

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW 13 LEARNING BRIEFING

WHAT IS A DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW (DHR)?

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) defines a Domestic Homicide Review as a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect by either:

- a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
- a member of the same household.

DHRs are held with a view to identifying the lessons learnt from the death.

DHRs are NOT inquiries into how the victim died or to find out who is to blame; that is a matter for coroners and criminal courts.

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW

This brief is based on the learning from a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) commissioned by the Bristol Community Safety Partnership (now the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership) in 2017 and was reviewed by an independent chair.

What is known

The victim was part of a minoritised community in Bristol.

The victim and perpetrator were divorced. They had children and lived together. The victim was in the process of exiting the relationship. It is known that point of separation is a high-risk factor for domestic abuse.

There had been domestic abuse in the relationship, this was mostly verbal.

A family member acknowledged that there were missed opportunities to report things, suggesting that those close to the victim may have been aware of previous domestic abuse.

The victim was ambitious to pursue her career after spending many years caring for children fulltime. It appears that this resulted in judgement from family members, and likely judgement from the wider community.

There is evidence to suggest that the victim changed sexual orientation shortly before her death. It is not known if she had discussed her sexuality with friends or family or if she was open about this with the wider community.

The victim was under enormous pressure to conform to gender and cultural norms, in particular to accept the authority of the male family members in her life.

Research

A study¹ has identified that there are key characteristics, based around (1) the psychology of the perpetrator, (2) the risk markers observable from their behaviour and (3) the possible triggers inducing them to act that, when simultaneously present, heighten the risk to the victim.

¹ Exploring the relationship between stalking and homicide - The Homicide Triad (Monckton Smith, Szymanska, Haile 2017)

FEEDBACK



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In this case it is speculated that the perpetrator had:

1. Issues with challenge and rejection
2. Exerted coercive control over the victim
3. Experienced cultural humiliation by her being seen to assert freedom from their relationship that he could not accept



KEY LEARNING POINT

The importance of professionals understanding the culturally diverse communities of Bristol:

- how cultural norms interact with gender-based violence including honour-based violence, forced marriage and domestic abuse (including coercive control)
- how risks may heighten at the point of separation

Learning from another DHR

Some of the recommendations from a previous review also resonate with this case:

1. To work with community leaders, community organisations and faith groups to challenge negative attitudes around power and control towards women and girls
2. Broadening the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda to under-represented communities affected by domestic violence and sexual violence through a community empowerment approach



SUPPORT SERVICES



BRISTOL

[Next Link Plus](#)

provides specialist domestic abuse support services including emergency accommodation, for men and women who have experienced domestic abuse. The service is led by Next Link working with their partners including Victim Support and Nilaari.

[The Sky Project](#) provides support to communities around honour-based violence and forced marriage.

[Kiki](#) is a Bristol organisation providing space for QTIPOC (Queer, Transgender, and Intersex People of Colour) and their friends to meet.

[Opoka](#) provides support for women and children in the Polish community who experience domestic violence and abuse.

NATIONAL

[Muslim Women's Network](#)

Faith and culturally sensitive helpline and counselling service.

[Women's Aid](#) provides information and practical support.

[Hidayah LGBTQI+](#) provides support and welfare for LGBTQI+ Muslims and promotes social justice and education to counter discrimination, prejudice and injustice.

[Karma Nirvana](#) supports both men and women who are victims of Forced Marriage and honour - based violence.

[Halo Project](#) supports victims of honour-based violence.

[Galop - the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity](#) provides information and practical support.