

IRENA

Case Summary

In April 2017, an ambulance was dispatched to a residential flat following an emergency call reporting a female had collapsed. Paramedics discovered Irena, who appeared deceased and emaciated, lying on a mattress in a neglected and alcohol-ridden environment. Three males were present, one of whom was Irena's partner, Lukas, who claimed to have found her dead that morning after a fall down the stairs. Initial police examination detected bruises, but the case was referred to the Coroner as a sudden death. A post-mortem examination, subsequently revealed that Irena had suffered fatal blunt force trauma to her abdomen, akin to a severe impact, such as a fall from height or a car crash, ultimately leading to her death. Lukas was convicted for Irenas murder and is serving a minimum of 17 and a half years in prison.

Lukas and Irena had known each other from Lithuania and has been in on ongoing relationship in the UK.

Key themes

- Alcohol use
- Migrant isolation
- Controlling and coercive behaviour

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

Agency Involvement

Cambridgeshire Police
Trinity surgery (GP)
Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH)
Rosmini Walk in Centre
Fenland District Council (FDC)
Circle Housing

Recommendations

- The FCSP should seek to ensure that Migrant Outreach workers work with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to offer advice, guidance and signposting for domestic abuse
- The FCSP should look at ways to gain voluntary support from within the migrant community in supporting initiatives for tackling domestic abuse to assist in creating opportunities for intervention.
- The FCSP should consider convening with their partners several practitioners' events across the Fenland area for professionals and agencies using this case to highlight the effect of alcohol and controlling and coercive behaviour. This will also help to gain a clearer picture of how to reach Fenlands diverse migrant communities and other minority groups.
- The FCSP should seek assurance that each agency strategic safeguarding lead ensures that front-line staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of this specific form of domestic abuse.
- The FCSP should seek assurance that health practitioners, through the CCG in their area, are encouraged to ask explicit questions concerning domestic abuse and that signposting to other support agencies by referral is considered on an individual basis as best suits the needs of the individual, e.g. alcohol/drug support.
- The FCSP should look at Integrating agencies such as the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) to the FCSP for 'future proofing' domestic abuse policy within the migrant population.