

CHELTENHAM STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP GROUP



# Domestic Homicide Review

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Under s9 of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004

In respect of the death of a woman

## **Learning Points, Recommendations and Agreed Actions**

**Final – for publication  
Embargoed until 18 October 2016**

Learning Point	Recommendation	Scope of recommendation i.e. local or regional	Action to take	Lead Agency	Key milestones to achieve recommendation	Target Date	Date of completion and Outcome
1. There is no consistency across the county in responding to domestic abuse	Each public-sector agency that is represented on the DHR panel and on Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group (SLG), will adopt a domestic abuse policy and procedures, based on a county-wide template, to guide how their agencies responds to domestic abuse and stalking. Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) agencies will also be encouraged to adopt a domestic abuse policy.	County-wide	The Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Implementation Group (GDASVIG) to develop a countywide concordat and this to be adopted by all participating agencies.  Template policies for agencies to be developed as part of the concordat.	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group  Strategic DASV Co-ordinator working through the GDASVIG	GDASVIG to define key requirements for a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Concordat for agencies.  Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) will work with the DASV County Co-ordinator to shape elements of the Concordat.  Engagement with the DASV Multi-Agency Group to develop the Concordat.  GDASVIG to formally adopt Concordat.  Awareness raising and circulation via DASV local fora and VCS networks  Customisation and adoption by participating agencies	Adoption of Concordat by agencies by March 2017	
2. Consistency should stretch to provider agencies contracted to deliver public-facing services	There will be a requirement that selected agencies delivering public-facing services on behalf of public sector partners have a domestic abuse policy	County-wide	Cheltenham SLG will work with the DASV County Co-ordinator to research best practice from elsewhere and then, if appropriate, recommend that GDASVCG sign off standard clauses to be included in procurement processes and contracting arrangements	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group	Cheltenham SLG and DASV County Co-ordinator to undertake research into best practice elsewhere. To feed into Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Commissioning Group for their consideration during re-commissioning processes	Adoption of standard clauses by March 2017	
3. There is a need to train staff across agencies to create a consistent message for victims	A training needs analysis will be coordinated by the GDASVIG and a plan developed for how to roll out training across agencies	County-wide	A training review will be coordinated by GDASVIG to review training across the county, consider multi-agency training needs and develop a county-wide training statement to ensure consistent messages	Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Implementation Group	GDASVIG Task group to conduct a training review and to develop a training statement for multi-agency sign up.	March 2017	

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4. Local people were not aware of the help available to them	An awareness campaign implemented using the branding of the local domestic abuse specialist agency and the glostakeastand website to raise awareness	County-wide	GDASVIG to develop a communications strategy and a resourced action plan to ensure that residents, businesses and agencies in Gloucestershire are aware of DASV support and advice	Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Commissioning Group	GDASVIG to define key requirements for communications strategy.  The multi-agency group to develop communications strategy and action plan.  GDASVIG to formally adopt strategy and identity resources for its implementation.	November 2016	Completed June 2016 and agreed by the GDASVIG, the plan will be reviewed and re-developed annually'
5. There is not a sufficiently wide understanding of how domestic abuse is practised and as such damaging beliefs can be reflected and left unchallenged in the criminal justice process.	As a trial is a public event and is retained in public records it should reflect reality, it is recommended that Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutors in domestic homicide cases and Magistrates have training in recognising the practices of coercive control, stalking and domestic abuse	Regional	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to invite local representatives of the CPS, local magistrates and wider criminal justice reps to attend DASV training events	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group	SLG to write to the CPS about this DHR and raise the concerns about the case and request they review their own in house training to reflect the concerns.	With immediate effect	
6. Vulnerable and intimidated witnesses were not always identified or special measures applied for by the CPS in court proceedings	It is a responsibility of the police to identify vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and respond accordingly	Local, but potential national implications	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to write to the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers and Gloucestershire Constabulary and the CPS to remind them of the need to follow the guidance in this area	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group	Ensure all police officers are reminded of this guidance in training, bulletins, and the 'how to' guide, and that this is always discussed or raised with the CPS where domestic abuse, stalking or coercive control prosecutions are considered	Ongoing	
7. Those responsible for Susan's health and wellbeing did not follow up signs of domestic abuse	All health practitioners and professionals should consider Routine Enquiry in cases where depression or anxiety, or any condition potentially related to domestic abuse, is discussed with a patient	County-wide	Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group through the Cheltenham Locality Executive to ensure that a commitment to routine enquiry is implemented as part of the adoption of the countywide concordat for DASV in recommendation 1.	Cheltenham Locality Executive	Meeting with the Cheltenham Locality Executive to remind local GPs of the need to follow relevant guidance.  Training needs to be identified via the training needs audit.  Ensure that projects that link with GP practices also follow guidance such as the social prescribing project, the IRIS project and the health champions.	March 2017	

Learning Point	Recommendation	Scope of recommendation i.e. local or regional	Action to take	Lead Agency	Key milestones to achieve recommendation	Target Date	Date of completion and Outcome
8. Benefit Fraud investigators did not consider financial abuse or control	Benefit Fraud investigators should be aware that in cases where coercive control is exercised that financial abuse and control of the victim's finances is more probable than possible and should therefore be trained in domestic abuse and have enhanced training in financial abuse.	County-wide / local	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to scope out training packages for delivery to Benefit Fraud investigators working in Cheltenham  Ensure needs to be identified as part of county-wide training needs analysis in response to recommendation 3	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to contact local benefit fraud investigators  Contact Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board to ascertain if they are aware of any training packages.  Cheltenham SLG to feedback to GDASVIG training group following their correspondence with benefit investigators, to ensure appropriate links with county-wide training.	March 2017	
9. An effective risk assessment was not performed	All agencies should have identified individuals who are competent in identifying risk factors and understanding their significance (eg strangulation)  More agencies need to be trained including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social care</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Probation</li> <li>• Local councils</li> <li>• Benefits Agencies</li> <li>• Health Agencies</li> </ul>	County-wide	GDASVIG to ensure that the skills required to complete Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harrasment (DASH) forms are identified as part of the training needs analysis developed in response to recommendation 3	Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Implementation Group	GDASVIG training subgroup to scope the training need in relation to risk assessment and present any training developments to the GDASVIG for approval	June 2017	
10. Perpetrator behaviour is not robustly challenged	Police should use their professional judgement and consider all options available to them when attending calls for help in cases of domestic abuse. The police have a number of actions available to them, all of which would be aided by meticulous evidence gathering at the time. The use of evidence gathering aides, such as body worn cameras should be discussed within the Constabulary	County-wide	Gloucestershire Constabulary to research best practice from elsewhere and explore the feasibility of better evidence gathering aides.	Gloucestershire Constabulary	Discussion to be held within Gloucestershire Constabulary about this recommendation and what other tactics available to officers should be used and encouraged eg. Domestic Violence Prevention Notices	Ongoing	The police are revisiting their use of detectives within the context of investigating domestic abuse. A sophisticated domestic abuse matrix has been developed to consider threats and harm and support evidenced based prosecutions

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11. The domestic abuse court in Cheltenham is not staffed by trained individuals any more	The specialist domestic abuse court should be staffed by professionals with enhanced training in domestic abuse and coercive control. This would include the prosecutors, magistrates, judges and supporting personnel.	County-wide	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to write to Her Majesty's Court Service and the Home Office.  Ensure that court service are aware of locally provide training and how to access this.	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group	People who work in the specialist domestic abuse courts have participated in appropriate training  Encourage Her Majesty's Court Service to ensure that the Cheltenham specialist domestic abuse court meets national criteria.	June 2017	
12. There is a lack of specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse	There should be an assessment of the needs of children and young people where Domestic Abuse has occurred and this should be part of any risk assessment. It is considered that there is a need for specialist group and individual programmes which would support children witnessing or affected by domestic abuse. This review recommends that local agencies are supported in bidding for funding to begin developing such support for children.	County-wide	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to write to Gloucestershire County Council and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board and ask them to review their provision for children in relation to support for domestic abuse  Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group to consider working with Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service with the support of agencies such as the Hollie Gazzard Trust, the Youth Support Team and the Inspiring Families project to develop a programme and seek funding support.	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group	Carry out research to assess the needs relating to children  Work collaboratively to identify common outcomes  Work collaboratively to identify sources of funding to deliver programmes of support.	June 2017	
13. Strangulation - Early Recommendation	All local agencies recognise the significance of strangulation or choking attempts when they happen in the context of domestic abuse. Research was considered which showed a correlation between such assaults and future homicide	Local	All panel members agreed to share this information with their agencies so that reported choking, drowning attempts, or strangulation could be considered in future cases of domestic abuse and be responded to as a potentially serious and high risk behaviour	Cheltenham Strategic Leadership Group		Complete	Complete