

ASTA

Case Summary

Asta and Jonas had been in a relationship for 2 years before Asta's death. They planned to marry and described their relationship as loving, but they had occasional arguments. Asta's death occurred in June 2022. Jonas found her lifeless body in their bedroom with a belt buckle around her neck, and there was blood coming from her mouth and nose. Despite Jonas's efforts to administer CPR and call for emergency assistance, Asta was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics. The circumstances surrounding her death raised concerns about domestic abuse and a few weeks after Asta's death, family and community members came forward with concerns that Jonas had control over her and was physically abusive, ultimately leading to an investigation into this aspect of their relationship.

Key Themes

- Controlling and coercive behaviour
- Level of harm that 'apparently minor' acts of humiliation, control and subtle undermining can cause

The purpose of Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is to give an accurate as possible account of what originally transpired in an agency's response to Asta, to evaluate it fairly, and if necessary to identify any improvements for future practice.

Link to DHR -

Agency Involvement

- GP Practice
- Police

Recommendations

- The panel recommends that the Police consider how such knowledge can be gathered from its European counterparts and this is implemented in local policing guidance.
- The panel invites the Home Office and College of Policing to ensure that any revisions to the national policing guidance to support initial responses to unexplained deaths should explore whether domestic abuse may be a contributory factor to a possible suicide, and if so, whether any criminal offence has been committed, including potential charges of controlling and coercive behaviour whilst determining if a call to a suicide is a suicide.
- The panel endorses the recommendation made within a previous review that the resourcing of interpreting services across the Partnership should be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and available based upon demand. Collaboration opportunities should be explored.
- The panel recommends that the SVDA Services providers report on the number of referrals and that this reflects the percentage of referrals from communities, and ensures this data informs intelligent resourcing and awareness raising.
- The panel recommends that the IDVA service support health clinicians to recognise domestic abuse, regardless of the level of risk, as a potential safeguarding concern and to discuss possible referrals with DA specialist service providers to determine if there is a reporting requirement in non-high risk cases of domestic abuse.