

## Dudley Domestic Homicide Review 4 Local Learning Briefing

### Who should read this?

Any practitioner or manager within the borough who works with adults.

### Background information

This Domestic Homicide Review, commissioned by Safe & Sound Dudley's Community Safety Partnership, concerns the death of a forty-four-year-old woman who was the mother of eight children and who was brutally killed by her fifty-year-old partner when she was trying to leave him in January 2018. Hereinafter, the woman will be referred to as the victim and her partner, the perpetrator.

The perpetrator strangled and killed the victim and then tried to hide her body. He was convicted of manslaughter and received a fifteen-year sentence and it was ordered that he would be monitored for five years longer than normal on release.

### Key Areas of Learning Identified

#### ***Domestic abuse and coercive control***

A perpetrator's history of violence and stalking must inform future assessments of risk. Perpetrators of domestic abuse will often manipulate their victims and lead them to believe that they are responsible for provoking the abuse and make them doubt their sanity through relentless emotional abuse and coercive control. Perpetrators of domestic abuse will also manipulate professionals in an attempt to discredit their victims and draw attention away from their own abusive behaviour.

Stalking behaviour has featured in the vast majority of domestic homicides. Although the behaviour need not appear serious, it should always be an indicator of high risk.

Separating from a domestic abuse perpetrator is the most dangerous time for victims and children and agencies should work with the victim to strengthen their safety plans at this time rather than assume that separation will lead to safety.

#### ***Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme***

In certain circumstances, domestic abuse victims may have both a 'right to ask' and a 'right to know' about their abuser's violent history and all agencies need to be alert to these possibilities when working with victims of domestic violence and abuse.

### ***Domestic Abuse, Substance Abuse and Mental Health***

Appropriate and sensitive routine enquiry must be standard practice across all services that women with experience of abuse come in to contact with. All agencies and services should ensure that their pathways are trauma-and-gender informed and flexible enough to effectively engage with women facing multiple disadvantage

### ***Holding Perpetrators to Account***

All agencies need to appreciate the impact that a perpetrator's abusive history should have on assessments of risk to subsequent victims.

### ***Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference***

responses from MARAC were inadequate: there was an inadequate method of monitoring these actions and holding agencies accountable

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

### ***Recommendation 1: Understanding Domestic Abuse***

Dudley Safe and Sound should review and seek assurance about the degree to which agencies support front-line staff and their supervisors to understand this breadth and range of domestic abuse, coercive control and stalking behaviours as well as identify and respond to risk.

### ***Recommendation 2: Raise public awareness***

Dudley Safe and Sound should continue to raise public awareness specifically about domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking and harassment

### ***Recommendation 3: Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme***

Dudley Safe and Sound should ensure that the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is well known by agencies and the public alike.

### ***Recommendation 4: Trauma and Gender Informed Services***

Dudley Safe and Sound and Safeguarding Boards should seek assurance from agencies that services and pathways are trauma-and-gender informed and flexible enough to effectively engage with women facing multiple disadvantage, using the West Midlands Domestic Violence Standards and the trauma-and-gender informed principles of the national Women's Taskforce on Mental Health as guides.

### ***Recommendation 6: Perpetrator's History of Violence***

Dudley Safe and Sound should seek assurance from its agencies that they are able to accurately record and access records on an abuser's previous violent history and apply this to current risk assessments and responses.

***Recommendation 7: Policing Domestic Abuse***

West Midlands Police should provide evidence of the improvements made in the policing of domestic abuse to Dudley Safe and Sound, particularly compliance and impact of the changes concerning: the mandatory completion of DASH; referrals to specialist domestic abuse and alcohol treatment agencies, and the impact of portable mobile devices.

***Recommendation 9: MARAC***

Dudley Safe and Sound should consult with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and evidence how the recent improvements to MARAC arrangements have impacted upon agency involvement, victim safety and holding perpetrators to account.

**More information**

To access the full report and Executive Summary, including individual agency recommendations please visit: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/ourwork>

For more information in respect of Domestic Abuse please visit our helphub: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/help-hub>