

Domestic Abuse Related Death Review: Executive Summary

Safer Islington Partnership

Report into the death of Charlie August 2021

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In the summer of 2021, Charlie had embarked on a new and positive chapter in his life. He was busy making plans to move house, enjoying exploring London with his new Freedom Pass, and had reconnected with us, his siblings, much to our happiness. Charlie had a lot to live for. This bright future has been cruelly and casually taken from him, and from us.

However, we don't want to remember Charlie for the manner of his death, but will instead think back to the cheerful, entertaining, intelligent, and happy-go-lucky brother with whom we grew up, and who made friends wherever he went. At school, he was forever telling jokes and wanting to make everyone laugh. As he grew older, he enjoyed a busy social life, including as a mature student, and loved going to gigs, parties and football matches.

[One of Charlie's siblings]

The thought of Charlie being murdered is so hard to comprehend and difficult to live with. I live with such regret and sadness for the lost years. We had only just got Charlie back. He was back in our lives, and I was making tentative steps to rekindling a relationship with my brother. This opportunity was snatched away from me before it really began. I live with such terrible guilt that we as a family couldn't save him. If only we had known that he was in danger, we could have helped him and offered him sanctuary away from London.

[Charlie's eldest sibling]

Glossary

CSP: Community Safety Partnership
MPS: Metropolitan Police Service
DARDR: Domestic Abuse Related Death Review
ED: Emergency Department
ICB: Integrated Care Board
IDVA: Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
IMR: Individual Management Review
LB: London Borough
MAPPA: Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel
MARAC: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
NPS: National Probation Service
VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls

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Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) into the death of Charlie¹

Preface

The Independent Chair and the DARDR Panel members offer their deepest sympathy to all who have been affected by the death of Charlie.

The Review Chair thanks the Panel for their considered engagement with this process and the Individual Management Review authors for their thoroughness, honesty and transparency in reviewing the conduct of their individual agencies.

1. Introduction

1.1 Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) came into force in April 2011. They were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). The Act states that a DARDR should be a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by-

(a) A person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship or

(b) A member of the same household as himself;

with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

The report uses the statutory definition of domestic abuse as defined within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

1.2 The purpose of a DARDR is to:

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) apply these lessons to service responses including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate;

d) prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity;

e) contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse;

¹ Not his real name

and

f) highlight good practice².

1.3. In early November 2022, the Metropolitan Police submitted a formal notification for a Domestic Homicide Review³ to Safer Islington Partnership following the arrest of two individuals for the suspected murder of Charlie in August 2021.

1.4. The Chair of Safer Islington Partnership discussed the notification with partners and consulted local domestic abuse specialists. The decision to undertake a DARDR was made nine days later, and the Home Office was duly notified.

1.5. The process concluded in April 2024. Delays were experienced due firstly to the criminal proceedings, then in waiting for consent for witness statements to be shared and finally in making arrangements to meet with family members. A variety of means were offered, and the family were very definite in wanting a face-to-face meeting despite the fact that this would mean one could not take place for some time. This was discussed with Safer Islington Partnership and a decision made that it was better to wait rather than the task being delegated to someone other than the report author.

1.6. Domestic abuse is a key priority for Safer Islington Partnership and is part of their Strategic Plan. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is one of the key priorities within it. This strategy is due to be refreshed in 2026. The VAWG board keeps the Safer Islington Partnership updated regularly on its progress.

1.7 Safer Islington Partnership has undertaken three previous DARDRs of which two have been published. These were considered to assess if there were any similarities, but none were identified. A fifth DARDR ran in parallel to this one and was also a parricide. One of the recommendations made here is also included in the other.

1.8. Domestic abuse is also a priority for London Borough of Islington, who set out has set out on an ambitious journey to improve the experiences of those affected by VAWG. The process began by listening to the voices of survivors and others affected, and finding out what they care about which subsequently became the priorities of the Service Transformation Programme. This commenced in April 2020 and is supported by additional council funding, as well as funding from central government, the Mayor for London, the Clinical Commissioning Group (now the Integrated Care Board) and Public Health. This substantial new investment and service expansion has supported local VAWG services to respond to the unprecedented increase in demand and complexity of need.

2. Overview

2.1. Persons involved in this DARDR

Pseudonym used	Who	Age at the time of the incident	Ethnicity
Charlie	Victim	62	Irish and English

² Home Office, (2016) "Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews", https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575273/DHR-Statutory-Guidance-161206.pdf

³ The name of these reviews was subsequently changed to Domestic Abuse Related Death Review

Kyra	Perpetrator and stepdaughter of Charlie	29	Mixed heritage: Irish and Thai
Karim	Kyra's partner and perpetrator	46	Asian British: Pakistani

2.1.1. Address 1 is the home where Charlie lived and where Kyra spent most of her childhood.

2.1.2. Address 2 is where Kyra lived as an adult and where the homicide is believed to have occurred.

2.1.3. At the time of the homicide, Karim was living in Approved Premises (formerly known as probation or bail hostels).

2.2. Overview of the case

2.2.1. At the time of his disappearance, Charlie was 62 years old, and he lived at address 1 in the London Borough of Islington. This was a four-bedroom council property in a very desirable area where Charlie had lived for over twenty years. On the open market, it is likely that the house would be valued in the region of £2m. Although he was a tenant, not an owner, Charlie did have the power to swap his address with other council occupants, subject to council approval. There were two known interested parties relating to a house swap: a couple, Mr and Mrs Brown, who had heard from a neighbour that Charlie wanted to downsize his address - and Karim's sister. Karim was the partner of Kyra, one of Charlie's stepdaughters.

2.2.2. Charlie had lived at this address with his wife (Kyra's mother) for whom he was a full-time carer. However, in early May 2021, she died. The couple had had no children together and Charlie had no children of his own. However, his wife had five children from a previous relationship, one of whom was Kyra -.

2.2.3. In late August, Charlie visited Karim's sister to tell her he had decided not to swap his tenancy with hers. He was telephoned by Kyra, who had given birth just over three weeks ago, and began making his way to her flat.

2.2.4. He was seen on CCTV walking along a main road and his travel card shows he got on the bus at 18:40 to make the short trip to Kyra's address. Shortly after his arrival at around 19.00, a video was sent out from Kyra's phone to Karim's sister. In this video, Charlie 'confessed' to sexually abusing Kyra as a child⁴. Kyra also sent a photograph of some rings which were later identified as having belonged to Charlie's late wife, and which he had been wearing since her death.

2.2.5. Charlie was then seen on CCTV at approximately 22.00 walking away from Kyra's address in the company of Karim and within a few minutes, seen returning and both walking back towards Kyra's address. This is the last sighting of Charlie. His body has yet to be found.

2.2.6. A few days later, Kyra attended H&T Pawnbrokers and exchanged three rings for two hundred pounds. These were the rings identified as belonging to Kyra's mother which had been worn by Charlie since her death.

2.2.7. Mr and Mrs Brown were in contact with Charlie up to his disappearance and believed that they were going to exchange properties. Despite repeated attempts to

⁴ See paragraph 8.5 for further discussion of this allegation.

contact him, there was no response and eventually, almost two weeks after Charlie was last seen, Mrs Brown attended Islington Police station and reported him missing. This was initially dealt with as a missing person inquiry by Islington CID but would later become a murder inquiry.

2.2.8. Kyra and Karim were both arrested and gave no comment interviews. It would be another year before they were arrested a second time and charged and a further year before the trial happened. The couple were eventually convicted of murder and the prevention of the lawful and decent burial of Charlie's body. At the end of November 2023, Karim was given a minimum tariff of 24 years and Kyra was given a minimum tariff of 18 years. When delivering his sentencing remarks, the judge said that Karim's culpability was aggravated due to his previous convictions, most recently for robbery, whilst Kyra's was reduced due to her low IQ and a diagnosis of complex PTSD.

2.3. Summary of agency involvement

2.3.1. A request for information was sent to a range of agencies and ten were identified as having had contact with one or more of the subjects of this DARDR within the temporal scope.

A summary of the involvement of each agency is set out in the table below.

Name of Agency	Summary of involvement
Integrated Care Board: Charlie	Charlie was registered with the same GP from March 1999 until his death. During this time, apart from a ruptured spleen in 2004, he saw the GP for routine checks and the occasional minor illness. He last saw his GP in early June 2021 for the second dose of his covid vaccination. This was less than a month after his wife had died. There are no references to any kind of social history ever being asked about or recorded. As a consequence, no IMR was requested but this has prompted a recommendation.
Integrated Care Board: Kyra and Karim	Both had been deregistered by their GPs.
Better Lives (Substance Misuse Service and Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Service)	Kyra was in contact with the emergency department and crisis interventions in late 2020. Records state that she had a history of suicidal ideation and self-harm but was not a risk to others. There was a history of domestic violence with police involvement. She reported fearing someone but would not disclose who or give further information apart from saying she no longer lived with them, and that she was being supported. She disclosed a history of unsafe use of medication. In February 2021, Kyra disclosed that she was pregnant and there were concerns due to her alcohol consumption. In May, Kyra was referred to the specialist perinatal service for support with her mental health although an appointment was not achieved until a week after Kyra gave birth. In June, the substance misuse service was informed that Kyra had been punched in the jaw and pushed by her ex- partner. Support was offered and Kyra asked for a face-to-face

	appointment, accompanied by Charlie even though the service said they would prefer to see her alone. As it happened, Kyra did not attend, and telephone contact was eventually achieved a month later. Lots of advice was given around alcohol consumption, discussions about suicide ideation and checks made that she had numbers to call in an emergency. The service attempted to maintain contact with Kyra, but she repeatedly did not attend appointments or answer the phone. She gave birth in early August 2021. Kyra again did not attend the next two appointments and as she did not have her child in her care, Kyra's case was closed. Karim was also seen by this service between November 2020 and March 2021 when he was discharged from the service as drug free. He was originally referred via the criminal justice pathway but even at his initial assessment Karim declared that he was not using illicit drugs and that he had been abstinent for two years. This was verified with drug testing at regular intervals until his discharge.
Daily Safeguarding Meeting (DSM – Islington's version of MARAC)	There were four referrals to DSM between March 2021 and May 2022 due to domestic abuse perpetrated by Karim against Kyra although only two of these took place before Charlie's disappearance. The safeguarding referrals were discussed by the multi-agency partnership as part of the DSM or taken outside of the Core DSM panel to extended professionals meetings to allow more in-depth discussion. In total, referrals were discussed nine times including follow up action plan reviews although only four of these occurred before the homicide.
Islington Children's Services and Pause	Kyra was known to Islington Children's Services since 2011 in respect of her three eldest (living) children. There were numerous contacts and police reports received, mainly due to concerns around the children being exposed to domestic violence. In more recent years, there was growing concern regarding Kyra's alcohol and drug misuse. Care proceedings for the older children commenced in 2018, concluding a year later with their permanent removal. The case was then closed to Children's Services at this point, although to help Kyra cope with her loss, she was referred to Pause.⁵ They worked with Kyra throughout 2020 but terminated their support at the end of January 2021 when Kyra

⁵ Pause exists to ensure that women who experience the removal of children into care are given the best possible support so that it never happens more than once. This is imperative given that nearly half (47%) of new-born babies in care proceedings between 2012/13 and 2016/17 were born to mothers who had lost care of previous children. It is also needed because of the well documented devastation that child removal wreaks upon the lives of most mothers. Pause provides specialist support to these mothers to try to break the cycles of trauma.

	was 12 weeks pregnant. This support was resumed after her child was born but this took place after Charlie's disappearance and is not included within this Review. In March 2021 Children's Services received a referral from LAS, Midwifery and Police raising concerns about Kyra, then four months pregnant, being raped and experiencing domestic violence. Police reported that Kyra was intoxicated during their attendance at her home. Her youngest child was born in early August 2021 and was placed in foster care following their discharge from hospital.
Islington Intensive Tenancy Sustainment	Kyra moved to address 2 in July 2020 as a result of a management transfer on the grounds of domestic abuse. Her case had first been referred to the Intensive Tenancy Sustainment Team in April 2020 while she was in temporary accommodation awaiting a permanent move. This first interaction was quite superficial, and the case was closed after she moved, on the grounds that the risk had been mitigated. The case was reopened in December 2020 due to Kyra's chaotic lifestyle, escalating tensions with her neighbours and ongoing domestic abuse at the hands of multiple perpetrators, which had followed her to her new address. This time the interactions were more intense, but the focus was more around addressing noise complaints than supporting Kyra with the domestic abuse or her complex needs. Although not within the scope of this Review, it should be noted that subsequent to Charlie's disappearance, the support offered by the Intensive Tenancy Service to Kyra was exemplary, supporting the investigation but also remaining focussed on identifying and mitigating risks to Kyra in the context of continued physical and sexual violence. From this time there was a very strong partnership approach.
Metropolitan Police Service	Charlie came to police attention in May 2001, when he received a caution for theft. He was also listed as a witness to a domestic assault by Karim to Kyra in June 2021. Kyra came to police attention on multiple occasions since 2004 as both a victim and suspect of crime. However, she did not have any criminal convictions prior to the homicide as none of the incidents resulted in a charge. Police have recorded over 130 vulnerable adult (MERLIN) reports for Kyra that relate to mental health, drugs, and alcohol abuse. Additionally, Kyra was a repeat victim of abuse for

	offences including harassment, sexual assault, actual bodily harm (ABH), and malicious communication. These involved multiple partners/men as suspects. The first police report identifying that Kyra and Karim were in a relationship was in February 2021. There are multiple crime reports of domestic abuse allegations made by Kyra against Karim including sexual assault, during which she threatened to take her own life. There was a further domestic assault on Kyra by Karim three weeks after Charlie went missing. Karim has 14 convictions for 22 offences between 1992 and 2014. Three offences involved violence against a person: GBH (2014), ABH (1993) and common assault (1992). Karim is also a registered sex offender with a life notification requirement following his conviction for attempted rape of an adult woman in 1999.
National Probation Service	The National Probation Service had contact with Karim during the review period (January 2020 – August 2021) as he was subject to supervision on licence following serving a term of imprisonment. He was released on licence in October 2020 until early March 2021. Although he only had two weeks left on his sentence at this point, he was recalled to prison following an allegation of sexual assault against Kyra. It was during this period of release, that he impregnated Kyra. As would be expected, sentence planning was undertaken including contact with the POM (Prison Offender Manager), the completion of risk assessment, securing of placement in an Approved Premise (AP) alongside appropriate licence conditions being placed prior to release (for example, see <i>Better Lives</i> above). Following release, there was liaison between the COM (Community Offender Manager), AP keyworker and Hackney Jigsaw⁶. Face to face reporting remained in place despite the pandemic as expected by organisational policies. During his release period, Karim attended appointments as requested and complied with supervision.
Partners for Improvement in Islington (Housing)	Housing was first alerted to the presence of Charlie at address 1 when he called them in May 2021 to

⁶Jigsaw are specialist teams within each London borough responsible for information sharing and monitoring those offenders subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements. Karim was subject to this because he was a registered sex offender.

	inform that that his wife had died. He went on to tell them that although his name was not on the tenancy, he had been married to the tenant and he would like to stay in the property as he had been living there for years. He suggested that at some future point, he would be interested in downsizing to a smaller property but for now, contemplating moving was too much. An application process was initiated, which included a home visit, checking paperwork and asking for others to verify his residence in the house. In mid-July, the process was completed, and Charlie attended the housing office to complete the Deed of Succession which was backdated to May. Whilst this process was ongoing, Charlie initiated conversations about undergoing a mutual exchange, but these could not be progressed until his tenancy was confirmed.
Solace Women's Aid	Solace had an off-on involvement with Kyra from April 2019 to October 2022. This involvement was due to referrals in relation to domestic abuse and for counselling services. In October 2021, Kyra was transferred to the Solace WiSER service due to her multiple needs. As this lies outside the temporal scope of this Review, this latter support is not examined in this report.
University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UCLH)	Kyra was well known to the Gastroenterology Department, Maternity Department, and the Emergency Department in UCLH. She had complex physical and mental health needs, in addition to alcohol addiction issues. Kyra frequently attended the Emergency Department (ED) at UCLH presenting with injuries that were potentially sustained due to domestic abuse such as bruises to her eyes and face and bite marks. There were also allegations of sexual exploitation from her partner. Safeguarding referrals were completed by the maternity safeguarding team and the child and young adult safeguarding team.

3. Parallel reviews

3.1. There was a criminal trial (see above for details).

3.2. As Charlie's body has not yet been located, there was no inquest.

3.3. There were no other parallel reviews.

4. Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Panel

4.1. The DARDR Panel consisted of the following:

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Davina James-Hanman	Chair & report author	Independent
Jade Jennings	Daily Safeguarding Meeting Coordinator (Minute taker)	LBI VAWG / Solace Women's Aid
Betsey Lau-Robinson – UCLH	Head of Safeguarding Adults, the Mental Capacity Act & Prevent	University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Catherine Briody	Head of VAWG and Youth Safety Commissioning	LBI VAWG
Georgina Bavetta	Service Manager	Intensive Tenancy Sustainment, LBI Housing
Heather Wheat	Interim Service Manager, Children Looked After	LBI Children's Services
Jahmane Dolphy	Supporting People Referrals Manager, Housing Needs and Strategy	LBI Housing
Joanne Rollings	Interim Head of Operations	Solace Women's Aid
Karen Brown	Safeguarding Adults Designate (Islington), Chief Nurses Directorate	North Central London Integrated Care Board
Karolina Bober	VAWG Strategy and Commissioning Manager	LBI VAWG
Liliana Curea	Social Worker	Children Looked After Team – LBI
Louise Reader	Out of Hours Anti-Social Behaviour Manager	LBI Community Safety Anti-Social Behaviour Team
Maneek Sahota	Safeguarding Domestic Abuse Practitioner (Better Lives)	Camden & Islington Foundation Trust (C&I) – North London Mental Health Partnership
Mary Callaghan	Sheerin Safeguarding & MCA Advisor Lead Nurse	University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Pamela Gallup	Deputy Associate Director for Safeguarding	Camden & Islington Foundation Trust (C&I) – North London Mental Health Partnership
Peter Newbold	Housing Manager	Partners for Improvement in Islington
Sally Pattison	Detective Sergeant	Specialist Crime Review Group (SCRG) Metropolitan Police
Stephanie Salmon	Head of Service	National Probation Service

4.2. The Panel met six times between April 2023 and April 2024. To ensure good attendance, meetings were held slightly further apart than usual to accommodate another DARDR running in parallel. There was then a further delay whilst arrangements were made to speak to family members.

5. Independence

5.1. The author of this report, Davina James-Hanman, is independent of all agencies involved and had no prior contact with any family members. In the interests of full disclosure, however, she worked for LB Islington from 1992-97 and was also employed by them as a consultant over a period of six months when developing their VAWG strategy in 2021. She is an experienced DARDR Chair and is also nationally recognised as an expert in domestic violence having been active in this area of work for almost four decades at a local, regional, national and now international level. More detail is contained within the Overview Report.

5.2. This is the fourth DARDR undertaken by Safer Islington Partnership since their introduction in 2011. A fifth is also underway that is being chaired and authored by Davina James-Hanman. She also chaired and authored a DHR in Islington in 2019.

5.3. All Panel members and IMR authors were independent of any direct contact with the subjects of this DARDR and nor were they the immediate line managers of anyone who had had direct contact. Panel members were unable to meet the independence requirements due to a flat management structure. As such, they were represented by Islington Children's Social Care.

6. Terms of Reference and Scope

6.1. The full terms of reference can be found in the Overview Report. The key lines of inquiry were as follows:

Key lines of inquiry

The Review Panel (and by extension, IMR authors) will consider the following:

1. Each agency's involvement with the following people between January 2020 and the (assumed) death of Charlie in August 2021.

(a) Charlie of address 1

(b) Kyra of address 2

(c) Karim of [Approved Premises] (formerly known as probation or bail hostels).

2. Whether, in relation to DHR subjects, an improvement in any of the following might have led to a different outcome for Charlie:

(a) Communication between services

(b) Information sharing between services

3. Whether the work undertaken by services in this case was consistent with each organisation's:

(a) Professional standards

(b) Domestic violence policy, procedures and protocols

4. The response of the relevant agencies to any referrals relating to the review subjects or their children, concerning domestic violence or other significant harm. It will seek to understand what decisions were taken and what actions were carried out, or not, and establish the reasons. In particular, the following areas will be explored:

(a) Identification of the key opportunities for assessment, decision making and effective intervention in this case from the point of any first contact onwards.

(b) Whether any actions taken were in accordance with assessments and decisions made and whether those interventions were informed, professional, timely and effective.

(c) Whether appropriate services were offered/provided and/or relevant enquiries made in the light of any assessments made

(d) The quality of the risk assessments undertaken by each agency and whether thresholds for intervention were appropriately calibrated, and applied correctly, in this case.

5. When, and in what way, were the victim's wishes and feelings ascertained and considered? Is it reasonable to assume that the wishes of the victim should have been known? Was the victim informed of options/choices to make informed decisions? Were they signposted to other agencies?

6. Was anything known about the perpetrators? For example, were they being managed under MAPPA? Were there any injunctions or protection orders that were, or previously had been, in place?

7. How accessible were services for the victim and perpetrators?

8. Whether practices by all agencies were sensitive to the nine protected characteristics⁷ of the respective family members and whether any special needs were explored, shared appropriately and recorded.

9. Did the Covid pandemic impact on the delivery and / or quality of services?

10. Whether the impact of organisational change over the period covered by the review had been communicated well enough between partners and whether that impacted in any way on partnership agencies' ability to respond effectively.

11. What did the family members or friends know about any abuse and what did they do with this information? How would they know what to do with this information?

12. What learning can be identified from this case? What changes would you suggest to avoid such tragedies occurring in the future?

6.2. The time frame under review was set as being from January 2020 to August 2021 as this captured most of the relevant agency contacts and provided a reasonable

⁷ These are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation

overview of other events leading up to the homicide. Information prior to that date has been summarised.

7. Key events

7.1. Background information

7.1.1. Charlie

7.1.2. Charles was born in Warwickshire. He commonly went by the name 'Charlie', and he had three sisters and two brothers to whom he was close growing up. His siblings described their childhood as happy and loving but add that *'from an early age, Charlie found it hard to say no to people and I would say to some extent this continued into his adult years.'*

7.1.3. In the early 1980's, Charlie went to University in Sunderland to study business studies. Following the completion of this, he moved to London where he got a job teaching business studies at a college in London. He remained teaching at the college for many years, leaving around 2004 to become a full-time carer for his wife, Daniella. Despite his move to London, he remained a lifelong fan of the football club local to where he grew up.

7.1.4. In the mid 1990's Charlie met Daniella who would later become his wife. Before they got married, Charlie brought her to meet his family. One of Charlie's siblings described this meeting as follows: *'I remember we went to a neighbour's garden party and Daniella got very drunk. She kept talking about my parent's income and she appeared obsessed with money. As a result, our first impressions of Daniella were not great, although Charlie appeared smitten.'*

7.1.5. *Unfortunately, our relationship as a family with Daniella quickly began to break down. She continued to be obsessed with money and as a result Charlie would regularly ask my dad to give him money. We always got the impression that Daniella was behind it. Daniella was obsessed with who would inherit my parents' house when they passed away. The constant demanding of money became a feature within [their] marriage.'*

7.1.6. He married his wife in February 1997 at Abbey Church in Erdington, Birmingham. Daniella had five children from a previous relationship, one of whom was Kyra. They all lived together at address 1 although at various points one or more of the children resided elsewhere. Charlie would later describe this new family as follows:

'I took on a family that was dysfunctional to say the least. David [Oldest child] was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and caused a lot of problems in early years but is estranged from rest of family. Thankfully he is quieter now and I had to go and break the news [of his mother's death] to him because he is still on medication. [One of the other brothers] fell out over two [other] brothers going out with his girlfriend while he was in prison (I could write a book!!). [Daniella's sister] has a boyfriend who suffered a brain injury (ironically after a motor accident in Hamburg, Germany while working for Warner Brothers). To add to the mix, she had a child taken away from her when she was 17 against her wish. She lives in Texas with a family of her own. Unfortunately, due to Daniella's health and pride over a house falling apart, they never reunited.'

7.1.7. Charlie's relationship with his birth family deteriorated rapidly once he was married. As one of his siblings described: *'During the next few years, we couldn't see or speak to Charlie without her being there and he seemed very meek and mild around her. I thought he was scared of [her], he always seemed to be doing her bidding and she seemed to control him. My parents would tell me of many occasions over the years when Charlie would demand money from them. It always appeared as though the*

demands would come under Daniella's instruction for random reasons such as requiring a new carpet or money for an expensive plane ticket. Charlie's siblings also believe that Dannielle would monitor Charlie's phone calls.

7.1.8. *One year, whilst visiting my parents, [we were able to get Charlie on his own] which was unusual... During this visit my mother tried to speak to him to offer him a way out and try to get to the bottom of what was going on. Charlie seemed so unhappy and through his silence, he confirmed our suspicions about Daniella, her behaviour and his life. We said he could come home if he wanted to leave. He seemed resigned to his fate, and he returned to London [with Daniella].'*

7.1.9. In 2004, one of Charlie's siblings travelled to London to confront him about the amount of money he owed their parents. They met at a café local to address 1. Charlie admitted he didn't know what to do and revealed that he couldn't say no to Daniella who constantly invented new reasons to ask their parents for money. Charlie completely shut down and eventually told his siblings that he and Daniella wanted to do their own thing and live their own life.

7.1.10. There was then no contact until Charlie's father died in 2006. Charlie attended the church service and burial but not the reception. Even at the funeral, there was an attempt to borrow more money.

7.1.11. When Charlie's mother became ill and was in hospital, the siblings discovered that their mother had been giving money to Charlie and Daniella. It was more than she could afford and so she had borrowed money from other people, run up credit card debts and had even initiated enquiries into releasing equity from her property to meet their demands. An angry letter was sent to Charlie which caused further fractures in the relationship. Charlie stopped visiting and it was clear to his family that they were not welcome at his home. They had no contact for many years until Daniella died in 2021, apart from one occasion: his mother's funeral. Charlie attended the funeral but left straight afterwards. He would later describe this in a letter as one of the few times he left the house: *'[Daniella] had been self-isolating for years and my social life was catching taxis to doctors or visits to hospitals. In fact, our last day out was in August 2018 – we went for a Chinese in Piccadilly on the day [Kyra's brother] got married to his wife, and before then, mum's funeral in March 2012...where [Daniella] had to wait in McDonalds as she was banned from church etc due to past misdemeanours.'*

7.2. Kyra

7.2.1. Kyra grew up with her step and half-siblings (all brothers) and her mother. Charlie married her mother when she was six years old. She reported that her attendance at primary school was patchy and that her childhood was '*not good*'. She reports being raped when she was age seven and touched inappropriately by her brothers⁸. One of her other brothers expressed surprise when he heard of Kyra's allegations of sexual abuse against Charlie. He said: *'My first instinct was one of disbelief... My immediate thought was whether Kyra was getting confused with David. I remember a particular occasion when Kyra was around 6 years old and asleep in bed. From the hallway, I saw David, who was drunk, put his hand underneath Kyra's pyjama trouser leg and move it toward her knickers. David would have been in his early twenties at this point.'*

7.2.2. Kyra reported that she started drinking alcohol at age ten which is also when she began caring for her mother who developed liver problems secondary to alcohol. From age 14, Kyra was encouraged by her mother to drink with her, and she was soon drinking excessively on most days. Kyra would later also allege that her mother would

⁸ See paragraph 8.5 for more discussion of this.

encourage her to have sex with boys who were older than her (17 years old) and that she tried to sell her for sex.

7.2.3. When one of her siblings (the oldest, David) reached the age of 15-16 years, he became violent toward everyone in the family – Charlie and Kyra included. For the majority of his childhood, David lived with his dad. He was not happy about this and would regularly stay at address 1. Years later, David made assault allegations against his dad.

7.2.4. One of her siblings said: *'Kyra also started to go wayward in her later teen years. She would stay out late, drink heavily and socialise with the wrong company. She rowed with her mother and Charlie often, to the point where she became quite nasty toward them. Charlie would rarely get involved in these arguments but when he did, Kyra would verbally abuse him.'*

7.2.5. Kyra also reported physical assaults from her mother whilst growing up. As is very common for abused children, Kyra began deliberately self-harming which included cutting her arms. At age 16 she moved to a YMCA, and whilst she was pleased to be away from her mother, there were also numerous hostel parties and she carried on drinking excessively. Kyra stopped going to school and she failed all of her GCSE's. Although Kyra did not have any convictions until the homicide, she was arrested on numerous occasions for public order offences and assaults amongst other summary offences. Kyra was also well known to the police having been in a number of violent and abusive relationships although these all led to no further action due to insufficient evidence or Kyra withdrawing the allegations. She had three children⁹ who were removed from her care¹⁰ after which her drinking got worse, and she developed suicidal thoughts.

7.2.6. It should be noted that the source for much – but not all - of the above information about Kyra's childhood is Kyra herself. A school report for Kyra when she was aged 15¹¹, spoke warmly of her academic progress, her excellent attendance and predicted that she was expected to do well in her GCSEs. As such, it seems likely that at least some of Kyra's descriptions of her childhood experiences prior to this may be exaggerated. From aged 16 onwards, there is more independent verification of her circumstances and experiences.

7.2.7. Kyra was also involved in a protracted dispute with at least one neighbour, with allegations repeatedly made by both sides, including threats to kill. Her lifestyle was described both by professionals and a family member as *'chaotic'*.

7.3. Karim

7.3.1. Much less is known about Karim with agency records relating almost exclusively to his offending behaviour. He has fourteen convictions, relating to twenty-two offences, two for sexual offences as well as convictions for robbery, GBH and theft as well as a number of other offences. He was convicted of attempted rape in 1999 and sentenced to four years imprisonment. He is therefore indefinitely subject to the

⁹ Kyra also had a fourth child – her first - that was stillborn.

¹⁰ Despite not being in their mother's care, panel members expressed concern that they may have seen media reports about the trial. The Chair followed up on the current well-being of these children and received reassurances that the *'children are in the care of their father, who has indicated that appropriate support is in place for the children via the school.'* The local authority concerned has agreed to attach a full and unredacted copy of this report to their records when the report is cleared for publication.

¹¹ This was part of the paperwork cleared from Charlie's home and shared with the Chair by one of Charlie's siblings.

Notification Requirements of the Sex Offenders Register. He was in and out of prison throughout the period 2020-2022 and it is thought his relationship with Kyra began in late 2020. He was arrested for raping Kyra in March 2021 (and this led to his recall to prison for two weeks), but the charges were later dropped when Kyra admitted that the allegations were malicious.

7.3.2. Karim has a history of crack, heroin and alcohol use and once disclosed that most of his arrests were due to funding his drug habit and violent behaviour when under the influence of substances.

7.3.3. Karim had previously worked as a labourer and a lorry driver, but at the time of Charlie's disappearance he was unemployed. He was resident in a hostel in a neighbouring borough, but it is believed he spent most of his time at Kyra's flat (address 2).

7.3.4. Little is known about the relationship between Kyra and Karim. Of that which is available, there are highly conflicting accounts with some believing Karim to be viciously exploiting Kyra's vulnerability and others believing Kyra to be highly manipulative of Karim and willing to make serious but untrue allegations in order to present herself as the victim.

7.4. Key events

7.5. Charlie lived at address 1 with his wife Daniella (Kyra's mother) and her five children. This was a four-bedroom council property in a very desirable area where Charlie had lived for over twenty years. On the open market, it is likely that the house would be valued in the region of £2m.

7.6. One of Kyra's siblings said: *'Charlie and my mum were always together. She relied on him heavily to the point where they were together constantly and appeared dependent upon each other. You could not see one without the other. When my mum passed away, I was initially concerned about whether Charlie would cope without her. For the duration of the time he was with my mum, Charlie didn't have many friends. When she became ill, they would spend most of their time indoors and only go out together.'*

7.7. Another said: *'Growing up, I had a good relationship with Charlie. He was very supportive and because he was a teacher, he would help me with my schoolwork. He was very soft and sometimes I wished he would stand up to my mum a bit more.'*

7.8. Charlie was described as *'a creature of habit'* who had a routine that rarely wavered and lived a quiet, steady life. He had a *'cheerful and gentle personality'*, a good sense of humour and a *'zest for life'* and loved chatting to people. He was purportedly in *'good health and physically quite active.'*

7.9. Kyra was referred to Pause in January 2020 after care proceedings for her three children concluded with them being permanently removed from her care. One of the conditions for receiving support from Pause is that clients need to be on long-lasting contraception. The existence of covid restrictions at this time meant that it was agreed that Kyra could go on the pill instead. Kyra's drinking and drug use increased over this period, and by the end of the year she was in receipt of mental health services for depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicide attempts and alcohol and drug dependence. During the latter part of 2020, Kyra was also involved in escalating tensions with her neighbours and ongoing domestic abuse at the hands of multiple perpetrators. This led to a referral to the Daily Safeguarding Meeting (Islington's version of a MARAC) in

January 2020 (not Karim). She would go on to be referred nine more times between January 2020 and May 2022¹². A number of actions were completed including a Clare's Law application¹³, tag requirements on Karim to not be in contact with Kyra, home shelter support scheme to protect Kyra at home and support with accessing temporary accommodation.

7.10. Karim was released from prison on licence in November 2020 and it is thought he began a relationship with Kyra shortly afterwards. Within a matter of days, Kyra was pregnant. When this became known to Pause, their support was subject to a phased withdrawal which ended completely when Kyra was 12 weeks pregnant in February 2021. Kyra was referred to Solace for support during her pregnancy.

7.11. In March 2021, Kyra made an allegation that Karim had raped her. Karim was arrested and denied the allegation, stating it was a verbal argument only. Whilst the matter was investigated, Karim was recalled to prison to serve the remainder of his sentence (two weeks). Kyra later withdrew the allegation, and the matter was closed due to insufficient evidence.

7.12. Over the next few months, there were multiple crime reports of domestic abuse allegations made by Kyra against Karim including another sexual assault, over which she threatened to take her own life. Despite the best efforts of numerous professionals to safeguard Kyra, she repeatedly withdrew her allegations.

7.13. By now, Children's Services were aware of Kyra's pregnancy and began care proceedings to protect the baby once it was born. A full disclosure of Karim's offending history was also made to Kyra.

7.14. There was little agency contact with Charlie before his disappearance. The first possible mention of Charlie was in November 2020 when Kyra told a worker at Pause that she had been arrested for assaulting her mother's partner. The partner's name is not included in the entry and there is no independent confirmation that the incident even occurred.

7.15. Charlie was married for 25 years. For about 17 of these years, his wife had underlying conditions including arthritis. In September 2012 she had her left kidney removed, which made her very susceptible to infection, culminating in a serious admission to the Royal London Hospital in June 2017. They saved her life on four or five additional occasions until, following a long illness, she passed away in May 2021. Charlie got the news whilst on a bus, making his way to the hospital.

7.16. The next agency contact with Charlie was in May 2021 following Daniella's death. Charlie called Islington Council to say that although his name was not on the tenancy, he had been legally married to Daniella and he would like to stay in the property as he had been living there '*for years*'. He claimed he could not contemplate moving right away, but the rent was too much for him and he would need to downsize at some point.

¹² Only those referrals which took place before Charlie was murdered have been included in this chronology.

¹³ Clare's Law, officially known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, designates several ways for police officers to disclose a person's history of abusive behaviour to those who may be at risk from such behaviour. The law has two main elements: a 'right to ask', which allow any members of the public, to request information from the police about a potential abuser; and a 'right to know', which, in certain circumstances, permits police to disclose such information to the public on their own initiative. Requests under the 'right to ask' are assessed rather than automatically granted but if made by a friend or family member, may result in a police officer determining that the victim has a 'right to know'.

7.17. He said: *'Daniella was stubborn in a lot of ways – one of them keeping me a dark secret (even from her doctors and nurse who were shocked to find out she was married) and as I was not claiming benefit (she was getting PIP high rate).'*

7.18. Following the death of his wife, Charlie seemed to get a new lease of life. He reconnected with his siblings, went to the library to get an email address and to apply for a Freedom Pass, and started to travel around London. He made plans for a trip to Wales with his brother and admitted to him that Daniella had been controlling. He spoke warmly of being close to Kyra and spoke excitedly about their plans for him to be her birth partner. He wrote in a letter:

7.19. *'Apart from raising funds for funeral, which will have to be a cremation as she never got round to insurance due to ill health and stubbornness! As a consequence, I can't apply for funeral expenses until I receive my first payment of Universal Credit which is 24th June! So, the funeral may be early July, 2 months later!! The funeral director is very jolly and says that he's used to it, all the red tape. One of her nephews in Ireland has helped out and [one of his stepsons] is also broke due to losing his father-in-law three months ago!!'*

7.20. *Last weekend I went to Piccadilly Leicester Square to renew old memories with my newly acquired freedom pass. On the Sunday (a week on) I was sitting in front of an ambulance as Kyra had contractions and her boyfriend (one of many) was elsewhere at UCLH hospital. Since then, they have split up!! and I am going with her to appointments.*

7.21. *They say life goes on...in this family it certainly does, not always for the best, but it keeps me on my toes!!'*

7.22. In late May, Kyra told Solace that she had left Karim 'for good'. She said that Karim had very bad mental health, didn't care about the baby, pressured her to drink (sometimes spiking her drinks) and had been violent towards her (after previously and repeatedly denying it over the preceding weeks). The worker tried to get her housing support, but refugees would not take her due to Kyra's high support needs. The next day, Kyra informed Solace that if she could not stay at a friend's house, she would stay with Charlie, her stepfather. By early June, she said she was staying at Charlie's while she sorted out her mother's possessions.

7.23. During late May and throughout June, Kyra presented repeatedly at four or five different hospitals, sometimes more than once a day, saying she was in labour or suffering from abdominal pains, discharging herself if she did not receive the care/drugs she wanted and causing considerable safeguarding concerns among health professionals. An alert was sent to all London hospitals. She was often accompanied by an older man identified as Charlie and sometimes also by a younger man identified by Kyra as her brother-in-law (albeit that Kyra didn't have any sisters).

7.24. In mid-June, Kyra alleged that Karim had assaulted her twice in one day (she was now seven months pregnant). Karim was arrested and remanded in custody for approximately five weeks. He denied the assaults. Karim was later charged but both assaults were dismissed at Court.

7.25. In late June, Charlie applied to downsize his property via a mutual exchange, but the application was ultimately unsuccessful as Charlie was not yet the legal tenant.

7.26. Following further telephone communication between Charlie and Islington council, and a home visit by a housing officer, the tenancy transfer application was processed and in mid-July, a Deed of Succession was signed at the housing office.

7.27. Now that Charlie was officially the tenant, he had the power to swap his accommodation with other council tenants, subject to council approval. There were two known interested parties relating to a house swap: a couple, Mr and Mrs Brown, who had heard from a neighbour that Charlie wanted to downsize his address - and Karim's sister.

7.28. In early August 2021, Kyra gave birth. Child protection measures were implemented, an interim care order granted, and the baby was handed over to foster care. Kyra was once again referred to Pause for support.

7.29. One of Kyra's siblings said: *'Since my mum's funeral, I would speak to Charlie every now and again on the phone. We spoke at least 2-3 times a week, for at least a month after she passed. We would call each other, sometimes talking for an hour at a time. He appeared to be going out a lot, exploring London. He appeared happy and was enjoying his new freedom. He spoke about his family in Newcastle, his brother in particular and mentioned he was getting back in contact with them. He was particularly excited about this. He mentioned Kyra and I got the impression they were spending a lot of time together. He also spoke about moving and that Kyra's boyfriend was interested in his house. He [Charlie] is easily influenced and very vulnerable.'*

7.30. Another sibling echoed these impressions: *'Charlie was very upset at having lost my mum, but I also sensed he felt some freedom as he had always been by my mum's side. Before he only ever went out if she needed something from the shop or go to the library to use a computer. Occasionally he would go to a café once he got his Freedom Pass he travelled around London a bit more. He had been unable to do these things whilst my mum was ill.'*

7.31. *'Charlie would say to me that Kyra was being particularly nice to him, taking him out a lot and having him over for dinner. Charlie then started talking about doing a house swap with Kyra's partner's family. It struck me this was the reason he had been spending a lot of time with Kyra.'*

7.32. In late August, Charlie went to visit Karim's sister to tell her he had decided not to swap his tenancy with hers. He was telephoned by Kyra, who had given birth just over three weeks ago, and began making his way to her flat.

7.33. He was seen on CCTV walking along a main road and his travel card shows he got on the bus at 18:40 to make the short trip to Kyra's address. Shortly after his arrival at around 19.00, a video was sent out from Kyra's phone to Karim's sister. In this video, Charlie 'confessed' to sexually abusing Kyra as a child¹⁴. Kyra also sent a photograph of some rings which were later identified as belonging to Daniella, but which Charlie had been wearing since her death.

7.34. He was then later seen on CCTV at approximately 22.00 walking away from Kyra's address in the company of Karim and within a few minutes, seen returning and both walking back towards Kyra's address. This is the last sighting of Charlie. His body has yet to be found.

7.35. A few days later, Kyra attended H&T Pawnbrokers and exchanged three rings for £200. These were the rings identified as belonging to Kyra's mother which had been worn by Charlie since her death.

7.36. Mr and Mrs Brown were in contact with Charlie up to his disappearance and believed that they were going to exchange properties. Despite repeated attempts to contact him, there was no response and eventually, almost two weeks after Charlie

¹⁴ See paragraph 14.5 for further discussion of this allegation.

was last seen, Mrs Brown attended Islington Police station and reported him missing. This was initially dealt with as a missing person enquiry by Islington Police but would later become a murder enquiry.

7.37. Kyra and Karim were both arrested and gave no comment interviews. It would be another year before they were arrested a second time and charged and a further year before the trial happened. During the investigation period, Kyra was befriended by an anonymous witness to whom she confessed. She said: *'I'm not gonna lie. We did torture him.'* Kyra and Karim then kept his body in a bath of bleach for three days to get rid of any DNA evidence. They then purchased a £350 car and drove 80 miles outside of London to dump the body in a location that they have never revealed.

7.38. The couple were eventually convicted of murder and the prevention of the lawful and decent burial of Charlie's body. At the end of November 2023, Karim was given a minimum tariff of 24 years and Kyra was given a minimum tariff of 18 years. When delivering his sentencing remarks, the judge said that Karim's culpability was aggravated due to his previous convictions, most recently for robbery, whilst Kyra's was reduced due to her low IQ and a diagnosis of complex PTSD.

8. Key findings by the DARD Panel and recommendations

8.1. The findings and recommendations below arose from panel discussions and analysis. Additional findings were made by IMR authors who made their own recommendations.

8.2. Finding 1: Possible motives in addition to the alleged child sexual abuse

Whilst it cannot be definitively stated, two potential motives emerged.

- **The house (address 1)**

8.2.1. Housing files document that Charlie was going ahead with the mutual swap with Mr and Mrs Brown. In mid-August, however, Charlie expressed his wish to conduct the mutual exchange with a different family, namely Karim's sister. Charlie had expressed to others that he was finding the decision difficult; he seemed flattered by the attentions of Karim's sister, but others encouraged him to choose Mr and Mrs Brown.

8.2.2. One week later, eight days before Charlie 'disappeared', he contacted the Housing Officer to inform them that he had changed his mind again and wished to continue the mutual exchange with Mr and Mrs Brown, as originally intended.

8.2.3. Under the right-to-buy, whilst any new tenant may have had to wait to qualify / increase their percentage discount, the market value of the property is currently estimated to be around £2m.

- **Money**

8.2.4. In early September, shortly after Charlie went 'missing', Kyra had a conversation with a female relative in which she mentioned the house swap. Kyra disclosed that she believed Mr Brown had given Charlie £10,000 to 'sweeten the deal'. The female relative clarified that the money had not been paid and the plan had been to do so in instalments after the swap was completed. Kyra was very surprised by this and clearly indicated that she thought Charlie would already have the money in his bank account.

8.2.5. See also financial abuse below.

8.3. Finding 2: Financial abuse of Charlie

8.3.1. Charlie was clearly subjected to financial abuse by both his wife and later by Kyra and may even have been killed for financial reasons (see above).

8.3.2. After August 2021, there was no movement in Charlie's bank account. At the point that he went 'missing', the balance was just over £1,000. Bank records showed a total of ten payments to Kyra, each with the reference 'DAD'. Each payment occurred after his wife died. The payments to Kyra have been extracted and are shown below:

Date	Time	Activity	Credit	Balance
08/06/2021	08:21:46	'KYRA' DAD	£20.00	£1,365.22
13/07/2021	20:11:07	'KYRA' DAD	£5.00	£820.24
19/07/2021	12:27:33	'KYRA' DAD	£18.00	£582.72
31/07/2021	06:20:42	'KYRA' DAD	£5.00	£46.48
02/08/2021	22:39:27	'KYRA' DAD	£10.00	£78.05
04/08/2021	23:32:21	'KYRA' DAD	£10.00	£35.50
13/08/2021	11:12:25	'KYRA' DAD	£10.00	£361.73
17/08/2021	02:10:57	'KYRA' DAD	£10.00	£55.21
18/08/2021	20:00:19	'KYRA' DAD	£5.00	£52.96
19/08/2021	14:51:06	'KYRA' DAD	£10.00	£37.96

8.3.3. These payments were all made during a period when Charlie was struggling to afford to bury his wife. In fact, he was only able to afford it by appealing for contributions towards the costs from Daniella's nephew.

8.3.4. Daniella also financially abused Charlie by claiming higher benefit payments for herself as a single person, thus making Charlie completely financially dependent on her. By having all bills such as utilities in her name alone, she also denied Charlie the opportunity to build a credit rating. She expressed a high degree of interest in Charlie's family money and – it seems – put him under pressure to borrow large sums from his parents which they could ill-afford.

Recommendation 1: Islington VAWG Board to reassure itself that financial abuse is adequately addressed in local domestic abuse training programmes.

8.4. Finding 3: Charlie's invisibility

8.4.1. The Panel was struck by the relative invisibility of Charlie in the world. Investigations to prove that Charlie had not gone 'missing' but had been murdered, proved remarkably difficult as he seemed to barely leave a trace of his existence. Estranged from his family for years and 'hidden' by his wife, he was without a smart phone, no social media accounts or indeed any internet footprint at all. He had an email address that had only been created in the last weeks of his life, no current passport, no

dental records, barely any GP visits, HMRC had no record of him, and he had only commenced a claim for Universal Credit in May 2021.

8.4.2. In the end, it was the lack of movement in his bank account, the lack of calls on his (non-smart) mobile, his disappearance from the local library and the lack of activity on his Oyster card that heightened suspicions that Charlie had been murdered rather than simply gone missing.

8.4.3. This invisibility of Charlie undoubtedly contributed to his isolation from all but a few people. A search of his belongings would later reveal a telephone contact list comprised of only eight numbers, one of which belonged to someone who denied ever having met Charlie and one of which was his housing officer. Such extreme levels of isolation are commonly associated with domestic abuse.

Recommendation 2: North Central London Integrated Care Board to issue a reminder to GP surgeries that social histories should also be recorded and updated at least once every three years.

8.5. Finding 4: The child sexual abuse allegations

8.5.1. The allegation of child sexual abuse is complicated, and the Panel recognises that this information may be painful for Charlie's family. At the outset it should be made crystal clear that there is absolutely no evidence to support Kyra's claim that Charlie sexually abused her as a child. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that for obvious reasons, child sexual abuse is very rarely witnessed. As such, the absence of corroborating evidence is unsurprising. However, this allegation was central to the criminal investigation and was the only defence offered by the perpetrators as to their motive (but see also Finding 1 above for possible others).

8.5.2. Three things need to be considered:

1. Professionals who have worked closely with Kyra are very confident that she is a survivor of child sexual abuse albeit that there is no evidence that Charlie was the abuser. Kyra's risky and erratic behaviours are very indicative of past trauma commonly displayed by people with these experiences.
2. Kyra's older sibling was seen by one of Kyra's other siblings putting his hands inside Kyra's underwear when she was around six years old, and the older sibling was in his early 20s.¹⁵ As such, we can reasonably assume that Kyra was sexually assaulted as a child on at least one occasion.
3. Kyra had alleged that Charlie had sexually abused her as a child on at least two previous occasions. In 2017, and again in 2019, she made this allegation to a female relative.

8.5.3. In the absence of any additional information, the Panel does not feel able to comment further on the allegations of sexual abuse.

8.5.4. However, Charlie was a part of Kyra's family from at least age six (we do not know how long Charlie and his wife were together ahead of their marriage in 1997). Kyra was failed by all the adults – including Charlie – in that house. She was subjected to physical violence from her mother and older siblings, to at least one sexual assault

¹⁵ Alarmed by this disclosure the Panel made inquiries of the Metropolitan Police and the sibling has not come to police attention for anything similar in the intervening years.

from her older brother and manipulation from her mother to become alcohol addicted before she reached her mid-teens. She was not attending school consistently and took on significant caring responsibilities for her mother from the age of ten (but see 8.7 below). She was also self-harming, itself a maladaptive coping mechanism most commonly used to distract the brain from traumatic memories / experiences by causing physical pain to focus upon. There is no recollection by any of the residents of that home, nor any agency record, of Charlie taking any steps to protect her. It is possible that some residual guilt over this non-action explains why Charlie was so supportive of Kyra over the summer of 2021.

8.6. Finding 5: The impact of Covid

8.6.1. As detailed in paragraph 12.9 above, for most of the temporal scope of this Review, the UK was subjected to varying pandemic restrictions which impacted on the subjects of this Review in different ways.

8.6.2. It is significantly less likely that Kyra would have become pregnant in 2020 had she been able to access sexual health clinic appointments in person and thus receive a long-lasting reversible contraception rather than relying on the contraceptive pill. We cannot know how much of a factor the pregnancy was in sustaining Kyra and Karim's relationship (such as it was sustained) or if, without the pregnancy, Kyra would have terminated that relationship earlier. We do know that she had a constructive working relationship with her Pause worker and had this not been interrupted, more positive progress may have been made.

8.7. Finding 6: Failings of the education system?

8.7.1. The Panel fully acknowledges that much has changed since the period being questioned here and therefore no recommendation is made. Nevertheless, it has been alleged that Kyra was alcohol addicted by the age of 14, was rarely in attendance at school from around 12 onwards and left with no qualifications whatsoever. There are no records of this decline attracting any attention from the education authorities or of any referrals to Child Protection services. As previously mentioned, however, (paragraph 107.2.6), it is possible that these circumstances have been exaggerated.

8.8. Finding 7: Karim's offending history and violence to Kyra

8.8.1. Karim was known to professionals as violent and abusive not just to Kyra but to others in the past. He was also on the sex offenders' register. Until six months prior to the homicide, he was on licence and subject to monitoring by Probation. He was known to the local DSM. And yet at the point of him torturing Charlie to death, he was subject to no restrictions or any formal structured monitoring.

8.8.2. The Panel has been unable to unearth much information about Karim's background to assess in any meaningful way what might have prevented his actions at an earlier stage.

8.8.3. It is not the case that Karim escaped monitoring: he was subject to a reasonable amount and the Panel was only able to identify two places where the system might be usefully amended. Firstly, that although he came to police attention on a number of occasions, he was also regularly bailed. The panel was not able to identify any instances where this was not a reasonable decision. Secondly, there was no effective liaison between MAPPA and DSM, so that information known to one, was not shared with the other.

Recommendation 3: MAPPA and DSM to develop and implement an information sharing protocol.

8.9. Finding 8: Kyra's vulnerability

8.9.1. It is clear that Kyra was a vulnerable woman albeit that this in no way excuses her culpability for Charlie's death. In the space of a few short months, she had lost her mother – almost always a traumatic event no matter how poor the relationship – and her most recent child.

"Women who have children removed from their care often have long-standing, entrenched and complex needs, they are typically young, socioeconomically disadvantaged and have multiple physical and mental health related challenges...health needs can be worsened following the removal of child, which in some cases can lead to deteriorating mental health, increased risky behaviours and premature, preventable mortality."¹⁶

8.9.2. She was in a long-standing and acrimonious dispute with one of her neighbours and was largely estranged from several of her siblings. Her boyfriend – Karim – was so abusive towards her that when this homicide occurred, most professionals immediately assumed that Kyra was the victim.

8.9.3. There were multiple efforts to try and support Kyra and there was much evidence of effective liaison, partnership working and information sharing between agencies in pursuit of this goal. Unfortunately, Kyra's traumatic history was extensive and the point at which a quicker 'fix' might have worked was long past by the time she came to the attention of agencies as an adult. Had she been able to receive the services for longer, it is possible, even probable, that more progress may have been made.

8.9.4. The Panel is satisfied that arrangements in LB Islington for identifying and supporting abused children at a much earlier stage are in place, so this finding has not resulted in a recommendation.

8.10. Finding 9: Familial domestic abuse doesn't get the same level of attention as intimate partner abuse.

8.10.1. There have been five domestic homicides in LB Islington since the introduction of DARDs. Three of these have been familial homicides but domestic abuse is still largely framed as something that occurs between partners.

8.10.2. One of the main stumbling blocks to adequate training on family violence – as well as other complexities - is the limited number of hours that some agencies are able to devote to domestic abuse training. Whilst at a local level, the Safer Islington Partnership is committed to doing more, the Panel felt that there is also a need for action at a national level given the scale of the issue and the current Government ambition to halve the incidence of VAWG.

8.10.3. Most statutory sector staff need to have a subject specific degree in order to practise (eg doctors, nurses, social workers, housing staff and so on). If, as part of that degree, they have to do one module on VAWG which covered basic knowledge – the extent and severity, who it happens to, who perpetrates it and so on – it would mean that once they entered the workforce, future training on VAWG could start from a more advanced point and include more of a focus on practice skills.

¹⁶ PAUSE (2023) <https://www.pause.org.uk/news/pause-contributes-to-new-research-on-paper-youre-normal-narratives-of-unseen-health-needs-among-women-who-have-had-children-removed-from-their-care/>

Recommendation 4: Ensure that family violence / parricide is adequately included within the local training offer and work with MOPAC and other national organisations to support raising greater awareness of adult child to parent violence.

Monitoring safeguards

Recommendation 5: CSP to request six monthly updates from partners until such time as the action plan is fully implemented

Recommendation 6: CSP to write to the victim's family every six months updating them with progress.

9. Conclusion

This was an unusual domestic homicide in that it involved two perpetrators, one of whom was not related to the victim and one of whom was female. There is no recorded history of abuse by the perpetrators towards the victim with the exception of some possible financial abuse, a possibility given more weight by the likelihood that the motive for the homicide was also financial rather than the more usual motive of control that underpins so many domestic homicides.

Charlie had cared for his wife for many years until her death, a few short weeks before he was killed. In that limited amount of time, he seemed to blossom, creating 'space for action' and making tentative steps towards developing a new life for himself. These efforts were cut short by what appears to be the greed of his stepdaughter and her partner. He was killed with excessive cruelty and then his body was disposed of in such a way that it has yet to be found, adding extra layers of trauma for the family members left behind.

The Panel hopes that the lessons identified in the review process will inform future responses so that similar tragedies may be avoided.