

Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership

## **DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW**

### **OVERVIEW REPORT**

**REVIEW REPORT INTO THE DEATH OF**

**Sally**

**Date of Death February 2012**

**Report produced by:**

**Brian Boxall**

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> July 2013

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2012, Sally, a 17 year old girl from Chelmsford, failed to attend College. She had travelled to Barkingside to the flat of Farid, a 19 year old male with whom she had been having a relationship for a number of months. Whilst there Farid attacked her with a hammer and strangled her inflicting fatal injuries. He was subsequently arrested, charged and in June 2012 convicted of her murder.
- 1.2 Farid had entered the country illegally in December 2008. He was assessed to be under the age of 18 and he became a looked after child under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. Essex Social Care had responsibility for him and he was placed in foster care.
- 1.3 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This provision came into force on 13th April 2011.

The purpose of a DHR is to;

- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims
- Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result;
- Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate and
- Prevent domestic violence homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working.

These reviews are not inquiries into how the victim died or into who is culpable; that is a matter for coroners and criminal courts to determine as appropriate.

- 1.4 The case was referred to the Essex Safeguarding Children Board to consider whether or not Sally's death should be subject to a Child Serious Case Review as defined within 'Working Together 2010.' The Serious Case Review Panel agreed that it did not fit the criteria and recommended that Essex Children's Social Care undertake an Internal Management Review instead.
- 1.5 In May 2012, the case was reviewed by Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership to consider if it should be subject to a DHR. It was agreed that it should not be subject of a DHR and the Home Office were informed of the decision. Following a review by the Home Office Quality Panel, the Community Safety Partnership was informed on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012 that a DHR should be undertaken.
- 1.6 The Chair of the Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership confirmed with the Home Office that this case would, on their request, be subject to a DHR.

- 1.7 In September 2012 the Coalition Government announced a revised definition of domestic violence, which came into force from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. It states that

***Domestic violence***

*Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:*

- *psychological*
- *physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional*

***Controlling behaviour***

*Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.*

***Coercive behaviour***

*Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.*

This DHR has considered the implications of this definition.

**2 THE DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW PROCESS**

- 2.1 This review has been undertaken in line with Home Office Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Homicide Reviews. This overview report has been subject to anonymisation in order to protect the identity of the family and other persons involved, as required by the guidance.

**Terms of Reference and Scope**

- 2.2 Terms of reference for the DHR were formulated and agreed. It set out in detail the areas required to be addressed within the Individual Management Reviews (IMRs). The category headings were:

- Agency Context
- Policy and Procedure
- Information Recording and Sharing
- Victims /Perpetrators
- Supervision
- Assessment
- Training/Awareness
- Action Plans

- Good Practice
- Ethnic, Cultural and Linguistic Issues
- Lessons Learnt

### **Specific Considerations**

- What issues are presented when supervising or supporting young asylum seekers
- What lessons can be learnt in respect of domestic violence and young people

2.3 The period of time that was agreed should be subject to review was December 2008 to February 2012. This covered the period from Farid's arrival in the country up to the time of the fatal incident.

### **Domestic Homicide Review Panel**

2.4 Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership set up a DHR panel to oversee the process. The panel consisted of the following individuals:

- Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Young People, NHS Mid Essex
- Vice Chairman of One Chelmsford Partnership
- Operational Investigations Manager, Essex Probation
- Head of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding, Essex County Council Social Care
- NSPCC (independent advisors)
- Assistant Lead Strategic Commissioner, Education Learning Service Essex County Council
- Immigration Enforcement Delivery Team, UK Border Agency
- Protecting Vulnerable People- Detective Chief Inspector, Essex Police
- Public Protection Detective Inspector, Metropolitan Police (Redbridge)
- Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator, Essex Safeguarding Adult Board and Essex County Council
- Director of Safer Communities, Chelmsford City Council
- Partnerships and Improvement Manager, Chelmsford City Council (facilitation)

2.5 Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) were requested from the following agencies:

- UK Border Agency (UKBA)
- Essex County Council Children's Services (CSC)
- North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)
- Havering Further & Higher Education College (the College)

IMRs were not requested from either Essex or the Metropolitan Police, as neither had significant contact with the victim or perpetrator prior to Sally's death.

IMRs from the school and college attended by Sally were considered, but it was agreed that given the information they held a full IMR was not required. The author has had the opportunity to speak with leads from both establishments.

- 2.6 Brian Boxall of BDB Consultancy Ltd, was commissioned by Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership to independently chair the panel and author the overview report.

He is a retired Detective Superintendent who served with Surrey Police for thirty years. During this time he was responsible for public protection, including domestic violence. He was a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) domestic violence group and was responsible for the introduction of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in Surrey in 2006. He is currently the Chair of an Adult Safeguarding Board. He has acted as a Chair and author for a number of Serious Case Review panels. He has completed the accredited Government of London/Tavistock training for chairs of Serious Case Review panels and Overview Report Authors.

### **Methodology**

- 2.7 The DHR Panel met on the following occasions:  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012  
28<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
13<sup>th</sup> February 2013  
22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013  
12<sup>th</sup> June 2013

### **Individual Management Reviews**

- 2.8 The DHR chair met with the IMR authors at the commencement of the process (28<sup>th</sup> November 2012) to explain what was required. The authors were then invited to a number of the subsequent panel meetings, firstly in order to discuss their initial considerations whilst compiling their initial narrative and then to present their findings and recommendations. The panel reviewed the IMRs and challenged accordingly. This approach ensured that the IMR quality was good and the findings appropriate.
- 2.9 The chair/author was able to contact individual authors in order to seek clarification whilst constructing the overview report.
- 2.10 In addition the author was provided with a number of additional documents including: Essex County Council's:
- The Leaving and After Care Service Transition to Adulthood Policy
  - Children's Services Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Policy and Procedures.

### **Involvement of Family and Friends**

- 2.11 It is recognised that Sally's family have had to come to terms with the loss of Sally and condolences go out to them. Sally's mother was informed of the DHR via the Police Family Liaison Officer assigned to her following the death of her daughter. This was supported by a letter from the chair at the commencement of the review and followed up as the review progressed. Sally's mother, who has moved abroad, contacted the author and he conducted a telephone interview with her. Due to illness she was unable to speak to the author until June 2013. The author would like to thank her for her involvement at a very difficult time. Her input has been invaluable.
- 2.12 The author also met with a couple of Sally's best friends in order to gain a better insight into Sally and her relationship with Farid. This was a very helpful exercise.

### **Perpetrator involvement**

- 2.13 Farid was informed of the DHR and visited by the author. He declined to make any contribution to the DHR.

### **Linked investigations**

- 2.14 The Metropolitan Police undertook an investigation, which led to the conviction of Farid in June 2012. The author had access to some investigation material which assisted with providing background information about the relationship between Sally and Farid.

### **Review Timings**

- 2.15 The review panel first met in October 2012. It has not been possible to complete the review within the six months' time period set out in guidance. This was due in part to the delay in being able to interview Sally's mother. It was considered important that Mother should be able to contribute. Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership was kept informed of the delays.

## **3 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT AGENCY CONTACT**

- 3.1 As part of the DHR individual agencies produced detailed chronologies of their contact with both Sally and Farid. These chronologies were then combined to produce a comprehensive chronology of all contacts. This section will not replicate the full chronology but will highlight the significant contacts agencies had with Sally and Farid.
- 3.2 The chronology highlights the minimal contact agencies had with Sally. These contacts were restricted to the health service, school and college. There is no information from health that was considered relevant to this review. Both the school and college she attended were contacted but they held only information specific to her continuing education. Her time at school and college will be subject to further comment later in the report. This lack of contact is reflected in the following commentary on the agency involvement.

### **Agency involvement.**

- 3.3 On the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008, Essex Children's Social Care (CSC) received a referral from Essex Police informing them that four illegal immigrants had been located in the Basildon area.

The following day an interview and age assessment were undertaken by CSC social workers. Farid described travelling to the UK having left Iran a month previously. He claimed to be 15 years of age and gave his date of birth as 20<sup>th</sup> March 1993.

He was accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and placed with foster carers (FC1), who were considered to be very experienced. It was agreed that there would be an interpreter for all future formal meetings.

- 3.4 On the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009, a placement agreement meeting was held. It was clarified that Farid did not have a brother in Leeds as was first thought. He indicated that he might have an uncle in Norway.
- 3.5 On the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009, UK Border Agency (UKBA) sent Farid a letter informing him

that he was a person liable to removal. The letter set a meeting date with the UKBA case owner for the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009. It stated that the UKBA disputed his date of birth, given as the 10/6/94, but accepted that he appeared under the age of 18 years so would be processed as a child. The date of birth he had given to the UKBA was different to that provided to his social workers.

- 3.6 The initial Health Assessment was undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and Farid's first Looked after Child (LAC) review on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009. It was noted that he had provided the Home Office with a different date of birth and it was agreed that a further age assessment would take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2009.
- 3.7 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009, Farid was accompanied by his social worker to a meeting with his solicitor during which he was adamant that he was born in 1992. When informed by the social worker that he needed to be born in 1993 to be 15, nearly 16 years of age he agreed that he was born in 1993.
- 3.8 On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009, his social worker completed a pre-16 referral form for College. It included an agreement to fund his pre 16 place at college.
- 3.9 On the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009, his asylum application was refused. Farid was granted Discretionary Leave to remain in the country until he reached the age of 17 ½ (20<sup>th</sup> September 2010).
- 3.10 A further LAC review took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. Reference was made to the level of anxiety Farid displayed in respect of his asylum claim, his desire to meet with other Iranians and that he did not feel three days per week at college was enough to study English.

The agreed care plan was for Farid to remain in his placement until he reached independence unless the Home Office made a decision in relation to his asylum status.

- 3.11 On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Farid was seen alone in his placement by his social worker. He was not happy due to his immigration status, and he wanted to know why he did not receive a wage. He also expected to have a British Passport. The social worker felt friends at college were influencing him.
- 3.12 On the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Farid's social worker undertook a statutory visit to see him. Farid was spoken to both alone and in front of his carer. Concerns were expressed about his relationship with another young person in the placement in that they had been involved in arguments and disagreements. He apologised for getting angry with his social worker during the previous visit. It was noted that his English had improved.
- 3.13 On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009, Farid's social worker sent an e-mail to education to inform them that Farid's solicitor had a confirmation from the Home Office stating that Farid's date of birth has been accepted as 20.03.93, which made him 16 years of age.
- 3.14 On the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2009, a LAC care plan was produced. It confirmed that the overall care plan for Farid was "supported living in the community," but noted that "he had developed well enough to live on his own independently." It was thought he would cope better in supported lodgings. His transfer summary for the Leaving and After Care Team (L&ACT) was completed; it was noted in the summary that his case was transferred on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009. His solicitor felt his immigration status case was weak and as a result there was no appeal against the decision. There was no further involvement with the solicitor. The UKBA were unaware of this.



- 3.15 On the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2009, a social worker and senior practitioner made a joint statutory visit to Farid. He expressed frustration about his previous social worker from the Permanency Team whom he felt had not supported or respected him. Farid was also unhappy with the L&ACT, as no one had been to visit him on a consistent basis. This was due to there not being a permanent social worker available to allocate to him until December 2009.
- 3.16 On the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009, his social worker made a telephone call to his foster carer, who expressed concern about Farid's recent anger in the classroom. On the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009, he had an outburst in class and accused his female peers of 'sleeping around'.
- 3.17 On the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010, a Needs Level Assessment was completed. His behaviours were listed as disturbed sleep, mild verbal abuse (at college) and sexual active adolescent 15 +
- 3.18 On the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010, a Needs Level Document and Life Skills Assessment was presented to the Essex Access to Resources Panel. The panel agreed to continue funding his foster placement until July 2010. This was on the basis that he was not considered ready for independent living. Farid's foster carers and his college teacher both felt he was not ready for independent living supported this conclusion.
- 3.19 On the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010, a statutory visit was undertaken by his social worker. Farid stated that his plan was to find a girlfriend to do all the cooking so he did not need to further his cooking skills. His view was challenged by the social worker.
- 3.20 On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010, a Needs Assessment was commenced alongside a Pathway Plan by his social worker. It identified that;
- Farid did not have an independent visitor/mentor
  - He had declined access to emotional /mental health services
  - He declined services provided by the Diversity Steering Group, L&ACT drop-in or mental health coordinator
  - He had declined the assistance of the Red Cross Tracing Service
  - He was said to be sexually active but had no girlfriend.
  - A flat had been located in Romford with a view to him moving in by the 7/7/10
  - The L&ACT mental health screening tool set out the risk factor 'evidence of alcohol use,' but nothing else was identified
- 3.21 Information from Sally's friend indicates that it was around this time, March 2010 that Farid first made contact with Sally via 'Facebook'. This was following the unexpected death of her father. The police investigation suggests that the first contact may not have occurred until September 2010; Sally's mother thought it was around November 2010.
- 3.22 On the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2010, Farid got into a fight with another student; as a result he was suspended from College for a week. It was agreed that he could return, but it was felt that anger management would be useful. This was referred to in a CSC case management meeting, but there is no record of the outcome of the action to seek anger management.
- 3.23 A further Needs Assessment was completed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010. It concluded that Farid would benefit from further education in the areas of general health, sexual health, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, housing tenancy and money management.

3.24 On the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010, he moved to a one bedroom flat in Romford. This was funded semi-independent living with 16 to 20 hours per week floating support via Impact IMPACT the Supported Living Housing Provider. He was 17 years and 4 months at that time.

3.25 Farid struggled with his money management and was frustrated by his lack of progress at college. He wanted to move to a higher group.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010, CSC were informed by the IMPACT housing support worker that there had been a complaint about loud music. Farid was spoken to and stated that he was bored. He also informed the IMPACT support worker that he had a 16-year-old girlfriend and had recently met her mother. It is now known that Sally's mother had taken her daughter to his flat, but she had been under the impression that it was Sally's friend's house. Mother has confirmed that she never met Farid.

3.26 On the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011, Farid was suspended from College following a sexual assault on a female student, who had reported that he had touched her inappropriately. A tutor, who had witnessed this assault, was able to confirm her version of events. The student was 18 years of age and declined police involvement.

3.27 On the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011, Farid attended the Stage 3 disciplinary hearing at the College. Also in attendance was his social worker. This is not recorded in social care records. Farid was subsequently expelled from the College. He was informed by letter which was cc'd to his L&ACT social worker on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

3.28 On the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011, a Pathway Plan part 2 was completed. It listed:

- January 2011 the Home Office had refused Farid's appeal for asylum.
- Farid stated he would kill himself rather than return to Iran.
- Social worker to make a referral to mental health coordinator with L&ACT.

Action: To explore dual planning for Farid regarding future options/support:

- 1) If Farid is granted leave to remain in the UK
- 2) If Farid is refused leave to remain and has to return to Iran.

Who will do this: Social Worker with Farid; timescales: within 6 months.

On the same day there was an Emergency Duty Team (EDT) alert from the social worker. Farid had stated he wanted to kill himself and said he had tried with a knife that a friend took off him. He stated he thought he would not make it through the night. He was accompanied to Accident & Emergency to access the Crisis Team. He was assessed by the Psychiatric SHO. They considered that he may be suffering from psychosis due to illicit drugs. As a result a referral was made to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for a psychiatric assessment arranged for the 24<sup>th</sup> February.

3.29 CSC faxed the UKBA a copy of Farid's application to appeal. The hearing was listed for 18/02/11. The Immigration Judge adjourned the hearing to allow Farid to seek legal representation as he was still a minor and unrepresented. Farid's social worker was present at the time.

3.30 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011, Farid spoke with his social worker over the telephone. He stated he was feeling low, but he stated that he had spent the weekend with his girlfriend and her friends.

His IMPACT support worker expressed concerns about Farid living on his own. Farid attended his psychiatric appointment on the 24<sup>th</sup> February and shared that he had been hearing voices since the age of 9/10 years. No conclusion was reached in respect of a treatment plan. He also disclosed that he had had a girlfriend for a couple of months but he had only met her on 3 occasions so was not considered very serious.

- 3.31 On the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011, a CAMHS practitioner, accompanied by Farid's social care support worker, made home visits to Farid. He reported passing out having consumed large amounts of alcohol and energy drinks. He was also angry with his girlfriend. He mentioned that they had had sex several times, but that she no longer wanted to see him. He spoke about wanting to teach her a lesson. The L&CAT social worker was informed of the threat made by Farid. There is no record of this comment being acted upon or probed further.
- 3.32 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011, Farid returned to the College asking for a second chance. He was upset and was talking about suicide. The area head advised him on his options. His social worker was informed of his visit once he had left.
- 3.33 On the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011, there was a CAMHS visit but it was cut short, as Farid was more interested in his new laptop. The Doctor considered that a referral to Adult Mental Health Services was not required.
- 3.34 On the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011, Farid's appeal against the decision to refuse him entry into the country was dismissed. The UKBA served Farid and his original solicitor with the finding. There is no evidence that CSC were informed. Farid had no solicitor at this time but the UKBA were still sending correspondence to his original allocated solicitor.
- 3.35 On the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011, L&ACT social worker accompanied Farid to an interview with Havering Housing RE: hostel place. He was advised there was no place available.
- On the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011, social worker 2 accompanied Farid to interview with YMCA regarding accommodation. The social worker 2 was shocked when he was informed that Farid stated that he had previously tried to kill himself. Farid was informed a few days later that his application for accommodation had not been successful.
- 3.36 Farid's appeal rights were exhausted on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 and he no longer had legal status in the UK. He was required to report on a regular basis to a local police station and received a fax from UKBA stating that he had failed to report on the 7/2/11 and 6/6/11.
- 3.37 In July 2011, CSC confirmed that Farid had no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Shared accommodation for individuals with NRPF had been identified for him in Barkingside.
- 3.38 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011, a Pathway Plan 2 was completed. It stated that Farid was not in education and had been expelled from college due to poor attendance. The issue of inappropriate touching was not recorded in the pathway plan. As a failed asylum seeker he could not undertake employment.

He stated he had a girlfriend, who lived in Chelmsford and whom he visited from time to time. He did not say much about her, other than that her mother had a partner. He said he spent most of his time at the library.

- 3.39 On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012, the CSC recorded that Farid had received a letter from National Asylum Support Service (NASS) refusing him accommodation under Section 4, because he failed to justify why he could not return to Iran. It stated that he could appeal within three days.
- 3.40 On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Sally attended Farid's flat where he subjected her to a fatal attack. Farid was detained three days later as he tried to leave the country in the trailer of a lorry.

## **4 INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT REVIEWS**

### **Lessons learnt.**

4.1 A number of lessons emerged from the individual IMRs. Some, but not all of these, will be covered in this review. To assist the reader the following is a brief summary of the lessons identified in the IMRs.

#### **4.2 Essex Children's Social Care**

- For the CSC and the UKBA to consider the use of combined toolkit in their assessment of UASC.
- There is a gap in communication between UKBA and CSC.
- Consideration of DASH training for all practitioners.
- Consideration should be given to legal support to L&ACT working with UASC and young people.
- Consideration should be given to UASC being provided with an advocate and independent visitors.
- More focus and attention should be given to the view of foster carers when considering a move onto semi-independent living.

#### **4.3 North East London Foundation Trust**

- NELFT policies and procedure on domestic violence to be reviewed MHS and CAMHS to ensure all staff attend a Domestic Abuse training programme.
- Communication between CAMHS and LAC services to ensure that recent changes to improve communication are working.

#### **4.4 UK Border Agency**

- There was a lack of information sharing between the various agencies involved with Farid.
- Failed asylum seekers need to be re documented failed asylum seekers as soon as possible.

#### **4.5 Havering College of Further and Higher Education.**

- Consideration should have been given to home tutoring of Farid to assist him with his frustration.

## **5 ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

### **Leaving & After Care Team**

- 5.1 The L&ACT in Harlow currently works with young people from 19 different foreign countries. 51% of Looked After Children or Former Relevant Children are asylum seekers. There are regular team meetings. Caseloads have been reduced since September 2011; 25 is now the standard number for Personal Advisors. The number for social workers is currently around 18; the target is 12.

### **North East London Foundation Trust**

- 5.2 NELMHT was granted Foundation Trust status in 2008 and renamed NELFT. In July, Barking and Dagenham community health services transferred to NELFT. They provide both mental health services and community services to LAC. INTRACT is a tier 3 mental health outreach service to support young people aged 12 to 18 at home.

### **Havering College of Further & Higher Education**

- 5.3 This College is large and diverse. The number of Asylum Seekers studying at the College is relatively low. When Farid commenced, there were only 8 students taking the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course. The numbers have since increased to 45, which can be attributed to the fact that it was a new course in this area. There is clearly a need for it. Not all of those students were asylum seekers. The College received an excellent Ofsted grading in 2011 for pastoral support for learners. Safeguarding was seen as an example of good practice.

## **6 ANALYSIS OF AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sally was 17 years of age at the time of her death. The Coalition Government announced a new definition for domestic violence in September 2012 that came into force from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. It now includes relationships between young people, aged 16 and 17 years. This change was post the death of Sally but it has provided this DHR with an opportunity to consider aspects of this case against the new definition.

The DHR has focused on identifying possible threats that Farid posed to Sally and other individuals, and whether these should have been identified by agencies and acted on. Due to her age, the Essex Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Review Panel considered whether Sally's death should be subject of a Serious Case Review, required under 'Working Together To Safeguard Children 2010'. They concluded that it had not reached the threshold for a Serious Case Review, but lessons for future practice could be identified in respect of Farid as a UASC and care leaver.

It was therefore agreed that CSC would undertake their own management review covering these aspects of Farid's care. The CSC IMR has examined in detail all aspects of Farid's care and will also act as a stand-alone report to be used by CSC to learn lessons as required by the Safeguarding Children Board. This DHR overview will examine some, but not all of the issues identified and addressed in the CSC IMR. The comprehensive set of recommendations contained in the CSC IMR deal with many of the issues in this case.

This section is split into two parts:

Part 1: will examine the agencies' interaction with Farid as a UASC

Part 2: will examine the relationship between Sally and Farid & domestic abuse

## **6.1 Part 1**

6.1.1. Farid entered the country illegally in December 2008 with three other young people. He claimed that he was 15 years of age and was accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and placed in foster care by Essex Social Care.

6.1.2. His time in this country can be split into three time periods:

- 1) Placement with foster carers: December 2008 to July 2010
- 2) Funded Semi Independent living: July 2010 to July 2011
- 3) No recourse to public funding accommodation: July 2011 to February 2012

6.1.3. It is evident from the start of their contact with Farid that the information CSC had of his past was very sketchy. He stated that he had fled from Iran and that he had seen members of his family killed. It is now clear from the information provided post-conviction that his original story is untrue and he had in fact travelled from Iraq.

### **Placement with foster carers: December 2008 to July 2010**

6.1.4. This DHR acknowledges the support that Farid received when first placed in care.

6.1.5. *SCIE guide 37*<sup>1</sup>: Good practice in social care with refugees and asylum seekers states the following:

### **Children**

*For unaccompanied asylum seeking children the primary needs are likely to be:*

- *basic needs for a place to live and for maintenance*
- *needs for security and belonging*
- *access to healthcare*
- *access to, and support with, education and career*
- *opportunities to develop social networks and to be active in the community*
- *legal advice and support with their asylum claim*
- *support with needs related to their refugee or asylum status*
- *support, and as appropriate*
- *access to psychological interventions and social support in relation to experiences of forced migration, torture and/or trauma including bereavement*
- *cultural and linguistic sensitivity in the way in which they are received, and in which services are planned and delivered*

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<sup>1</sup> *SCIE guide 37*<sup>1</sup> (June 2010): *Good practice in social care with refugees and asylum seekers*: Social Care Institute for Excellence

- 6.1.6. It is evident from the response by the Local Authority, that, when Farid was under their care they acted very positively towards him and provided the support as identified above. The foster placement was appropriate and the carers had been chosen for their experience of working with young people of different ethnicities and religious backgrounds. They, together with the social worker, worked with Farid to support him. He was registered with a local college and for 20 months progressed well.

### **Age Assessment and Background History**

- 6.1.7. The assessment of the age of an asylum seeker is the starting point from which decisions as to entitlements are made.

- 6.1.8. It is the subject of an article in the British Journal of Social Work: Wright (2012)<sup>2</sup>

*Once an UASC claims asylum, the local authority's children's social services department in the area where they initially present are responsible for completing a Merton compliant age assessment. Many asylum applicants who claim to be children do not have any definitive documentary evidence to support their claimed age. Therefore, a careful assessment of the applicant's physical appearance, demeanour and the effects of previous experiences is required in order to determine a precise date of birth for use in the UK (Home Office, 2011a). Although this is completed by two social workers, there is currently no prescribed way in which local authorities are obliged to carry out these assessments (Crawley, 2007). The courts have, however, provided some general guidance to local authorities in a case involving Merton Council (B v. London Borough of Merton [2003] EWHC 1689 (Admin)... However, an age assessment does not solely determine whether a young person is under or over eighteen. Being assessed as either under or over sixteen will have significant implications for a UASC in terms of the level of support and resources available to them. An UASC assessed to be under sixteen years of age will be entitled to a foster placement/residential home, where they will gain considerable support from carers, be supervised and have access to extended payments, such as clothing budgets, whereas UASC assessed as being sixteen or seventeen are likely to be placed into a selection of accommodations ranging from supported lodgings to independent living shared accommodation properties with no adult supervision (Crawley, 2006)*

- 6.1.9. Farid's age was subject to initial uncertainty. In December 2008, at the initial interview and age assessment, he stated that he was 15 years of age and his date of birth was accepted as 20<sup>th</sup> March 1993. However, he gave his date of birth to the UKBA as the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1994, which made him 14 years of age. This was disputed by the UKBA in a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009. They did accept that he was under the age of 18 years so was to be treated as a child. This was noted in his first Looked After Children review (LAC) when it was agreed that a further age assessment would be completed.

The following is noted in the social care IMR:

*'When (Farid) had a meeting with his solicitor on 22/01/2009, he raised concerns about his DOB being incorrect on his ARC card. He was adamant that he was born in 1992 but when it was brought to his attention by the social worker that he needed to be born in 1993 to make him 16, he agreed with the given year'*

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<sup>2</sup> Wright (2012)<sup>2</sup> *Social Work Practice with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People Facing Removal Age assessments and the implications for local authority*: British Journal of Social Work

Farid's exact date of birth is irrelevant in terms of it being agreed that he was under 18 years age, but very relevant in respect of him either being 15 years or 16 approaching 17 years as this influenced the type of placement provided to him. There is evidence that he was being coached as his foster carers told him that if he was under 16 years he would have to attend school. He made a phone call and then gave his year of birth as 1993 making him 16 years.

The IMR has examined this issue and concludes: 8.39

*"Whilst the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Policy and procedures (2008) gives no guidance regarding the review of age, the more recent Children Social Care Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Policy and Procedures (July 2012) notes' the age assessment is an ongoing process and the local Authority will ensure that any age assessment that is conducted is reviewed within 4 weeks and at every statutory review taking into consideration any further evidence or information and the views of those professionals involved in the care of the young person. An updated age assessment will be given to the young person where any additional information is added.*

*The review of age assessments by CSC on a regular basis will enable CSC to consider and new information which comes to light after accommodation and to consider appropriate placements of UASC."*

- 6.1.10. CSC confirmed that the Children Social Care Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Policy and Procedures (July 2012) states:

*'All age assessments conducted by Essex County Council will be Merton compliant'*

- 6.1.11. Another difficulty faced by all agencies when dealing with individuals similar to Farid is the lack of verifiable past history. Farid provided misleading information as to his background as soon as he was picked up in December 2008. His story, with regard to his family, was inconsistent. In normal circumstances a looked after child's reactions, behaviour, difficulties can be assessed against a detailed knowledge of their background history, neglect, abuse etc. In Farid's case, and other asylum seekers, there is often no detailed history on which to base an assessment or plan. This difficulty was acknowledged in the CSC IMR:

*'Very little is known about the past life of people seeking asylum and they have different motivations for wanting to be in the country, i.e. education, different quality of life, fleeing traumatic experiences in their home country, etc. Not knowing about background of asylum seekers makes it much more difficult to assess needs and to try and plan when information is so limited.'*

- 6.1.12. Farid's motivation for coming to the country remains unclear. What has now become evident, with hindsight, is that other parties, possibly even family members, were probably influencing his behaviour. He was very secretive, spent significant time on his mobile phone and appears to have been able to gain access to money and purchase expensive presents for Sally, even though he had little income. He declined support from emotional /mental health services, as well as services provided by the Diversity Steering Group, L&ACT drop-in and the L&ACT mental health' coordinator. He did not wish to use the Red Cross Tracing Service. Farid totally distanced himself from his foster carers once he moved into independent living.



- 6.1.13. Assessing information about an individual's background is closely linked to age assessment:

The OCC report: The Fact of Age July 2012<sup>3</sup> highlights this link when considering the application of the Merton Judgment.

*The assessment process must be a holistic one looking at all aspects of the child's life and development; Social workers must obtain as much information as they can about the chronological life-history and development of the young person;*

*A young person may provide inconsistent information about their life but this may not have a bearing on the assessment of the young person's age. He may lie about aspects of his life unrelated to age (such as reasons for seeking asylum) and inconsistencies should not be counted against the young person automatically;*

*As a matter of fairness, any inconsistencies should be put to the young person so that they have an opportunity to clarify matters before a conclusion is reached on their age;*

*Reasons must be given for the decision made;*

*The Local Authority must make its own decision on the young person's age and cannot simply adopt the assessment of the UKBA.*

*The process of assessing age as set out in the Practice Guidelines and approved in the Merton judgment has subsequently been adopted by many local authorities across the UK and where the process is applied correctly, has gained the label of being a 'Merton compliant' age assessment. The Court has also used the Merton principles as the guidelines for assessing the correctness and lawfulness of a Local Authority age assessment.*

- 6.1.14. Inconsistencies in Farid's story were identified in the CSC IMR. The experienced foster carers were a good source of information, as Farid seemed to have at times dropped his guard when speaking with them in respect of his family. The following is a good example of this:

*'When Farid was in placement with foster carers he had at the beginning of the placement told the foster carers that he was Kurdish and from Iraq (this information was shared with the CSC by the foster carer). Farid was taken to an Iraqi restaurant by foster carers as a way of familiarising and integrating him into the local community. They reported that he understood and was able to speak the language.'*

- 6.1.15. This is a simple but important example as post-conviction he has confirmed that he originated from Iraq not Iran. This information, along with changing information about the reasons why he had come to the UK and his family situation, needed to be continually re assessed and subject to challenge. The Merton Judgment, whilst specifically linked to age assessment, does set out an approach for continued assessment.

In this case there appears to have been little challenge or assessment of what Farid was revealing, so new information about his possible country of origin had not been assessed and shared with the UKBA, who had responsibility for identifying where Farid had originated from.

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<sup>3</sup> L Brownlees, Z Yazdani (July 2012): *The Fact of Age*: OCC

## The Asylum Process and Information Sharing

6.1.16. The DHR has examined the relationship between the UKBA and CSC. What has become evident is the lack of information sharing and limited overall understanding and communication between the two agencies. A number of concerns were identified.

6.1.17. The following is a brief history of Farid's asylum status during the review period:

Farid made an application for asylum in January 2009. His application was refused in March 2009, but he was given discretionary leave in accordance with UASC policy; this expired in September 2010. Farid made an application for further leave; this was refused in January 2011. He appealed, but he was unsuccessful in his appeal and his rights were exhausted in June 2011. At this time the UKBA attempted to re document him in an effort to seek his removal back to Iran. This failed, as without the documentation, Iran would not accept his return.

6.1.18. Farid's main support through the process was from his social workers. They accompanied him to the screening unit in Croydon in January 2009. They were present at Farid's substantive appeals hearing in February 2011. Whilst a solicitor initially represented him they withdrew their services having reviewed his case and concluded that it was weak. The UKBA were unaware of this, and continued to send documentation to the original solicitor.

6.1.19. Despite the Local Authorities' involvement, the UKBA's IMR identified that the decisions made with regard to Farid's status and his applications were not forwarded as a matter of course to the Local Authority.

The IMR states that:

*'The case owner must seek to agree a contact management strategy with the child and their social worker that continues beyond any grant of discretionary leave under the UASC policy. There is no evidence in the paper records or CID computer database that a contact management strategy was agreed between the case owner and Essex social services. In practice, given the finite resources available within the Agency and the number of asylum seeking children (in addition to all other asylum seekers), a contact management strategy is not practical or workable within the case owner role.'*

It concludes:

*'The UK Border Agency failed to notify the Local Authority when decisions were being made on Farid's asylum application. Improved contact with the Local Authority may have resulted in Farid having greater insight into the immigration process, imparting on him that his removal was not imminent.'*

6.1.20. This is a reasonable conclusion, and acknowledgement of the potential impact on the lack of communication. The failure to agree a contact management strategy is of concern as that document would have assisted communication.

6.1.21. Whilst the L&ACT had experience with working with UASC young people, a joint contact management strategy may also have assisted the flow of information between CSC and UKBA. The CSC IMR identified that there were regular team meetings, but the professionals interviewed expressed a view that more training and workshops would assist them in their work with UASCs.

- 6.1.22. The CSC held information such as Farid's change of accommodation, expulsion from College and information from his foster carers about Iraq. This information may have assisted the UKBA in their role.
- 6.1.23. Whilst CSC supported Farid, they had to be cognisant of his ongoing asylum status. It is evident that he became very frustrated about the process and this impacted on his behaviour. This is a difficult position for social workers, as they can appear to be both supporting the young person, whilst at the same time supporting their potential removal.

This was subject of comment in the British Journal of Social Work: Wright<sup>4</sup> (2012)

*'The information a young person requires when facing removal is very specific and demands careful explanation, as young people have very few choices remaining at this stage. The way in which this information is delivered can have a large impact on how a young person perceives their social worker's opinion. It is therefore essential to support Young people to access this information without giving the impression that you are betraying them by going against their wishes.....'*

*'There are many specialist organisations that can provide UASC with in-formation surrounding removal and the options available to them. Receiving this advice from professionals outside of social care can consequently help the young person to differentiate between the professional giving them the details they may not want to hear and the professional who is there to support them when making such difficult decisions. This will help social workers to remain neutral in the eyes of the young person and therefore continue to provide the necessary emotional support.'*

The use of some form of advocacy may have helped to support the social worker in their role. This was identified in the CSC IMR along with additional support that could be provided by independent visitors/mentor.

This has been acknowledged in the CSC IMR, so will not be subject to separate recommendations in this report.

### **Removal from the Country**

- 6.1.24. Both the DHR and the UKBA IMR reviewed the position in respect of Farid's possible removal from the country. This was one of the issues that most concerned Sally's mother the knowledge that her daughter's killer should not technically have been allowed to remain in the country.
- 6.1.25. Farid's appeal rights were exhausted in June 2011 seven months before the death of Sally and it is acknowledged by the UKBA that there was a delay in commencing his Emergency Travel Document (EDT), as this was not passed to a caseworker until January 2012 .The UKBA IMR states:

*"His removal from the UK was not immediately sought due to the lack of documentation to facilitate his removal... in reality the prospect of removal was improbable due to Farid's account of his nationality and apparent reluctance to return to his home country voluntarily."*

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<sup>4</sup> Wright (2012)<sup>4</sup> *Social Work Practice with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People Facing Removal Age assessments and the implications for local authority*: British Journal of Social Work

- 6.1.26. Farid had provided false information having stated that he had originated from Iran. This ensured that whilst he may not have gained leave to remain in the UK he could not be easily returned to Iran without supporting documentation. This was made even more difficult to achieve following the closure of the Iranian embassy in London in November 2011.
- 6.1.27. Had the UKBA been aware that he had told his carers that he was from Iraq they may have been able to make enquires that might have allowed his removal. However, given that they were not aware of the information; his removal was not a realistic option.

### **Risk Indicators**

- 6.1.28. The review has tried to establish if behaviour exhibited by Farid led any professional to consider him to be a risk to himself or others. The evidence indicates that concerns were raised about Farid's behaviour and attitudes, but he was never considered or assessed to be a significant risk.
- 6.1.29. Farid did present a number of behavioural traits including:
- Attitudes
  - Aggressive behaviour
  - Physical assaults
  - Mental Health
- 6.1.30. During Farid's initial period living with foster carers until July 2010, a number of concerns were raised. In June 2009, the carers mentioned Farid's relationship with another other young person in the placement. This had resulted in arguments linked to Farid's frustrations, which then caused tension within the home. The carers' comments were set out in the CSC's IMR:

*"They reported that he could be at times secretive and did exhibit jealous, competitive and aggressive behaviour towards the other young person in placement."*

Whilst he appeared to accept authority from adults, he found it difficult to negotiate with his peers. He was also jealous that the other young person was attracting the attention of girls.

He had fights at college and was subject to a disciplinary hearing in April 2010. As a result he was set improvement targets with regard to his attitude and behaviour. This was with the involvement of his social worker. This is an example of effective intervention and joint working between the College and CSC.

These areas of concern must be considered within the context of him as UASC and the difficulties he faced both dealing with being in a new country and culture and also dealing with unknown issues in his background. What he was displaying was not uncommon for such an individual and led to the experienced foster carers feeling that he was progressing.

- 6.1.31. Farid's attitudes towards females were exhibited in some of his comments. In December 2009, he had an angry outburst in class when he accused his female peers of 'sleeping around'. In January 2010, whilst he was being prepared for independent living, he commented that his mother used to spoon feed his meals and he did not like the culture in the UK of men cooking, and that his plan was to find a girlfriend to do all

the cooking, so he did not need to further his cooking skills. He would be disrespectful towards disabled people.

- 6.1.32. Farid was registered with and attended college from 2008 until his expulsion in February 2011. There was significant contact between the College and the L&ACT specifically during 2010, when there were a number of concerns raised about him. It is evidenced in the College IMR that his behaviour deteriorated when he moved into independent living in July 2010.

#### **Funded Semi Independent living: July 2010 to July 2011**

- 6.1.33. Farid's move to semi-independent living was examined in the CSC IMR. In July 2010, he moved to a one bedroom flat in Romford. He received a high level of floating support (16 to 20 hours a week) and the support worker worked closely with Farid and CSC.
- 6.1.34. It is recorded that concerns were being expressed about Farid's move to semi-independent living especially by the foster carers. Farid wanted to move and the CSC IMR concludes:

*"Given the foster carers relationship and interaction with Farid on a daily basis, perhaps more credence should have been given to the foster carers' assessment of Farid's readiness for independent living. It is however, questionable whether the additional eight months in placement would have made any difference to Farid's behaviour, interaction or perception of others".*

The last point cannot be tested, but the lesson from this case is the requirement to take into consideration all informed views prior to a final decision being made. Farid's behaviour was managed well by his foster carers and his lack of skills to live independently were identified and endorsed by the Essex Access to Resource Panel in January 2010. It was agreed that CSC would go back to the panel in July 2010 if it was felt that Farid was not ready to live independently. Despite the concerns expressed, the case was not taken back to the panel. It is evident that Farid was pushing to be moved away from his carers and that he would only be able to remain with them for a few more months. So the decision to move him, whilst a difficult one, is understandable.

#### **No Recourse to Public funding accommodation: July 2011 to February 2012.**

- 6.1.35. Once Farid's claim to remain in the country was refused he had no recourse to public funds (NRPF). This limited the council's options for future accommodation and led to him being placed in 'shared housing' in the London area. A level of support continued to be supplied by Essex County Council. The impact of Farid being housed out of the council area was that the supervision of him was less intense. He was seen by his social worker on:

- 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011
- 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011
- 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011
- 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012

It is noted that these dates were not recorded officially as visits. This is a further of example of a lack of recording.

As a NRPF Farid was unable to access education or employment so his time was not spent productively, as he was isolated and therefore more reliant on friends for companionship.

This situation has been recognised by Essex County Council and they are currently considering keeping young people they have responsibility for, regardless of their asylum seeking status, in various accommodation options within the council area. This would potentially strengthen their ability to support the young person and be more aware of their activities.

It should be noted that Harlow L&ACT, responsible for UASCs, is situated on the far north west of the county and geographically is closer to areas of London, such as Barkingside, than it is to many locations in Essex so if a young person were located in Essex access, in terms of travel, may not be automatically improved. The option that best provides the greatest support to a USAC would need to be assessed.

### **Sexual Assault**

- 6.1.36. The most significant event took place in January 2011. Farid was suspended from college for what was recorded as 'inappropriately touching' of a female student. This led to Farid's suspension and subsequent expulsion from college.
- 6.1.37. This event has been subject to examination by the panel. It was established that the act referred to as 'inappropriate touching' did in fact potentially constitute a criminal offence of sexual assault. A member of staff witnessed the incident, so the serious nature of the offence is not in doubt.
- 6.1.38. The author examined the minutes of the College disciplinary hearing, where it is recorded that Farid claimed that it was an accident. However, the evidence would indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.39. The victim did not wish to involve the police. As she was 18 years old she was able to decide whether or not to pursue the incident through the criminal route. The College informed CSC as Farid was under their care. His social worker attended the subsequent disciplinary hearing, so was fully aware of the incident.
- 6.1.40. The DHR examined why the College did not contact the police. The College subsequently contacted their local police, who confirmed that as the victim was an adult and the perpetrator was already under the care of social care they would not, in all likelihood have taken action. Given the victim's age, this advice is appropriate. The College suspended Farid and subsequently expelled him, so any risk to other students within the College environment was removed.
- 6.1.41. However, the expulsion from college removed one of Farid's important support structures. Given this and the nature of his actions (i.e. an un-provoked sexual assault), this incident should have been subject to a serious assessment within social care.
- 6.1.42. Farid's disciplinary hearing was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011. His social worker attended so was aware of all the facts. On the 16<sup>th</sup> February there was a supervision meeting and on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011 a Pathway Care Plan was completed. The IMR notes the following:

*"Noted that Farid's appeal for asylum had been refused by the Home Office. Farid had been experiencing a huge rise in stress in regards to his immigration status. He had*

*been preparing to represent himself in court 18/2/11. Farid also told social worker that he would be killed if returned to Iran, therefore he will kill himself in the UK before returning"- Action: social worker to make referral to BC Mental Health Co coordinator with L&ACT (no record located)."*

- 6.1.43. Having considered all available information, other than acknowledging that Farid had been suspended/ expelled, the serious nature of his behaviour appeared to have been minimised. The social worker involved is no longer in place so could not be interviewed for this DHR so it remains unclear why this should have taken place. It does not appear that the team manager was aware of the facts.

The CSC's IMR states:

*"X Team Manager at the time advised that the social worker was very conscientious, she (X) was not however aware of the inappropriate touching and therefore was not aware of the potential risk that Farid pose to others. As Essex County Council was supporting Farid to attend other colleges, X was clear this information would have been pertinent for the L&ACT to share with colleges."*

The information should also have been shared with other agencies.

- 6.1.44. In February 2011, following his expulsion from college, Farid started to express a desire to self-harm. The concern was such that he was taken to the Accident and Emergency department. This resulted in him being referred to the North East London Foundation Trust (NELF) INTERACT service and to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Farid was subject to a home visit home visit by an INTERACT practitioner and his support worker on the 24<sup>th</sup> February He had just been excluded from college and reported that he was drinking heavily. The NELF's IMR states:

*'He spoke for the first time of a girlfriend with whom he was angry as she no longer wanted to see him and stated that he wanted to teach her a lesson. He would not elaborate further on this on this occasion or in later contacts. Contact was made with his Harlow Care team social worker on 01/03/11 and she was informed of the threat made by AM.'*

There is no indication that this threat was recorded within the social care records.

- 6.1.45. The INTERACT worker contacted the college on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and was informed that Farid had been expelled for 'inappropriately touching' a female student. The IMR concludes:

*'Although presenting risk, principally the verbal threat that he 'wanted to teach his former girlfriend a lesson' was assessed this was in the context of (X) being assessed due to his suicidal threats. When information regarding exclusion from Havering was made known to INTRACT worker, (X), the risk assessment was not reviewed in line with policy. In the case of (X) it cannot therefore be assured that NELF fully assessed all risks of domestic violence or would have been able to assess future risks of domestic violence had it been presented.'*

- 6.1.46. Failure to supply background information was identified in the CSC IMR:

*'....Given Farid had in the past exhibited aggressive behaviour when frustrated and could become easily agitated, this should have been information that was shared with the psychiatrist. Instead of the suicidal threats and hearing voices being considered in*

*isolation, more consideration may have been given to the effects of his behaviour on others'.*

- 6.1.47. Despite the serious nature of his behaviour, there is no evidence that CSC had assessed it. This led to the information not being passed to NELF which would have assisted them to assess Farid correctly in light of the threats he made towards his girlfriend. Even when they did become aware of the College incident NELF failed to re-assess Farid in line with their policy.
- 6.1.48. UKBA were not informed of the college incident so could not review the position RE: his status in the country.
- 6.1.49. This incident should have led to agencies identifying that Farid might pose a potential threat to women. If that had happened, then the subsequent threat he made towards his girlfriend may have taken on different connotations.

### **Section Summary**

- 6.1.50. Farid displayed anger and frustration, especially when things did not go as he wished. His anger was directed at both the perceived lack of support he was receiving from social care and his frustration with the asylum process. His behaviour was managed well by the foster carers, but his lack of skills to live independently were identified and endorsed by the Essex Access to Resource Panel in January 2010. It was agreed that Farid would be referred back to the panel in July 2010, if it was felt he was not ready to live independently.
- 6.1.51. Farid was being supported and actions were identified at various stages, but the CSC's IMR found that there was a lack of supporting documentation with regard to what happened with the actions. Examples include:

*The LAC Review, Health Assessment dated 31/03/10 made reference to Farid's anger management and made recommendation for an assessment by CAMHS(Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) – (No record of outcome)*

*Case management 20/04/10 following a fight at school action was CSC to explore anger management options. (no record located)*

*LAC visit on 15/07/10 recorded that a referral for counselling had been discussed- FARID missing his family (no recorded detail re: referral)*

Whilst it is evidenced that Farid continually refused to engage with services offered, the outcome of the identified actions should still have been fully recorded.

- 6.1.52. In March 2010 the Pathway Plan Needs Assessment identified that Farid had no allocated independent visitor/mentor and he had declined access to emotional/health services and services through the Leaving and After Care Team. Farid stated that the foster carers were a major component of his support system. His carers expressed concerns about his ability to live independently without a high level of support. Despite these documented concerns the case was not referred back to the panel This was unfortunate accepting that continued funded support, with the foster carers would have been for a limited time only.
- 6.1.53. With hindsight it becomes evident that Farid was influencing the situation and was advised by third parties, including during the age assessment. This is evidenced through his non engagement with services and the cutting himself off from his foster



carers whom he had stated were his influencers. There was a need for continued assessment and close working with the carers and other professionals to try and identify issues as they changed and to challenge the individual.

- 6.1.54. Farid's move to independent living was the point at which his behaviour deteriorated. This was evident within the College. He started to drink and was spending beyond his limited means. Where he was obtaining this additional money does not appear to have been questioned.
- 6.1.55. His expulsion from the College was a pivotal point as it removed his support structure and his routine. His actions were minimised by CSC at the time and in future assessments. Concerns about him self-harming only arose after his expulsion, and there is no evidence that he had ever attempted to self-harm, rather he appears to have only threatened it. This would again indicate that Farid was controlling the situation after his expulsion in order to ensure he remained in the country as again he refused ongoing support services.

## **6.2 Part 2**

- 6.2.1. Part 1 of this section focused on issues relating to Farid as a UASC LAC, the following will consider the relationship between Sally and Farid and links to potential domestic abuse.

### **Sally's Story.**

- 6.2.2. The chronology has almost exclusively been confined to agencies contact with Farid it is important to remember that Sally was the victim. As has been identified, she had little contact with agencies so the bulk of the information about her has been obtained from the police investigation into her death and from her mother and friends.
- 6.2.3. The following is a summary of her story compiled as a result of information gained from Sally's mother, who will be referred to as Mother in this report, and from friends.
- 6.2.4. Sally was Black British and 17 years of age at the time of her death. She moved from London to Chelmsford with her mother, father and two brothers in 2003. She was initially shy and very conscious of the fact that she was one of very few black pupils at her new school; she had come from a school with a greater diversity of students. She made friends and increased in confidence and wanted to pursue a career in fashion and textiles.
- 6.2.5. Her older brother who was autistic lived away from the family home during the week. She was very close to her Father.
- 6.2.6. In March 2010 her father died unexpectedly. This had a major impact on the whole family, especially Sally's mother. Sally declined the support of counselling from her school wanting her mother to help her. Mother struggled to cope as she was on her own.
- 6.2.7. Sally was a student at a local college commencing there in September 2011. She had previously attended a local school.
- 6.2.8. Mother believes that Sally first made contact with Farid via the internet in about November 2010. The subsequent police investigation indicates that this may have been September 2010, but her friend thought it was soon after her father's death.

- 6.2.9. Mother became aware of the relationship in December 2010 when Sally's younger brother started to tease her about having a 'boyfriend'. Sally denied it, as she knew her mother would not approve. Mother was not happy, as she felt that Sally's education was most important factor at that time. In January 2011, Sally told her mother that she was going out with a friend, as it was a weekend. This was unusual behaviour for Sally, but even though Mother was uncomfortable with her going out, she did not challenge it. In February 2011 Sally's school contacted Mother as she had not arrived at school. Mother was very worried, but eventually Sally turned up at school. Afterwards, a meeting was held with Sally, school staff and Mother. Sally did not disclose where she had been during the time she was missing, but Mother later found a letter in her bag written by Sally to request that Farid be allowed to remain in the country. Sally stated that Farid's key worker had told him that such a letter would be helpful for his case.
- 6.2.10. Mother told Sally that she must end the relationship as Farid was telling her lies. Sally told her mother that she was sorry and that she had started talking to Farid as he stated that he had also lost his father. Sally had her mobile and computer confiscated for a couple of weeks. Sally kept the relationship going and she started to ring a different number so when her mother checked her phone she would not recognise the number. Mother remained concerned as she felt that Farid was controlling her. She asked a friend and relative to help. They lived abroad but came over in April 2011 to speak with Sally about the relationship. It was felt that she would open up more to them about it. It became clear that Farid was trying to persuade Sally to run away with him and leave her family. The relationship continued as Farid kept ringing her. Sally would not listen to her mother.
- 6.2.11. Sally achieved good grades in her GCSE's so Mother arranged, with Sally's agreement, for her to visit a relative in Norway as a reward. Whilst she was in Norway Farid contacted Sally, they had lots of arguments witnessed by the relative Farid was still trying to get her to run away with him and he stated that he had money. Sally informed her relative that Farid had lied to her and that she had ended the relationship. This was during the summer of 2011.
- 6.2.12. As far as Mother was aware the relationship had ended. She never suspected that Sally resumed contact with Farid. She used to check Sally's mobile but she later found out that Sally had stored his number in a separate file. Sally commenced college in September, worked hard; her behaviour raised no suspicions not even to her younger brother.
- 6.2.13. Mother never met Farid. On one occasion she took Sally to an address in Romford where she thought Sally was meeting a friend, but it was in fact Farid's premises. Mother was not aware of this.
- 6.2.14. From information provided by Sally's best friend it is now known that Farid stayed with Sally at her home over Christmas 2011. Her mother and brother were abroad and were not aware. This was discussed with Mother. Sally had told her that she did not want to go away with her. Mother wanted her to stay with a friend (Kate) as she did not want to leave Sally home on her own at Christmas. Sally stated that if she stayed with Kate it would cause tension as Kate would get jealous, because she believed her mother liked Sally more. Mother eventually agreed for Sally to remain at home, but arranged that a neighbour would keep an eye on her. Mother went away and had no idea that Farid had stayed in the house.
- 6.2.15. Mother believes that Sally loved Farid and wanted to help him and encourage him to go to college and get work in order to remain in the country.

- 6.2.16. It is evident from the talking to her best friend, that Sally kept the relationship quiet from other friends. Even her best friend was limited in her knowledge of Farid. It appears that this was Sally's first relationship. It was a sexual relationship and Farid was always buying her presents.
- 6.2.17. The review author contacted both the school that she was attending at the time of her father's death, and the college that she attended as from September 2011. Neither held any information that would indicate that they were aware or should have been of the relationship. She was considered to be a good pupil; her attendance caused no concern nor did her behaviour. The school supported both Sally and her mother following the death of her father. Her best friend confirmed that she was a good, conscientious student who was always on top of her work. Sally gave the impression of being very strong and was always willing to help and support her friends.
- 6.2.18. On the day of the attack she informed her friend that she was going to meet Farid to collect a £1000 that he owed her having run up a bill on her mobile phone. She had told her mother that she was going to college; her best friend was the only one who knew where she was going.

### **The Relationship**

- 6.2.19. The first consideration was to establish if there were opportunities for professionals to have identified that Sally and Farid were in a relationship.
- 6.2.20. Farid made a number of references to having a girlfriend. In December 2010, whilst he was living in Romford, CSC were informed by the Impact housing support worker that there had been a complaint about loud music. Farid was spoken to and stated he was bored. He also informed the support worker that he had a 16 year old girlfriend and had recently met her mother. It is now evident from Sally's mother that this was not true.
- 6.2.21. In March 2011 he made reference to wanting to teach his girlfriend a lesson to the Interact practitioner. This was information was forwarded to CSC although there is no evidence of it being recorded in CSC records. It is now known that it was around this period of time that Sally's mother had found out about the relationship.
- 6.2.22. In June 2011, Farid informed his social worker that he had a girlfriend who was supportive and in October 2011, the Pathway Plans record that he had a girlfriend who lived in Chelmsford and that he visited from time to time.
- 6.2.23. The issue of Farid being in a relationship was never progressed. Sally was never identified and there is no indication that her age (16 years) or her vulnerability were ever assessed. As has been previously identified the veiled threat that he made against his girlfriend failed to lead to further questioning as to who she might be.

It was recorded that Farid's girlfriend was supportive; any assessment as to how she was being supportive is not recorded. The letter she drafted may evidence her support, but there is no record of her being officially asked to supply such a letter.

Without Farid identifying Sally, it would have been difficult for professionals to have progressed the matter, but there is no evidence of any proactive investigation, including questioning of Farid about his girlfriend.

## **Influencing Relationships**

- 6.2.24. Having established that little was known about Sally by agencies responsible for the care and support of Farid, the DHR has examined if her family, friends or school could have influenced the relationship.
- 6.2.25. It is now known that Mother had concerns about the relationship and tried to get Sally to end it. However, from Summer 2011 Mother thought that it had ended and it is evident that Sally at that stage deliberately sought to hide the relationship from all, but her best friend. This included the deceit of her mother at Christmas 2011. What is not known is how involved Farid was in influencing and advising Sally on this strategy of secrecy.
- 6.2.26. It is of note that the relationship commenced via the internet. Having discussed the issue with a lead at Sally's school it is evident that the internet and the young people's use of it is a major issue.
- 6.2.27. The review author has been in contact with both the school that she was attending at the time of her father's death and the college that she commenced in September 2011.
- 6.2.28. Neither institution has information in their records that would indicate that they were aware or should have been aware of the relationship, or that she exhibited behaviour that would indicate that she was becoming a concern because of the relationship. She was considered to be a good, mature pupil her attendance caused no concern nor did her behaviour.
- 6.2.29. Her school at the time of her father's death supported Sally and her mother by offering and grief counselling and as has been confirmed Sally declined the support.

Despite the schools increased contact with the family through the period of grief, there is no indication that the school received information or identified signs that Sally was in a relationship that might have been abusive or potentially harmful to her.

- 6.2.30. Her best friend stated that she was a diligent student who was on top of her work, which supported this position. She gave the impression of being very strong and was always willing to help and support her friends. Given the information known to the school and family it appears that there was little in her behaviour that one could consider should have led to it being questioned by the School or College.

## **Friends**

- 6.2.31. As has been previously set out, friends had limited knowledge of the relationship. Her closest friend did have concerns about the relationship and expressed her concerns to Sally, but she ignored the advice. It would appear that Sally tried to end the relationship, on a number of occasions, but Farid would not allow that to happen and made her feel guilty. This position is supported by the information provided by Mother.
- 6.2.32. The information obtained from the police investigative team would indicate that Farid was potentially exploiting Sally both financially and sexually. It is known that he hacked into both her mobile phone and Facebook account. This resulted in him running up a telephone bill of £1000 and him interfering with her 'Facebook' to try and isolate her from her friends. It is of note that he spent a lot of time on his laptop.

- 6.2.33. Sally had entered what appears to have been a possibly abusive relationship; her partner was jealous and controlling. Whilst she was away on a College trip in France, he spoke with her best friend and questioned her about what boys that Sally had been in contact with. He was not happy about her having contact with other males. Whilst her sexual relationship with Farid may have been consensual, she did disclose to her friend that she would see him and did not always want sex, but he did. She wanted to do other things.
- 6.2.34. There is no evidence that Farid had been physically violent towards Sally prior to the final fatal attack.
- 6.2.35. In conclusion, Sally's relationship was a secretive one with no exterior physical signs that would indicate to her School, College or family from summer 2011 onwards that one could say should have led to opportunities to intervene. That, linked to the total lack of knowledge of Sally by Farid's support structures, presented a situation that would have been hard to intervene and potentially change the outcome.
- 6.2.36. The author explored with the friend whether given her concerns she thought about informing anyone about the situation. She stated that she had not, as she would be betraying a friend's confidence and also she did not know who to inform.

The issue of betraying a friend's confidence exists within many domestic violence situations where a friend is aware of violence, but does not disclose due to loyalty. This is a significant issue in young people's relationships.

### **Domestic Abuse and Young people**

- 6.2.37. Whilst the new definition of domestic violence was announced after Sally's death, this DHR demonstrates that it will pose a number of challenges for all agencies. The well-established approach to domestic abuse needs to be reviewed when applied to young person's relationships.
- 6.2.38. In this case the issue was compounded by the lack of known contact between the victim and perpetrator. If there had been previously known incidents then the use of the MARAC assessment process might have been considered, but there were no opportunities for that to have taken place.
- 6.2.39. It is evidenced in the IMRs that all agencies have in place, or comply with policies, and procedures for domestic violence pre the new definition. The CSC IMR has considered the impact of the new definition of domestic abuse. It states:

*'It will now impact on children's services and therefore there is a need for these services to better understand the impact of domestic violence similar to that provided to adult services. That will need to include awareness of training in the DASH assessment process, the MARAC process etc.'*

- 6.2.40. There is a need to revisit the current policies and procedures and consider how agencies will react to abuse within young persons' relationships.

### **The Role of Schools and Colleges**

- 6.2.41. Farid was Sally's first boyfriend and, when examining the relationship with her friends, it led to the question as to whether Sally, or peers, really understood what a loving normal relationship looked like. How could they be provided with this information or private counselling if they had concerns?

6.2.42. As part of the review the author spoke to the College lead in order to establish what the College did with regard to raising awareness of students about domestic abuse and relationship support. The College has the following support systems:

- Counseling
- Mental Health worker
- Personal tutors for all students
- Tutorial programme including bullying, health issues etc.
- Child protection processes (all staff trained)
- Community Health workers attend college every week

6.2.43. It was acknowledged that raising awareness in respect of relationships and domestic abuse and links to sexual exploitation was limited. Individual issues such as drugs were covered, but the links between relationships, sexual exploitation and domestic violence were not at that time. It has subsequently been fed back to the panel that Sally's College is reviewing their current approach in light of the feedback from this review.

Sally's friends expressed a desire for such awareness raising within the college environment supported by some form of confidential service that they could consult with about their concerns. Her best friend disclosed that she had been in a relationship that was potentially controlling, which she ended as a direct result of what happened to Sally. This comment was very thought provoking and evidenced the current lack of awareness.

6.2.44. As a direct result of this review it has been agreed that Essex County Council will work with Colleges to develop a program to:-

1. Raise awareness of Domestic Violence and healthy relationships and support that is available
2. Assign an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) to support students
3. To record and track the evidence base on the extent of the problem and what works
4. Develop an evidenced based model for sustainability with the Safeguarding leads in each College

This will be supported by funding for one IDVA post and The Partners- The Colleges will appoint a lead champion to work with and report into the Essex Domestic Abuse Strategy Group over a period of a year.

6.2.45. This is a significant move and is testimony to the power of a DHR and evidences this areas commitment to learning and improving.

### **Sexual Exploitation**

6.2.46. Reference has been made to domestic abuse and possible sexual exploitation. The author raised the possibility that Sally might have been subject to sexual exploitation, accepting that this had not been clearly evidenced in this case. The DHR panel were not in total agreement with the suggestion.

6.2.47. The definition of child sexual exploitation used by UK governments in their guidance and policy was developed by the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited

Children and Young People<sup>5</sup>:

*"The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves **exploitative situations, contexts and relationships** where young people (or a third person or persons) **receive 'something'** (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.*

*Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources."*

- 6.2.48. Sexual exploitation, due to a number of high profile cases, has tended to be associated to groups of males often of Asian origin, targeting vulnerable young white women. However, as a recent serious case review in Torbay 'C26' identified, sexual exploitation can be undertaken within a relationship between two young people without the group or racial element.
- 6.2.49. When one considers the new definition of domestic abuse of persons under the age of 18 years, there appears to be a close link between abuse and sexual exploitation. There is a need to recognise this link when considering future training or investigations into either offences.
- 6.2.50. Sally, who was 16 years when the sexual relationship commenced, was in a situation that was potentially abusive due to Farid's controlling behaviour, jealousy etc. Therefore, sexual exploitation was a possibility and cannot be ignored. However, the author totally accepts the view of some of the panel that sexual exploitation had not been clearly evidenced in this case and that there may be elements of exploitation in many young people's initial sexual relationships. Sexual exploitation must be explored when training and making young people aware of abusive relationships.

### **Ethnic Cultural & Linguistic Issues**

- 6.2.51. Ethnic, cultural and linguistic issues were relevant in this case. As has been previously highlighted Farid has specific needs and these were taken into consideration when he came into care of the CSC. The choice of foster carers and their subsequent work with Farid to support his needs should be considered to be good practice. He was attending College to learn English and he was also supported by the interpreting service for most of his contacts. This was good support for his linguistic needs.
- 6.2.52. It has to also be recognised that his attitudes and behaviour especially his attitudes toward females, were potentially linked to his cultural background. This was a case of good support for an individual who had significant needs.
- 6.2.53. It is important that in cases such as Farid's, where there is limited background history, there is continuing assessment in order to establish who they are and be able to test the information given to the professionals.

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<sup>5</sup> : [What is child sexual exploitation?](#). National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People, 2008.

## 7 CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNT

- 7.1 This DHR has reviewed the relationship between two young people, Sally, who was 17 years of age at the time of her death, and Farid a failed asylum seeker under the care of the Local Authority as a LAC since December 2008. Sally kept the relationship secret, even from her mother. Whilst Farid, made a number of references to having a girlfriend, her identity remained unknown to the agencies supporting him.
- 7.2 There was no known history of police involvement, or other agency involvement with them as a couple, so the traditional information available in many abusive relationships such as previous incidents, assaults, increased violence etc. was not present in this case. A revised definition of domestic violence was introduced in September 2012, post Sally's death. This DHR has identified issues that need to be considered by agencies in light of the new definition.
- 7.3 Farid was a LAC with the added complexity of being a UASC. CSC had no reliable background information to assist with assessments; including his age, which was subject to a number of changes in the early stages. Nonetheless, it was always accepted by the UKBA that he was under the age of 18 years.
- 7.4 Farid became frustrated with the asylum process and often took his frustrations out on the CSC and the perceived lack of support. The use of an advocate to support and advise him specifically about the asylum process may have assisted the social care team, as it would have allowed them to focus on his care.
- 7.5 The CSC role was not assisted by the UKBA, who failed to supply the CSC with on-going information in respect of the asylum process in their role as his 'corporate parent'. Any correspondence was sent direct to Farid and his solicitor, who stopped representing him very early on in the process. There was equally a lack of information being passed back to the UKBA from the CSC including Farid's change in behaviour, his expulsion from College following a sexual assault and his various accommodation moves. The setting of a clear contact management strategy between the two agencies would have assisted communication and understanding of what was happening by both parties as Farid moved through the process.
- 7.6 Farid exhibited behaviours including anger and the threat to self-harm. He also demonstrated unacceptable attitudes towards females and was eventually excluded from College for a sexual assault. This was not, at the request of the victim who was 18 years of age, passed to the police for investigation. Farid's social worker attended the disciplinary hearing at the college, so he was fully aware of the circumstances. However, the serious nature of the incident is not evidenced and reflected in future planning or assessments. It appears to have been minimised, and it is unclear why.
- 7.7 Soon after his expulsion, Farid was referred to CAMHS following threats to harm himself. During one of his sessions he indicated that he was going to '*teach his girlfriend a lesson*' as she wanted to finish with him. This information was passed to the CSC, but neither the CSC nor the CAMHS fully assessed the implications of the threat in conjunction to his known behaviour towards women and specifically the sexual assault.
- 7.8 This was the one potential opportunity to have identified a possible future risk to women and specifically to Sally his girlfriend. No risk was identified, as the links and potential danger were not understood or recognised. There is no evidence to indicate that Farid's references to a girlfriend were explored with him to establish who she was.



- 7.9 In respect of Sally, it is known that her father died unexpectedly in March 2010. This was a traumatic event in Sally's life but she had to be strong to support her mother, who was greatly affected by the death. She commenced the online friendship with Farid. She was vulnerable so likely to be attracted to attention/support and the emotional links with Farid when he informed her about his father being killed.
- 7.10 They eventually met up and the relationship became physical. This was thought to be her first real relationship. It appears that Farid's behaviour was controlling, jealous and when Sally tried to end the relationship he made her feel guilty. He hacked into her Facebook account, attempted to turn her friends against her and ran up a bill of £1000 by accessing Sally's mobile account.
- 7.11 Despite this, there is no evidence that she displayed any signs at school or later at College that would indicate that the relationship was affecting her studies, attendance or behaviour. Initially her mother was aware that it was taking place and expressed disapproval. She tried to get it stopped in February 2011 and she thought that in the summer of 2011 the relationship had ended. However, Sally sought to keep the relationship quiet.
- 7.12 The best friend was aware of the on-going relationship and was concerned about his behaviour towards Sally. She was aware that she had gone to meet him on the day of her death, but Sally declined offers for her to go with her.
- 7.13 Friends disclosed that this sort of one-sided relationship is not unusual amongst young people, especially in first serious relationships. They disclosed that whilst the College and school deal with issues such as drugs and sexual health, there is currently little information as to what a good relationship is like or who can students speak to about concerns they may have about a relationship.
- 7.14 This relationship may have involved abuse and with the new definition of domestic abuse now in place educational establishments should review how they are going to inform their young students about domestic abuse, and sexual exploitation.
- 7.15 The new definition will challenge agencies' current training and views in respect of domestic abuse as young people's relationships pose different challenges.
- 7.16 This review has identified a number of issues that agencies need to consider when dealing with young unaccompanied asylum seekers. It has also identified the level of awareness that has to be achieved by professionals when implementing the new definition of domestic violence.
- 7.17 There were a number of opportunities to identify that Farid and Sally were in a relationship, but they were reliant on a number of other factors, such as Farid informing the agencies who his girlfriend was and for Sally to have wanted to have engaged if she had been approached. The evidence would suggest that this was unlikely to have happened, so it hard conclude to that any action taken would have prevented the tragic outcome.

## 8 REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

The overview sets out two levels of recommendations:

1. Recommendations for multi-agency partnership groups.
2. Recommendations for individual agencies not captured within the agency IMR

### 1) Recommendations for multi-agency partnership groups

#### **Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership**

Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership to share the report with a number of relevant organisations and to monitor the implementation of the recommendations allocated to:

- a) Essex Safeguarding Children Board
- b) Essex Domestic Abuse Board
- c) London Safeguarding Children Board

#### **(a) Essex Safeguarding Children Board to:**

- 1) Review how awareness of the new definition of Domestic Violence is being introduced into statutory and voluntary agencies and provide an update to the Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership within six months of receipt of the report
- 2) Ensure that local Schools and Colleges consider the findings of this DHR and review how they currently advise/support young people about domestic abuse within relationships. This should include the role of friends and the issue of breaking a confidence when risk is known. Provide an update to the Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership after six months of receipt of the report.

#### **(b) Essex Domestic Abuse Board to:**

- 1) Review current domestic abuse training in light of the new definition and ensure that it now includes reference to sexual exploitation and provide an update to the Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership on progress within six months of receipt of the report.

#### **(c) London Safeguarding Children Board to:**

- 1) Share the report with relevant partners and confirm to the Chelmsford Community Safety Partnership that the lessons learnt have been disseminated as appropriate within three months of receipt of the report

### 2) Recommendations for individual agencies not captured within the agency IMR

#### **Essex County Council Children's Social Care**

- 1) To have in place a clear contact strategy between CSC and UKBA for each young UCAS to ensure that information between the two agencies is shared, as the UCAS travels through the asylum process.

## **UK Border Agency**

- 1) To have in place a clear contact strategy between UKBA and CSC for each young UASC to ensure that information between the two agencies is shared, as the UASC travels through the asylum process.

## **9 INDIVIDUAL AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below are listed the recommendations taken from the agency IMR.

### **Havering College of Further and Higher Education**

Police to be notified when a student is expelled due to assault regardless of whether or not Social Services are involved. To ensure that the incident is logged by the police in case of future incidents.

### **UK Border Agency**

- 1 The UK Border Agency should make immediate efforts to re-document failed asylum seekers in an effort to facilitate the removal. This will result in the timely removal of immigration applicants from the UK, and will evidently reduce any risk of eventual domestic violence.
- 2 Other statutory agencies, whether responsible for the victims or perpetrators, should routinely and immediately contact the UK Border Agency to share information and intelligence. This will allow the UK Border Agency to focus on cases where there is a need for immediate or swift intervention in relation to immigration matters; whether to assist the victim or to deal appropriately with the perpetrator. This should also apply to information sharing to other agencies by the UK Border Agency.

### **North East London Foundation Trust**

- 1 Completion of the review of the NELFT policies and procedures on domestic violence.
- 2 Domestic Abuse Training to be included in the core training skills programme for all clinical staff.
- 3 Havering CAMHS staff to attend DA training.
- 4 Implement a system to identify/flag all LAC with an open referral on the CAMHS case load.
- 5 To raise awareness of CAMHS staff in relation to requirements for escalation and management in the event of increased risk factors
- 6 Health LAC team to receive notification of all LAC children placed in borough from Essex County Council within 5 working days of placement change

### **Essex County Council Children's Social Care**

- 1 There is a need for interagency agency working and information sharing to be improved. Where there are formal meetings, minutes and documentation should be

- provided in a secure way to ensure this information is received.
- 2 There are gaps in communication between the UKBA and CSC. Consideration needs to be given to regular liaison and updates between the UKBA and CSC.
  - 3 There is a need for interagency agency working and information sharing to be improved. Where there are formal meetings, minutes and documentation should be provided in a secure way to ensure this information is received.
  - 4 Consideration to be given to DASH training being made available to all practitioners but essentially to those involved in the initial assessment and intervention process and those working with young people.
  - 5 Consideration needs to be given to additional training and workshops for practitioners working with this user group to assist them in their assessment of need, including where therapeutic interventions are required.
  - 6 Consideration needs to be given to the formulation of policy and procedure in relation to domestic violence amongst and between young people.
  - 7 Given the level of involvement and work undertaken with UASC in CSC, consideration needs to be given to the availability of legal support and guidance to the L&ACT working with UASC and young people.
  - 8 UASC and young people do not often have any one to advocate for them, consideration should be given to UASC being provided with an advocate.
  - 9 The Assessment of Need and Pathway Plan is currently devised with the young person by the Personal Advisor and reviewed every six months. More consideration could be given to this being a joint meeting with all professionals involved in the young person's life and chaired by an independent person equal to the Statutory Childcare Reviews undertaken when a LAC.
  - 10 Given the uncertainty around the immigration status of UASC and young people, they should not be provided with a stand-alone independent living accommodation. Consideration should be given to placement within supported Living, Supported Accommodation with Sharing Housing being considered the least favourable and last option.
  - 11 There needs to be a balance of UASC and young people remaining in Essex and having their cultural, diversity needs met. Where possible efforts should be made to provide placements in Essex as this will ensure there is more accessibility and greater contact to the provision of service provided by Essex County Council.
  - 12 More focus and attention should be given to the view of foster carers when considering a move onto semi-independent/independent living.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

CSC	Children's Social Care
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
ECCCS	Essex County Council Children's Services
EDT	Emergency Duty Team
GP	General Practitioner
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
IMR	Individual Management Review
LAC	Looked After Child
L&ACT	Leaving & After Care Team
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NELFT	North East London Foundation Trust
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child
UKBA	UK Border Agency