

## Dudley Domestic Homicide Review No.8

### Local Learning Briefing

#### Who should read this?

Any practitioner or manager within the borough who works with adults. Of particular, but not exclusive relevance, to healthcare professionals.

#### Background information

This Domestic Homicide Review, commissioned by Safe & Sound Dudley's Community Safety Partnership, concerns the death of a forty-year-old male, father of two, who died by suicide following a domestic related incident in June 2021.

The victim's wife explained there had been a deterioration in the relationship in the nine months leading up to the death. On the day itself, there was an argument immediately prior to the incident regarding an apparent online relationship the male had commended with another woman to whom he had started sending money. His wife informed him that she would be seeking a divorce and threatened to tell his mother. She had gone upstairs to call her, however heard a yelp and came down to find that he had stabbed himself.

The coroner's court enquiry ruled suicide, that the male had died as a result of having stabbed himself.

#### Key Areas of Learning Identified

##### *Professional Curiosity*

- There was a lack of prior professional curiosity from healthcare professionals in understanding why the couple were living with multiple individuals in their residence, and who they were.
- Similarly, that when the multiple occupancy was documented by the community midwifery service there were no questions recorded as being asked regarding other occupants.
- Professional curiosity was not always applied by healthcare professionals to facilitate a more detailed understanding of the couple's relationship, and if any concerns were present.

- The Review Panel highlighted a lack of professional curiosity following the birth of Child B, when on the same day they and the mother were discharged from the maternity unit, and were discharged to an address - out of area, without any understanding or questioning of the context or rationale.
- The embedding of professional curiosity within organisational culture should properly reflect the long experience, established research and good practice protocols that are known. This is necessary to prevent the frequently cited issue of lack of professional curiosity from reoccurring.

### *The Domestic Abuse Routine Enquiry*

- Health care professionals involved in the discharge of maternity services should have the confidence to facilitate a confidential slot to ensure the Routine Enquiry can be undertaken safely.
- Annual audits are to be undertaken regarding the asking of DA Routine Enquiry.

### *Language as a Barrier*

- Work to raise awareness of and access to support for victims of Domestic Abuse from within minority community groups still requires further development. In particular, how the intersection of different aspects of someone's identities (including Race, Sex and Language Barriers) may impact their experiences and the help and support they seek. The Review Panel has considered these issues and also the specific matter of specialist provision for minority communities more generally. This has led to recommendations for work on these issues locally. That work should include ensuring that awareness raising campaigns and services are accessible, as well as equipping professionals to respond appropriately to domestic violence and abuse in these communities.

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## **Overview Recommendations for Safe and Sound, Dudley's Community Safety Partnership**

### *Recommendation One – Audits*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership should seek to assure itself that good practice around DA Routine Enquiry is in place. This could best be achieved through

the use of annual audits undertaken by maternity services regarding the asking of DA Routine Enquiry.

*Recommendation Two – Routine Enquiry*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership should seek assurance that health care professionals involved in the discharge of maternity services have the confidence to facilitate a confidential slot to ensure Routine Enquiry can be undertaken safely.

*Recommendation Three – Transfer-Outs*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership should seek assurance that health care professionals involved in the discharge of maternity services have the confidence to be professionally curious regarding Transfers-Out.

*Recommendation Four – Postpartum Health Visits*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership should seek to implement practice identified by the Panel to assist with the identification of any mental health concerns of partners/fathers as part of postpartum health visits. This could best be achieved through the further scoping of the practice from Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust and implementation.

*Recommendation Five – Domestic Abuse Strategy*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership to satisfy itself that those parts of Objective 1A and Objective 4A of the Dudley Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DDALPB) Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2027 that specifically relate to the education sector are being progressed.

*Recommendation Six – Domestic Abuse Policy*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership should seek satisfy itself regarding ShropCom's Domestic Abuse Policy. Seeking clarification that it has been reviewed and refreshed? It may also wish to further enquire as to the training provided for staff to recognise domestic abuse and the cultural barriers that may prevent disclosure.

*Recommendation Seven – Language Barrier*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership, should consider adopting the policy highlighted during the review by Sheffield's Children's NHS Foundation Trust, that when an interpreter is required to discuss DA or ask the Routine Enquiry, colleagues are required to consider the interpreter's gender to ensure this is culturally acceptable and to ensure the interpreter's details are obtained and documented in health reports. Whenever possible, interpreters from a recognised body who have received training and have an understanding of domestic abuse and coercive control should be used.

#### *Recommendation Eight – Accessibility*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership and partners should seek to utilise the benefits of the most recently made available census data, to assure themselves that DA services are made aware to and accessible by people with English not as their first language.

#### *Recommendation Nine – Minority Community Support*

Dudley Safe and Sound, Community Safety Partnership, as part of any future IDVA or other DA service tender process, to scope and consider the requirement for specialist minority community DA support provision in the borough.

#### *Recommendation Ten – Victim Family Contact*

The CSP should consider having a policy of undertaking to inform the victim's family directly of its decision to conduct a review as soon as possible.

#### **More information**

For more information in respect of Domestic Abuse please visit our helphub:

<https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/help-hub>