

Royal Borough of Greenwich Community Safety Partnership

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW

Under s9 of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004

In respect of the death of 'Tania' in February 2015

Draft report produced by Independent Chair
Dr Jane Monckton Smith

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Restricted / Official Sensitive
Please do not circulate

Glossary

- AAFDA - Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse
- BME - Black and Minority Ethnic
- CSP - Community Safety Partnership
- CPS - Crown Prosecution Service
- DASH - Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour'-Based Violence Risk Identification
- DHR - Domestic Homicide Review
- DVPP - Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme
- FLO - Family Liaison Officer
- FOIA - Freedom of Information Act
- GMPS - Government Protective Marking Scheme
- IMR - Individual Management Reviews
- MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- MAPPA - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
- MHI - Mental Health Investigation
- PCT - Primary Care Trust
- SCR - Serious Case Review
- SIO - Senior Investigating Officer
- TOR - Terms of Reference
- VCS - Voluntary and Community Sector

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1.0 Preface

I would like to begin this report by expressing my sincere sympathies, and that of the panel, with the family and friends of Tania who is remembered by them as an affectionate, considerate and fun-loving person who was dedicated to her children and grandchildren. She is keenly missed by everyone who knew her.

The key purpose for undertaking a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is to enable lessons to be learned from homicides where a person is killed as a result of domestic violence and abuse. In order for these lessons to be learned as widely and thoroughly as possible, professionals need to be able to understand fully what happened in each homicide, and most importantly, what needs to change in order to reduce the risk of such tragedies happening in the future.

I would like to thank the panel, and those who provided chronologies and information, for their time, patience and co-operation.

It is important in this review to mention issues of confidentiality. The family have suffered terribly due to this tragedy and further suffering must be avoided wherever possible. For this reason, I have excluded some information which may identify individuals, like specific dates and detail of certain incidents. Tania and Richard are pseudonyms decided upon by the report author and approved by the victim's family. Tania and Richard's children are referred to as Child A and Child B to protect their identities.

Tania's son has provided the following comments about his mother which we are pleased to include in this report

My mum was my hero, she held down three jobs when I was young to make sure we could get Christmas presents and holidays but always came home with a smile on her face to see me and my sister. I loved her with all my heart and miss her every day, she was my mum and a best friend. I looked forward every week to our journeys to London on the train; we used to take the micky out of people stuck on their phones or not talking. But her world was happiest with her grandchildren in her arms, my children loved her and every minute they spent with her. For the first six months of my youngest son's life my mum came to see us every weekend without fail and my only regret is that she never got to meet her granddaughter who was born six months after her death.

Jane Monckton Smith

Independent Chair

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 Tania was 57 years old when she was killed
- 2.2 Richard was 63 years old when he killed her
- 2.3 Both Tania and Richard were white British people
- 2.4 Tania had been in a relationship with Richard from around 1980. However, this relationship broke down and they continued to live together only for convenience. It is not known exactly when this relationship broke down but there is evidence to suggest it was prior to 1998. Although they were together for a long time they never married.
- 2.5 They had two children both of whom were adults at the time of Tania's death: Child A and Child B.
- 2.6 Tania and Richard had a joint mortgage on the property where they lived and where Tania was killed.
- 2.7 Tania was the main earner in the relationship as Richard did not work and had not done so for approximately twenty years due to a bad back.
- 2.8 Richard was in receipt of disability benefits and supplemented his income by doing car repairs from the home.
- 2.9 In the 1990s Tania had a relationship with another man and left Richard. This is important because Richard showed stalking and controlling behaviours in response to this.
- 2.10 She purchased a flat at this time, which suggests she was in control of her own money, and she continued to contribute to the mortgage on the property that she owned with Richard.
- 2.11 After a short time, Tania sold the flat and returned to live at the property with Richard but they did not live as a couple in the intimate sense. Their domestic lives seemed to be dominated by Richard's routines.
- 2.12 In the months preceding her death, Tania had told Richard that she wanted to sell the house and for them both to go their separate ways.
- 2.13 Tania returned home from work one evening and was stabbed 14 times by Richard as she entered the house; she had not taken her coat off.
- 2.14 There was no history of services being involved with Tania and Richard in relation to domestic abuse.

3.0 Timescales

- 3.1 A decision to hold a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) was taken by the Royal Borough of Greenwich Community Safety Partnership in June 2015
- 3.2 The Independent Chair was appointed in December 2015.
- 3.3 The initial meeting of the DHR Panel took place in June 2016 and the final meeting of the Panel took place in November 2017
- 3.4 The review was significantly delayed by the trial which although originally scheduled for December 2015 did not take place until June 2016 with a verdict of guilty made on the 28th June 2016.
- 3.5 Richard was sentenced to 16 years with no access to parole until 2032.
- 3.6 Further delays were experienced as it took considerable amounts of time to access some of the requested documents such as the victim's health records, and detail from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on Richard's claim for disability benefits, and details from the Halifax bank on the couple's shared mortgage which were never forthcoming despite multiple attempts.
- 3.7 The Metropolitan Police assisted with accessing the health records.
- 3.8 The Chair made several attempts to contact both the DWP and the Halifax with telephone calls and letters sent by special and recorded delivery, including to named individuals. The letters and calls were neither acknowledged, nor responded to, by the Halifax. This difficulty is raised in the analysis and recommendations.
- 3.9 The DWP informed the Chair that the department would only release information on benefit claimants if required to do so under a court order.
- 3.10 The Home Office has been informed on these issues.
- 3.11 There was a further delay when the family experienced a very serious event in their lives which meant they needed some extra time to contribute to the review.

4.0 Confidentiality

- 4.1 It is important in this review to mention issues of confidentiality as the family of the victim have suffered terribly as a result of this tragedy and further suffering must be avoided wherever possible.
- 4.2 For this reason, some information which may identify individuals, like specific dates and detail of certain incidents has been excluded from the report. Tania (victim) and Richard (perpetrator) are pseudonyms decided upon by the report author and approved of by the victim's family.
- 4.3 Tania and Richard's adult children are referred to in the report as Child A and Child B.

5.0 Terms of Reference

- 5.1 To establish the facts about events leading up to and following the death of Tania who was killed by Richard.
- 5.2 To examine the roles of the organisations involved in the case, the extent to which Tania and Richard had involvement with those agencies, and the appropriateness of single agency and partnership responses to the case.
- 5.3 To establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from this case about the way in which organisations and partnerships carried out their responsibilities to safeguard the wellbeing of the deceased.
- 5.4 To identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon, and what is expected to change as a result.
- 5.5 To identify whether as a result there is a need for changes in organisational and/or partnership policy, procedures or practice in The Royal Borough of Greenwich in order to improve our work to better safeguard victims of domestic abuse.
- 5.6 To produce a chronology of involvement with the victim (Tania) and the perpetrator (Richard) and events and actions from January 1995 to February 2015; seeking information from:-
- Organisations who had contact with them,
 - Local community organisations,
 - Their family and friends.
- 5.7 To review current roles, responsibilities, policies and practices in relation to victims of domestic abuse to build up a picture of what should have happened,

5.8 To review this against what actually happened to draw out the strengths and weaknesses,

5.9 To review national best practice in respect of protecting adults from domestic abuse and coercive control.

5.10 To draw out conclusions about how organisations and partnerships can improve their working in the future to support victims of domestic abuse and coercive control.

5.11 The review will also consider:

- An assessment of whether family and friends were aware of any abusive or controlling behaviour from the perpetrator to the victim

6.0 Methodology

6.1 The method for conducting a DHR is prescribed by Home Office guidelines. The DHR followed those guidelines in the usual way. After the trial which concluded in June 2016 the business of the panel formally began. It is important that the Independent Chair observes the rules of disclosure which can become difficult if a review begins before a trial is ended, especially where family are key witnesses. This observation extended the time within which the review was conducted and the Home Office were informed of the delay in beginning.

6.2 All agencies in the area were contacted to search for any contact they may have had with Tania and Richard. If there was contact, then a chronology detailing the specific nature of the contact was requested. As there was no agency involvement there were no Independent Management Reviews (IMRs) requested.

6.3 In this case information was sought from;

- Witness statements from the Metropolitan Police investigation,
- The victim's health records
- The perpetrator's health records
- The Department for Work and Pensions
- The Halifax Bank
- Tania and Richard's children
- Richard (perpetrator)
- independent consultant in supporting victims representing themselves in property related court proceedings

- 6.4 All panel members were asked to present their own perspectives on recommendations which they thought should be made in the final report. Each of these suggestions were discussed by the panel.

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7.0 Involvement of Family, Friends, Work Colleagues, Neighbours and Wider Community

- 7.1 Tania had been in a relationship with Richard from around 1980, however this relationship broke down and they continued to live together only for convenience. It is not known exactly when this relationship broke down but there is evidence to suggest it was prior to 1998. Although they were together for a long time they never married.
- 7.2 They had two children, a son and a daughter who were both adult at the time of Tania's death.
- 7.3 Both Tania's children were invited to take part in the review; Child B did not wish to be involved but Child A did take part and was supported by Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA).
- 7.4 The Chair met with Child A and their partner with the AAFDA Support Worker.
- 7.5 The DHR overview report was shared with the family and their comments were noted in the report. The family were given as much time as they felt they needed to contribute and had a copy of the draft report to consider in their home.
- 7.6 The Chair visited the perpetrator in prison, to allow him to contribute to the review.

8.0 Contributors to the Review

- 8.1 As there was no agency involvement with Tania and Richard no IMRs were requested and the review was informed mainly by the Metropolitan Police Investigation, health records, and statements from family and friends.
- 8.2 The Chair spoke with the unqualified legal advisor and family members to gather as much information as possible about Tania. She also visited Richard in prison who accepted the invitation to contribute to the review. Not everyone wanted to contribute and there were family sensitivities.

9.0 The Review Panel Members

Dr Jane Monckton Smith – Independent Chair,
Annette Hines – Senior Community Safety Officer, Safer Communities Team, Royal Borough of Greenwich,
Simon King – Social Worker, Safeguarding Adults and DOLS team, Royal Borough of Greenwich,
Sharon Whittington, Safer Communities Team Manager, Safer Communities Team, Royal Borough of Greenwich,
Judith Banjoko, DVA Services Manager, Housing for Women, Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse (GDVA) Service,
Dipa Patel, Senior IDSVA/IDSVA Line Manager, Her Centre,
Jennifer Theodule, Mental Health Practice Learning Co-ordinator, Oxleas Adult Mental Health,
Angela Middleton, Patient Safety Lead, Mental Health, NHS England,
Janice Cawley, Detective Sergeant, Metropolitan Police
Deidre Bryant, Head of Service, National Probation Service
Wayne Butcher, Service Manager, CGL Substance Misuse Service,
Bernie Nipper, Support Midwife, Local Supervising Authority, NHS England
Andrew Coombe, Designated Nurse for Adult Safeguarding, NHS Greenwich CCG
Sue Haile, PA to Dr Jane Monckton Smith and Minute Taker.

- 9.1 All members of the Panel had not worked directly with either the victim, perpetrator or their families.
- 9.2 The Panel met on 1st June 2016; 22nd July 2016; 1st September 2016; 20th October 2016 and 13th November 2017.

10.0 Author of the Overview Report

Dr Jane Monckton-Smith was appointed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich Community Safety Partnership as Independent Chair and Author of the Overview Report in November 2015. She is a Forensic Criminologist specialising in domestic homicide. She lectures in criminology and criminal investigation and is an active researcher and is published in the area of domestic homicide. Dr Monckton Smith trains professionals in advanced risk and threat assessment in the area of coercive control, stalking and domestic abuse, and also works with a number of homicide and

stalking charities helping victims and professionals understand domestic homicide, and domestic abuse and stalking.

Dr Monckton Smith has had no previous involvement with the Royal Borough of Greenwich Community Safety Partnership nor any of the agencies involved in the domestic homicide review into the death of Tania.

11.0 Parallel Reviews

- 11.1 An inquest was opened and adjourned until the trial had concluded.
- 11.2 Following the trial the inquest was completed

12.0 Equality and Diversity

Issues of gender (sex) and disability were considered in this review.

- 12.1. All nine protected characteristics were considered from the equality Act 2010 and two were found to be relevant in this case. They were disability and sex.
- 12.2. Disability: Richard was receiving disability benefits due to claims that he had a back injury which meant he could not work. However, he did continue working on an informal basis acting as a mechanic from a base in his garage. His extensive medical records do not focus on his back problems. His incapacity benefit was withdrawn and this seemed to create financial difficulties for him. Tania appeared to be the one who paid the mortgage and kept the house running. Richard was quite a solitary man and his incapacity benefits may have given him the financial support necessary to remain solitary.
- 12.3. Gender/sex: gender or sex is always relevant in a domestic homicide review because domestic abuse is gendered. The killing of women by their intimate (or former intimate) partners is a serious social, criminal justice, and public health issue. Globally, homicide statistics show that men dominate as both

perpetrators and victims of homicide (95% and 80% respectively) except in the IPH category where women account for around 70% of victims, and men make up around 95% of perpetrators (UNODC 2013).

- 12.4. The links between intimate partner homicide (IPH) and domestic abuse are similarly powerful, and a history of perpetrating domestic abuse is a key risk marker in those who are IPH killers (Bourget *et al* 2010). This indicates that those men who are perpetrators of domestic abuse are more likely to kill their partners, so it is important then to be able to identify this if risk is to be managed. Controlling behaviours, rather than violence alone, are important in identifying the highest risk domestic abuse, and where there is control, violence and a separation after living together there is a 900% increase in the potential for homicide (Stark 2009). The often hidden and complex nature of coercive and controlling patterns of behaviour mean they are not always recognised or identified, though recent legislative changes which have criminalised these patterns in the UK (s.76 Serious Crimes Act 2015) reflect their importance and value in predicting serious harm and homicide. Stark (2009) notes that coercive and controlling behaviours are predominantly employed by men in an intimate relationship.

Bourget, D., Gagne, P., & Whitehurst, L. (2010). Domestic Homicide and Homicide-Suicide: The Older Offender. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online*, 38, (3), 305-311.

Stark, E. (2009) *Coercive Control: How men entrap women in personal life* Oxford: Oxford University Press

13.0 Dissemination

Home Office,

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC),

The Royal Borough of Greenwich, Safer Greenwich Partnership.

National Probation Service,

Metropolitan Police,

Oxleas Mental Health NHS Trust,

Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse Service (GDVA),

NHS England

14.0 Background Information (The Facts)

- 14.1 Tania was killed as she walked through the front door of her home after returning from work in February 2015.
- 14.2 She was stabbed in the back 14 times and had not had time to take off her coat.
- 14.3 Richard called the police immediately and admitted what he had done.
- 14.4 He was charged with her murder and sentenced to life imprisonment for a minimum of 16 years in June 2016.
- 14.5 Tania and Richard had lived together for over 35 years but had never married.
- 14.6 They had a joint mortgage on the property where they lived.
- 14.7 They had two children who were both adults at the time of Tania's death.
- 14.8 Child A described Richard as very controlling of Tania, always wanting to know where she was and when she would be home.
- 14.9 Richard had been medically retired and in receipt of incapacity benefit for about 25 years and this is from DWP records
- 14.10 He carried out vehicle repairs to supplement his benefits.
- 14.11 Tania was employed as a legal secretary at the time of her death and had always worked throughout her relationship with Richard,

sometimes having more than one job especially since his medical retirement.

14.12 Although Tania and Richard lived at the same address they led separate lives and had done so for many years; at least from 1998.

14.13 Tania had told Richard that she wanted to move out and sell the house.

14.14 She had consulted with an unqualified on-line consultant on how to end the relationship and represent herself in court.

14.15 It was shortly after she told Richard of her intentions, and that they were final, that he killed her.

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15.0 Chronology

1992	Richard claimed Incapacity Benefit in 1992 and declared his incapacity at the time as Polymyalgia Rheumatica.	DWP
1999	Tania became involved in a swimming club with her child then aged about 9. Tania became secretary of the club in a voluntary capacity. During this time Tania took exams to qualify as a swimming judge and referee. Whilst doing this she became friendly with John (pseudonym).	MPS
1999/2000	Tania told John that she and Richard were living separate lives. They began an intimate relationship. John was married to Carol (pseudonym).	MPS
2000	Tania purchased a flat with a mortgage and moved in. She was expecting that John would move in with her.	Informal
2000	The relationship between Tania and John became known to Richard and Carol. Richard confronted John who confirmed there was a relationship. A witness stated that Richard physically grabbed John by the scuff of the neck and they shouted at each other.	MPS
2000	Carol went to Tania's address and confronted her and John. There was violence between Tania and Carol. Carol was injured in the altercation.	MPS
2000	Richard made a number of phone calls to Carol. Carol did not speak with him and he was told to stop contacting her or the police would be called which he eventually did.	MPS
2000	Richard showed stalking behaviours during this time. This makes the relationship between Tania and John relevant. Richard showed a history of stalking patterns.	Informal
2000	The relationship between John and Tania broke down and he stayed with his wife. Tania was finding the financial burden of two properties too much and moved back into the house with Richard.	informal
2000	Richard and Tania did not have an intimate relationship. This was confirmed through comments made by Richard in his medical records where he stated he was not sexually active and hadn't been for a long time. They did share domestic life and Tania observed Richard's routines.	Health records
November 2007	Richard attended a Personal Capability Assessment (PCA) and stated that he had Musculoskeletal problems	DWP
2008	Tania attended a Podiatry foot health appointment.	Oxleas Trust
June 2010	Tania reported to her GP that she was depressed and was offered counselling. She accepted the offer.	Health records

August 2010	The counselling service offered Tania an appointment in October 2010. Tania declined the appointment at this time stating she no longer needed the service.	Health records
April 2013	Tania attended her GP surgery complaining of abdominal pain	Health records
June 2013	Tania attended her GP surgery complaining of ongoing nausea. Tania did not tell her GP of her concerns about the cause of this but did tell her family that she thought Richard was trying to poison her. He was controlling all her food and would insist on what she ate, when she ate it, and how much she ate. Tania had taken to pretending that she was eating the lunches he made for her and was also saying she would take part of her evening meal to work the next day to placate him and make him think she was eating what he had cooked for her.	Health records and other
June 2013	Tania went to her GP and according to family was given advice re her diet. She decided to tell Richard that she needed to control her own food on the advice of the hospital and could no longer eat in the way he wanted her to. She said to family that because of this she managed to regain control of her diet. There are no more records of abdominal pain or nausea after this.	Health records and other
August 2013	A male friend contacted Tania when his wife died. They had been friends some years before. They had a platonic friendship and Tania accompanied him on a short holiday while he was grieving. Tania had spoken to him about being desperately unhappy living in the same house as Richard but could not afford to live separately.	MPS
July 2014	Richard attended a further PCA examination. He stated that he had Musculoskeletal problems, eating and drinking problems, visual problems, memory loss, and bladder problems. Incapacity Benefit was paid to September 2014.	DWP
September 2014	Tania had another holiday-break with her platonic friend and disclosed deep unhappiness with Richard and his behaviour. She disclosed that Richard had taken money from a joint endowment and given it to their child.	MPS
September 2014	Tania made a claim for contributions based, Jobseeker's Allowance and was paid benefits to October 2014. Tania's claim was closed because she found work.	DWP
December 2014	Tania spoke again to her platonic friend and told him she had taken legal advice and everything would be sorted with Richard.	MPS
January 2015	Tania handed in her notice at work. She told a friend she was really run down and unhappy with Richard.	Informal
February	Tania contacted someone from an independent	Informal

2015	consultancy which offered help and support to people in legal disputes over property. The person who was running the business was not a lawyer, nor were they legally trained. They were also not trained in domestic dispute resolution or domestic abuse risk assessment. They offered help with filling out forms, also they offered help to people wishing to represent themselves in court as a result of these legal actions.	
February 2015	There was some information passed to the consultancy about Tania's domestic situation. A time was arranged for them to speak privately.	Informal
February 2015	Richard told Child A that Tania wanted to leave him. Child A said to Richard that they knew and it had been on the cards for a very long time.	Informal
February 2015	A phone call was made lasting some 45 minutes between Tania and the consultancy. Tania stated she had been paying the mortgage on her own since 2000. She was desperate to leave Richard. She said they were sleeping in separate rooms.	Informal
February 2015	Both children tried to support Richard with the separation and selling the house. Tania told Child A later that evening that she planned to move up to the North of the country. Child A stated that every time the subject was raised Richard would threaten to kill himself.	Informal
February 2015	The consultancy drew up a draft of the statement of claim for the legal action. They did not manage to send it to Tania as she was killed before this could be done. Richard visited council offices to request that they buy the house from him and let him live there as a tenant. Later that morning Richard returned home in a bad mood as the council had refused to help him in the way he had suggested. Child A was in the house and Richard said they needed to give him the £15,000 which they had previously borrowed. Richard stated that Tania was 'ruining everything'. When Tania returned home with Child B later that day Richard was reported to be in a 'jolly' mood. Later that evening Tania apologised to Child A for the trouble about the money and told them not to 'let him scare you'. She then drove to work for the evening shift. Richard again threatened to 'top himself' later that	Informal

	<p>evening to Child A.</p> <p>Richard made the evening meal half an hour late – a point of comment and concern due to his reliance on routine. When asked if he was okay he ‘sniggered’.</p>	
February 2015	<p>Call received at 0100 from Richard to 999 call-centre saying he had killed Tania. He had stabbed her as she walked in the door of the house 14 times. She did not have time to remove her coat. He was waiting at the front door for her to return from work.</p>	MPS

The research also highlighted the following;

- Enquiries with statutory agencies have shown that they have no records of Tania having any pertinent contact with services that could indicate a safeguarding concern, or any indication of known risk for either party.
- Neither party were known to the police for any criminal activity.
- The family was not known to Royal Greenwich’s Adults and Older People’s Department.
- The children of the family are over 18 and have not been known to Royal Greenwich’s Children’s Services Department.
- Neither party were known to the Greenwich Domestic Abuse MARAC.
- Tania had not had contact with Her Centre or GDVA (Housing 4Women), the primary providers for Domestic Abuse services in the borough.
- Richard was seen by the Oxleas Mental Health Liaison and Diversion Team whilst in Plumstead Custody Suite following the death of Tania but had not had any prior contact.
- It is not recorded that Tania ever mentioned domestic abuse or any other concerns about Richard to her GP. She apparently did not disclose her concerns about her abdominal problems to her GP. She did disclose to her family.

16.0 Overview

What was known:

- 16.1 There were no police calls in this case, and no agency was ever contacted about domestic abuse. Both Tania and Richard contacted their respective GPs regularly. Richard was especially regular at the GP surgery with a number of health concerns which were most often unrelated to the condition for which he claimed incapacity benefit. He did disclose to the GP that he was 'sexually inactive' and depressed, but this is the only reference to his domestic situation. Tania disclosed to her GP that she was 'sexually inactive' and at one point talked of depression. Again visits were for minor ailments unrelated to her domestic situation. Even when she had concerns which she shared with others, she did not seem to share these with her GP.
- 16.2 Family were aware that Richard and Tania were not in a loving and intimate relationship. Friends reveal that Tania disliked Richard and was only living with him through necessity and because he would not sell the house and refused to move out. Family reveal that Richard had some very fixed behaviours which they thought were strange; specifically, his adherence to strict routines and schedules, and his insistence on knowing where Tania was, what she was doing and who she was seeing.
- 16.3 When Tania left the home, she did not feel able to sell the house, so bought another property, a small flat. Whilst she was living there, family and friends were aware that Richard stalked her and made many threats to kill himself. He would sit outside her flat and constantly call round and contact her. This behaviour is relevant to this review because it is known that control and stalking are repeat behaviours, and this gives insight into the way Richard responded to a threat to his control. It also shows some risk markers linked to the possibility for future homicide.
- 16.4 Family and friends were aware that Tania was romantically involved with another man at this time, who she hoped to form a life with. This man was married and the relationship became known to his wife. At this point the relationship ended.
- 16.5 Family and friends state that she moved back to the house she owned with Richard and sold the flat.

17.0 Analysis

- 17.1 Richard and Tania were suffering serious trouble in their relationship from at least 1998. They had at some point been living together in an intimate relationship and had two children together, but by around at least 1998 Tania was deeply unhappy and wanted to leave Richard.
- 17.2 It is noted by family that Richard was a man who followed strict routines, and imposed those routines on family members. He would do things at the same time every day without any diversion. He would become very agitated and challenging if there was any disruption to his routines. This observation by family is concerning and is noted in other homicide reviews as a behavioural trait to a more, or lesser extent, in homicide and domestic abuse perpetrators. It is especially noted in coercive control.
- 17.3 This observation also gives some insight into the ways that Richard managed to keep control in his own life, but also exert control on others. Tania and the children knew that they had to adhere to Richard's routines and rituals, so they knew when they had to be around for meals and so on. This is a very common tactic used in coercive and controlling individuals. It also gives us some insight into the way those routines could have ordered and structured his life so he felt more in control.
- 17.4 This also makes any deviation from a routine by Tania very visible to Richard. He would be alerted very quickly to any changes in Tania's behavior or challenges to his control.
- 17.5 Richard had given up work by this time and was claiming incapacity benefit. However, he supplemented his benefits by working from his garage as a mechanic. The relationship between the two was platonic and they were living emotionally separate lives. Family said of the two that Tania wanted to leave, but Richard did not. It appears that Tania had little love for Richard by this time, and family say that he was a difficult, solitary and depressive person who liked routine.
- 17.6 The picture built of Richard is that he was able to be solitary and anti-social through his ability to claim benefits. He was also able to impose his obsessive routines and rituals on others, as they complied to keep the peace. He appeared to be rooted to the home and did not seek to move on from his relationship with Tania or change his lifestyle.
- 17.7 Tania started the relationship with John sometime after 1998, John was married to Carol at the time. They had met when Tania had started to attend a swimming club for her youngest child who was around 9 at the time. Tania had become a secretary to the club and was taking

- exams in refereeing and in judging swimming competitions. Family state that Tania was dedicated to her children and very involved in their lives.
- 17.8 Tania believed sincerely that she and John were going to live together and start a new life. It is noted in statements that John led her to believe that this was a realistic aspiration for them. She had already been living a separate life from Richard.
- 17.9 This relationship seemed to give Tania the confidence to leave Richard, but he did not accept her decision and this is when the stalking started, giving some insight into Richard's dependence on Tania.
- 17.10 Tania moved away from Richard and purchased a flat with a mortgage which she moved in to. She continued to pay the mortgage at her joint home with Richard. He was not contributing to the mortgage. This indicates that she had control over her money, but it is also noted that Richard seemed to rely on her to pay the mortgage in the house they had shared.
- 17.11 During the time that Tania was living in the flat, Richard would stalk her and follow her. He would constantly send messages and flowers and hang around outside her flat. He would contact Tania constantly and made things difficult for her. He was also threatening self-harm.
- 17.12 The behaviours described are noted to be indicators of elevated risk after a separation. Family, friends and Tania considered Richard to be strange, more than they considered him dangerous. This is a learning point, for controlling behaviours as they are not always recognized as dangerous or high risk, but are a serious indicator of potential future harm, especially where the control is diminished or broken.
- 17.13 The relationship between Tania and John came to the attention of John's wife Carol, who sent a letter to Richard informing him of it. Richard confronted John at the swimming club and there was a minor assault and a heated argument.
- 17.14 Carol went to Tania's flat and there was an altercation between the two women which resulted in Carol receiving a cut lip. John left with Carol and tended to her, he did not stay with Tania at the time, and he did not leave his wife afterwards.
- 17.15 After this Tania realised that John was not sincere in his promises to set up a life with her.
- 17.16 Tania was forced to move back to the house with Richard as she could not afford to pay the mortgages on both properties. She moved back on the understanding that the relationship between her and Richard was over and that they would live separate lives. She continued to pay the mortgage on the house and sold the flat.
- 17.17 The separation has been confirmed from many sources. GP records for Tania show that she was not in a sexual relationship with

Richard from at least 2002, though family state it was long before this time.

- 17.18 Richard confirms the lack of intimacy in the relationship by reporting to his GP on numerous occasions that he was not 'sexually active', and in 2014 hadn't been so for 12 years. He also reported erectile dysfunction.
- 17.19 Tania and Richard's children also confirm that their parents were living separate lives, but that Richard would still impose routines on all of them and would control Tania's activities. He was described as needing strict routine and insisting on imposing that routine on everyone in the house.
- 17.20 He would do things at the same time on the same day, following a strict pattern. He would prepare food for Tania which he insisted she ate, at the same times every day. The routine was so strict that it was a point of comment when one day it was not adhered to. Tania had said that she did not want to eat the food he prepared but would go along with the routines to try and avoid upset in the home.
- 17.21 There are statements made by family and to the police which state that Richard was quite self-focused and that he felt life had dealt him a bad hand. The Independent Chair met with Richard in prison after the murder and he stated in that interview that he felt he had been a victim for most of his life. He felt he was a victim in the relationship because Tania did not want to stay with him. He stated that he felt that everyone was on Tania's side. He did not show any remorse for the killing, but asserted his sense of injustice.
- 17.22 There is various information to suggest that Richard was quite moody and often miserable, he was fairly self-isolated, concerned about his health and very routined and controlled. People also described him as controlling of Tania.
- 17.23 By 2012 Tania was complaining to her friends that her life was very difficult and that she was very unhappy. She said she felt trapped in the house and that Richard would not let her leave.
- 17.24 Tania was deeply unhappy living with Richard, and in the last year of her life, felt she could no longer tolerate him.
- 17.25 It is a concern that Tania was expressing the thought that she was trapped.
- 17.26 A pattern can be identified in Richard's behaviour. The behaviour fits with many elements of coercion and control. Tania never made any allegation that Richard was violent. However, family and others do observe controlling patterns which dominated Tania's day to day life. She would follow his routines, placate him, and help him maintain the solitary lifestyle he wanted to live. The fact that Richard

would not accept the end of the relationship made it impossible for Tania to pursue other relationships. These patterns when considered with the stalking behaviours, the jealousy, and the suicidal threats, build a picture of coercive control, albeit a picture which many would not necessarily recognize as fitting the criteria.

- 17.27 In 2013 there were concerns noted by Tania that she felt Richard was trying to poison her. She thought he was putting poison in her food. Richard would force Tania to eat to his routine, and to eat the food he cooked.
- 17.28 Tania attended her doctor's surgery complaining of chronic stomach pain and nausea, and tests were done to establish if she had liver problems. It was suggested that she change her diet. Tania did not disclose her concerns about Richard trying to poison her to health professionals. She did talk to family about it. It appears that Tania felt she could not substantiate her concerns, and may have been seen as imagining things. She did not disclose very much about her domestic life to her GP.
- 17.29 Tania did use the doctor's advice to assert that she could not eat the food Richard had cooked and to his timetable. This reveals that Tania was fearful of Richard and that he might harm her. She shared her fears with family but not with professionals. This is an important observation. No-one considered that Tania was frightened of Richard, and they may have been right in thinking she wasn't frightened that he would hit her. However, in domestic abuse the fear is very often of the consequences of upsetting the perpetrator, and a realization that they could be capable of harm in a number of ways. Tania thought Richard was trying to poison her, she was frightened of him, and the consequences of upsetting him. This is a high-risk marker in domestic abuse.
- 17.30 Even though the picture of the relationship appears atypical in domestic abuse terms, there are now a significant number of high-risk markers evident, but not known by agencies. The high-risk nature of Richard's behaviour was not recognized by the family or Tania's friends, but there is indication that Tania was concerned he would harm her. More knowledge around coercive control is identified as a need for communities.
- 17.31 Things appeared to come to a head in 2015 when Richard and Tania had a formal disagreement over the mortgage. Tania approached a number of legal professionals but felt she could not afford to engage them.
- 17.32 In 2015 Tania approached a consultant through an online help service who had agreed to support her with the sale of the family home. This consultant agreed to help her draw up legal documents.

- 17.33 Information supplied by Tania to the consultant reveals that Tania was very unhappy.
- 17.34 Tania became very confident that with the consultant's support she had the ability to leave Richard. She had plans to move away to the North of the country and everyone was aware of the house sale and the split.
- 17.35 Richard objected strongly and even tried to get the council to buy the house from him. He told the children that he could not afford to buy the house from Tania and started to behave more strangely.
- 17.36 Family state that in the last few days before killing Tania, Richard changed and became sneering and withdrawn.
- 17.37 On the night before the murder he made the evening meal for himself half an hour late. This was seen as quite shocking by the family, given his strict routines and they talked about it and wondered why it had happened.
- 17.38 On the night she was killed Tania went to work as usual.
- 17.39 When she returned home in the early hours of the morning Richard was lying in wait for her behind the front door. As she walked in he attacked her with a knife stabbing her in the back 14 times. He killed her.
- 17.40 Richard then called the police immediately and admitted what he had done.
- 17.41 The timeline suggests that Richard realised that Tania was resolved to move out and to seek a completely separate life. He seemed to recognise that his life was going to change and he could not accept that. He blamed Tania for everything.
- 17.42 He was charged with murder. He was found guilty at a trial and sentenced to life with a tariff of 16 years.
- 17.43 This case presents many challenges because there were few opportunities for intervention by agencies in the traditional sense. There were a number of high-risk markers that appear on formal risk identification checklists, and in the extant research, which were observable in this case.
- 17.44 Those risk markers are as follows:

Suicidal threats: Richard threatened suicide on many occasions when Tania said she wanted to leave. He talked about 'topping himself' should she ever do it. These threats were known by the whole family. This behaviour is a risk marker for potential future harm or homicide, especially where there is a separation, though its importance is not widely known by the general public.

Fear in the victim: Tania was behaving in a way designed to placate and manage Richard's behaviour. She would follow his strict routines, and felt she was trapped. She was fearful he was trying to poison her. Even if there was no basis in fact for this fear, the fear itself was real and revealed that Tania saw him

as a threat to her. This fear is also an acknowledged risk marker for future serious harm.

Coercive control: Richard controlled the family especially with his routines and mood swings. He would check Tania's whereabouts and insist on knowing what she was doing and who she was with. The whole family did much as he wanted, as the consequences of upsetting or challenging him created difficulties for everyone. This is a marker for future harm. Behaviours designed to control the actions of a partner through fear of consequences, or fear of harm, are a risk marker, and more significantly linked to homicide, than violence alone.

Stalking: Apart from the surveillance activities when the two were living in the same house, Richard escalated his stalking behaviours when Tania moved out. He stalked Tania the whole time she was living away, and threatened suicide. Stalking is a behaviour significantly associated with future harm in an intimate/former intimate relationship. Research has shown that stalking is in the antecedents of between 70 and 90% of Intimate Partner Homicides (Campbell *et al* 2007, Monckton Smith *et al* 2017)

Campbell, C., Glass, N., Sharps, P., Laughon, K., & Bloom, T. (2007) Mortality Related to Intimate Partner Violence: a review of research and implications for the advocacy, criminal justice, and healthcare systems. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 8, (3), 246-269.

Monckton Smith, J., Szymanska, K. & Haile, S., (2017). Exploring the relationship between stalking and homicide. *Suzy Lamplugh Trust*. Retrieved March 30, 2018 from <http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/4553/>

Routine and ritual behaviour: Richard was a stickler for routine and imposed those routines on others. This is an acknowledged behaviour of people who are controlling. Family members have their food, activities and other things tightly controlled and often do not break the routines for fear of upsetting the controlling person. These routines not only control others pushing them to a timetable, they also indicate a need for control in the person imposing the routines.

Excessive jealousy: Richard was excessively jealous and wanted to know where Tania was all the time. This kind of paranoia around a partner leaving is associated with potential future harm after separation, or the threat separation.

Self-focused behaviours: Richard was very self-focused. He thought that all the things that happened to him were Tania's fault and that he bore no responsibility. This mind set is associated with domestic abuse. The perpetrator told the Independent Chair that he felt Tania was to blame for his misfortunes, and that he was a victim in life.

Depression : Richard said he was suffering from depression. This is associated with aggravating risk for harm, especially when observed in conjunction with other risk markers.

Financial Abuse: Tania appeared to have control of her own money as she was able to purchase a flat in her own name and move out of the family home. It is known that she found paying for both mortgages a struggle. It is stated in

documents to her advisor that she paid the mortgage without Richard's help. What is not known is how financially dependent Richard was on her, or whether he even attempted to contribute to the finances. He was earning from taking work as a casual car mechanic and he was receiving benefits. The potential that this dependency is financial abuse must be considered, especially if there was no attempt to contribute.

17.45 The review panel was led to believe that there had been a serious dispute over the mortgage between Tania and Richard but the Halifax bank did not respond to repeated and recorded requests for information. This was despite all communication being directed to the named individuals and departments as given by the Halifax Customer Services themselves.

Restricted/Official Sensitive

18.0 Conclusions

- 18.1 There was no involvement with statutory agencies in this case and few real opportunities for intervention. Whilst it has become clear in the analysis of this case that Richard could have been considered high risk for harming Tania, no agency was in possession of any information, or even the opportunity to perform a risk assessment. Family and friends had information but did not recognise the high risk behaviours as concerning.
- 18.2 The only agency with potential access to the information, and an opportunity for intervention was the GP surgery. Both Tania and Richard attended their doctor's surgeries for various problems. Routine Enquiry may have helped identify the emotional and behavioural problems, including a need for control and routine, Richard had which were quite serious. Tania was complaining of how difficult her life was, and she even thought that Richard was trying to poison her. This is a serious concern, but whilst she shared it with family, she did not share it with her GP even when she went for tests.
- 18.3 A second possibility for intervention was in Tania's conversations about selling the house with professionals. She went to see lawyers but could not afford their services. She sought the services of an unqualified consultant and disclosed how unhappy she was. If the risk markers which can arise in trying to separate from controlling people were more widely recognised as potentially dangerous, these disclosures could have resulted in Tania being given information and appropriate support, and perhaps referred to a specialist agency by the consultancy.
- 18.4 The conclusion is that Richard had serious control issues which came to a head when Tania's leaving, and his having to move home, became inevitable. He blamed Tania for all the problems in his life and responded to those problems with planned and deliberate fatal violence.
- 18.5 More public and professional knowledge and awareness of specific concerning behaviours, and the space to discuss those problems with people able to help, may have helped in this case.

19.0 Lessons to be learnt

Learning opportunity 1: Routine Enquiry (RE) could have encouraged Tania to talk with GPs about her concerns with Richard's behaviour. This may have created the opportunity to give Tania advice about risky behaviours, and specialist support in leaving him.

Learning opportunity 2: Legal advisors in this case didn't have a basic knowledge of the dangers of separation where there is domestic abuse or coercive control. Lawyers could routinely give information about specialist DA services in such cases. A recommendation could include all non-qualified consultants where legal advice, help or support is given. It would be useful for this to include all Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Learning opportunity 3: Awareness-raising for the public of the importance of recognizing domestic abuse and coercive control, and the problems and risks which may be raised when trying to separate could have helped in this case.

Learning opportunity 4: A support system like IRIS could have helped GPs to raise and respond to the issues present in the relationship.

Learning opportunity 5: The Independent Chair found it very difficult to obtain information from some organisations in this case, but more information could have helped identify more learning opportunities.

20.0 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Routine Enquiry should be encouraged in GP consultations where individuals present with any complaint which is commonly related to domestic abuse; for example, depression.

Recommendation 2: The Law Society be formally approached to discuss such a national code, and production of an advice leaflet, or use of leaflets produced by local DA services related specifically to separation.

Recommendation 3: A public awareness campaign which focuses on recognizing that some behaviours are concerning especially during a separation (suicide threats, stalking etc).

Recommendation 4: The CCG is already aware of IRIS. GP services could also consider adopting a DA champion scheme where a named individual at the surgery could co-ordinate information, leaflets and posters etc. and potentially, seek extra specific training.

Recommendation 5: that the Home Office make clear where agencies or organisations should help DHRs. The Home Office could give guidance to private companies making clear if there are any obligations, or a code of practice which may help reviews gain crucial information.