

Learning Brief

Domestic Abuse Related Death

DHR2024-4

Background

An adult male was found deceased by hanging in the autumn of 2024 at his workplace. He had been reported missing by his partner the previous day. Initial evidence suggested suicide, with no indication of third-party involvement or a note implicating anyone. A multi-agency panel decided not to conduct a full Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) but identified some learning opportunities. The Home Office agreed with the local decision not to conduct a formal review and was supportive of a learning brief being developed to improve future practice.

Key Circumstances

Mental Health History:

The deceased male had a history of depression and a previous suicide attempt in 2022 following a bereavement. He was prescribed medication and had recently shown signs of low mood and erratic behavior.

Relationship Dynamics:

Long-term relationship; married for over a decade, three young children, shared business owners. Early 2024: Allegations of physical assault and threats by the partner, including coercive control and suspected phone tracking. Previous incidents reported in 2020 and 2021. Allegations were denied and later filed due to evidential difficulties. Partner later expressed concern about potential false allegations.

Risk Indicators

Domestic Abuse Allegations:

Physical assault, threats, coercive control and suspected monitoring. DASH risk assessment rated medium during early 2024 incident.

Mental Health Vulnerability:

Previous suicide attempt and ongoing depression. Stress linked to family and business responsibilities.

Learning Points

1. Early Intervention:

Allegations of abuse and mental health concerns required co-ordinated multi-agency response. Missed opportunities for safeguarding and support for both parties.

2. Professional Curiosity:

Importance of probing beyond initial reports, especially where coercive control and threats are disclosed. Consideration of cumulative risk factors including mental health and domestic abuse.

3. Information Sharing:

Timely communication between agencies could have highlighted escalating risks.

Core Message

This case underscores the need for vigilance where mental health vulnerabilities intersect with domestic abuse allegations. No specific actions were identified through development of this learning brief. Multi-agency collaboration and proactive risk management are essential to prevent escalation and maximise opportunities to offer timely support.