



Safer Somerset
Partnership
Feel Safe, Be Safe

Domestic Homicide Review Learning Briefing

Somerset Case 027 (Ms A)

Introduction

The Safer Somerset Partnership commissioned a multi-agency learning review to determine what lessons could be learned from the suicide of a 33 year old female, (pseudonym "Ms A") . Specifically, to determine if there was any learning on how agencies work together when someone has got 'multiple needs' and is in (or what appears to be) a pattern of abusive behaviour.

In this instance, a formal Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) was not commissioned, because it was unclear that domestic abuse was a factor in the death. The Home Office agreed with this decision and that a learning review should take place.

If you work with adults affected by domestic abuse in Somerset, there maybe also additional specific actions and recommendations for your agency and your role. Please discuss with your manager or contact your representative on the Somerset Domestic Abuse Board.

This learning briefing has been published to summarise and share the key findings.

Key Themes From This Review

A review of the chronology of contacts Ms A had with 5 Somerset agencies (Police, Somerset Partnership NHS FT, GP, Adult Social Care and Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service), highlighted the following 3 themes.

Theme 1—Trauma Informed Approaches

Theme 2—Silo Working

Theme 3—Mental Health

The review panel considered these and identified several learning points which are described on page 2.

Next Steps—Please review these themes and actions and reflect on whether you can change your practice to help more victims of domestic abuse.

In 2021, Somerset County Council are launching digital learning modules for domestic abuse open to all Somerset professionals for free. Go to [Somerset Survivors – Working together to reduce domestic abuse in Somerset](#)



Theme 1—Trauma Informed Approaches

Ms A appears to have experienced anxiety for several years, and had a history of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It was unclear to what extent (if at all) 4 of the 5 agencies involved took a trauma informed approach. (The fifth agency did identify the trauma and encouraged her to access relevant support).

Action For You:

- ◇ Do you understand how domestic abuse and sexual violence can impact on someone's ability to engage in services, and what you can do to help?
- ◇ Are you aware of the specialist local (and national) services available which you can refer to?

Theme 2—Silo Working

Over the course of at least one month, there was evidence of intense activity by multiple agencies working with Ms A. However, there were no formal multi-agency discussions, and so opportunities were missed to effectively support Ms A during this 'golden window'.

Action For You:

- ◇ Are you clear on referral routes to Multi-Agency-Risk-Assessment-Conferences (MARAC), and other opportunities for multi-agency working?

Theme 3—Mental Health

The review found that assessing a clients mental health by non-mental health specialists doesn't routinely occur. Additionally, Ms A appears to have had a multiple abusive relationships, which was both a cause and effect of mental health issues, but wasn't understood by all professionals.

Action For You:

- ◇ Have you completed mental health awareness and suicide prevention trainings? Are you aware of the mental health assessment tools that you can complete even if you're not a mental health professional?
- ◇ Do you need to complete further training to understand the links between mental health and domestic abuse?

More Information

Find information online at <https://somensetsurvivors.org.uk> on:

- domestic abuse
- local and national services

Any questions, please email communitysafetyteam@somerset.gov.uk

