

Natalia (27 years of age)

Background

The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) commissioned a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) following the death of Natalia. On the Morning of the 11th of November 2021, her partner Jakub called the police to report Natalia missing. Jakub told officers that she had left their home in the middle of the night and not returned. Jakub also told the police that she had made threats to leave him before but never carried them out. A missing persons investigation began and as a result Jakub was arrested and subsequently convicted of Natalia's murder. He was sentenced to a minimum term of 22 years. This review has considered all aspects of agency involvement to try and identify opportunities for learning and to highlight good practice. The DHR has also recognised opportunities that have already been identified and positive change made.

The process has looked at ways in which frontline professionals engaged with the couple and how these agencies worked together to identify times when Natalia could have been identified as the victim of Domestic Abuse and whether current policies or procedures provide such opportunity for the necessary professional curiosity to be used. Additionally, the DHR looked at the possibility that Natalia may have found it difficult knowing which way to turn when suffering abuse and whether her pregnancy had been a trigger (or Red Flag) which analysis tells us is regularly the case in abusive relationships.

Key Learning

The review identified that previously, when attending the Sexual Health Service, Lincolnshire Community Health Services' detail of current partners was not routinely recorded. This has now been improved so that partner details are documented in each appointment.

The review has identified a significant increase in the volume of 'Routine Questioning' when clients attend ante natal classes.

The United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust, Midwifery Team, conduct monthly audits in relation to the quantity and quality of routine enquiries and the use of translation services, when required. There is also an agreed escalation process to deal with underperformance issues.

Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership have recognised the need to better engage with seldom heard communities and have introduced a raft of new initiatives to provide support for these group.

Improving Practice

This review has identified various changes to policies and procedures which it feels are worthy of highlighting in particular those demonstrating good practice:

1. The improvements of information sharing between the police and the Midwifery Safeguarding Team at the ULHT which helps to identify the vulnerability of individual women during pregnancy
2. Lincolnshire ICB has shared the 'doctors of the world fact sheet', which is available on their website, with all Lincolnshire General Practices. This includes a multitude of health care translated information for them to consider adding to their website, if they do not already have translation services on there. [TRANSLATED HEALTH INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS - Doctors of the World](#)
3. Efforts are being made, through business and outreach services to better engage with the Polish community including a Domestic Abuse Champion initiative. This was introduced in 2023 and continues to develop.

Recommendations.

R1. ICB are to continue to emphasise, during training sessions, via newsletters and through relevant safeguarding forums that GP practices are utilising clinical DA questioning when required.

R2. Raise awareness, across schools, that SEND presentation can also be confused with DA trauma symptoms.

R3. The ICB to promote translation services which explain how the NHS operates to practices who do not currently have them on their website.

Next Steps – What you can do

- ÿ Understand this 'Briefing Note' and discuss at your next team meeting and make sure you and everyone understands and is able to apply the learning.
- ÿ When working with victims of domestic abuse, including those from a minority community, ensure that they are aware of how to access support and report abuse.
- ÿ Maintain your professional curiosity.
- ÿ Maintain a 'Think Domestic Abuse' approach possible.
- ÿ Prevent domestic abuse before it happens.

