

1 DHRs – why they are important

When a person aged 16+ dies owing to violence, abuse or neglect by a partner, ex-partner or family/ household member the Police make a referral for consideration of a DHR. This allows agencies to work together to learn lessons and make plans to improve support in the future. Please see the latest research. www.vkpp.org.uk/assets/Files/Domestic-Homicide-Project-Year-2-Report-December-2022.pdf

7 Other risks

This briefing focuses on the risks associated with victim suicide in the presence of DA, but it is important to remember during the same period there were 202 homicides caused by (ex)partners and 103 adults died as a result of homicides by family members. Family homicides victims are 47% female and 53% male whereas partner homicide victims are 70% female. It is important to apply this information when working with those groups.

6 Things to think about

When a person experiences DA asking for help can be incredibly hard, not speaking up can be considered a logical way to prevent harm to themselves or others; so patience and understanding is a minimal requirement. Be professionally curious, be persistent but person centred.

Use flags on your organisations system to ensure risks are understood and explain what support is available. Always consider the risk of suicide as well as further violence.

2 Domestic abuse and suicide

Research has shown that between 2020-2022 114 people died of suspected suicide in the backdrop of domestic abuse. That is five people a month.

81% of those who died were women and 19% men. DHR guidance states that when someone has died of suspected suicide in these circumstances then a DHR referral should also be made.



Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Suspected Victim Suicides

5 Help and support

When aware that someone is experiencing DA consider all of the risk factors, have a conversation with the person in a safe space and consider the various services that are available and when you might need to refer to MARAC. Use the dedicated Domestic Abuse Pathway which explains how to respond to domestic abuse, where to get help and how to refer to MARAC in Shropshire and Telford.

www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk/media/oa2n0ein/sscp-domestic-abuse-pathway-a3-sep22-v4-pp-1.pdf

www.telford.gov.uk/info/20291/domestic_abuse

3 Risk Factors associated with suicide and Domestic Abuse (DA)

The research has looked at these deaths and identified the risks most associated with suicide when experiencing domestic abuse. These are

- 1 Perpetrator already known to Police for DA.
- 2 Coercive and controlling behaviours are used.
- 3 Perpetrator has problems with alcohol.
- 4 Non-fatal strangulation has been used.
- 5 Perpetrator misuses drugs.
- 6 Perpetrator has mental health problems.
- 7 Relationship ending increases risk.
- 8 Perpetrator has experienced depression/anxiety.
- 9 Perpetrator has previously been suicidal.
- 10 Perpetrator has also experienced DA.

www.vkpp.org.uk/vkpp-work/domestic-homicide-project

4 Coercive and controlling behaviour

Is a way of harming, punishing or frightening someone to make them give in and be dominated. This can be done through assaults or more subtle less obvious methods such as threats, humiliation or intimidation which is not as easily recognisable. It is an offence under Sect 76 of Serious Crime Act. It can include checking phone/spending/ bank account; dictating access to friends/family or time on own; preventing access to see GP or professionals; threatening to expose them; threatening to harm the person or themselves, family/children or friends; denying access to interpreter or controlling who they can see or where they can go. It can have a devastating impact and people sometimes only realise the impact retrospectively.