhere to live and moved into Ms FC's studio flat. She rearranged her belongings to fit the two of them into quite a small space and moved some of her possessions into storage. Around this time some of her close friends, mindful of her yearning for children, begged her not to have children with Mr HS. "We were terrified that XXXX might get pregnant. This would allow Mr HS to exert more control over her life". They feared that if she had a child with him she would never be able to get away from him.
44. There was a plan for them both to move into his flat when he regained his furniture from storage as it was bigger and he drew up a spreadsheet with 32 tasks to be completed to enable the relocation. They moved into his flat on 18th September 2012 without his furniture etc.

becoming available. He noticed among the belongings she brought with her some papers on internet dating and this sparked off a row and he had an “emotional outburst”. This outburst was too much for Ms FC and she returned to her own flat after one day. They split up again and this lasted for a number of months.

45. Around this time in September 2012 Ms FC visited her brother and at the end of the evening confided to her sister in law (HO) about his extreme rages and explosive temper which could be sparked off by the slightest thing and could lead to him wanting to beat people up or fight. Her sister in law was surprised to hear about this side of Mr HS’s personality because she (Ms FC) had previously always been very protective of him and did not want to put people off him. The sister in law felt that Ms FC admitted to something of this nature because she was sure that the relationship with him was over and no longer had to protect the image people had of him.
46. This split lasted several months. In October 2012 Mr HS managed to get use of the assembly hall attached to her work on the subterfuge of using the stage for a romantic gesture and arranged for Ms FC to be lured there on the pretext of a meeting. Ms FC found it highly embarrassing and emailed the venue manager within minutes of leaving to apologise for putting her in the middle of their situation. That afternoon Ms FC uncharacteristically told a number of senior staff (who were also friends) about how Mr HS had arranged the scenario in the assembly hall and how she was concerned about his mental health as he looked in a bad state. She telephoned JK the next day after the assembly room incident as Mr HS was hanging around outside her flat and he suggested contacting the police and getting a restraining order as he saw this as harassment but she said that she wouldn’t as she was concerned as to the police attitude given that Mr HS was black and also about the things she would have to disclose in order to get an injunction.
47. In 2013 they appeared to be back together although most friends and family were of the impression that they were not together and the relationship was over. Ms FC signed up to Blues Match which was an online dating website for Oxford and Cambridge graduates and she met LA on this site in March 2013. She told him about her previous relationship with Mr HS which she said had ended because she could not take any more of his negativity. He took everything even accidents very personally. And always wanted to blame others rather than take any responsibility himself. He was an angry man and all this wore her down.
48. On 12th June 2013 they were having a Skype conversation late in the evening and as they were talking he heard a loud bang from inside her flat and Ms FC suddenly slammed the screen down after looking up to the side. We know retrospectively that Mr HS came back earlier than expected and surprised her. Because he (LA) had heard the loud bang he was very concerned and dialled the local police using 101 (rather than 999 in case he was overreacting). The Metropolitan Police were very reassuring and told him they said they would send someone round to check on her but unfortunately Ms FC had never told him where she lived other than in South London and he could not give the police an address. She contacted him later to say that everything was okay and then sent him an email on Friday 14th June 2013 in which she told him for the first time about Mr HS staying at her flat. She was apologetic and said she wanted to be open with him. She explained that he had been staying at her flat on the sofa while his flat and some other issues were been sorted out. She made the point that it was not “friends with benefits” or anything like that meaning that she was simply helping him out and that it was not a sexual relationship. She added that she now regretted helping him because he was unpredictable and suspicious about late texts or emails and had a history of contacting her friends. On 22nd June 2013 Ms FC downloaded a document on how to end a controlling

relationship.

49. Around this time (23rd June 2013), unbeknown to Ms FC, Mr HS searched her mobile phone and copied all the texts between her and LA to his mobile. This took place at least one week before her death. This conflicted with his 'confession' that he killed Ms FC when he lost control after finding out that she was seeing someone else.
50. Mr HS often covertly recorded conversations using his computer and a memory stick. On Monday evening 24th June 2013 he recorded a two and a half hour conversation with Ms FC which the police found when they searched the flat. It was more of a controlling monologue than a two way discussion. He claimed at his trial that he was unaware that the recording had started and concluded that it must have started accidentally but police uncovered that he had logged on to his computer on Sunday 30th June 2013 and changed the name of the recording. The conversation seemed like an attempt to mentally wear her down into submission. Everything that had gone wrong was her fault. The recording was played in court. The recording showed that he still believed they were in a full relationship and she did not say anything to contradict this.
51. LA and Ms FC had arranged to meet on Tuesday 25th June 2013 but he received a text message from her about 8am which went along the lines of "I am sorry HS found your texts, been up all night talking. I am going to bed now". This was followed by an email that said that HS had taken her phones and computer and that she could not make contact. Two days later Ms FC telephoned LA as she left work at 6.48pm and this conversation continued until she reached home. It was a long and serious conversation. She told him that she had a three stage action plan to encourage Mr HS out of her flat and make him realise it was over.
52. During this conversation she made two further significant points which worried and concerned LA. She mentioned that Mr HS had found a photograph of her and he had been upset and took offence because she looked happy. The second point of concern was that Ms FC would not arrange another date as she was sure that Mr HS would follow her if she went out. LA reflected on this and sent her an email advising her to walk away if there was any hint of threat. He received a very short response which simply said "Got to be really quick, am OK".
53. On Saturday 29th June 2013, Ms FC met her mother for lunch in South London around midday and they spent a few hours together. She was clearly very bubbly and happy and spoke a great deal about LA and was very happy and open about the new relationship. She did not mention Mr HS at all on that occasion and her mother was unaware that he was staying at her flat and understood that the relationship had ended some time ago. Sometime between 3 and 4pm they said their goodbyes and each went their respective ways and this was the last recorded contact that anyone had with her before she was brutally murdered by Mr HS.
54. Mr HS's defence case rested on the contention that he lost his self-control and snapped when he found out about the new man in the life of Ms FC and that her relationship with him was over. The prosecution's case was that this was just an overblown description of circumstances which may have been difficult for him but were no more than many people have to contend with and suggested this was no more than a possessive and controlling man losing his temper when confronted with an unpalatable reality that she had finally found the words to tell him it was over.

55. The police were able to unravel some important facts about this weekend which undermined the facts put forward by the defendant that he had acted on impulse after learning about LA. He told police he had produced a five page document setting out his relationship with Ms FC and it ended with the following paragraph – “She stressed there was no one else involved and was only about us. But soon I found her phone with text from a ‘L’. She was not telling the truth. I asked who was ‘L’. She turned cold all of a sudden and said it is none of my business as we were over. I lost it. I grabbed the Swiss army knife and stabbed her.” The evidence uncovered by the police showed that he had copied her texts messages at least seven days beforehand and additionally the content from the covert recording revealed that he was aware of the new relationship from that date. His document – My life with XXXX ... was referred to in court as “an essentially false account of what had happened” and also as “an attempt to rewrite history”.
56. The document was supposed to be a confession setting out the background to what he had done but the evidence from his computer showed that he had started drafting this document up to a week before the murder and it went through approximately 28 different versions as he polished it. He renamed it, corrected spelling, and used the thesaurus to find better more appropriate words. One version, subsequently changed, started – “I write this with a heavy heart.”
57. The police were able to fill in some of the gaps between the murder and him notifying them which illustrated the actions of a very clear headed man who was putting his house in order. He attempted to clean up the murder scene and washed the walls and floor but forensics were still able to clearly establish the blood trail. He put various items including her clothing in black bin bags and put them out for the rubbish collection (the rubbish collection had already taken place and the bin bags were still in place when the police arrived). He undressed Ms FC and put her body in the bath and washed it. He said that it seemed the right thing to do – “I was on autopilot.” He polished his confession – “My life with XXXX, a woman of many faces” and downloaded an Oscar Wilde poem, ‘The Ballad of Reading Gaol’, which includes the verse: ‘Yet each man kills the thing he loves... The coward does it with a kiss, the brave man with the sword’. The police told at his trial how he seemed to be putting his house in order. Among other things he did before calling the police included researching online about how to write a will. He paid cheques, wrote letters. He went to the nearby ATM at the local supermarket and withdrew £160 in cash. He contacted his sister by text asking for her bank details and full postal address and then sent £500 to her bank account. There was also a message that he would need her help soon. He telephoned her and told her to get a pen and paper. He said he was terminally ill and did not have long to live. He was calm and spoke in a normal voice. He sent her an email with the title – “XXXX, a woman of two faces”. At the end of the email he had written “I have stabbed her”.
58. At the trial the defence produced a psychiatric assessment of him which showed a number of negative personality traits such as entitlement, grandiosity, possessiveness, lack of empathy which the panel saw as being similar to the characteristics of abuse perpetrators.

Analysis of the terms of reference

59. The three ToRs relating to communications and working together are taken together because of their interrelationship. 1) *Communication and co-operation between different agencies involved with Ms FC and/or Mr HS.* 2) *Identify lessons to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies worked together to safeguard the victim and her family.* 3) *Identify what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result.*

Analysis The MPS were the only statutory agencies with any involvement with the victim or perpetrator and therefore issues of communication or cooperation did not arise.

60. **ToR** *Establish whether the agencies or inter agency responses were appropriate leading up to and at the time of the incident on 27th December 2012.*

Analysis The MPS is the only agency that this ToR applies to and their response was appropriate in the circumstances and complied with the policies and procedures of that service. We looked at whether any of their actions could have been done differently or better and concluded that they could not be improved.

61. **ToR** *Establish whether agencies have appropriate policies and procedures and associated monitoring procedures to respond to domestic abuse and to recommend any changes as a result of the review process.*

Analysis The IMR from the MPS confirmed that appropriate policies and procedure in terms of domestic abuse were in place at the time of this incident and were complied with. In terms of Ms FC's GP surgery we were disappointed to hear that a large medical practise in central London did not have any policies, procedures or training in place relating to domestic abuse. Similarly the local authority employer of the victim did not have a workplace policy on domestic abuse.

62. **ToR** *Review the care and treatment, including risk assessment and risk management of Mr AR in relation to his primary and secondary mental health care.*

Analysis Mr HS has no history of mental illness and therefore received no care or treatment in relation to his mental health and accordingly was not risk assessed.

63. **ToR** *Seek to establish whether the events of 27th December 2012 could have been predicted, prevented or the likelihood of it happening could have been reduced.*

Analysis Having reviewed all the information available to us we reached a unanimous conclusion that this homicide could not have been predicted or prevented. We could not identify any action or activity that if done differently would have lessened the chances of it happening.

64. **ToR** *Examine whether information sharing and communication within and between agencies regarding the family of Ms FC was effective and comprehensive; did it enable joint understanding and working between agencies; were all appropriate agencies including the day centre, housing authorities and mental health authorities involved in the information sharing.*

65. **ToR** *Examine whether the sharing of information was sufficient to facilitate "joined up*

working”.

Analysis These two ToR are not applicable because of the lack of statutory and/or voluntary agencies involved in this case.

66. **ToR** *Examine whether previous “learning” from local or national cases had been acted upon.*

Analysis The MPS is a proactive organisation that puts great value on the learning within London and nationwide. In this particular case we cannot identify any areas where organisational learning has not been accepted or applied.

67. **ToR** *Examine whether data protection issues or client confidentiality concerns impeded the sharing or dissemination of information.*

Analysis There were no instances where concerns about confidentiality or data protection prevented the sharing or dissemination of information.

ToR *Examine whether there were any early warning signs of aggression or violent behaviour and what actions followed.*

Analysis There were no early warning signs of aggression or violent behaviour available to any statutory or voluntary agency before this killing.

68. **ToR** *Examine whether the level of risk posed by the perpetrator was assessed and addressed properly; whether there was an appropriate intervention plan.*

Analysis A risk assessment was undertaken in April 2009 during the secondary investigation following the complaint by Ms FC that Mr HS was harassing her and it was graded as standard. The records show that the background checks showed a ‘no trace’ result and this was not correct. We do not know whether the Investigation Officer was aware of the caution for criminal damage and took this into consideration when reaching his ‘standard’ grade for the potential risk. There were no incidents that prompted a police intervention after March 2009 and therefore no further risk assessments were undertaken.

69. **ToR** *Examine whether equality and diversity issues were considered appropriately by all the agencies involved with the family of CR.*

Analysis We have not identified any equality or diversity issues in this case in respect of the family of Ms FC. They are white British residents and there are no diversity, disability or sexual orientation concerns. We also approached the family of Mr HS through his sister and were informed that they would only participate in this review if he approved of the participation. Mr HS did not accept our invitation to contribute to this review and has not entered into any form of communication of any sort with us. We are therefore not aware of any equality or diversity issues with Mr HS or his family.

While we accept that there were no direct diversity issues in this cases it is worth pointing out that there were indirect issues of ethnicity that had implications for the way Ms FC dealt with the police. She had concerns about how Mr HS, as a black male, would be treated by the police and also the future implications for him from having a criminal record and these were some of

the reasons why she was reluctant to pursue police involvement in her complaint made in 2009.

70. **ToR** *Seek the involvement of the family, employers, neighbours & friends to provide a robust analysis of the events.*

Analysis The Chairman of the DHR panel attended parts of the trial to meet and introduce himself to the friends and family of Ms FC and to explain about the review that would start when the court hearing had been concluded. It was a very good opportunity to answer questions and to ask for cooperation. We maintained contact with the mother of Ms FC during the course of this review in order to keep her apprised of developments and to enable her to contribute suggestions as the review progressed. We offered meetings with the family to discuss our draft report and to obtain their feedback.

Conclusions and key learning

71. We reached the overall conclusion that this homicide was not preventable or predictable. We could also not identify any actions or inventions that if done differently could have prevented or predicted this tragedy.

72. The domestic abuse of Ms FC started within the first two years of the relationship beginning and continued on and off for a further ten years. No doubt there were often good times within this period but they do not offset or nullify the bad times. We know that around 2003 she had voiced her fears and told others she was afraid of him and asked for help to escape from his control. The next ten years followed a pattern of breakups and reuniting to the extent that family and friends were never quite sure when they were together or apart.

73. We feel that the information before us indicated that Mr HS was a taboo subject because she was embarrassed that she stayed in the relationship with him despite his appalling behaviour. Her solution to avoid this unwelcome advice, to use a colloquialism, was to 'keep her cards pretty close to her chest'. In doing so she effectively cut herself off from much needed advice and support from her family and friendship network.

74. We reached a conclusion that Mr HS was a repeat abuser of women. He had a history of coercive abuse as evidenced by the testimony of his former wife at his trial. He had a significant number of diagnosed personality traits which retrospectively matched the widely used characteristics of domestic abusers.

75. In our view these personality traits referred to earlier seemed to mean he had a pathological need to control his relationships and to be in control of all aspects of his victim's life. We looked at how he tried to deprive both his former wife and Ms FC of their autonomy, to isolate them from support mechanisms, intimidating them and behaving as if he had an inalienable right to do so. His grandiosity (unrealistic sense of superiority) fuelled his right to dominate and lack of empathy.

76. The family were of the view that the panel should have had access to the mental health assessment used in the court proceedings and that this report would be incomplete without a mental health perspective. This access to documents is reflected in our recommendations.

77. We have a recommendation from the police for officers called to domestic abuse situations to distribute support information to victims and record this on their systems. They are ideally

placed to identify victims and to act as a gateway to support mechanisms.

78. History of abuse is the best indicator of future abusive relationships. It is therefore important that domestic abuse is reported and recorded whether it is by organisations such as Victim Support or the police as this may help future potential victims otherwise abusers can emerge from a damaged relationship with a 'clean sheet'.
79. Awareness of Invisible Abuse Publicity about coercive control as a form of domestic abuse is slowly gathering momentum. There is a need to significantly heighten knowledge of coercive control as a serious form of domestic abuse so that victims and their families and friends recognise its characteristics and manifestations and realise that it does not have to be tolerated.
80. Inclusive Targeting is an issue of concern. Ms FC was a well-educated high flyer from a professional family background and the current awareness campaigns do not appear to us to be targeting people like her and the strategies need to be rethought so that they are all inclusive.
81. The availability of telephone support centres where victims could discuss their situation anonymously was felt to need much improved publicity and awareness.
82. GP Surgeries should have a more effective role in DA. During the course of this review we were surprised that the profile of domestic abuse in GPs surgeries was not higher and this was disturbing. We took the view that role of general practitioners in detecting and supporting domestic abuse victims is under exploited and they could be used more effectively. We were not convinced that enough was being done within the arena of public health to deal effectively with this serious issue. Development of this IRIS programme is our recommended approach to making more effective use of GP surgeries in the fight to tackle domestic abuse.
83. Abuser interventions The panel was also of the view that while advice and support towards victims should be increased there was a danger of ignoring the preventive work that should be directed to perpetrators and suspects. This resources issue must change and action directed at the root of the problem rather than only dealing with its consequences.
84. Workplace Support Domestic abuse can have a high cost for businesses because of unplanned time off, lateness, sick pay and decreased productivity and performance. Domestic abuse can have a devastating and long term effect on a survivor's mental health. Workplace policies should be adopted which demonstrate that employers will take this issue seriously and will be supportive of women (or men) who are in abusive relationships.
85. We took the view that DHRs should have greater access to information used in the criminal prosecution to use as appropriate in carrying out the review if a reasonable case can be made that these would be beneficial.

Recommendations

86. **Recommendation 1** The police to develop a procedure whereby every domestic abuse victim is provided with details of their local domestic violence support agencies and given information of options available and to record on the CRIS that this information was given.
87. **Recommendation 2** The CSP should take responsibility for leading a campaign for the greater understanding of domestic abuse with particular attention on the less well known

aspects related to non-violent abuse.

88. **Recommendation 3** Public Health should take the lead in ensuring the IRIS programme is taken up by GP surgeries in increasing numbers with the aim of achieving 100% coverage within 12 months.
89. **Recommendation 4** Abuser intervention should be given a higher profile so that the source of the abuse problem is proactively tackled rather than just the consequences. The CSP should review this issue and determine how best to progress it with the aim for the borough to have an effective programme in place within 12 months.
90. **Recommendation 5** Publicity and support mechanisms should be subject to annual review to ensure that they are targeted at all sections of the community and that there are no gaps in coverage.
91. **Recommendation 6** Workplace domestic abuse policies and procedures should be put in place by all major employers and public sector organisations should take the lead in adopting this approach and setting a good example. The Responsibility Deal Health at Work pledge should be re-launched locally.
92. **Recommendation 7** Evidence used in the criminal proceeding should be made available to DHRs if it would assist in the understanding of the case.

Patrick Watson
DHR Chairman and Report Author