



Home Office

Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Mr Derek Winter
Civic Centre
Burdon Road
Sunderland
SR2 7DN

17 October 2019

Dear Mr Winter

I am writing in response to your Regulation 28 report of 27 August following the tragic death of Kay Richardson. Your report raised a concern regarding the protection in place for the victim.

I am acutely aware of issues regarding the use of pre-charge bail, particularly in relation to vulnerable victims and witnesses. As such I am working closely with criminal justice partners on what further mitigations can be put in place. A significant amount of further work is already in train on this matter, including to ensure the robustness of current frameworks and greater oversight of the use of pre-charge bail in high harm cases.

However, it is important to be clear that pre-charge bail, including conditions, continues to be available to the police where it is necessary and proportionate, including to prevent further offences and protect victims and witnesses.

To date, the Home Office has coordinated the implementation of a number of actions on this issue. For example, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has published operational guidance that provides clear advice on domestic abuse and high harm cases, specifying that if a suspect has been arrested in connection with an offence involving vulnerable people or domestic abuse, there should be documented decision-making as to why pre-charge bail has not been used and serious consideration given to the imposition of bail with conditions in order to safeguard the victim. The guidance also advises that a detective inspector should be consulted before a domestic abuse or high harm offense suspect is released under investigation.

In addition, HMICFRS are inspecting all forces on their use of pre-charge bail. The reports will be key in building our evidence base for what wider changes may be necessary and as such the Government will give serious consideration to its findings.

You also raised concerns about the decision of the police to return to the perpetrator his home keys. As I gather you are aware, the Independent Office for Police Conduct investigated this matter in order to understand why such a decision would have been taken and to help prevent such events occurring in the future, and I expect the police to act on the findings.

More broadly, you may be aware that earlier this year the government introduced its landmark Domestic Abuse Bill and alongside this has published a comprehensive package of other measures following the domestic abuse consultation that took place in 2018. The government is committed to transform the response to this abhorrent crime that affects so many people in society, particularly women and sometimes with tragic consequences, such as the death of Kay Richardson. The package of legislative and non-legislative measures puts prevention and protection at the heart of the government's approach to combat domestic abuse.

I hope my response is reassuring and I am grateful to you for writing and bringing this important matter to our attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Patel', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP