

1. Domestic Homicide Reviews – why they are important

When a person aged 16+ dies owing to violence, abuse or neglect by a partner, ex-partner or family or household member, the Police make a referral for consideration of a review.

This allows agencies to work together to learn lessons and make plans to improve support in the future. You can read the latest research [here](#).

7. Other Risks

This briefing focuses on the risks associated with victim suicide in the presence of domestic abuse, but it is important to remember during the second year of the research project, there were 202 homicides caused by (ex) partners and 103 adults were killed by family members.

47% of family homicide victims are female and 53% male. Partner homicide victims are 70% female. It is important to apply this information when working with those groups.

6. Things to think about

Experiencing domestic abuse and **asking for help can be incredibly hard**. Not speaking up may *seem* like a logical way to prevent harm to themselves or others, so patience and understanding is essential. Be **professionally curious**, be **persistent** but person centred.

Use flags on your organisations system to ensure risks are understood and explain what support is available. Always consider the risk of suicide as well as further violence.

2. Domestic abuse and suicide

The research has shown that between 2020-2022, 114 people died of suspected suicide in the backdrop of domestic abuse. That is 5 people a month. 85% of those who died were women and 15% men. In year 3, there was a 7% decrease (17 people less) in the recorded number of deaths compared with year 2.

The statutory guidance states that when someone has died of suspected suicide in these circumstances, then a referral for a Domestic Homicide Review should also be made.

3. Risk factors associated with suicide and domestic abuse

The research has looked at these deaths and identified the risks most associated with suicide when people experience domestic abuse. These are:

- (1) The perpetrator is already known to the Police for domestic abuse
- (2) Coercive and controlling behaviours are used
- (3) The perpetrator has problems with alcohol
- (4) Non-fatal strangulation has been used
- (5) The perpetrator misuses drugs
- (6) The perpetrator has mental health problems, including depression/anxiety
- (7) Relationships ending increases risk
- (9) The perpetrator has previously been suicidal
- (10) The perpetrator has also experienced domestic abuse



5. Help and Support

When you become aware that someone is experiencing domestic abuse, consider all of the risk factors. **Have a conversation with the person** in a safe space.

Consider the services that are available and when you might need to refer the person to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

Use the dedicated Domestic Abuse Pathway which explains how to respond to domestic abuse in [Shropshire](#) and [Telford & Wrekin](#).

4. Coercive and controlling behaviour

This is a way of harming, punishing or frightening someone to make them give in and be dominated. It is an **offence under S76 of the Serious Crime Act**.

It can be done through assaults or more subtle methods such as threats, humiliation or intimidation which harder to recognise. It includes:

- checking phones/spending/bank accounts
- controlling access to friends and family
- preventing access to see a GP or other professionals
- threatening to expose or harm the victim or their family/children or themselves
- denying access to an interpreter.

It can have a devastating impact and people sometimes only realise the impact when looking back. A survivor explained to the researcher she was told “**if you love me you’d take the tablets**” encouraging her to kill herself.

Domestic Homicide Reviews and Suspected Victim Suicides

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