

HN273 Gisted Risk Assessment dated 28/06/2018

1. A risk assessment is a 'snap shot' in time. New information received, or a change in circumstances could raise or lower the risk. It is therefore appreciated that assessments require regular monitoring and may require updating.
2. The risk assessment is prepared by assessors with relevant experience, and on the basis of consideration of documents as well as meetings with the nominal for the purposes of assessment.

Summary

3. In summary, the current risk to HN273 and their family is very low in respect of both harm and harassment. The increase in risks to HN273 should their name be confirmed is dependent on a particular factor which can be mitigated. There remains a real and grave risk to N273.

Real Identity

4. Nothing in HN273's life before joining the MPS affects the current risk assessment. Pre and post completing the report on the SDS following the closure of the unit in 2008 is set out in the risk assessment. HN273 has held/holds sensitive roles post SDS.

SDS Involvement

5. HN273 is the author of the SDS closing report. The report took 9 months to complete, from September 2008 to June 2009. The risk assessment includes a summary of the closing report. The closing report covered the whole period of the SDS, from its inception in 1968 to its closure in 2008. HN273 studied documentation from this period upon which the report was based. HN273 did not interview any UCOs. The report noted a number of issues and made several 'covert learning recommendations'. A number of these recommendations were fully incorporated by the new Special Projects Team (SPT).
6. N273 is likely to be unpopular with some former SDS officers, particularly those in post when the unit was closed. This is mainly due to the fact that the closing report was critical (often highly critical) of the SDS and the management of the unit and it could be viewed that the findings within it were reported without regard for personal circumstances. HN273 believes that the major failings of the SDS were due to the management and not the individuals, many of whom HN273 held in high regard, but this view has obviously not been accepted and the negative perception remains.

Formal Investigation

7. HN273 did not disclose being subject to any formal investigation, or any previous investigation, civil claim or other litigation connected with the SDS and none was found by the risk assessor.

Current Situation

8. The risk assessor set out HN273's current situation including their physical and psychological health. Other than a specific diagnosed condition, HN273 described their health as good. HN273 also described their psychological health as good. However, knowledge that their true identity may be disclosed as a result of this Inquiry has raised HN273's anxiety levels.

HN273's Subjective Views

9. HN273 has little doubt that a number of individuals in Special Branch harbour resentment towards him/her. HN273 considers that if he/she were identified this would inevitably lead to massive intrusion on their personal life by a variety of media sources and potentially activists. If fully identified HN273 fears that he/she would become a target due to sensitive non-SDS roles that HN273 has held/holds. HN273 considers that this impact would be extreme, resulting in serious injury or worse. In relation to HN273's perception of risk of interference with their family and private life, HN273 believes that intrusion from media, both newspapers and TV, would be substantial. HN273 holds the firm belief that the closing report is of such significance to the Inquiry that there will be an increased interest in HN273 as the author and that the media will seek them out. In HN273's opinion this will inevitably lead to harassment of them and their family and could potentially lead to HN273 being subject to serious harm.

Objective Assessment of media interest and potential physical harm or interference

10. It is the risk assessor's opinion that the media would have an interest in HN273 owing to the closing report of the SDS. Many of the areas of significant interest to the Inquiry are addressed in this report and recommendations are made. The risk assessor also considers that media interest is likely to increase if HN273 is given anonymity. It is the risk assessor's view that should HN273 declare their true identity the media interest in HN273's identification will be reduced as they will already have provided it and the media will concentrate on the content of the report.
11. In the risk assessor's objective opinion the risk of harm depends on his/her identity being made public as a result of the Inquiry. HN273 has taken great care to keep their identity out of the public eye. Should HN273's identity be made public the risk of harm would be in relation to sensitive non-SDS roles HN273 held/holds. It is the risk assessor's opinion that the concerns about the risk of harm are reasonable and there would be a real threat to HN273's safety. The risk of harm is related to the sensitive non-SDS roles HN273 has held/holds. The impact of any such risk being realised, HN273 believes, would be extreme.

Mitigating the Risk

12. The risk assessor's opinion is that though the sterile corridor between the cipher HN273 and the real name is strong, it could be eroded by a disgruntled former colleague, a risk which would increase if granted a restriction order over the real name. This situation could be mitigated by the official confirmation of the real name and cipher which in the opinion of the risk assessor should be done.
13. Using a cipher should remain a consideration. In the risk assessor's view disclosure of the cipher in connection with the true name is the best way to mitigate research or exposure by SDS officers. Screening would be essential to prevent HN273 being recognised visually in their current role. Voice modulation would be of little value but could remain a consideration. Other measures would assist.

Third Party Risks

14. Should HN273 be identified by image as well as real name and cipher, there would be risks to his/her family and lateral risks to others.

Conclusions

15. The current risk of both physical harm and interference to HN273 and their family is very low.
16. It was the belief of the risk assessor that should the true name of HN273 and their cipher be officially confirmed this would limit the increase in risk to them. The risk assessor's rationale was that to anonymise HN273 would be likely to increase attention from both media and research groups as HN273 has significant evidence to provide with regard to the closing report of the SDS. The report covers a number of issues of high importance to the Inquiry and offers some recommendations to prevent repetition. This would present the greatest risk to HN273 in terms of harm to them, their family and third parties. However, the risk assessor could not rule out the risk that the media may still take a high interest in HN273, even if their true identity is published, owing to the content of the closing report. The impact in this case is at a constant critical level, and cannot be mitigated. It is only the probability of the occurrence that can be diminished or abated.
17. The greatest risk to HN273 in terms of harm to them and their family relate to non-SDS sensitive roles that HN273 has held/holds. HN273 takes stringent measures to protect their own personal safety and that of their family. The revelation of HN273's true name would, in the view of the risk assessor, result in an adverse impact to the psychological well-being of HN273 and that of their family in anxiety and stress, merely in the knowledge that there was official confirmation in the public domain.
18. Should HN273's real name be confirmed, the risk assessor considered the likelihood of physical attack as low (2) where the probability of risk occurring is considered unlikely and the impact would be critical (5) and be overwhelming for HN273 and their family. In physical terms this would result in a life threatening injury, and would require total changes such as relocation. The overall score is (10) in relation to the increase in risk of physical harm if HN273's name was officially confirmed.
19. Should HN273's real name be confirmed, the risk assessor's view was that the likely increase in the risk of interference to HN273 and their family is low (2) and the impact of interference would be critical (5) and overwhelming, requiring total changes such as relocation. The overall score is (10) in relation to the increase in risk of interference if HN273's name was officially confirmed.