



Southend, Essex
& Thurrock Domestic
Abuse Board

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Practitioner Learning Brief

Background

This case was a familial homicide where the victim was killed by her grandson in a care home. This case crossed over three generations of one family and across two different authorities. The review looks at agency involvement and examines the past to identify any relevant background or trail of abuse before the homicide, whether support was accessed within the community and whether there were any barriers to accessing support. By taking a holistic approach the DHR seeks to identify appropriate solutions to make the future safer.

Engagement.

9 Agencies were engaged with the family and took part in the DHR process/ 16 agencies contributed to discussion on this review via a DHR workshop. 1 family member contributed to review.

Key focus of the review

- *How do agencies engage families in the care of older people, those with care and support needs, people with mental health care needs?*
- Included within this were the questions: *What if there is domestic abuse? How is this identified and responded to?*

The conclusion from the responses at the workshop is that a better response, and support, is required for the families who are supporting individuals with care and support needs, mental health issues or drug/alcohol issues:

- An improved culture of recognition is needed of the role of families, and of carers' needs and how agencies can respond to this.
- Better systems need to be in place to ensure staff have the tools and confidence they need to identify and support individuals, families and carers.
- Strategic and operational partnerships are in place and these can be promoted more widely to improve information sharing, communication, referrals and multi-agency working.

Key themes	Learning and Recommendations
<i>Domestic abuse: enquiry, understanding and response</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to provide guidance and training to ensure all professionals can spot the signs (including softer, less obvious signs) and to ask the question where they suspect domestic abuse. (professional curiosity) • Suggested that all professionals have mandatory training on domestic abuse awareness, identification, and response to Domestic abuse to ensure that professionals know what to do in response to a disclosure, including recording, information sharing and referral routes into support services. • Stronger links needed with Care homes and the J9 project.ⁱ
<i>Think Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals think family and demonstrate curiosity and consider the wider family dynamics and impact on them during visits/assessments and identify and respond to any additional needs. • Professionals should be proactive in offering carers assessments to family members. Taking account of the fact that they may be caring for more than one family member. • Highlighted the need to recognise an increase in intergenerational families living together. • Carers and other family members may not know what support is available to them, both in relation to carer's assessments and support services, and professionals can therefore make a significant difference to them in offering assessments and referrals.
<i>Information sharing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing was critical to providing effective services to clients and by extension their families; and that frameworks and policies are in place around this, including an Information Sharing Protocols. • Frontline staff who may not have the confidence to act. • Need to encourage cross-border information sharing.
<i>Multi-agency working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage agencies and professionals to work together to support clients around all their issues, including domestic abuse. Ensure staff know referral pathways, thresholds and processes into relevant partner agencies; promote staff confidence to contact partner agencies for advice as well as to challenge; and ensure staff know who their safeguarding leads are, as they can offer effective information and routes into relevant services.
<i>Staff confidence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information, and actions to ensure that management supported their staff in carrying this out with confidence, including escalating concerns with partner agencies when required.

<p><i>Carers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies working with clients have a responsibility to identify their clients' wider families and networks, both to better support those clients by identifying issues in their families and networks, and to identify any support needs for those family members • A recommendation was made for the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board to seek assurance from its partners that support is available to carers; and to ensure that support for carers is integrated into its training, awareness raising and communications relating to safeguarding adults. • Staff have awareness of. Information about a range of support services, for many different needs and issues can now be found at www.livingwellessex.org which is being promoted across the County along with the SET Domestic Abuse Board website setdab.org. E.g. GP; Adult Social Care; Citizen's Advice Bureau; Carer's Association; Carer's UK; Mencap; Alzheimer's Association; mental health trust. <p>There was consensus that agencies needed to be considering the needs of their clients' families, and ensuring that they were offered relevant support, which may or may not be through a carer's assessment.</p>
<p>Direction to available resources</p>	
<p>The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) is made up of representatives from agencies and organisations working to join up and better facilitate Southend, Essex and Thurrock's vision to work together to enable everyone to live a life free from all forms of domestic abuse.</p> <p>The SETDAB partnership website provides advice and information on services for those affected by Domestic Abuse. It also provides information for professionals including training, resources, and pathways for support. Anyone can sign up the partnership newsletter where updates are given about developments regarding Domestic Abuse across Southend, Essex & Thurrock.</p> <p>For further information please visit https://setdab.org/</p>	

ⁱ The J9 Domestic Abuse Initiative is named in memory of Janine Mundy, who was killed by her estranged husband while he was on Police bail. The initiative was started by her family and the local police in Cambourne, Cornwall, where she lived and aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse and assist victims to seek the help they so desperately need.