



Case Summary

JW and BW, a married couple of 92 and 90 years old, had a marriage of nearly 70 years marked by frequent arguments. They lived in an annex in their son's garden, given to their son after BW's heart attack. JW's mobility declined, preventing him from going out, something he cherished. In their younger days, they were social, with JW singing at a local pub and BW enjoying dancing. However, as they aged, they both suffered from health issues that caused constant pain and hospitalizations.

The couple's isolation in their small home led to escalating disputes, sometimes turning physical. JW was expected to take on caring responsibility he could no longer cope with. There was police involvement multiple times due to allegations of assault, which did not resolve the ongoing abusive behaviours from BW to her husband. JW, after an argument with BW, took an overdose of liquid morphine with alcohol, leading to his death from multiple organ failure due to mixed drug toxicity.

Key Themes

Long-standing abusive behaviour
Lack of Recognition of Domestic Abuse
Bi-Directional Behaviour
Clarity in Record Keeping
Consideration of Social Stressors
Challenges with Discharge Planning
Confirmation of Existing Involvement
Inter-Agency Liaison

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 JW, to evaluate it fairly, and if necessary to identify any improvements for future practice.

Link to DHR - <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/community-safety/community-safety-partnership/dhr-jasmin/>

Agency Involvement

-Police
-Adult Social Care
Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Foundation
- Addenbrookes Hospital and Cambridge University Hospital
-GP Practise

Recommendations

- Guidance is required relating to the potential requirement for a Carer's Assessment be undertaken when a person registers with their GP as a Carer.
- Greater procedural clarity is required about what can be done in the circumstances in which a victim of domestic abuse, who meets the Adult at Risk threshold, chooses to decline support that is offered to them.
- Cambridge University Hospital (CUH) to review the process used to monitor referrals to ensure that, when the safeguarding team advise staff to make a referral, that advice is followed up, if a referral is not received.
- GP practice to consider how they could, more effectively, manage and retain oversight of complex cases where safeguarding concerns exist.
- GP practice to define the circumstances under which they would cross reference, or link, the records of two or more patients, registered with the same practice, in circumstances where safeguarding concerns relate to all parties.
- Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council Adult Social Care to review the current Carers Guidance, by 31st January 2020
- Relevant training to be provided to Cambridgeshire Police duty managers, to ensure that, when officers attend apparent suicide incidents, initial enquiries consider any indication of domestic abuse or violence and, if they do, to refer such cases to the Duty Senior Investigating Officer for further evaluation.