

### Summary of the investigation

**X's version in brief:** X describes that they had a student/teacher relationship in their home country many years ago. Contact between them resumed as a result of X applying to Lund University. X and Y were both single parents and they were soon in daily contact, albeit remotely. **During spring 2017, X came to Sweden on a visit** and they started a more **intimate relationship**. However, she was clear from the start of their relationship that she did not want to be his girlfriend; she did not harbour any such feelings. This was accepted by Y. In August 2017, X moved to Sweden and the parties' children also became friends. They socialised a lot and even shared everyday chores. It took a while before a Swedish bank account was organised. Y therefore helped X with certain financial matters that she continuously reimbursed him for. She also drove his car from time to time as he had lost his driving license. She was also introduced to Y's large contact network in the workplace. Everything worked well until the end of November, when she wanted to return to merely having a friendship. Y got very upset as he had fallen in love. Since **she ended their romantic relationship**, Y has shown behaviours and actions that X has perceived as harassment. Her experience is that he uses various master suppression techniques. E.g. via email/text message; staying physically close by in meetings with other people; wanting X's attention; writing text messages to colleagues that X and Y are in a romantic relationship; wanting to write about their unhappy love affair in a public blog but being stopped by X; vilifying her; blaming her for his actions and his state of mind; hiring a hacker who harasses and extorts; entering her full name in a public EU portal with the intention of damaging her reputation. Regarding the hacker events, the police and security office at the University have been involved and the activities reported to the police. X tried immediately to get Y to accompany her to an IT company to find out about the background but Y refused at the time. Later on, he offered to go but X thinks that it is now too late and everything has been deleted.

In early March, she placed a request with the director to change supervisors as she had lost all trust.

In her statements and emails to the investigator, X has shown various extracts from parts of their correspondence. These messages show her clear boundary-setting and his acceptance that the relation was to be considered as a friendship **despite the intimacy**. The way the tone of the emails/text messages changed when the romantic relationship was to turn into a friendship can also be verified. (See appendices 3-7)

**Y's version in brief:** Y describes that he initially did not even remember her as a student but that he heard from a friend that she was applying for a placement in Lund and offered to act as a reference. He had previously helped fellow citizens to come to the University. He himself cannot return to his country for political reasons and is keen to help others find a better life. He had also made similar efforts to support others before X applied to Lund University.

Y says that they had an agreement that X was not his girlfriend but that they would support each other as friends and single parents. However, he fell in love and therefore became very upset when she only wanted a friendship. Driven by jealousy and affected by alcohol, he acted in a way he deeply regrets at a Christmas party in December 2017 and apologised for his behaviour. His explanation for the hacker is that Y and X had very frequent contact and could therefore be identified as a suitable "victim" for blackmail. It was also public knowledge that he spent a lot of money on his son's cancer treatments, i.e. has financial resources, which was another reason for his being a suitable victim for blackmail. He tried to find out who and what was behind this with an IT security company, but without success.

To the interview questions on whether their health has been negatively affected by what happened, they both replied yes. They also both worry about what will happen in the future and about potential negative consequences from the report. Both state that they feel vilified by the other party.

Before the Skype conversation with the former director, the investigator received a document briefly describing what happened at the end of 2013 and during 2014 in connection with Y. No verbal warning was issued but there are emails etc. that describe various perceptions and activities that were carried out at the time. During the interview, it is also mentioned that there is a history of Y being keen to have "disciples".

### Analysis

On the basis of the material available in text messages, messenger texts, etc. between X and Y, it is clear how X tried to delimit her involvement with Y. When she ended the relationship, Y lost something that he valued highly. His emotional reaction is expressed in various control strategies/master suppression techniques through which he tried to limit her contact with other male colleagues. Victim behaviours also occur in various forms, such as laying guilt on her for his deteriorating state of mind. The hacker events are a matter for the police in which it is her word against his as to what happened. There is as yet no factual proof, so this aspect cannot be considered in the present report. However – in the light of X expressing that she had lost trust and wanting to change supervisor – the entry in the EU portal can be seen lacking in judgement and a reinforcement of X's perception that she is being harassed. Based on what has been described above, the investigator's assessment is that Y's behaviour towards X constitutes harassment in the form of stalking. (See appendices 3-7)

That both parties started a friendship initially seems to have led to advantages for both of them. What the investigator sees as problematic is Y's self-appointed role as a helper of others (even before X) and that X chose to become intimate with Y. It is easy to end up feeling that one has a debt of gratitude and in a position of dependency, even though the agreement that she was not his girlfriend was explicitly stated. At the same time, it is natural and important that postdocs and other people in similar professional roles may need a hand with things like social contacts, projects, etc. to progress in their research careers. If the social support remains within a professional framework, this can bring advantages for both parties. The investigator perceives that Y now feels exploited by X who wants to move on without his assistance. Meanwhile X has felt guilty about the fact that she initially received a lot of both practical and social support from Y, which reduced her ability to act and contact the management before the situation escalated into a work environment problem.

The events mainly took place outside working hours. But as they led to changes in their work relationship as well, e.g. the change of supervisors and that other colleagues became involved, the relationship turmoil has spilled over into the workplace. The psychosocial work environment and various colleagues are thereby negatively affected by a relationship that was initially private.

The parties currently have no ongoing work that requires collaboration. In view of this, conflict management aiming to repair their work relationship is thus not necessary. However, both parties need to know that the report and this investigation will lead to measures that are felt to be relevant to ensure that the vilification ceases. This will be achieved most simply through the experience of fairness and dignity.