

Shropshire Domestic Homicide Review

Shropshire Community Safety Partnership has published the findings of an independent domestic homicide review, into the death of a woman: “Jessica” aged 47 years in 2014.

Her long-term partner murdered “Jessica”, at her place of work in Shrewsbury. The perpetrator has been brought to justice and is currently serving a prison sentence.

The review was commissioned by Shropshire Community Safety Partnership in line with Home Office guidance to identify what can be learned from the circumstances of a domestic homicide.

Chair of Shropshire Community Safety Partnership, Supt. Jason Wells, said: “We would like to express our deep sorrow and regret that a woman should die in such circumstances. We want to take this opportunity to offer our condolences to her family. The family of the victim made a valuable contribution to this report and we are very grateful to them. Despite this being a tremendously difficult process, their input helped to paint a fuller picture of “Jessica’s” life, and the extent of abuse suffered at the hands of the perpetrator.

“The commissioning of this independent review which examines in detail the circumstances of this case is a mark of our determination to learn from, and prevent, future homicides from occurring. It also underlines the seriousness of Shropshire’s commitment in tackling domestic abuse.

“The review is published today for all to consider the events leading up to “Jessica’s” death at the hands of her partner. It makes challenging and upsetting reading.

“It is the review’s conclusion that whilst no single agency failure within this sad case contributed more than another, if the multi-agency partnership had functioned as it should, and if risk assessments and relevant information had been shared, compared and indeed challenged, then a much richer understanding of the level of risk faced by “Jessica” would probably have been reached. On this basis, the Partnership feels that “Jessica’s” death could have been prevented, although it was not, in itself, predictable.

“The Shropshire Community Safety Partnership fully accepts both the findings and recommendations of the review, and agencies have committed to acting upon the recommendations and the early lessons learnt have already been implemented.

“I want to take this opportunity to appeal to all victims of abuse, their family or friends and the wider community. Please tell someone about the abuse – the police, a support agency, a GP. We will all do our best to support you.”

Services that offer support to victims of domestic abuse can be accessed by visiting: <https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/crime-and-community-safety/domestic-abuse/>

<https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/crime-and-community-safety/anti-social-behaviour/shropshire-domestic-abuse-service/>

The report's author, Mr. Ivan Powell said: "As with all domestic homicides this was a very tragic case and my condolences go out to the members of the victim's family. Agencies have a responsibility to identify, and respond, to people who are affected by domestic abuse. Actions have been taken in response to the panel's recommendations, in order to strengthen working practices, and better support people affected by domestic abuse. Lessons have been learned from the review in respect of individual and multi-agency intervention and as a result, improvements have already been made to how those at risk of domestic violence and abuse are supported across Shropshire.

Although the full report and the executive summary has been anonymised, family members have asked not to be approached regarding this case.

Background

The Shropshire Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty to carry out domestic homicide reviews.

In April 2011, the Government implemented section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. This means that following a domestic homicide, local areas are required to undertake a multi-agency review in order to identify lessons that can be learnt to prevent future homicides and violence.

The purpose of a domestic homicide review is to:

- Establish what lessons can be learned from the domestic homicide and how local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims
- Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is to change as a result
- Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate
- Prevent domestic homicide and improve service responses for all domestic abuse victims and their children through improved intra and inter agency working