Tracy's Journey

The true story of a domestic abuse survivor and what could have been.

What actually happened

What could have happened with needs-led intervention

Tracy meets her partner in her early twenties and they have two children.

Tracy is diagnosed with a chronic mental health condition that she manages with support from her GP.

Her husband becomes increasingly controlling and he manipulates her mental health needs.

When Tracy retires, the abuse becomes physical.

Tracy's children have both left home and Tracy decides to ask her GP for help.

GP: £351

Her GP thinks that Tracy's request for help is part of her mental health condition and makes a referral to a psychiatrist for her 'delusional behaviour'. This makes her angry and she disengages from services.

Tracy calls the police from a phone box because her husband has attacked her with a knife and taken her phone. When the police arrive they take her home because she is drunk - her husband tells them about her mental health issues and Tracy is blamed for wasting police time.

Police: £746

Tracy's husband begins to call her support services telling them that he's worried that she's becoming more ill and asking for her to be sectioned. He convinces Tracy to take out Equity Release and sign away her financial rights to their shared home.

A mental health professional visits Tracy at home and talks to her husband - she notes that he displays no hostility and she discharges Tracy from the crisis team.

Tracy calls the police, they attend the home and find broken furniture, Tracy with a knife wound and her husband bleeding from the leg. Tracy is drunk and arrested for assault. Her husband who doesn't press charges is assessed as a 'low risk' victim.

Police: £746

Tracy goes to A&E because of a knife attack on her hand. A&E staff call the police to escort Tracy home because she is fearful of her husband. The police find her husband with scratches on his face. She is arrested again and spends the night in custody.

A&E/police: £2,382

While she heals, Tracy begins to look for a place to live by herself. She makes an application for a council property but her husband says he can't live without her and will kill himself. Tracy decides to stay for now.

Six months later Tracy tells her mental health support worker that she's had it with her husband's manipulation. They make a referral to MARAC but no actions are allocated.

MARAC: £129

A month later the mental health worker has to visit Tracy at a friend's house because her husband has thrown her out. The team makes another referral to MARAC, which is declined because Tracy is not 'high risk'.

Mental Health Support: £173

In winter Tracy contracts pneumonia and spends weeks in hospital. The hospital staff complete a 'risk assessment' and send her case to MARAC. Tracy's case is heard and actions are allocated to specialist services and police to follow up. When Tracy is discharged, she declines all visits.

Hospital/ MARAC: £119,253

Tracy asks her mental health team to help her husband. He is drinking a lot, becoming aggressive. She doesn't want a MARAC referral, she wants his behaviour to change. There are no perpetrator services available for men without young children.

Six weeks later Tracy calls the police and says her husband has threatened her with a knife. When police arrive, they find both the home and the husband very calm but Tracy is drunk so no statement is taken.

Police: £746

In winter, Tracy contracts pneumonia again. When she is well enough to leave hospital she is advised not to return to her husband, she is discharged to the homelessness office.

Hospital: £26,131

Tracy is placed in an emergency homelessness hostel and a MARAC referral is made. She is deemed "medium risk" as she isn't living with the perpetrator. Her husband finds her location and harasses her.

Housing/ MARAC: £6,547

Tracy falls in the hostel. Her mental and physical health is failing. She returns to hospital where she is assessed by the dementia team but is discharged back to the hostel. Tracy wants to leave the hostel but doesn't meet local thresholds for supported housing so she returns to live with her husband.

Dementia assessment: £327

Her husband calls an ambulance claiming that they've tried to kill each other. Tracy has multiple stab wounds and her husband has self-inflicted wounds. Her husband is arrested and charged with attempted murder. Tracy is discharged to a refuge.

Hospital/ Police/Stay in refuge: £25,842

fare: £183,373

Tracy's husband attacks her with a knife and she is taken by ambulance to hospital. The police are informed and she is discharged to a refuge. Her husband is arrested and she is supported to build a prosecution. She receives 1:1 counselling and continues with her over 50s group.

A&E/Police/ Stay in refuge: £21,895

Tracy's husband threatens her with a knife and throws her out of the house - she calls the specialist service out of hours helpline on her own phone who call her a taxi and take her to emergency accommodation.

Included in CBS cost above.

Tracy has a conversation with a Trade Union colleague who has had Ask Me training. She listens to Tracy, believes her, and tells her about a friend who escaped an abusive partner.

Included in CBS cost above.

Tracy starts at a weekly over 50s group at the specialist services and meets women who have lived in refuge.

Included in CBS cost above.

Tracy is supported to leave the refuge and moves into a flat in supported housing where the staff have had Trusted Professional Training and help her maintain her independence.

Included in CBS cost above.

fare: £23,966

Over the next three weeks, the caseworker from the specialist service talks to Tracy about her options. They open a bank account for her, claim Disability Living Allowance, and secure Tracy a new phone.

CBS service: £1,365

Her GP has received Trusted Professional Training and he understands the importance of believing and validating Tracy's experience. He asks her what she needs and makes an appointment for her to be seen with a careworker from the independent women's domestic abuse service.

GP/CBS service: £706

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women's aid

until women & children are safe