

1 The case

Intimate partner homicide - Woman aged 51, killed by her former partner aged 73. The couple had been in a relationship for 27 years. Review found evidence of domestic abuse in the offenders previous relationship, for which he served a prison sentence. The couple were separated at the time of the homicide and it was assumed that she experienced difficulties in ending the relationship.

The family stated the relationship was increasingly characterised by violent and abusive arguments. They did not at the time see it as domestic abuse, and believe she would not have viewed herself as a victim.

The review found evidence of abuse across the timeframe considered,

2 Background

Family and friends disclosed witnessing limited physical abuse. Descriptions of their relationship made it evident that the perpetrator was controlling and abusive. She was often isolated from friends, he controlled their finances and he was seen to demonstrate unreasonable jealousy.

The woman was seen to have deteriorating mental health, episodes of self-harm, suicide attempts & periods of binge drinking.

Direct disclosures of domestic abuse were not made to professionals. There were no police call outs. The woman was in contact with health professionals (GP/Mental Health/A&E) and disclosures were made about relationship difficulties.

3 Concerns

- Perpetrator's age was seen as a protective factor e.g. he was unlikely to follow through on threats.
- Need to improve recognition of the inter-relationship between domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health vulnerability and addressing them holistically.
- Develop practice to encourage joined up working to support women with complex needs.
- Utilise opportunities to increase professional curiosity across systems, particularly when individuals disclose relationship difficulties.

4 Lessons to be learnt

- Health agencies encouraged to embed positive enquiry into practice
- Recognition of coercive and controlling behaviour still poses a challenge not only amongst professionals, but also family, friends and the wider community
- An holistic support plan approach to address dual or multiple needs is required to improve outcomes
- Women aged 50+ are less likely to report domestic abuse, and also less likely to be identified as a victim
- Preconceived ideas of what an 'ideal victim' of domestic abuse looks like, or how they present
- Over reliance upon self-disclosure

5 DHR Report

The report will be published on SMBC Safer Solihull webpage and cascaded across key local board

6 What we will do now

Agree and implement recommendations, which will be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board