

7 Minute Briefing Domestic Homicide Review -Victoria

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1. Context

Under Section 9(1) of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 there is a requirement for Bexley Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) to undertake domestic homicide reviews (DHRs).

The BCSP is made up of representatives from the 'responsible authorities' (Local Authority, police, fire and rescue, probation services and health) Who work together to protect their local communities from crime and help people feel safer.

2. Why it matters?

Domestic abuse is a horrendous crime that affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men. Two women are killed in the UK every week by a current or ex-partner. When a homicide occurs, we have a duty to enquire if agencies could have done something different to increase safety for the victim.

3. Criteria for a DHR

If the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as themselves OR where a victim took their own life (suicide) and the circumstances give rise to concern, for example it emerges that there has been coercive controlling behaviour in the relationship, even if a suspect is not charged with an offence or they are tried and acquitted.

4. Background

Victoria was a woman aged in her late 30s/early 40s of White British ethnicity. The conclusion of the coroner as to her death was "drug related". Victoria had contact with 22 different agencies, although this declined and the last 3 months of her life there was no engagement.

This Review has shown that most agencies were either not aware of the totality of Victoria's situation or were focused on one issue alone.

5. Safeguarding

A DHR should seek to establish the lessons to be learned about how local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims. It aims to identify clear lessons, apply those lessons in timely actions, appropriately amend practice, change policies and procedures, and improve responses to those affected. The agencies recorded throughout the review relate to Victoria's experiences and issues: experiences of trauma and loss, experiences of domestic abuse, alleged sexual assault by a stranger near her home, relationship with her children, uncertain and unstable housing situation, ongoing mental ill health, and ongoing use of substances.

6. Recommendations and learning

The review panel made nine overarching recommendations and 49 single agency recommendations sourced from Individual Management Reports. These recommendations were acted on through the development of an action plan and for the recommendations to be developed, implemented, and monitored.

In line with national guidance BCSP Board will maintain oversight of the DHR and ensure learning and lessons from the review into Victoria's death is explicit and disseminated amongst partners.

7. What's next?

BCSP are committed to sharing recommendations and lessons learnt from a review.

The [overview report](#) into the death of Victoria has been published on the Local Authority website.

All our partners will be encouraged to read the reviews and see what recommendations / lessons learnt can be implemented within their own organisation.

For further information about domestic abuse services in Bexley please visit:

www.bexleydomesticabuseservices.org.uk