



Domestic Abuse Related Death Review

Executive Summary Report

Name: Janina

Aged 33 years.

Died: May 2022

**Independent Panel Chair and Author Theresa Breen
MA**

Date report completed 15.12.2023

Section	Title	Page no
1	The review process	3
2	Contributors to the review	4
3	The review panel members	4
4	Chair and Author of the overview report	5
5	Terms of reference for the review	6
6	Summary chronology	7
7	Conclusions	13
8	Learning	13
9	Recommendations from the review	15

1. The Review Process

1.1 This summary outlines the process undertaken by the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership area Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (formerly Domestic Homicide Review) panel, in reviewing the homicide of **Janina**¹ who was a resident in their area.

1.2 The following pseudonyms² have been in used in this review for the victim and perpetrator, and other parties as appropriate, to protect their identities and those of their family members. The Chair/ Author chose the pseudonyms used in this report from a list of popular names relevant to the subjects' country of origin.

Pseudonym	Age at time of incident	Ethnicity	Relationship to Janina
Janina	33 years	White European	N/A- Victim
Jonas	40 years	White European	Perpetrator- Husband
Child 1	N/A	White European	Eldest child
Laima	N/A	N/A	Best Friend / work colleague
Ema	N/A	N/A	Friend. Sister to Laima
Ona	N/A	N/A	Friend - married to Petras
Petras	N/A	N/A	Gym friend - married to Ona
Aras	N/A	N/A	Gym friend
Frank	N/A	N/A	Gym owner & friend
Greg	N/A	N/A	Gym owner & friend
Helen	N/A	N/A	Employer

1.3 Janina was a Lithuanian national who had lived in the UK for over 10 years, having moved to a small town in Lincolnshire in 2012 with her husband Jonas and their baby. They went on to have a set of twins. She was living with her husband Jonas, who was also a Lithuanian national, and their three children at the time of the murder. Janina and Jonas both worked locally (she in a care home and he in a factory). In the months leading up to the murder, Janina had expressed to friends and gym colleagues that she was unhappy in her marriage and intended to leave her husband, although they both remained in the family home. There were no reported domestic abuse incidents during this time to any agency.

1.4 In May 2022, Janina and Jonas were joined by friends, initially at their home and later went out to celebrate Jonas's birthday, at a nightclub. A verbal altercation took place and Jonas became angry as he believed Janina had 'danced with, hugged and kissed' a member of their group. They all travelled home in a taxi before Janina and Jonas went into their home alone. The children were present in the home but were asleep in bed.

1.5 Their eldest child reports waking (between 06.00-07.00) after hearing noises before being told to go back to bed by Jonas. He instructed her to call a family friend later when she woke. After receiving the call from the child, Laima attended and discovered the bodies of

¹ A pseudonym chosen by the Author on behalf of the DARDR panel

² List of culturally appropriate Pseudonyms chosen by the Author on behalf of the DARDR panel

Janina and Jonas. The subsequent police investigation concluded that Janina had been murdered by Jonas who then took his own life.

1.6 Following the death of Janina and Jonas, a formal notification was sent by Lincolnshire Police to the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership. A meeting of the DARDR decision panel, on 25th May 2022, confirmed that the case met the DARDR criteria, and the Home Office was informed. All agencies that potentially had contact with Janina and Jonas prior to the point of death were contacted and asked to confirm whether they were involved with them.

1.7 The panel met 4 times by video conference with further work being conducted by telephone, video conferencing and the exchange of documents. At the start of the review process, the panel each confirmed their independence.

1.8 The review was concluded on 15.12.2023 following final consultation with the panel.

2. Contributors to the review

2.1 5 of the 17 agencies contacted confirmed contact with the victim and/or perpetrator and children involved and were asked to secure their files. The police had no contact with the victim or preparator prior to the incident but did complete the initial notification documents to the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.

Agency	Contribution
Lincolnshire Police	Brief information/ police statements
LCC ³ Children's Health Services	IMR
LCC Education	IMR
United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT)	IMR Summary Report
Lincolnshire ICB/GP practice	IMR
Lincolnshire Housing	Chronology

2.2 Each IMR author had no previous knowledge of the subjects of the review nor had any involvement in the provision of services to them. They were selected as people independent from any clinical or line management supervision for any of the practitioners who provided care for them and could provide an analysis of events that occurred; the decisions made; and the actions taken or not taken.

3. The Review Panel Members

Name:	Agency
Theresa Breen	Independent Chair and Report Author
Sarah Norburn	DA Coordinator Lincolnshire Police
Julia Miller	Housing Options manager, North Kesteven District Council
Rebecca Pinder	Head of Safeguarding Children, Lincolnshire ICB

³ Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)

Elaine Todd	Named Nurse For Safeguarding Children & Young People, United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT)
Rachel Freeman	Head of Service, LCC Children's Services
Dawn Waring	Locality Health Manager, LCC Children's Health
John O'Connor	Head of Service, LCC Education Support
Jane Keenlyside	MARAC Manager, EDAN Lincs- DA Specialist Services
Liz Cudmore	Children & Young Person Safeguarding Lead, East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)

4. Author and Chair of the Overview Report

4.1 Theresa Breen was selected as the independent Chair of the Review Panel and Author of the report. She retired from British Policing (not Lincolnshire) in November 2018, after 30 years. As a former senior police officer, she worked across a range of policing disciplines, including Serious Organised Crime, Counter Terrorism and Safeguarding in management positions. She gained experience of reviews working extensively in partnership with other agencies and had experience of working with Eastern European communities. She was a trained Senior Investigating Officer (SIO).

4.2 She worked across a number of Public Protection and Safeguarding portfolios in London and Surrey, managing and overseeing MAPPA⁴ and MARAC⁵ processes. As the police Public Protection lead in Westminster, she managed and oversaw Domestic Abuse services, to diverse communities. As a Borough Commander in a West London Borough, she was the core police member of the Safer and Stronger Strategy Group. Operating as 'Gold London⁶,' Theresa had overall strategic command of multiple incidents including those involving domestic abuse and homicide.

4.3 Working in partnership, Theresa additionally led the national police implementation of the cross-agency Operational Improvement Review (OIR) recommendations following the terrorist activities across the UK in 2017/18. Theresa has not worked for any agency in Lincolnshire and has no connection with any of the agencies involved in this review. She has completed the relevant Home Officer DARDR Chair training.

⁴ MAPPA stands for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, and it is the process through which various agencies such as the police, the Prison Service and Probation work together to protect the public by managing the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community.

⁵ MARAC is a multi-agency meeting which facilitates the risk assessment process for individuals and their families who are at risk of domestic violence and abuse. Organisations are invited to share information with a view to identifying those at "very high" risk of domestic violence and abuse. Where very high risk has been identified, a multi-agency action plan is developed to support all those at risk.

⁶ The generic command structure, nationally recognised, accepted and used by the police, other emergency services and partner agencies, is based on the gold, silver, bronze (GSB) hierarchy of command and can be applied to the resolution of both spontaneous incidents and planned operations.

4.4 Theresa has been the Chair and Author for 10 DARDR's and is a current Chair and Author for the new OWHR⁷ pilot process. She is a trainer for Sancus Solutions, delivering safeguarding and equality training, and delivered the OWHR training to over 100 delegates, including safeguarding and, equality and diversity input.

5. Terms of Reference

5.1 At the meeting on 13.01.2023, the panel considered the TOR referenced in the Multi-Agency Statutory guidance for the conduct of Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews 2016 (section 2 paragraph 7) and adhered to the guidance with some case specific terms⁸. The aim of the DARDR is to identify the most important issues to enable lessons to be learned from homicides with a view to preventing homicide and ensuring that individuals and families are better supported. In order for these lessons to be learned as widely and thoroughly as possible, professionals need to be able to understand fully what happened in each homicide, and most importantly, what needs to change in order to reduce the risk of such tragedies happening in the future.

5.2 Timeframe under Review

5.2.1 The scope for this review is **1st November 2012 to 1st May 2022** and the reason for this period is the victim and the perpetrator appear to have entered the UK during this time and this is the first period that there is information from services. It is also apparent that they have a young child at this point so to creating an understanding of the family dynamic would be critical to understanding their lives, communities, and support networks.

5.3 Case specific Terms

5.3.1 Subjects of the DARDR

Victim: Janina, aged 33

Victim's Children: three children - all primary school age

Perpetrator: Jonas, aged 40

5.3.2 Specific terms: Key Lines of Inquiry:

The Review Panel and Chair considered the 'generic issues' as set out in statutory guidance and were asked to examine the following case specific issues.

- **To examine patterns of abuse and coercive and controlling behaviours⁹ perpetrated by the perpetrator against the victim.**

⁷ OWHR is Offensive Weapons Homicide Review is a HO pilot to deal with the under researched and reviewed area of homicides involving offensive weapons in 4 pilot sites across the UK.

⁸ Referenced at section 5.3

⁹ In March 2013, the Government introduced a cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse, which is designed to ensure a common approach to tackling domestic violence and abuse by different agencies. The Serious Crime Act 2015 (the 2015 Act) received royal assent on 3 March 2015. The Act creates a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships (section 76).

- To consider how women with additional needs (Language¹⁰/Diversity) who are experiencing domestic abuse access information, services, and support.
- To examine the impact of COVID 19, in particular lockdowns, on both an individual's ability to access information and support and agency responses.
- To consider potential gaps in service provision, alongside potential barriers to accessing services. Significantly, it was noted by the panel that the period under review and the months leading up to the death were during the COVID¹¹ lockdown periods, which will be examined during this report.

5.3.3 The Review Panel and Chair discussed and agreed additional enquiries that the Chair would pursue with friends and family members:

- **Whether family, friends or colleagues were aware of any abusive behaviour from the alleged perpetrator to the victim, prior to the homicide, and whether this had been shared, by them, with professionals.**
- **Whether there were any previous victims of Jonas.**
- **Whether there were safeguarding concerns in relation to the children.**

5.3.4 The author was unable to make contact and interview any friends or family members and was therefore unable to secure separate commentary from them, to answer the additional enquiries. The author therefore relied on the content of their police statements to address lines of enquiry.

6. Summary Chronology

6.1 During the review period, the family came to the attention of agencies for routine engagement and non-urgent matters. The summary of agency engagement is as follows:

6.1.1 **Police:** Neither Janina or Jonas had come to the attention of police in the UK or Lithuania prior to the night of the murder.

6.1.2 **Medical (includes Children's health, GP services and Integrated Care Partnership information):** There are a number of routine medical appointments for the eldest child recorded, prior to Janina becoming pregnant with twins. Throughout the review period, there was expected engagement with all prenatal and antenatal services, none of which raised any concern about domestic abuse. The GP and hospital records are also unremarkable for Janina and Jonas and their children and held no information which assisted this review or indicated any abusive behaviour or domestic abuse concerns.

6.1.3 **Education:** Whilst the school did record some minor incidents where the children discussed their parents 'arguing' at home, the school did not identify any issues or concerns about domestically abusive behaviour which required any intervention or referral. Janina did not present with any visible injuries. It is possible that Janina was not the victim of any physical abuse, and the school were not aware of any DA taking place. The school had not been made aware of any DA concerns about Janina and had not observed any marks or bruises on her.

¹⁰ The victim spoke Lithuanian as a first language and English as a second language.

¹¹ Listed at Appendix 1

6.1.4 Housing: The housing team confirmed that during the course of Jonas and Janina's tenancy, there had been low level isolated issues associated with rent arrears. No enforcement action or proceedings were ever required or initiated and the contacts that took place were only to address and discuss to prevent any potential escalation and ensure any support needed provided.

6.2 Information from witnesses

6.2.1 Laima: Janina's best friend Laima made a statement to police providing background information. In summary, Laima had no information that Jonas had ever assaulted or been physically abusive towards Janina, although she described controlling behaviours in his threats to commit suicide. Laima described that she had been told by Janina that she intended to divorce Jonas and she was preparing him for life on his own, as she thought he was unable to do anything for himself. She said that Janina and Jonas had been talking about divorce. Janina had told Laima that Jonas threatened to kill himself ('if you leave me, I will kill myself')¹², but Janina did not think it was a serious threat as he had never 'touched' her. Because of this, Laima also did not believe the threat.

6.2.2 Ema: Ema (Laima's sister) stated that she knew that Janina was very unhappy. She said that Janina had told her personally that she was unhappy in her relationship and was preparing Jonas for divorce.

6.2.3 Ona: Ona knew Janina from the gym. She said she knew that Janina was unhappy. She also disclosed that Janina wanted a divorce as she had mentioned it to her personally several times and said she only stayed because of the children, and 'everyone knew' as she talked to everyone in their social circle. Ona was part of the group who were with Jonas and Janina at the nightclub on the night of the murder.

6.2.4 Petras: Petras knew Janina and Jonas for about two years and knew Janina from the gym. He said he knew that Janina was unhappy, and she described to him being 'disappointed in her marriage.' She had told him that Jonas was angry when she (Janina) went to the gym, and Jonas was alone all the time, and he wanted to spend more time with her. The author was unable to pinpoint the exact time these conversations took place with Janina, as she was unable to interview Petras.

6.2.5 Aras: Aras met Janina and Jonas at the gym and had known them for years. He described Janina as a friend. He recalls previous conversations with Janina where she said she was unhappy in her marriage, and she wanted a divorce from Jonas. She revealed Jonas' suicide threats. Janina also explained that she was planning to go on holiday to Spain with some girlfriends and she revealed that Jonas was not very happy about it. She did not disclose any violence in their relationship other than to say that on one occasion before they were married¹³ Jonas had 'beaten her up'¹⁴ but she didn't give any other detail about this, and she never mentioned it again.

6.2.6 Frank: Frank described Janina as a friend, who was very close to his own daughter and trained with her at the gym. He said that Jonas was a 'loner, with no friends' and no interest

¹² Source Laima's police statement.

¹³ They were in a relationship between 2008-2010.

¹⁴ This is a direct quote from Aras's police statement. He did not give any other detail about this.

in socialising. He described several incidents of note. Between 2020-22, they had multiple conversations where Janina indicated she was unhappy with Jonas¹⁵. She once told him that Jonas would have to 'like it or lump it' because she loved the gym. On another occasion she arrived at the gym and was very 'off and distant' and when he asked her about it, Janina said that Jonas was 'unhappy that she had changed so much'. She trained hard and appeared happy before she left.

On another occasion, a night about a month before the murder¹⁶, Janina went to the gym and hung around to have a conversation with Frank at the end of training. She told him, that she did not love Jonas, and that he was jealous. She stated that Jonas said if she left him, he would kill her. Janina told him that she was waiting for the youngest children to get a bit older before leaving and was looking for a second job to get money to support herself and the children, for when she left. She informed him that Jonas had told her multiple times that he would kill her and himself if she left him. Frank said that Janina rolled her eyes as she said it, and claimed she had 'heard it so many times' implying that she was de-sensitised to it.

6.2.7 Greg: Janina and Jonas had been members of Greg's gym for years. Greg described Jonas as quiet, he kept to himself, and made little conversation, would just say hello but not converse¹⁷. He described Janina as 'very happy and outgoing.' Janina and Jonas never came into the gym together as they took it in turns to have the children. He described that after Janina lost her weight, she became much more confident, started doing kick-boxing classes. He said from an 'outsiders' point of view, she was attracting 'a lot of male attention'. He had not seen either of them in the 6 months before the murder, so was unable to add anything further.

6.3 Incident

6.3.1 At the time of the incident the children were 11 years old and twins of 8 years old and all attended a local primary school. There were no other occupants of their house.

6.3.2 The account of the evening was taken from witness accounts. It was Jonas's birthday the evening before the murder. Despite the fact that he rarely socialised¹⁸, arrangements were made for a night out with friends (Ona, Petras, Aras). Jonas was celebrating his birthday, so after drinks and food at their house, they all went by taxi to a nightclub. Petras and Aras¹⁹ describe that 'a lot of alcohol was drunk.' The actual amount was never specified but, in his statements, Aras disclosed that the whole group were drinking whiskey all evening. They had drunk a bottle of 50% proof whisky before going out and continued to drink double whiskey and cokes.

6.3.3 It is stated by those witnesses²⁰ that Janina had been dancing with a male in the group, and this caused a verbal disagreement in the group, with Jonas becoming angry and shouting. When they all departed in a taxi, Jonas appeared to still be angry and continued shouting at Janina. Ona and Petras dropped them off at their home in the taxi at about 01.30hrs, collecting

¹⁵ The author was unable to pinpoint the exact dates these conversations took place.

¹⁶ The date cannot be confirmed.

¹⁷ See notes at section 11.10.4

¹⁸ Source Laima's police statement

¹⁹ Source Petras and Aras's police interviews

²⁰ Source Petras, Aras and Ona's police interviews

their own children who had been babysitting. Aras initially went into the house and Jonas told him to leave, stating he needed to speak to Janina alone.

6.4 Events at the family home

6.4.1 Bar one, there are no non-family witnesses to the events as they unfold, and no neighbours heard or saw anything significant. However, despite no witnesses hearing noise that could isolate the time, the forensic evidence speaks to the violence that ensued.

6.4.2 The only possible witness to events is the eldest child, who heard noises, and went downstairs to check the noise. Their initial statement was recorded²¹ on police body-worn video, and later transcribed. In a subsequent police interview²², the child described that they heard a noise sometime between 06.00-07.00 on the day of the murder. The eldest child saw what they described as a 'fat man lying on the sofa' (this is believed to have been the body of Janina). Jonas told the child to go back to bed.

6.4.3 Jonas then went upstairs and spoke to the child. He told them that their mother had 'got drunk and banged her face on the wall and injured herself.' He also said that everyone was a bit drunk and 'mum was a bit flirty.' Jonas gave the child his mobile phone, telling her not to come down, but to ring the family friend Laima, when they woke later.

6.4.4 When the child phoned Laima some hours later (at 15.46), she dropped the keys from the first-floor window as the front door was locked. Laima entered and found the bodies of Janina and Jonas. Laima called police, who attended, and the police investigation commenced. The police initially recorded the child's first account on body worn video and later conducted a taped interview with the child. There is no explanation for the delay in the call to Laima, and it is known that all three children were alone in the house with their parents' bodies during this time (07.00-15.46). This time delay is something that the panel are unable to clarify.

6.4.5 Sometime between 01.30 and 06.00-07.00, Jonas has murdered Janina. The time of death could not be isolated. Jonas then hanged himself. A Coronial process was held. In summary, the medical cause of death for Janina was described as 'ligature strangulation'. The coroner concluded that Janina was murdered by her husband, when Jonas assaulted her causing significant injury and strangled her with a ligature which resulted in her death. The coroner concluded the death was 'unlawful killing.' The medical cause of death for Jonas was described as 'hanging.' The coroner described the circumstance, that Jonas 'was found suspended by ligature', after he had just murdered his wife.' The coroner concluded his death was 'suicide'.

6.5 Key issues arising from the Review.

6.5.1 **Patterns of abuse and coercive and controlling Behaviour²³ by the perpetrator against the victim:** During the period under review, there were no incidents reported to any agency to show that Janina was being controlled and coerced, bullied, and assaulted by

²¹ Childs statement was transcribed and used as source material for this review.

²² Childs taped interview was transcribed and used as source material for this review.

²³ Coercive control is defined as: 'Any incident or pattern of incidents **of controlling, coercive or threatening** behaviour, **violence**, or **abuse** between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

Jonas, but post event information from witnesses suggests a pattern of obsessive behaviour, and one allegation of assault. The statements from friends (taken after the murder) about a declining state of the marriage provide information which suggest there are relevant issues for consideration to the murder. This should be considered in light of the suicide threats and the disclosure made by Aras regarding a previous (uncorroborated) assault on Janina.

6.5.2 Janina was known to want to keep the family unit together until the children were a bit older and when she could independently financially support them and had described to Laima that she didn't want her children to be impacted. This meant she remained in the relationship much longer than she wanted.

6.5.3 Humiliation and Self Doubt (psychological): Janina had felt concerned and uncomfortable by her weight gain²⁴. It is not known if Jonas highlighted this to her. However, when she sought to address that, and actually lost weight and gained confidence, Jonas was jealous and clingy, and Laima reported that he was unhappy with her new-found confidence.

6.5.4 Assaults (physical): There is no agency evidence that Janina had suffered any physical assault from Jonas prior to the murder. That does not mean there was none. Police records in the UK and Lithuania were searched and no information was found. Her best friend Laima stated that he had **not** assaulted her, and Janina did not fear him. This is contradicted by Aras who recounts that Janina had disclosed to him that Jonas had once 'beaten her up'. Whilst this is not substantiated by any other source, this information was provided at inquest to the Coroner and was not challenged.

6.5.5 School reports indicate that the children revealed that there had been arguing at home, but the reports contained no evidence of anything of a physical nature towards Janina. There were comments made by the children to the school, that dad (Jonas) would hit them if they were naughty. Whilst not condoning violence, there is nothing so significant noted that the school felt they should make a referral or intervene. Janina did not present with any visible injuries. It is possible that Janina was not the victim of any physical abuse.

6.5.6 Isolating from support system: Janina did not have the same familial support network that she would have done in Lithuania, so the isolation was created by the situation they found themselves in. COVID lockdown also played a part in isolating many families across the UK.

6.5.7 Janina had a circle of (female) friends and had planned to go on holiday with them. Jonas was described as jealous about this by witnesses, and witnesses reported that Jonas was also jealous and resentful of her going to the gym. Jonas refused to allow visitors to their home. Jonas tried to prevent her from being with friends, in an attempt to isolate Janina and keep her dependant on him. Laima believed this was about control, and not simply lack of confidence with language. They had many Lithuanian friends and associates, but Jonas wanted them to be on their own. She had made these disclosures to witnesses.²⁵

²⁴ Janina had gone to her GP in 2020 to discuss her concerns about her weight gain. This was also reported in Laima's statement where she described Janina as 'uncomfortable' by her weight gain.

²⁵ Source- statements from Laima and Greg.

6.5.8 Financial control: There is evidence of Jonas working long hours to support his family. Unusually, considering cultural norms where males are presented as more dominant in Lithuanian culture, it was Janina who, by agreement appeared to manage the finances within the relationship. The housing team report that when they contacted Jonas about rent arrears, he said he 'would take details and pass to his partner.' She set up the direct debits and appeared to manage the money. The prevalent research suggests the perpetrator can manipulate through financial control. Janina appears to have been responsible for the bills and paying the rent, but there was no clear information either way about who had overall budgetary control. Janina was looking for a second job. She had expressed her intention to Laima to be financially independent for her later intention to leave Jonas. Janina did not report their finances or economic abuse as a barrier to her leaving at that specific time, as she wanted to remain until the children were older. Janina had also revealed to Frank (gym owner at 6.5.3) that she was waiting for the youngest children to get a bit older before leaving and was looking for a second job to get money to support herself and the children, for when she left.

The panel considered that Jonas's language challenges may have been the reason.

6.5.9 Witnesses disclosed that this area was one of concern for Janina as she felt that she could not leave Jonas as she managed everything²⁶ (house, bills, shopping, rent etc) and she was trying to prepare Jonas to manage these things himself. This may suggest that Jonas made Janina feel he was totally dependent on her, and this could be perceived to be a method of control. The housing team also confirmed that during the course of the tenancy there had been low level isolated issues associated with rent arrears. This may have been an issue for Janina and Jonas.

6.6 The panel discussed the research of Professor Jane Monckton-Smith's which identifies the 8* step timeline to Domestic Abuse Homicides and found some evidence that would support that Jonas exhibited controlling behaviours. The panel noted that divorce and separation is a fact that impacts thousands of families across the UK every day. Whilst many are by agreement, many others have degrees of conflict and escalating tensions caused by the pressures of separation. It is not commonly understood by lay-people or non-experts in the domestic abuse arena, that there is a period of heightened tension where victims of abusive relationships are extra vulnerable.

6.7 It is often assumed that a victim choosing to separate from an abusive partner or leave an abusive home will reduce the risk to them and their children of further harm. However, evidence from research and surveys of victims indicates that the risk of further violence and harm actually increases at the point at which a victim leaves a perpetrator.

6.8 What is unusual in this case, is that Janina did not perceive herself to be a victim and according to most witnesses, she had not been subject to physical abuse from Jonas. Numerous people were aware that Janina was preparing to divorce Jonas. It is entirely likely that she did not see the risk at the point of potential or impending separation. Many reported that Janina had told them of threats to commit suicide. One witness (Greg) reported that Janina had told him that Jonas said he would kill Janina if she left, but she appeared to dismiss this comment. This escalating behaviour by Jonas towards Janina was unreported and not disclosed to agencies until after the murder. No anonymous reports were made to police and no 3rd party reports were made by neighbours highlighting any issues.

²⁶ Source Laima's police statement

7 Conclusions

7.1 From review of the chronologies and IMR's, it does not appear that any agency involved in this review held evidence or suspicion of Janina experiencing any physical abuse or other coercive and controlling behaviour from Jonas. There were no points where information sharing could have potentially led to a different outcome in this case.

7.2 Domestic abuse in the form of coercive and controlling behaviour is not always obvious. It is more subtle but there are multiple indicators, as discussed above, to which Janina was vulnerable. In hindsight, there were signs and indications (clues), that were shared amongst her friends, but not with agencies, that Jonas was potentially dangerous as Jonas exhibited jealousy; he was lacking in confidence about the relationship and had told Janina he would kill her and himself if she left. Taking Monckton Smith's Homicide Timeline into consideration, Janina and Jonas featured at most stages.

7.3 The way that Janina presented to friends and acquaintances was in contrast to the generalised presentation of Lithuanian females who may be in domestically abusive relationships. Janina did not see herself as a victim. Evidence suggests that she did not see or recognise the danger from Jonas. The way that she lived with Jonas is believed to have become her 'norm'. Janina had told him repeatedly that she wanted a divorce. He was her husband and her first identified adult relationship, so whilst it is unknown if it was a common feature, the possessiveness and jealousy were something that she had certainly experienced in the last two years together. In this case, financial dependence was a factor in her decision making and Janina had indicated that she was waiting to 'save enough money' to support herself and the children. Stigma did not appear to concern her, as she spoke openly about her intent to leave. Whilst she did not have a family support network, she had close contact with Laima. Janina also did not present with any concerns about domestic abusive behaviours.

7.4 In this case, these indicators or risk factors were not understood or recognised by Janina, or by her many friends or family. The subtleties of control were not seen as risk, and therefore risks were not disclosed to or identified to a single agency. As no disclosures were made, professionals could not have exercised their professional curiosity or offer support, advice, and guidance. It is implausible that an agency could have intervened.

7.5 The overriding theme from this review indicates that much more could be done to raise public awareness of what coercive and controlling behaviours are and how these contribute to the escalation of risk and dangerousness. Public awareness of risks needs to be informed by relevant academic research to increase opportunities to intervene. Both men and women are at risk. The point of separation can be a period of heightened risk, and this is not generally understood by the wider public.

8 Lessons Learned by agencies in this review

8.1 For **LCC Children's Health**: there were 2 areas of generic learning but nothing specific for this case. It is the expectation that practitioners will ask the domestic abuse questions at all contacts with patients if safe to do so and complete the recognised health template to document that it has been asked. Practitioners should confirm with all patients whether they require an interpreter if English is not the patients first language. The information reviewed for

this DARDR was from 9 years ago. Since this time Children's Health have embedded the expectation that practitioners ask the domestic abuse question and confirm if an interpreter is required for patients if English is not their 1st language. Children's Health has identified no learning within this case regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the individual's ability to access information and support and did not identify any gaps in service provision or potential barriers to accessing services for Janina and the children.

8.1.1 Children's Health actively promote health practitioners to ask the domestic abuse question and document this in the health record on SystmOne (IT system for record keeping). It is clearly recorded within our universal and individual need standard operating guidance that there is an expectation that the domestic abuse question is asked at every contact. The individual need standard operating guidance has just been reviewed and is being shared with staff within team meetings, so the message is being reiterated. The template on SystmOne has recently been updated to enable practitioners to easily record whether they have asked the domestic abuse question or not with a text box to add a narrative if they respond that they are suffering domestic abuse or if they are unable to ask the domestic abuse question. When a health practitioner receives a disclosure of domestic abuse, there is a follow-on template which indicates the use of DASH form and referral onto domestic abuse services and MARAC if required.

8.1.2 Every baby when born is provided with a personal child health record "red book" and there is a page inserted which was sourced by Children's Health about local domestic abuse services. It also provides advice on where to go if you are a victim of domestic abuse. This is a universal resource for all families.

8.1.3 Children's Health have revised information shared with health staff regarding the use of interpreters and the need to ensure that all families are offered the use of an interpreter if English is not their first language. This information has been cascaded out to all Children's Health teams by email and shared within team meetings. As part of the annual record keeping audit the use of interpreters is monitored and any lessons learnt shared with staff to raise their awareness of the need to use interpreters.

8.2 GP Practice did not record any lessons learned or new recommendations in relation to this review. Effective practice does appear to have been followed in this case, the family were engaging with routine screening/immunisations and were presenting with their individual medical concerns, which were then acted upon appropriately with medication therapies, scans/pathology investigations and referral for services. Safeguarding training, including domestic violence awareness, is in place for practice staff. There are no recorded safeguarding concerns from practice contacts during this period. During the period reviewed, the concerns presented by the individuals were acted upon and escalated as clinically appropriate. Therefore, there are no clinical recommendations for changes of practice. The practice reviewed the information that is accessible to patients, both in the waiting room and online via the website, with the view to making safeguarding signposting information visible and translatable, through digital resources.

8.3 The **School - LCC Education** did not identify any gaps in service provision or potential barriers to accessing services for Janina and the children. Whilst there was no concern about domestically abusive behaviour, the school has looked to improve practice. Since 2021, the

school now has 5 Designated Safeguarding Leads²⁷ (DSLs) within school who meet regularly to discuss families and any concerns. Every 6 weeks reports are printed of the whole school so that patterns can be determined between children within the same family. Since this DARDR, they have designed a new system for contacting parents to check if medical opinions have been sought. The school have created a front door (teachers) and back door (DSLs) system to ensure such issues will be followed up with parents. Before the implementation of the DSLs, the school would do a lot of the 'follow up' of parents whereas now teaching staff will have the initial conversation and DSLs will monitor and chase any follow up if required.

8.4 ULHT: There are no lessons learned or new recommendations for ULHT in relation to this review.

8.5 Police: The Femicide Census 2020²⁸, highlighted that a woman is killed by a man every three days in the UK and domestic abuse makes up 18% of all recorded crime in England and Wales. The Census has consistently evidenced that separation is a risk factor for intimate partner femicides, or more accurately, a trigger for violent, abusive and/or controlling men. Linked to this research, and a positive development, for the first time in December 2021, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing sought to address the inconsistencies in policing responses and create a national focus on supporting police forces to prioritise Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)²⁹ related crimes. They developed and published a new police VAWG framework, informed by experts in policing, government and the VAWG sector. Every police force has had to develop an action plan and a problem profile outlining what they are doing at local level. The VAWG Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA) predicts that that nearly all forms of VAWG are expected to rise in the coming year, with the biggest threats from domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual offences, child sexual abuse and exploitation and tech enabled VAWG such as online stalking and harassment.

9 Recommendations

9.1 The panel examined the contributing agency responses and agreed that in this review, although unusual, there were no specific individual agency recommendations to be made. Much of the recorded agency involvement with Janina and Jonas was limited or historical in nature and no risks had been identified at any stage.

9.2 In addition, locally in Lincolnshire, a range of proactive activity is currently ongoing in the area regarding Eastern European engagement (attached as appendix 1). This work is being monitored by the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership and it is for that reason that a local recommendation is not required.

9.3 This review has highlighted, that despite recent academic research, there is limited national public information or campaigns which highlight the increased risks posed by victims during and after separation. There were behaviours that could have indicated risk; however,

²⁷ The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the person appointed to take responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) across early years settings and schools.

²⁸ www.femicidecensus.org

²⁹ <https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/our-work/vawg/vawg-stra-public-official.pdf> and <https://www.npcc.police.uk/our-work/violence-against-women-and-girls>

these were not highlighted to any agency and were not recognised by the friends and associates of either Janina or Jonas.

9.4 In Lincolnshire there is specific reference to the domestic homicide timeline and the heightened risks at separation in all of the basic training on offer for both professionals and businesses with access to resources to support safety planning in these circumstances. A case study has been created from a previous DARD which is utilised in training to demonstrate the risks involved. The domestic homicide timeline is also used as a reference tool in MARAC for considering risk management measures. The following is therefore proposed as a national recommendation:

Recommendation:

9.4.1 It is recommended that the Home Office instigate and deliver a proactive communications campaign, delivered by national media and community safety partnerships to highlight domestic abuse risks, specifically 'point of separation' risks. The campaign should be nationally monitored to ensure that national best practice is identified and the dissemination and promotion of that material to highlight domestic abuse risks is widely communicated, to encompass awareness and understanding for all cultures.

Appendix 1:

Culturally Specific Engagement

9.4.2 Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (LDAP) have recognised the need in Lincolnshire to enhance the engagement of harder to reach communities and more specifically, the Eastern European Community. Informed by a local needs assessment and prior learning reviews the current offer of support is summarized below. Activity is regularly reported on and monitored via the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Programme Board.

9.4.3 **Commissioned Service** (LDASS.org.uk) includes the following provision;

- **Digital Platform** - has the option for users to choose which language to access it in
- **IDVA** – Independent Domestic Violence Advocates: the service offers an inclusive approach to recruitment and has employed an individual of Eastern European nationality who is able to work with victims from the Eastern European community particularly if there are initial barriers to engagement.
- **Interpreter services** - as required- case by case
- **Outreach & Engagement Team** –
 - **DA Champions** - Domestic Abuse Champions are the eyes and ears around the county helping to support proactive early intervention for those experiencing domestic abuse. Events aimed at professionals, business owners, survivors and members of the public who share a vision for raising awareness in the community. Whilst this initiative is aimed at all cultures there is current representation from the Eastern European Communities.
 - **Community Engagement Events** – continued program of awareness raising events including specific targeting of areas with higher Eastern European population.
 - **Surviving to Thriving** – community groups run by the community for the community, the outreach and engagement team support with set up and

delivery of empowerment activities to build confidence of survivors and encourage them to thrive.

- **Scan codes** – posters and stickers with scan codes to support non-English speaking victims to access the website where they can access information in a language of their choice.
- **Libraries Initiative** – initially planned from January 2024 in one Eastern European Community with a view to extending wider across the county. Monthly drop-in session with access to specialist support including translators and legal services.

9.4.4 LDAP:

- **DA Training** – all training for professionals explores barriers in understanding and accessing DA services, including cultural perspectives on understanding risks in specific communities and encouraging the use of professional curiosity.
- **MARAC Chairs Events** – learning events for MARAC chairs – Awareness of DA in Eastern European communities and cultural perspectives is part of the wider plan of knowledge sharing.

9.4.5 Communications:

- **social media and communications campaigns** - including 16 days of Action, are ongoing in collaboration with partner agencies and offer specific content for Eastern European communities.
- **DA Newsletter** – Monthly newsletter distributed to partners with links to specific services and resources including those pertaining to Eastern European communities.
- **Crimestoppers** – campaign currently in the planning stages to be delivered jointly with Lincolnshire Police and Lincolnshire County Council with a specific theme of raising awareness in Eastern European communities of understanding domestic abuse, overcoming myths about the UK system of support and promotion of local services.
- **Lincolnshire County Council website** – content is accessible via an option to translate to chosen language. Links to Eastern European organisations are available for public and professionals to access advice, guidance and resources.

9.4.6 Business Engagement:

- **Local Employer Engagement** ongoing initiative to support Lincolnshire businesses to meet their responsibilities regarding Domestic Abuse under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The four key aims of the engagement programme are to support employers to; design and develop safeguarding/domestic abuse procedures and protocols, develop and deliver briefings to key staff, provide signposting of information and services to employees, and to introduce local services to employees including how to access them. 2023 includes a targeted approach to businesses known to employ a high rate of Eastern European employees.
- **Business Engagement Conference** – annual conference to inspire and motivate employers to engage in the ongoing programme of support (see above). Conference invites in 2023 have included a specific approach to businesses known to employ a high rate of Eastern European employees.