

CHELTENHAM STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP GROUP



Domestic Homicide Review

Under s9 of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
In respect of the death of a woman

Information about the Domestic Homicide
Review Panel

Final – for publication
Embargoed until 18 October 2016

Restricted / Official-Sensitive

Please do not circulate

Purpose of the Review, Process, Scope and Terms of Reference

The purpose of the review was not to reinvestigate the death or apportion blame, but to establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide, regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims, and to identify clearly what those lessons are, both within and between agencies.

The Terms of Reference were articulated thus:

Purpose of the panel:

To establish the facts about events leading up to the murder of Susan

To examine the roles of the organisations involved in her case, the extent to which she had involvement with those agencies, and the appropriateness of single agency and partnership responses to her case.

To establish whether there are lessons to be learned from this case about the way in which organisations and partnerships carried out their responsibilities to safeguard her wellbeing.

To identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon, and what is expected to change as a result.

To identify whether, as a result, there is a need for changes in organisational and/or partnership policy, procedures or practice in Gloucestershire in order to improve their work to better safeguard victims of domestic abuse.

The scope of the panel review

To produce a chronology of events and actions leading up to the death of the victim, Susan, from the period 1st January 1999 until she was discovered deceased in 2013; seeking information from:

- Organisations which had contact with her
- Local community organisations
- Her family and friends

To review current roles, responsibilities, policies and practices in relation to victims of domestic abuse – to build up a picture of what should have happened

To review this against what actually happened to draw out the strengths and weaknesses

To review national best practice in respect of protecting adults from domestic abuse

To draw out conclusions about how organisations and partnerships can improve their working in the future to support victims of domestic abuse

The review will also specifically consider:

An assessment of whether family and friends were aware of any abusive or concerning behaviour from the perpetrator to the victim (or other persons).

A review of any barriers experienced by the family in reporting any abuse or concerns, including whether they, or the victim, knew how to report domestic abuse had they wanted to.

A review of any previous concerning conduct or a history of abusive behaviour from the perpetrator and whether this was known to any agencies.

An evaluation of any training or awareness raising requirements that are necessary to ensure a greater knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse processes and / or services in Gloucestershire.

Whether the perpetrator had any previous history of abusive behaviour towards this victim, or any previous partner, and whether this was known to any agencies.

Whether family and friends wanted to participate in the review. If so, find out if they were aware of any abusive behaviour by the perpetrator prior to the homicide.

Communication to the general public and non-specialist services about available specialist services related to domestic abuse or violence.

Whether the work undertaken by the service in this case is consistent with its own: professional standards, compliant with its own protocols, guidelines, policies and procedures

Any other information that becomes relevant during the conduct of the review

DHR Panel

The DHR panel was made up of people who work in a relevant area of the focus for the review and local relevant support practitioners and professionals, including charitable organisations. The individuals who made up the panel for this DHR were from the following agencies:

Independent chair
Cheltenham Borough Homes
Cheltenham Borough Council
Gloucestershire Constabulary: Detective Inspector
Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Services: Service Manager
Oakley Neighbourhood Project: Service Manager
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Infobuzz
Gloucestershire County Council - Adult Services