



Domestic Homicide Review Report

Under s9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

Review into the death of Jonathan
which occurred in January 2017

Report Author: Christine Graham
December 2018

This Overview Report has been compiled as follows:

Section 1 will begin with an **introduction to the circumstances** that led to the commission of this Review and the process and timescales of the review.

Section 2 of this report will **set out the facts** in this case **including a chronology** to assist the reader in understanding how events unfolded that led to Jonathan's death.

Section 3 will provide **overview and analysis of the information** known to family, friends, employers, statutory and voluntary organisations and others who held relevant information.

Section 4 will address **other issues** considered by this Review

Section 5 will provide the **conclusion** debated by the Panel and will consolidate **lessons learned and the recommendations that arise**.

Appendix One is the Terms of the Reference of the review

Where the review has identified that an opportunity to intervene has been missed, this has been noted in a text box.

Preface

The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership wishes at the outset to express their deepest sympathy to the family of Jonathan. This review has been undertaken in order that lessons can be learned to better protect others in the future. We appreciate the engagement from families and friends throughout the process. Our understanding of the circumstances that preceded the incident resulting in Jonathan's death has been helped enormously by the engagement of those involved.

This review has been conducted in an open and constructive manner with all the agencies, both voluntary and statutory, engaging positively. This has ensured that we have been able to consider the circumstances of this incident in a meaningful way and address with candour the issues that it has raised.

The review was commissioned by Bristol's Community Safety Partnership on receiving notification of the death of Jonathan in circumstances which appeared to meet the criteria of Section 9 (3)(a) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

Glossary

AAFDA	Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (www.aafda.org.uk)
DART	Domestic Abuse Referral Team
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence risk assessment model introduced to all UK police forces since 2009
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
HCIPG	Hate Crime and Incident Procedural Guidance (Force document)
IMR	Individual Management Review – this is a review undertaken by an organisation to look at their interaction with the victim or perpetrator and identify good practice or lessons learned
NFA	No further action
TAU	Treat as Urgent
VCOP	Victim Code of Practice
VDTP	Victim Declined to Prosecute statement

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Section One – Introduction

1.1 Summary of circumstances leading to the Review

- 1.1.1 In the early hours of a Wednesday morning in late September 2015 police were called to a residential address in Bristol after reports of a man screaming for help. The victim in this case, Jonathan, was located at a nearby address and taken by ambulance to hospital. He had had acid thrown on this face and body by his ex-partner, whilst lying unclothed in bed at her home. Jonathan was a Dutch national who had lived and worked in Bristol for around five years. All of Jonathan’s family lived in Holland or Belgium. His ex-partner, Frances, was a South African national who had lived in the Bristol area for several years.
- 1.1.2 As a direct result of the attack Jonathan sustained serious and life changing injuries. He was in a coma for several months and was paralysed from the neck down. Burns from the acid affected approximately 25% of his body. His lower left leg was amputated just below the knee, he lost sight in his left eye, severe damage to the sight in his right eye. On moving out of his coma he was only able to move his face and tongue and was barely able to speak for many months. He underwent several operations including a substantial number of skin grafts and endured significant muscle weakness.
- 1.1.3 Frances was arrested and charged with the criminal offence ‘to throw/cast corrosive fluid with intent to burn/maim/disfigure/disable/do grievous bodily harm’. She was remanded in custody to await trial.
- 1.1.4 Jonathan remained in hospital until November 2016 when he was moved to a care home. His condition required full-time care. In the December of that year he moved by private ambulance, to a hospital in Belgium.
- 1.1.5 On 2nd January 2017 Jonathan’s life ended in Belgium as a result of legal euthanasia¹.
- 1.1.6 At the time of Jonathan’s death Frances was still awaiting trial. As a result of his passing she was additionally charged with his murder on the basis that her attack upon him directly led to his death.
- 1.1.7 On 23rd May 2018 Frances was found guilty of ‘applying a corrosive substance’ with intent to cause injury and found not guilty of both manslaughter and murder. She was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 12 years.
- 1.1.8 The manner of Jonathan’s death and the nature of the weapon used in the attack upon him are both somewhat unique and require special mention within this report. However, this review is about what can be learned from the circumstances of the relationship between Jonathan and Frances in order to better protect others in the future. It is in this context that this report is written.

¹ Euthanasia is legal under Belgian law but remains illegal under UK law.

1.2 Reasons for conducting the review

- 1.2.1 This Domestic Homicide Review is carried out in accordance with the statutory requirement set out in Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.
- 1.2.2 The review must, according to the Act, be a review ‘of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:
- (a) A person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
 - (b) A member of the same household as himself, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death’.
- 1.2.3 In this case, Jonathan chose to end his life by way of euthanasia in Belgium. His decision to take his own life was based upon the quality of life he was to endure as a direct result of the attack upon him. Frances has been found guilty of throwing the corrosive substance with intent to cause him injury. Therefore, the criteria set out at 1.2.2 above, and further explained with the Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews (Reviews to include suicide), has been met.
- 1.2.4 The purpose of this DHR is to:
- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which 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 expected to change as a result
 - Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate
 - Prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses to all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest possible opportunity
 - Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse
 - Highlight good practice

1.3 Process and timescales for the review

- 1.3.1 Bristol Community Safety Partnership were notified of the attack by Avon and Somerset Constabulary on 29th September 2015 due to the extent of Jonathan’s injuries. The Community Safety Partnership concluded, at this time, that the criteria for a Domestic Homicide Review had not been met as at that time there had been no ‘homicide’. It was agreed to initiate the process again if his condition deteriorated.
- 1.3.2 Following Jonathan’s death, a further referral was made on 6th February 2017.

- 1.3.3 The DHR Advisory Group met on 6th March 2017 after an initial trawl had been undertaken to ascertain those agencies with knowledge of the couple. This meeting was chaired by Sue Moss from Public Health at Bristol City Council and the decision was taken to appoint an independent chair and report author and proceed with a domestic homicide review.
- 1.3.4 The Independent Chair and Report Author were appointed in May 2017.
- 1.3.5 The Home Office were notified of the decision to carry out a DHR on 24th March 2017. The family were notified of the intention to hold a review by letter which included the Home Office leaflet and AAFDA leaflet, all translated into Dutch.
- 1.3.6 The first panel meeting was held on 21st September 2017. The following agencies were represented at this meeting:
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
 - Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Bristol City Council – Community Safety
 - Bristol City Council – Public Health
 - National Probation Service
 - Womankind
- 1.3.7 At this first meeting, the panel considered its composition and, in view of both parties being foreign nationals, it was agreed the Equalities and Inclusion Officer of Bristol City Council would be invited to join the panel.
- 1.3.8 It was agreed that Individual Management Reviews (IMR) would be requested from:
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
 - GP for Jonathan
 - GP for Frances
 - Next Link
- 1.3.9 The panel met four times and the review was concluded in December 2018. Completion of this review was affected by the criminal justice process surrounding the murder charge faced by the perpetrator. Following discussions between the Chair and the senior police investigating officer it was decided that the review would proceed in limited scope until the conclusion of those proceedings. The reason for this was that a number of those who may provide valuable information for the purposes of this review were also ‘fully bound’ witnesses for the murder trial. A first trial in this case was held in mid-2017 but was discontinued part-way through for legal reasons. A further trial took place and concluded in May 2018. This review continued in full after that date. At all DHR panel meetings, whether those at the point of ‘limited scope’ or otherwise emerging issues of learning were an agenda item.

1.4 Confidentiality

- 1.4.1 The content and findings of this Review are held to be confidential, with information available only to those participating officers and professionals and, where necessary, their appropriate organisational management. It will remain confidential until such time as the review has been approved for publication by the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel.

- 1.4.2 To protect the identity of the deceased, their family and friends, Jonathan will be used as a pseudonym to identify the deceased hereafter and throughout this report. The person who committed the the attack by throwing the corrosive substance will be called Frances. The woman with whom Jonathan was having a relationship at the time of the incident will be known as Joanne.

1.5 Dissemination

- 1.5.1 The following individuals/organisations will receive copies of this report:

- Jonathan’s family
- Frances
- Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner
- Chief Constable, Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Chief Executive, Bristol City Council
- Chief Executive Officer, Womankind
- Chief Executive Officer, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Chair, Avon and Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board
- Independent Chair, Avon and Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board
- GP practices for both Jonathan and Frances

1.6 Terms of Reference

- 1.6.1 The Terms of Reference for this Review were established by the Community Safety Partnership and the DHR Review Panel to learn lessons from the specific circumstances of this case in order to better protect others in the future. The full terms of reference can be found at Appendix A of this Overview Report.

1.7 Methodology

- 1.7.1 Bristol Community Safety Partnership was advised of the death by Avon and Somerset Constabulary on 6th February 2017. Given the complexity of the death, having occurred outside of the UK, this was a timely notification and demonstrated a good understanding by the police of the need for a referral at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.7.2 In response to the notification, a partnership meeting was held 6th March 2017. At this meeting, the police provided a summary of incident and those partners present shared the initial information that they held. The panel noted that this was the second time a notification had been received from the police for this case, the first being on 29th September 2015 just after the incident occurred. The second being on 6th February 2017 following the victim’s death on 2nd January 2017.
- 1.7.3 Having heard the contributions from the partners present, the Chair took the decision to hold the Domestic Homicide Review because it was clear that, given the information available at the time, there would be learning from this case. The Home Office was informed of the decision to undertake the review. This decision demonstrates a good understanding by the Chair of the Partnership of the issues surrounding domestic abuse

and a willingness to welcome external scrutiny of the case in order that lessons could be learnt.

- 1.7.4 Gary Goose and Christine Graham were appointed in June 2017 to undertake the review and the Review Panel met for the first time on 21st September 2017. The Panel met four times and the final meeting of the Panel was on 3rd December 2018.
- 1.7.5 At the meeting on 21st September 2017 all members of the panel were present. At this meeting, the process of the Domestic Homicide Review was explained to the panel with the Chair stressing that the purpose of the review is not to blame agencies or individuals but to look at what lessons could be learned for the future. Prior to this meeting, the Chair and Report Author had met with the police's senior investigating officer (SIO) to ensure that Section 9 of the statutory guidance was adhered to. The meeting agreed that there was a limit how far the review could progress until after the criminal proceedings had completed.
- 1.7.6 Agencies were asked to secure and preserve any written records that they had pertaining to the case. Agencies were reminded that information from records used in this review were examined in the public interest and under Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which allows relevant authorities to share information where necessary and relevant for the purposes of the Act, namely the prevention of crime. In addition, Section 29 of the Data Protection Act 1998 enables information to be shared if it is necessary for the prevention and detection of crime, or the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. The purpose of the Domestic Homicide Review is to prevent a similar crime.
- 1.7.7 At this meeting the Terms of Reference were agreed subject to the family being consulted. It was agreed that the Chair and Overview Report author would make contact with the family with an introduction via the police family liaison officers and that Bristol City Council would assist with translating documents into Dutch.
- 1.7.8 In January 2018 the Home Office were updated as to the delays in bringing this Review to conclusion.
- 1.7.9 On 18th April 2018, the Report Author was able to meet with Jonathan's father and explain, with the assistance of an interpreter, the purpose of the review. At this meeting he was able to contribute his thoughts to the review.
- 1.7.10 The criminal justice process concluded in May 2018.
- 1.7.11 On 24th August 2018, the Chair and Report Author met with Frances and her Offender Supervisor.
- 1.7.12 On 5th November 2018 the Chair met the woman with whom Jonathan had established a new relationship; she has contributed to this Review.

1.8 Contributors to the review

- 1.8.1 Those contributing to the review do so under Section 2(4) of the statutory guidance for the conduct of DHRs and it is the duty of any person or body participating in the review to have regard for the guidance.

- 1.8.2 All Panel meetings include specific reference to the statutory guidance as the overriding source of reference for the review. Any individual interviewed by the Chair or Report Author, or other body with whom they sought to consult, were made aware of the aims of the Domestic Homicide Review and referenced the statutory guidance.
- 1.8.3 However, it should be noted that whilst a person or body can be directed to participate, the Chair and the DHR Review Panel do not have the power or legal sanction to compel their co-operation either by attendance at the panel or meeting for an interview.
- 1.8.4 The following agencies contributed to the review:
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
 - Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Next Link (specialist domestic abuse services, including male victims)
- 1.8.5 The following individuals contributed to the review:
- The victim's father
 - Frances
 - Joanne, the victim's girlfriend at the time of the incident

1.9 Review Panel

1.9 The members of the Review Panel were:

Gary Goose MBE	Independent Chair	
Christine Graham	Overview Report Author	
Stuart Pattison	Community Safety Manager	Bristol City Council
Lynne Bosanko	Domestic Abuse Officer	Bristol City Council
Cherene Whitfield	Equalities Officer	Bristol City Council
Jackie Beavington	Public Health	Bristol City Council
Paul Bolton-Jones	Inspector	Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Anjalee Joglekar		Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Paulette Nuttall		BNSSC CCG
Andrew Sutherland		NHS England
Kyra Bond		Womankind
Allason Hunt		National Probation Service
Dawn Harding		Next Link
Mark Thompson		Victim Support

1.10 Domestic Homicide Review Chair and Overview Report Author

1.10.1 Gary Goose served with Cambridgeshire Constabulary rising to the rank of Detective Chief Inspector, his policing career concluded in 2011. During this time, as well as leading high-profile investigations, Gary served on the national Family Liaison Executive and led the police response to the families of the Soham murder victims. From 2011 Gary was employed by Peterborough City Council as Head of Community Safety and latterly as Assistant Director for Community Services. The city's domestic abuse support services

were amongst the area of Gary's responsibility. Gary concluded his employment with the local authority in October 2016. He was also employed for six months by Cambridgeshire's Police and Crime Commissioner developing a performance framework.

- 1.10.2 Christine Graham worked for the Safer Peterborough Partnership for 13 years managing all aspects of community safety, including domestic abuse services. During this time, Christine's specific area of expertise was partnership working – facilitating the partnership work within Peterborough. Since setting up her own company, Christine has worked with a number of organisations and partnerships to review their practices and policies in relation to community safety and anti-social behaviour. Christine also delivers Partnership Healthchecks which provide an independent view of partnership arrangements. Christine is also a Lay Advisor to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough MAPPAs which involves her in observing and auditing Level 2 and 3 meetings as well as engagement in Serious Case Reviews.
- 1.10.3 Working together, Christine and Gary have completed four reviews, with thirteen reviews (excluding this one) currently in progress. In addition, Gary has completed six reviews working alone.
- 1.10.4 Neither Gary Goose nor Christine Graham are associated with any of the agencies involved in the review nor have, at any point in the past, been associated with any of the agencies.²
- 1.10.5 Both Christine and Gary have:
- Completed the Home Office online training on Domestic Homicide Reviews, including the additional modules on chairing reviews and producing overview reports
 - Completed DHR Chair Training (Two days) provided by AAFDA (Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse)
 - Attended the AAFDA Annual Conference (March 2017)
 - Attended training on the statutory guidance update in 2016
 - Undertaken Home Office approved training in April/May 2017
 - Attended the AAFDA Annual Conference (March 2018)
 - Attended Conference on Coercion and Control (Bristol June 2018)
 - Attended AAFDA Learning Event (Bradford September 2018)

1.11 Parallel Reviews

- 1.11.1 There were no parallel reviews being undertaken. As Jonathan's death occurred outside of the UK and he was not a UK national, there was no coronial process.

1.12 Equality and Diversity

- 1.12.1 Throughout this review process the Panel has considered the issues of equality in particular the nine protective characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. These are:
- Age
 - Disability

² Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews (para 36), Home Office, Dec 2016

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

1.12.2 The Panel was mindful that both the victim and the perpetrator were not UK nationals and therefore the Equality Officer of Bristol City Council was invited to join the panel.

1.12.3 There are a number of diversity issues that may have impacted upon this case and these will be discussed during the report:

- The age difference between the victim and the perpetrator
- English was not the first language of either the victim and the perpetrator and there is some evidence to suggest that they may have struggled to make themselves understood in English
- There is some evidence that Jonathan might have been prejudiced towards Frances because of her ethnicity
- Frances' mental health
- A medical condition that they both shared that may have led to dependency upon each other

1.12.4 This is a case of violence being perpetrated on a male by a female which, indirectly, resulted in his death. The Review is mindful that, although domestic abuse is predominately perpetrated by men on women, this is not always the case and there is clear evidence in this case, confirmed by the female, that she had been abusive towards her partner. She has also disclosed that he was abusive towards her and this dynamic will be explored in more detail within the report.

Section Two – The Facts

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 At the time of his death Jonathan was a 30-year-old man who was born in Holland. After meeting Frances on-line in 2010 he moved to the UK in order to study and stayed to work here following the completion of these studies. He had been in a relationship with Frances for approximately 5 years. The couple lived together in a flat that had, initially, been Frances' until their separation in August/September 2015.
- 2.1.2 Frances was a South African national who was 46 years old at the time of the incident.
- 2.1.3 At the time of the incident Jonathan had moved out of the shared flat and, after initially spending some nights in a local hotel, was staying with a woman with whom he had recently embarked upon a relationship until he found a flat of his own.
- 2.1.4 A full chronology of events and a summary of information known by family, friends and agencies will follow within this report.

2.2 Chronology

2.2.1 Background information

- 2.2.2 Jonathan was a Dutch national with two brothers and one sister. He had no family in the UK.
- 2.2.3 Frances had moved to the UK from South Africa with her then husband, who was English. She and her husband divorced in 2005 but she remained friends with him and he became a friend of Jonathan's. Frances moved to the address in Bristol in 2007 when she split from another boyfriend and was engaged on a fashion course in the city.
- 2.2.4 Jonathan and Frances met on line in 2010. Jonathan visited her in England in 2011 and, apart from going home to Holland for a week, he then remained in the UK. The couple moved to the Netherlands temporarily in 2012 but returned to the UK in 2013.

2.3 Detailed Chronology

2.3.1 2011

- 2.3.2 The first time that Jonathan and Frances came to the attention of agencies was in early April 2011. Frances called the police following an incident between them. Frances was taking Jonathan to the airport in her car and he had been drinking alcohol. She reported that they had an argument and Jonathan got out of the car into slow moving traffic and broke the rear-view mirror.
- 2.3.3 Police attended her flat later that day and Jonathan was arrested upon suspicion of assault after he had returned there and Frances alleged she had been assaulted by him. She told the police that he was aware that she was pregnant and, as well as being verbally abusive, he had assaulted her by grabbing her round the waist from behind and pulling at her stomach, yanking her to the ground with each motion, intending to cause a miscarriage.

She told police that she fell to the floor and he had kicked her in the back. There was mention of him having scratched a swastika into the back of his hand, but it is unclear whether this was done as part of this incident or if he had already done this.

- 2.3.4 When the police attended, they noted that there were no visible injuries to Frances. She declined medical treatment and provided a Victim Declines To Prosecute (VDTP) statement to the police.
- 2.3.5 The following day Frances called the police three times for an update on Jonathan. Jonathan had been bailed to a nearby hotel until the following morning. Frances was moved to a relative's home not known to Jonathan. Passing police patrols were undertaken and a Treat As Urgent (TAU) marker was placed on this address and her home address. Both parties were strongly advised not to contact each other.
- 2.3.6 Frances later contacted the police to say that she was very worried and wanted to withdraw the allegations. Jonathan was interviewed with an interpreter. He said that Frances had tried to drive off with his belongings which was why he had tried to get into the moving car and this was how the mirror had been broken. He denied the assault and said that the only time he had touched her was when she had tried to get off the couch and he had pulled her shoulder to pull her back down.
- 2.3.7 The Crown Prosecution Service decided that No Further Action (NFA) would be taken due to lack of victim engagement and no realistic chance of a prosecution. When she was updated, Frances indicated that she was happy with the outcome and the case was subsequently filed.
- 2.3.8 Police systems were checked for any previous incidents of domestic abuse between Jonathan and Frances. None were found and a Domestic Abuse Referral Team (DART) letter and leaflets were sent to Frances and the information was faxed to the midwife due to the possible pregnancy.
- 2.3.9 **2012**
- 2.3.10 In September 2012, Frances was seen by the GP after she reported suffering from anxiety. As a result of tests, she was diagnosed with severe anxiety, prescribed medication and a letter was sent to the university, at her request as she needed to take time off.
- 2.3.11 In December 2012 her condition was reviewed by the GP and she was referred for a consultation with the Mental Health Nurse Consultant in the practice. At the consultation she disclosed that she had been struggling for many years with anxiety and depression. She also indicated that she had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in 2009³.
- 2.3.12 **2013**
- 2.3.13 At the end of January 2013 Frances attended her GP again and, on this occasion, Jonathan accompanied her for the consultation. She explained that she was experiencing low mood, depression and anxiety following the recent death of her father. She was advised to continue to see her counsellor.

³. Later, it became clear that this was as a result of a serious sexual assault upon her in her home country some years previously

- 2.3.14 At the beginning of March Frances was referred to the LIFT⁴ psychology stress and mood management course but she returned to the GP in April and asked for a private referral to a counsellor as she was struggling to wait for the LIFT course. This was agreed.
- 2.3.15 Throughout the rest of 2013 Frances was in contact with her GP and local mental health services. There is evidence of contact between services and Frances was considered to be 'quite high' on the suicide risk and risk of other self-harm.
- 2.3.16 In July 2013, at one of her appointments, she disclosed that she was violent to her partner when she was anxious, panicky, stressed and angry. She also stated at this time that she could not go out of the house to leave the situation and that he would not leave. At a further appointment she disclosed suicidal thoughts but no plan/intent. She said she had last self-harmed three weeks previously and last hurt her boyfriend one week before. She was given advice about alternatives to self-harm and advice was given for her boyfriend about support available to him.
- 2.3.17 The next time that either Jonathan or Frances came to the attention of the police was in late August 2013 when a member of the public rang the police to say that a man was climbing halfway through a window in a residential property. The man claimed that he lived there and was shouting for his girlfriend, Frances. She came out of the property and told the caller that she knew Jonathan and they talked outside of the property. The call handler enquired of the caller if there was any altercation and they said that all seemed to be OK. Jonathan and Frances went inside the house and closed the door. A police officer attended and spoke to the caller and to Jonathan and Frances. It was reported that all was in order and the call was closed with no further action taken.
- 2.3.18 **2014**
- 2.3.19 In early 2014 Frances was engaged on a self-esteem course and was in regular contact with her GP for reviews of her medication and condition. In March she disclosed agoraphobia and further referrals to and meetings were held with mental health services. She disclosed details of incidents in past to her GP who stated he believed that she was suffering with PTSD.
- 2.3.20 She was seen by the Mental Health Nurse in late August; her symptoms were reviewed and her interaction with LIFT was discussed. Frances felt that she needed more sessions with them. It was agreed that she would be reviewed again as and when needed. There is no further record of an interaction with her GP for the next 12 months.
- 2.3.21 **2015**
- 2.3.22 In February 2015 a 999 operator advised the police that he had received a call, but the line dropped. He said that he could hear general talk in the background and he played the recorded message in which a male started to speak saying something about his girlfriend and needing an ambulance, he was then unsure and said all was OK. The operator said that he should replace the handset if he did not require an emergency service and he was about to do so when a female was heard by the operator in the background crying saying,

⁴ LIFT psychology provided a primary care psychology service covering Swindon, Wiltshire, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North Somerset.

'I don't know what to do'. The operator said that there may have been another male on the phone that just kept saying, 'Hello? Hello?'.

- 2.3.23 The mobile number was provided to the police call handler who rang it and Frances picked up. The call handler asked her if she was OK and she responded, 'yes I am fine, thank you'. She then asked who was speaking and call handler identified himself as being from the police. She then realised that it must have been the police that had been speaking to her boyfriend and she said she thinks he rang 999 because she was having chest pains and he did not know what to do. When asked if she needs medical attention, she says no that she gets pains from time to time and could not breathe. She still sounded upset, so the call handler asked her again if she is OK. She said that it scared her. The call handler asked her if she could speak freely and she said she could, so the call is closed, and no further action was taken.
- 2.3.24 In August 2015 Jonathan met Joanne for the first time. According to Jonathan, Frances was in a hotel and he had a week to find a new place. He said, in a text to Joanne, that he is 'weak and afraid to be on my own...that's why I stay here I guess'. He went on to say that he would probably regret it but last night Frances had come home, and they had talked all night, she had promised to change and although he knew it probably would not happen, he could not help it. He said he was not a person who had affairs and apologised to her for wasting her time.
- 2.3.25 A few days later Jonathan sent a text to Joanne in which he claimed that the previous evening, Frances had hacked his email and attacked him 'big time'. He said that he was going to stay in a hotel from that night until he found somewhere to rent and asked her not to send anything else by email. Joanne provided Jonathan with a list of hotels where he could stay. Jonathan and Joanne met later that same day and he told her that Frances had attacked him, and he had marks on his neck and torso.
- 2.3.26 The following day Jonathan asked a work colleague to collect a printer from the flat as he was too scared to go there. The work colleague said that he had received a text from Jonathan in which he said 'She is crazy. I don't want to go back there will you collect the printer'. Joanne told police that Jonathan went back to the flat to collect some clothes and he discovered that she had taken a number of tablets, so an ambulance was called. There is no record of an ambulance having been called.
- 2.3.27 According to Joanne, Jonathan stayed in a hotel from 20th – 23rd August after which point, he stayed with her whilst trying to find a flat of his own. It is at this point, she says, that she started to receive the silent phone calls.
- 2.3.28 This report will now use specific dates relating to incidents as the intensity of the incidents are important context to the subsequent attack upon the victim and the build-up to it. However, as there are numerous calls and text messages between Frances and Jonathan and vice versa on a daily basis, not all will be detailed within this section to try and avoid confusion.
- 2.3.29 On 23rd August there were 65 text messages between Jonathan and Frances in which they appear to be having an argument and breaking up. In the messages, Frances accuses Jonathan of fraud, prostitution and refers to a female (not Joanne) who Jonathan has slept with. Jonathan acquired a new mobile phone with a new number that day which he said was because of the harassment from Frances. Jonathan also made contact with his

colleague by text and told him that he would make sure the work belongings were returned and that he had been kicked out last Wednesday night and therefore did not have any transport.

- 2.3.30 This same day, Frances sent a message to her mum to tell her that she and Jonathan had split up.
- 2.3.31 On 24th August Jonathan gave his colleague the address of the flat so that he could go and collect the printer as he was too scared to go. At around mid-day, the work colleague went to the address.
- 2.3.32 In the afternoon of 24th August, Frances phoned the Samaritans.
- 2.3.33 On 26th August Jonathan phoned Frances using the new mobile phone he had purchased to avoid harassment from her.
- 2.3.34 On 26th August (for the first time in 12 months) Frances went to see her GP. She said that she was struggling to focus on things and stated that she has a quick temper and feels restless. She was prescribed some medication and was to be reviewed in 1-2 weeks.
- 2.3.35 The next day, 27th August, the University of the West of England (UWE) Wellbeing Service made a telephone call to the GP concerned about her wellbeing. They advised that Frances had disclosed to them that she had taken an intentional overdose in front of her partner but had vomited the tablets up (it is not clear when this occurred). She had stated that she relied on her partner financially and socially. The university requested that the Mental Health Nurse makes contact with Frances. The Mental Health Nurse was not available and so the GP telephoned her. During this conversation, she disclosed suicidal thoughts but did not have any current plans. She declined a referral to the crisis team but agreed to have telephone contact from the Mental Health Nurse the next day.
- 2.3.36 The Mental Health Nurse telephoned Frances on 28th August and she disclosed that she was struggling since the break-up with Jonathan and was experiencing a lot of immediate distress. She was given a prescription for short term medication with a view to reviewing in five days' time. She stated, in the call, that she was safe and had no plans to harm herself.
- 2.3.37 On 1st September Frances made four calls to Joanne, followed by two further calls and a voicemail message to Jonathan. Joanne texted Jonathan to tell him about the four calls she had received from the private number and that she had told the caller that she would go to the police if it continued.
- 2.3.38 On 2nd September, Joanne sent a text to Jonathan in which she said it was important that they got rid of the past so that they could move on. Jonathan replied to her saying he just wanted his ex-girlfriend to leave them alone so that they could build a future together. Later that day, Frances made a number of calls to Jonathan.
- 2.3.39 On 2nd September a search for sulphuric acid was undertaken on Amazon, along with a web page relating to a bottle of sulphuric acid 1 litre 98% laboratory grade. An order was placed with Amazon for Sulphuric acid 1 litre 98% laboratory grade. During the trial it was accepted that this purchase was made by Frances.

- 2.3.40 Frances spoke to the Mental Health Nurse on 2nd September, although it is not possible to establish the time of this call, when she was tearful and negative. She had not collected the prescription that had been made out for her on 28th August. She advised to collect the prescription and a face-to-face appointment was arranged as soon as possible. She was also signposted to other avenues of support.
- 2.3.41 Also on 2nd September, Jonathan attempted three times to call Frances but these calls were not answered. That evening Jonathan contacted the police to say that he has split up with his girlfriend, Frances, a couple of weeks before and she keeps calling him to go to her and when he says no, she keeps calling – crying and hyperventilating. He told the police that she had threatened to stab herself. He told the police that he had told her that he was going to call the police about the constant unwanted attention and she tried to blackmail him by telling him that she would tell the police that he had downloaded child abuse images. Jonathan asked the police to talk to Frances about this and said he was willing to come to the station to make a statement.
- 2.3.42 Jonathan told the police that he used to live with Frances but had spent a few nights in a hotel after the split before moving into his new girlfriend's home a couple of days previously. He said he had deleted her number and was confused about how he was still able to get hold of him. He said that his new girlfriend was also getting calls late at night and in the early hours of the morning and he suspected it was Frances.
- 2.3.43 Jonathan also said that she had recently emailed him to advise that a mutual friend had had a heart attack and when he called her to find out more, she had just kept crying and asking him to come over. He was asked by the police if there were any bail conditions or restraining orders to prevent her contacting him and he said no but that he would like something in place.
- 2.3.44 When he spoke to the police, Jonathan said he was safe, but he sounded very frustrated and distressed and kept repeating that something had to be done. When asked by the call handler if Frances was suicidal that day, he said that he did not know. He had last spoken to her 10 minutes earlier but the last time he had spoken to her he had to call an ambulance. He also said that she was depressed and would need to be seen. He told the police that they had been in a relationship for five years and that she was dependent upon him, both financially and emotionally. Frances was called, and it was established that she was OK but upset at the end of the relationship. The officers felt that there was no evidence of harassment, so Jonathan was given words of advice to call if she contacted him again.
- 2.3.45 On 3rd September at Frances rang the Samaritans.
- 2.3.46 Jonathan went to the police station on 3rd September and was interviewed about the call he had made about the alleged harassment by Frances. Shortly after this interview ended, the PC who had interviewed Jonathan rang Frances to give her words of advice about the complaint made by Jonathan. A few minutes after this call ended, Frances rang the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Crisis Team.
- 2.3.47 Frances had a consultation with the Mental Health Nurse on 7th September, in what was described as 'a long supportive chat'. During this conversation, Frances disclosed that she had taken an overdose of medication in the last week and had attended A&E, again the

review has been unable to ascertain if this was the case. She said that this had been in response to the relationship breakdown.

- 2.3.48 The next day, on 9th September, Frances again rang the Samaritans.
- 2.3.49 On 13th September, the Skype account of Frances had a conversation with a person who stated they were in France. During this conversation, Frances states that she is 'lost in dreamland', 'very needy and affectionate', 'betrayed' and says that 'his new woman is ugly'.
- 2.3.50 On 14th September there was google search for 'can I die from drink sulphuric acid'. There was subsequent browsing on a number of web searches including:
- Court hears screams of woman who drank acid
 - What happens if you swallow sulfuric acid
 - Sulfuric acid poisoning – symptoms, emergency, what to do
 - Man cleared of poisoning doctor with sulphuric acid
 - Man committed suicide by drinking sulphuric acid
 - Why can you dilute vinegar but not sulphuric acid
 - Bond actress Angela Scoular died drinking acid cleaner
 - Be cautious with sulfuric acid
- 2.3.51 On 15th September there were 57 text messages between Jonathan and Joanne. One text indicates an argument 'find somewhere to stay tonight because I will need more space. I'm so annoyed with you putting this on me before I go to work!'
- 2.3.52 On 17th September a google search was made for 'textile acid fabric burn.'
- 2.3.53 At some point on 17th September Frances rang Next Link and spoke to the Duty Officer. We do not know the exact time of this call, but we know that it would have been before 17.00 as this is the time that the helpline closed. She advised the worker that she was afraid of her ex-partner, Jonathan. She gave details of historic physical abuse which had resulted in bruising to her cheek and she had not reported this to the police. She also said that she had been subject to emotional abuse by Jonathan – he had called her useless and stupid. She said that she had ended the relationship with Jonathan many times but that she always went back to him because she loved him. She said that Jonathan had ended the relationship in August and had left her in debt. She was very worried about how she was going to pay her bills because she had no income. She had made attempts to contact Jonathan to get him to pay the household bills. She also advised that she was suffering with depression and self-harm. She had previously attempted suicide and that she had been given the Next Link number by the mental health crisis team.
- 2.3.54 A DASH risk assessment was conducted, and Frances scored 15 and was referred to MARAC. Whilst completing the risk assessment, she disclosed that, a long time ago, Jonathan was arrested for hitting her in the stomach. She also said that he had attempted to strangle her in the past. She said that the physical abuse had happened throughout the relationship. She said that she was frightened because of the emotional abuse and said that it was breaking her. She also said that Jonathan was very jealous and that he did not like her talking to her family in South Africa. She also said that he told her that she did not fulfil his needs sexually. She also said that he had been previously involved with drugs but did not elaborate any further.

- 2.3.55 Frances felt that her main priority at this time was sort out her debts and bills so that she could feel safe in her home. She was given advice about debt support agencies, legal remedies available and mental health/counselling support available. She was referred to MARAC and to the Resettlement Worker at Next Link for long term support. She agreed to meet with this worker and an appointment was made for 23rd September. She was advised to contact Next Link if she had any concerns before this date.
- 2.3.56 Frances had a consultation with her GP booked for this day too but did not attend.
- 2.3.57 Jonathan sent a text to Frances in which he said, 'Don't contact me this week please'. He sent her another text in which he told her that he would transfer £600 now so that she could pay her rent from next Friday. He said he would pay £325 per week which works out at £1300 per month. Once he had sorted out his tax, he would transfer £1500 per month. He said that he does not want her to contact him and he will contact her next week. He said 'I hope you understand my situation as well Not a lot of people help their ex with such an amount per week, when I just started work in this country, I did not even earn that with a full-time job'. He finished by saying he would call her next week.
- 2.3.58 There were a number of short calls between all parties over the next few days which add nothing to this narrative and are thus not included here.
- 2.3.59 On 19th September, Jonathan rang Frances and the call lasted 1 hour 6 minutes.
- 2.3.60 The following day, 20th September, Jonathan sent a text to Frances which said, 'I am really sorry ... I should not have called you yesterday when I was feeling down. It was wrong of me to call you. I did mean what I said though that I was thinking a lot about you and our conversation earlier that day really made me sad. I really don't want to lose you out of my life for you are a very special woman. I would want us to stay friends. But what I said yesterday was wrong. I should have never called you because I felt shit and down. I have to sort myself out and stop bothering you with my problems. Maybe you were right and there should be some distance between us. At least for now until all emotions have gone down a bit....But please don't cut me out of your life you are family to me and we will always love you'. This text was followed by a call from Frances to Jonathan which was answered and lasted several minutes. There were three further short calls from Frances to Jonathan in the minutes afterwards.
- 2.3.61 Jonathan sent a further text to Frances saying, 'OK.... I will keep my word and transfer the money each Friday. I am sincerely sorry about yesterday. I should never have called you. I respect your point of view and honor it. I hope you do well in life and excel in your study.' There was other text contact that day between them in which they were arranging for Jonathan to collect his belongings from Frances's flat on Friday 25th when he was due to be paid.
- 2.3.62 On 21st September at there were six text messages, initiated by Jonathan, in which a conversation was held about Frances wanting Jonathan's help to return to South Africa. In this conversation, he said that he would not help her as she had to finish university and that he would call her.
- 2.3.63 Later that day Frances exchanged 69 WhatsApp messages with an unknown person. It is clear from the conversation that they had met via online dating. The unknown person was very complimentary of Frances and she mentioned that her ex had cheated on her. Both

parties in this conversation talked about their thoughts that a third-party female was 'ugly'. From the court case, we know that they were discussing Joanne.

- 2.3.64 Frances exchanged 16 instant messages with her mother and during this conversation, Frances said that she thought that Jonathan was taking drugs as he was acting crazy. Her mother told her to get Jonathan to call her, but Frances said that she did not have the energy to talk to him as he made her ill. Later that evening Frances sent her mum a message to say that Jonathan was back with her.
- 2.3.65 Joanne returned home from work later evening and expected Jonathan to be there. When he was not, she rang him, and the call went to his voicemail and she left a message asking where he was. According to Joanne, he then sent her a text saying, 'Just let it be, sorry' and she replied to say, 'What did I do to hurt you'.
- 2.3.66 **22nd September (the day of the incident)**
- 2.3.67 Frances received a text from Jonathan which said, 'I love you (Frances). I always have. I am truly sorry for what I have done. We need to work on our relationship things will get back to how it was in the start. You and me are meant to be. I know that and I have always known that for you and me are the same. I will treat you as you deserve to be treated. You are my princess xxx'. Frances replied at saying, 'Aww my boy! You made me tearful reading this – it means a lot hearing this words. You believing in us again. You are the love of my life. God does not make a mistake dear. He choose you for me and I will forever be yours until I leave this planet (even then it won't stop). I love you dearly with all my heart – you are my Boy. Xxx'. Frances sent a series of texts to Jonathan in which they discussed that she was waiting to register at university and that she could do it that night.
- 2.3.68 Jonathan sent a text message to Joanne in which he says, 'Sometimes in life people have to do things they don't want to do. You are an amazing woman and it hurts me badly that I have to do this. I slept really badly, you should never take shit from no man and never change the way you are. Anyone who would want to do something like that is not worth you. The timing for us is just not right. I am a lucky guy for I was part of your life even if it was just for a little while, you will always stay in my mind and will always have a special place in my heart. Friday when I get paid I will transfer some money for the bills for it is the right thing to do. I come by after work to get my stuff and to give you back your key, there is no need to change your locks for I am a decent person, but if you wanted to do so I will pay for it'.
- 2.3.69 Joanne replied saying, 'What did I do to hurt you?'.
- 2.3.70 Frances told Jonathan, in a text that she had re-enrolled to continue her study at UWE from September 2015. This has been confirmed by the college. In this text to Jonathan, she told him she would be there at 5 to pick him up. During the course of the texts, Jonathan said, 'You today I tomorrow x'.
- 2.3.71 During that afternoon, Joanne received further texts (28 texts in total back and forth) from Jonathan in which he told her that his 'heart hurt'.
- 2.3.72 That afternoon Frances picked Jonathan up from work.

- 2.3.73 Jonathan sent a text to Joanne saying, 'Am on my way traffic is terrible'.
- 2.3.74 Frances called Relate for a third time and this call lasted 54 seconds. The content of this call is not known.
- 2.3.75 Joanne stated that Jonathan was at her address for approximately 2-3 hours and they had discussed their relationship, as well as Frances as they had heard that she was self-harming.
- 2.3.76 Joanne stated that at about 10pm Jonathan left her. He had told her that he was going to go back and see if Frances was OK and to remove all of her tablets so that she could not self-harm. He told Joanne that he would come back to her.
- 2.3.77 At 0.28 on 23rd September, Frances sent an email to her tutor at university. This email read, 'You don't have to call me tomorrow as I won't be doing this course anymore.... I have been abused and called names under the sun by Jonathan and he has made me realise I am not good for anything in this life'. Later in the day, the Well Being Service at UWE contacted the GP as they were concerned about her and wanted to make sure the GP was aware.
- 2.3.78 Between 2.03 and 2.46 there were five calls between Frances and her ex-husband which totalled approximately 41 minutes. We do not have the transcript of these calls, but her ex-husband stated that he was awoken at approximately 1.38 and checked his phone and then looked at an online dating website. About ten minutes he received a call from Frances. He said that he could hear a male voice and Frances say, 'I'm speaking to'. He stated that Frances thought that Jonathan had gone to his mistress' house to get his belongings but in fact he had sex with her. He ex-husband said that he told her to leave Jonathan.
- 2.3.79 At 2.50 a female neighbour heard a male in the street shouting, 'Help me I'm fucking going to die'. The screaming continued, and she noted the time on her phone.
- 2.3.80 One of the neighbours took Jonathan to an address on Ladysmith Road to use the shower and Jonathan said, 'my ex did it'. Whilst he is in the shower, another neighbour heard Jonathan say, 'I told her I was leaving her, and she did this to me'.
- 2.3.81 The police arrived and entered her flat. Frances mentioned that the substance that Jonathan was exposed to was sulphuric acid. She was arrested.

Section Three – Analysis

3.1 Engagement of family and friends

- 3.1.1 The involvement of family and friends in any Domestic Homicide Review is integral. Their involvement helps such reviews, to understand as fully as possible the circumstances in which the tragedy has occurred. This review respects the wishes of Jonathan’s family and friends to have limited engagement and appreciates that the difficulties of language and distance has not helped. Details about the review and the support services of AAFDA were translated for the family, the police family liaison officers helped enormously to encourage family engagement and conversations with Jonathan’s father were undertaken with an interpreter present. Attempts to engage other members of the family have not been successful and the review is very grateful to those who have felt able to engage.
- 3.1.2 Jonathan’s work colleagues have been contacted but have also chosen not to engage.
- 3.1.3 The woman with whom Jonathan entered a relationship in the weeks leading up to the incident met with the Review Chair and has assisted this review.
- 3.1.4 Frances has met with the Chair and Report Author but attempts to speak to her friends have been unsuccessful.

3.2 Evidence of domestic abuse

- 3.2.1 There is evidence to suggest that there was domestic abuse in Jonathan and Frances’s relationship. Both Jonathan and Frances made specific reference to abuse to different agencies at different times. As we consider this in more detail, it is important that we remember that Frances was found guilty of throwing the noxious substance. The Jury rejected her assertion that she threw what she thought was water and came to the conclusion that she knew what she was doing. During her trial, evidence was presented that showed that she had researched the use of sulphuric acid and had purchased it, a fact that she does not deny.
- 3.2.2 There are a number of potential scenarios:
- Frances was violent and controlling towards Jonathan and she was the only perpetrator of violence
 - That Jonathan and Frances were both, at times, violent and controlling towards each other in a relationship that was volatile and turbulent.
 - Frances had been a victim of domestic abuse from Jonathan and responded with violence towards him
- 3.2.3 It is right that this review explores the evidence that has been made available to it and makes comment upon its relevance and its ability to allow us to learn from it. This review has access to material that was available during the criminal process but was not heard in the public trial; in particular the account of Frances. We seek to avoid a ‘hierarchy of testimony’ subject to one caveat, that being that the perpetrator in this case provided an explanation that the Jury rejected and thus found her to be dishonest in that respect.
- 3.2.4 **Evidence of Frances being violent and controlling towards Jonathan**

- 3.2.5 In September 2015, Jonathan reported to the police that Frances was harassing him and Joanne with silent phone calls and numerous calls asking him to go around. Jonathan also said that Frances told him, in an email that her ex-husband, their mutual friend, had had a heart attack which was not true. He also told the police that she had threatened to tell them that he had been downloading child pornography. When he said that he was leaving, she threatened to kill herself and to self-harm. All of these incidents, if true, demonstrate coercion and control by Frances towards Jonathan.
- 3.2.6 Joanne has told this review that she saw scratch mark injuries to Jonathan's neck and torso during the course of their relationship (August/September 2015). She also said how Jonathan had told her of Frances' ability to self-harm and then call the police saying he was responsible.
- 3.2.7 Joanne told the review how she was subject to harassing telephone calls from Frances' in the days leading up to the incident and how she told Jonathan he must 'deal with it'. She was aware that he reported the issue to the police but said that he felt ashamed having to report the issue to a female police officer. The issue of men's reluctance to report domestic abuse will be revisited later within this section. She told the review that Jonathan felt obliged to pay part of his wages across to Frances's family in South Africa because they had so little and that even after he and Frances had separated, he was continuing to support her financially.
- 3.2.8 Almost twelve months after the acid attack, whilst in hospital, Jonathan asked to see the police. When they visited him, he disclosed that Frances had previously thrown boiling water over him because she was upset over a small thing. He said that he went to see his GP and told them he had accidentally tipped hot tea over himself. When asked directly about this by the Chair and Report Author, Frances said that he told her he had done it with hot tea. She said that she persuaded him to go to the GP and he came back with it bandaged.⁵
- 3.2.9 Frances disclosed to health professionals in July 2013 that she was violent to her partner when she is anxious, panicky, stressed and angry. Later when asked by the Chair and Report Author, if she had ever hit Jonathan she said, 'yes because he promised he would not strangle me but then he did so I would bite and scratch him'.
- 3.2.10 During the conversation with Jonathan's father he told the Report Author that he had known for the last year of their relationship that Jonathan was afraid of Frances. He also complained to his father about the food that they had and that she made him 'eat a lot of salad'. Jonathan told his dad that he had called the police six times in the last 6 months. The records do not support this and the question that his father asked was why would Jonathan say that if it was not true?
- 3.2.11 His father said that when he came to visit the couple he and Jonathan would speak in Dutch (because he does not speak English) and Frances would become suspicious about this. He said that Jonathan was controlled by Frances – she would say who he could see, where he could go.

⁵ There is no record of this in Jonathan's medical records.

- 3.2.12 Jonathan's father said that Jonathan was very generous, and he would buy coffees for his work colleagues. He said that when Frances saw this on the bank statement, she made a fuss and said that she only wanted Jonathan to eat and drink at home. He said that she made him go shopping when the food was reduced. He said that everything was all about money and he claims that the couple were sending money to her family in South Africa. These statements cannot be verified but, if true, indicate a pattern of economic abuse by Frances on Jonathan. We know from both Jonathan's family and Frances, that he had promised to support her financially for two years once the relationship ended. When asked why he would do this if he was moving on to another relationship, Jonathan's father concluded that it was because he was a good man and he was afraid that she might harm herself if he didn't.
- 3.2.13 A number of Jonathan's work colleagues were interviewed as part of the police investigation and they described things that Jonathan had told them about the relationship. One said that Frances was violent towards Jonathan and that she had threatened to stab him, and one colleague saw scratches on his back. They said that Jonathan appeared to be 'genuinely frightened' of her. One colleague said that Jonathan had a restraining order against her. This is not true, but we cannot know if Jonathan lied or if the colleague had misunderstood or was mistaken.
- 3.2.14 Whilst it is acknowledged that, in the majority of cases, domestic abuse and control is perpetrated by men over women there are men who are victims of abuse by their female partner. For the years 2012-2017 25% of reported cases of abuse were male victims⁶. This was a rise, from a previous recorded period of 19% to 25%. Some recent research has come to consider intimate partner violence as a 'human issue rather than a gender issue'.⁷ There is no denying that some men are victims of domestic abuse. Studies that have considered why women engage in domestic abuse have found that women do so for the same reasons as men – for control of the relationship⁸.
- 3.2.15 Although much bigger and stronger than Frances, there is no evidence that Jonathan retaliated when she was abusive to him. This is not uncommon, with many male victims having expressed an inability or unwillingness to retaliate when abused by their female partner. Men will say things such as,
- 'I was raised to never ever hit a woman, so I never fought back, I just covered by face and backed away from her the best I could'*
*'I never attacked her or fought back at all. I have tried to restrain her at times to prevent her from attacking me. The problem with that is that she would then show me bruises a couple of days later and tell me that she could report me to the police for assault and that they would believe her story. Unfortunately, it is true. It eventually got to the point where I would just cover my face and not even try to restrain her'*⁹
- 3.2.16 Jonathan had been experiencing domestic abuse throughout his relationship with Frances. Although he told work colleagues, he did not feel able to report this to agencies who would

⁶ Police reporting figures (2012-2017), Mankind Initiative, <https://www.mankind.org.uk/statistics/>

⁷ Jessica McCarrick, The 'minority' man?, New Voices, May 2015, Vol 28, No 5, p376

⁸ Fiebert and Gonzalez, 1997, Women who initiate assaults: The reasons offered for such behaviour, Psychological Reports, 80, 583-590 cited in Examining Issues Surrounding Public Attitudes and Awareness in Relation to Domestic Violence Against Males, Abby James

⁹ Bates Elizabeth A (2017), Hidden victims; men and their experience of domestic violence. Downloaded from <http://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/3058/>

have been able to offer him support. When we think about why this might be it is important to consider the effect of gender stereotyping on a man's ability to disclose abuse. Addis and Mahalik (2003)¹⁰ refer to the emotional stoicism and toughness that is applauded as a positive aspect of masculinity. Gender biases that exist in society affect the severity with which acts of violence are perceived. One large scale study by Sorenson and Taylor (2005)¹¹ found that acts were more likely to be perceived as abusive if they were executed by men. Qualitative research that examined the experiences of counsellors working with male victims also reported a lack of recognition within society that men can also be affected by domestic abuse¹². These factors all contribute to creating a society in which men feel unable to report abuse. This makes it all the more surprising that he felt able to tell his work colleagues.

- 3.2.17 Arguably, the response of professionals to a man who reports being a victim of abuse can have a profound effect on their willingness to continue with a report or to do so again. George (2007) argued that the prejudice against male victims is extreme and has led to under-reporting to the police¹³. We know that Jonathan did, on one occasion, report to the police that he was being harassed by Frances and he was treated as an 'involved party' rather than the victim. The officer investigating the case noted that they felt it was unrealistic of Jonathan not to expect contact from Frances on ending their relationship. This response to his report supports the findings of McCarrick's work (2015) that agencies in the Criminal Justice System focus on the 'criminal' side of a report rather than the psychological abuse being experienced¹⁴. It is noted, in the police IMR, that the officer appeared to minimise the incidents being reported by Jonathan. This could well have resulted in him losing faith in the police and not reporting further incidents, but we cannot know this given the short timeframe between this report and the acid attack.

The Review notes that the potential for unconscious bias against a male victim has been acknowledged by the police and this is discussed, along with recommendations, later in the report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Safer Bristol Partnership reviews the services to male victims of domestic abuse in the locality to ensure that, as far as is possible, services are available

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Safer Bristol Partnership reviews its publicity and information available to male victims of domestic abuse to ensure that they are providing information to men in the most appropriate places

¹⁰ Addis M E and Mahalik J R, 2003 Man, masculinity and the contexts of help seeking, *American psychologist* 58(1), 5014 cited in Jessica McCarrick, The 'minority' man?, *New Voices*, May 2015, Vol 28, No 5, p377

¹¹ Sorenson S B and Taylor C A (2005), Female aggression toward male intimate partners: An examination of social norms in a community-based sample, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29(1), 79-96 cited in Jessica McCarrick, The 'minority' man?, *New Voices*, May 2015, Vol 28, No 5, p378

¹² Hogan et al, 2012, Counsellors' experiences of working with male victims of female-perpetrated domestic abuse, *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research*, 12(1), 44-52 cited in Jessica McCarrick, The 'minority' man?, *New Voices*, May 2015, Vol 28, No 5, p376

¹³ Cited in McCarrick et al, 2015, Men's experiences of the UK Criminal Justice System Following Female Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence, *Journal of Family Violence*

¹⁴ McCarrick et al, 2015, Men's experiences of the UK Criminal Justice System Following Female Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence, *Journal of Family Violence*

Recommendation

It is recommended that all public facing agencies in the partnership review their training for staff and volunteers to ensure that appropriate responses are given to men reporting domestic abuse

3.2.18 Evidence that Jonathan and Frances were both, at times violent and controlling to each other in a volatile relationship

3.2.19 Some of the allegations/disclosures of both Jonathan and Frances suggest that there was situational couple violence in the relationship which has been described as ‘intimate partner violence [...] when specific conflict situations escalate to violence’ (Johnson et al, 2005).¹⁵ According to Johnson et al the scale of violence can range from pushing and shoving to life-threatening attacks. Research indicates that situational couple violence is likely to be more or less equally perpetrated by men and women in heterosexual relationships (Johnson et al, 2005)¹⁶. Johnson et al also state that situational couple violence is not connected to a pattern of control¹⁷.

3.2.20 Evidence of physical abuse

3.2.21 When she was interviewed after her arrest, Frances said to police that they both used to have physical fights and that he hit her, and she scratched him and ‘things like that’. She said that they would insult each other and throw things at each other. In her interview with the Chair and Report Author, Frances said that she knew that she was stubborn and that she contributed to the situation because she was headstrong. She admitted that she could be, in her words, “mouthy”.

3.2.22 It is important to note that, whilst Frances has disclosed, both to the police and her GP, that she could be violent towards Jonathan, there is no record of Jonathan disclosing such situational partner violence.

3.2.23 We can see below, evidence of Jonathan and Frances’s volatile communication by telephone and text. In this list, it is not always clear who had initiated contact; but it is clear that this was two-way communication:

15 th August	Approximately 146 contacts (texts and calls)
23 rd August	65 text messages between Jonathan and Frances in which they appear to be having an argument and breaking up. In the messages, Frances accuses Jonathan of fraud, prostitution and refers to a female (not Joanne) who Jonathan has slept with

3.2.24 Over the days of 17th to 19th September there are a number of times when Jonathan texts Frances to tell her not to contact him but then he made contact with her.

¹⁵ Michael P Johnson and Janel M Leone, Journal of Family Issues, April 2005, Vol 26, No 3, p 324

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Michael P Johnson and Janel M Leone, Journal of Family Issues, April 2005, Vol 26, No 3, p 323

3.2.25 **Evidence of emotional abuse**

3.2.26 Jonathan's accounts to police and to Joanne portray the Frances as a person who would use emotion as a means of controlling him. He said she would self-harm, took and overdose on at least one occasion and used what had happened to her in South Africa as a means of instilling guilt in him should he ever consider ending the relationship.

3.2.27 In her conversation with the Review Chair and Report Author, Frances described the early days of their relationship. She said that she did not fully know what she was 'getting herself into' when she embarked on this relationship. She said that as time went on, she learned more and more about him that he had kept hidden. She said that by the time she knew more about him, and things that concerned her, she was in love with him.

3.2.28 She reported that she was frightened because of the emotional abuse she had experienced. She said that Jonathan had called her useless and stupid and that it was breaking her. He had told her that she did not fulfil his needs sexually.

3.2.29 Frances told the Review Chair and Report Author that if he was being abusive towards her, she would go into another room to try and get away from him, but he would follow her and pull her hair. He would also taunt her by saying, 'are you hearing voices?' This was reference to her mental health which will be discussed later in the report.

3.2.30 **Evidence of coercion and control**

3.2.31 Jonathan told police, Joanne and some colleagues at work how Frances would self-inflict injury and then threaten to call the police, she would threaten to expose him (falsely) as a paedophile and bring up more about his past.

3.2.32 Frances told the Review Chair and Report Author that she felt, with hindsight, that the relationship had moved too quickly. She and Jonathan had met online and corresponded for a time. They first met in person in January 2011 when he came for a weekend and ended up staying for a week. She said that Jonathan then returned to Holland to collect his medical records and he came back to Bristol on Valentine's Day 2011. He never left Bristol and moved in with her. When she became pregnant shortly afterwards, both were very excited, and he immediately phoned his family to tell them. Unfortunately, Frances suffered a miscarriage.

3.2.33 Frances had not, she said, been looking for a long-term relationship but it was good to know that someone 'had your back' and that the relationship grew very quickly. She describes that, after she had the miscarriage, 'things went funny'. She said that Jonathan would not talk about how he felt.

3.2.34 In conversation with the Review Chair Joanne echoed the development of her relationship with Jonathan in almost exactly the same way as that described by Frances.

3.2.35 In this same conversation with the Review Chair and Report Author, Frances said that he would change one digit in the phone numbers in her phone so that she could not make contact with her friends and she did not know why they were not responding.

- 3.2.36 Frances also told Next Link that he had been very jealous and that she was not allowed to have friends and that Jonathan did not like her speaking to her family in South Africa. In July 2013 she told her CBT practitioner that she could not leave the house to get away from the situation and that Jonathan refused to leave.
- 3.2.37 Frances told the Review Chair and Report Author that when Jonathan had hit her, his family phoned from Holland and told her that she should not have gone to the police but that she should have told them and allowed them to sort it out.
- 3.2.38 **Evidence of economic abuse**
- 3.2.39 Jonathan had told Joanne that Frances had access to his bank accounts on-line and just spent whatever she wanted. He told her how he expected to have several thousands of pounds in one account but realised that she had spent most of it. Frances described how, when Jonathan first moved here, he was not working, and they lived on her money and money raised from her credit card. She said that all the money she had went into the relationship and she had nothing of her own.
- 3.2.40 Frances said, to Next Link, that the relationship had ended in mid-August and that he had left her in debt. She was very scared about managing her finances as she had no income. She had made contact with Jonathan to ask him to pay the household bills. The evidence before the court and contained in the text messages seen by this review is clear, that Jonathan had agreed to continue to support Frances financially for an indefinite period to a significant sum each month. When asked, by the Review Chair and Report Author why this was, she said that he wanted to continue to control her. He wanted to be with Joanne, but he still wanted her to be beholden to him.
- 3.2.41 A DASH risk assessment was conducted with Frances and she was referred to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). When she completed the assessment, she said that this were her greatest priority at that time. She wanted to sort out her debts and bills so that she could feel safe in her home.
- 3.2.42 She said that after he had left to go to Joanne, he had pestered her for money and she told him that she had spent it all on the bills. She said that she wanted him to help her financially so that she could finish her studies.
- 3.2.43 She said that she had ended the relationship a number of times but that she always returned to him as she loved him.
- 3.2.44 **Evidence of Jonathan being violent and controlling towards Frances**
- 3.2.45 The evidence of violent and controlling behaviour towards Frances by Jonathan is drawn from her interaction with the police in April 2011, her conversation with Next Link in September 2015 and her meeting with the Review Chair and Report Author in August 2018.
- 3.2.46 In April 2011, Frances called the police because Jonathan had damaged the wing mirror on her car. She told police that although he had now left the location, she was worried that he would come back to her flat and harass her. He did return to her flat later that day. The police attended, and he was arrested after the police were told that another argument had

taken place. Frances told the police that Jonathan was aware that she was pregnant and, as well as being verbally abusive, he had assaulted her by grabbing her round the waist from behind and pulling at her stomach, yanking her to the ground with each motion, intending to cause a miscarriage. She told police that she fell to the floor and he had kicked her in the back and hit her on the head a few times. She also reported that he had been racially abusive towards her and had scratched a swastika on his hand. This is discussed later in this report. This is the first time that the couple come to the attention of the police. Frances did not support a prosecution on this occasion and this is discussed later in this section.

- 3.2.47 The most comprehensive report to professionals that we have is from 17th September 2015 when Frances made contact with Next Link¹⁸. During this conversation, she said that she was afraid of her ex-partner because she had been a victim of physical abuse by him during the five years of their relationship. She gave examples of physical abuse - bruising to her cheek, kicking her in the stomach and trying to strangle her.
- 3.2.48 When she met with the Review Chair and Report Author, Frances described a number of times when Jonathan was physically abusive to her including him having locked her, naked, outside of the flat. Another time when he had dragged her by her hair. She also told of an incident when she had fallen asleep on the sofa watching TV and he had picked her up to carry her to bed and he had 'dropped' her onto the floor. None of this was placed before the court.
- 3.2.49 When Frances was asked, in this interview, if she had ever hit Jonathan she said, 'yes he promised he would not strangle me again and when he did, I would bite him and scratch him to make him stop'.
- 3.2.50 When asked if Jonathan forced her to have sex, Frances said no but then went on to say that he would strangle her whilst they were having sex. He would also, during sex, pull her top over her face and throat. She did not like these acts. She would sometimes wake up in the morning and he would be on top of her.
- 3.2.51 **Racist behaviour by Jonathan towards Frances**
- 3.2.52 The review has considered if, despite being in a relationship with a woman of a different ethnicity, Jonathan behaved in a way that could be considered to be racist towards Frances.
- 3.2.53 When the Review Chair and Report Author met with Frances she was asked directly if she thought that Jonathan was racist. She responded, without hesitation, 'yes he said he hated black people' and when asked why he had close relationships with black women if this was his view, she said, 'to use us because we are crap'.
- 3.2.54 She told of the swastika that was scratched on this hand. This has been corroborated by the police report of the incident in 2011 but we do not know how long that had been there or what prompted him to have it. It is clear, from the police IMR, that this was treated as a hate incident by the police and this demonstrates good practice.

¹⁸ It is acknowledged that this contact with Next Link was made *after* the acid had been purchased and shortly before the attack. We cannot know with certainty that this contact was not made to 'set the scene' for what was to follow, but, for the purpose of this discussion it is being taken at face value.

- 3.2.55 She also said that he would call her names such as a whore. She said he would call her 'santa claus'. The cultural meaning of this is that in the Netherlands people will paint their faces black.¹⁹ This was seen as an insult to the colour of her skin
- 3.2.56 The view given by Frances is completely contrary to that given by Joanne, who is also a black woman and older than Jonathan. She was taken aback by any suggestion that Jonathan may have held racist views. She said he was the gentlest and kindest person she had met and just treated her as a person. The issue of race had never even entered a discussion, she understood and accepted that he was attracted to women of a particular type.

3.3 Frances's mental health

- 3.3.1 We can say with certainty that Frances experienced, at periods in her life, mental health issues. Frances herself talked, when interviewed by the Review Chair and Report Author, of being ill between 2013 and 2015.
- 3.3.2 We know from a number of sources, that Frances had a traumatic childhood and adolescence and that this impacted upon her mental health.
- 3.3.3 Frances received a good level of care from her GP and mental health nurse within the practice and this was consistent over a number of years and she was referred, at different times, to specialist services.
- 3.3.4 The IMR provided by the GP records that she consulted the GP in September 2012 presenting with symptoms of anxiety and depression. She was seen regularly and was diagnosed with Generalised Anxiety Disorder (at a level of severe anxiety). She was prescribed medication to help with the symptoms. In March 2013 she was referred to a specialist service for a course of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, which she later reported she was finding very helpful. At this time, she disclosed suicidal thoughts and that she found it helpful to talk to the Samaritans. By July 2013 she reported that, as well as suicidal thoughts, she was now self-harming and not looking after herself.
- 3.3.5 Frances was monitored by her GP and by December 2013 she was assessed as moderate risk, with suicidal thoughts but no intent to act upon them. She agreed to attend a six-week self-esteem course which she attended.
- 3.3.6 By March 2014, she had been monitored regularly and she disclosed to her GP her violent and difficult life in South Africa. The GP noted that he believed that she was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and she was struggling to deal with her emotions. At this time, she also disclosed that she was feeling agoraphobic.
- 3.3.7 The GP and Mental health nurse continued to monitor Frances throughout 2014 and in August she completed an Adult ADHD²⁰ Self Report Scale (ASRS) and scored very high. She was advised to explore this further with her university.

¹⁹ See <https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/holland.shtml>

²⁰ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- 3.3.8 The university contacted the GP in August 2014 as they were concerned about her wellbeing. She had disclosed to them that her partner of five years had left a week earlier, and she had taken an intentional overdose in front of her partner but that she vomited the tablets up. She told them that she depended on him both socially and financially. This is an example of good practice by the university and the GP responded to their call and telephoned Frances who disclosed suicidal thoughts but no immediate plans. The GP and Mental Health Nurse continued to have contact with her over the coming days.
- 3.3.9 At the beginning of September the GP had a long chat with Frances in which she disclosed that she had taken an overdose of her medication the previous week and attended A&E. It is on this day that Frances purchased the sulphuric acid.
- 3.3.10 On 11th September the mental health nurse attempted a telephone consultation, but she was unable to make contact with Frances. On 14th September, Frances is known to have been carrying out her searches on the internet about sulphuric acid, particularly its ability to self-harm.
- 3.3.11 She did not attend a GP appointment on 17th September. On 23rd September, the university contacted the GP surgery once again as they were concerned that she had not attended an appointment at the Wellbeing service that afternoon. They called the GP again the next day as Frances was not answering calls or attending appointments and this was unlike her. It was agreed that the police would be asked to undertake a welfare check. The GP was then made aware on 25th September that Frances was in custody.
- 3.3.12 It is clear that over this last week or so, Frances's mental health was deteriorating. She recognised this herself, telling Next Link that Jonathan's behaviour was making her ill and that she did not want to go back to this again. However, it appears that her mental state deteriorated fairly quickly as she had been stable and engaging with services over a number of years.

The Review is satisfied that although Frances was obviously unwell, she was engaging in counselling and, possibly, making some progress. The review agrees with the IMR author that there is nothing in the records that would have enabled any of the practitioners involved in her care to anticipate such a desperately violent and pre-meditated attack.

3.4 Government approaches to reducing the use of acid and noxious substances in criminal acts

- 3.4.1 The use of noxious substances as weapons has been very much in the media in recent history. A voluntary data return from 39 police forces showed 408 cases of corrosive attacks between November 2016 and April 2017. These returns also showed that a fifth of offenders using corrosive substances were under 18 (when the age of the offender is known)²¹.

3.4.2 Acid Attacks Action Plan

²¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/651756/IA_corrosives.pdf

3.4.3 On 16th July 2017, the then Home Secretary Amber Rudd MP announced a new action plan to tackle acid attacks which would be put victims and survivors at the centre of a new strategy aimed at tackling the number and impact of acid attacks²². This action plan contained a number of areas:

- The Crown Prosecution Service's guidance to prosecutors will to be reviewed to ensure that it makes clear that acid and other corrosive substances can be classed as dangerous weapons, and what is required to prove intent. [This new guidance became effective from 1s June 2018](#)²³
- The Poisons Act 1972 will to be reviewed to assess whether it should cover more acids and harmful substances
- The Home Office will work with the police and Ministry of Justice to assess whether the powers available to the courts, including sentencing, are sufficient to deal with these serious offences
- New guidance will be provided to police officers on preventing attacks, searching potential perpetrators for harmful substances and responding to victims at the scene.
- [A consultation concluded on 22nd October 2018 which looked at extending the police powers to stop and search to offences including corrosive substances](#)
- Further work will also take place with retailers to agree measures to restrict sales of acids and other corrosive substances (this is covered later in this report)

Other measures in the action plan included:

- Improving police recording and reporting of offences;
- Commissioning research to better understand the motivations for carrying out these attacks
- Confirming appropriate support is provided to victims, from the initial medical response to giving evidence in court and long-term recovery beyond and
- Ensuring that Victim Impact Statements are completed in every case by the police so that courts are made aware of the full impact of the attack. The police will also be encouraged to prepare Community Impact Statements to show how such attacks have affected communities.

3.4.4 **Responsible sale of acid and corrosive substances**

3.4.5 This case particularly raises the issue of how easy it was for Frances to purchase, online, this highly corrosive substance. Early in 2018 the Government introduced a voluntary scheme to encourage the responsible sale of acid and corrosive substances²⁴. This policy paper sets out the commitments that it expects those joining the scheme to abide by:

- Agree to comply with the Poisons Act 1972 and promote awareness to staff of what this means for the sale of products which contain levels of acid and other corrosive substances that mean they are either regulated or reportable under the Poisons Act 1972
- Agree not to sell products to under 18s that contain potentially harmful levels of acid or corrosive substances. Where appropriate, this will include applying the challenge

²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-action-plan-to-tackle-acid-attacks>

²³

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sales-of-acid-voluntary-commitments-for-retailers>

- 21/25 policies when asking for age identification, and staff reported by till alerts, supervision and the inclusion of the products in age restricted sales training
- Age equivalent age restriction measures are applied to products sold online

3.4.6 The Government has also provided a range of publicity material for retailers to use to publicise their support of this scheme²⁵.

Whilst the Review welcomes action to restrict the sale of acid and corrosive substances, it feels that this initiative does not go far enough:

- It only applies to those under the age of 18 which would have made no difference in this case and many others that have had high profile media coverage
- It is purely voluntary
- Whilst it is assumed that promotion of the scheme is the responsibility of police and local councils through Trading Standards and Licensing teams, there is no explanation about how online retailers will be made aware of the potential harms that can be caused by selling these products or about the voluntary scheme

Recommendations

It is recommended that, in light of this case and others, government reviews its controls over the sale of acid to consider whether they should be extended to adults as well as young people.

3.5 Detailed analysis of agency involvement

The chronology sets out in Section 2 details about the information known to agencies involved. This section summarises the totality of the information known to agencies and others involved during the years leading up to the incident. The detailed chronology will not be repeated here; rather this section will provide an analysis of agency involvement.

3.5.1 Avon and Somerset Constabulary

3.5.1.1 The circumstances addressed by this Review relate to one police service – Avon and Somerset Constabulary. During the period of this review, up to the incident on 23rd September 2015, the police had contact with Frances and Jonathan on six occasions and each of these has been dealt with comprehensively by the IMR provided by the police.

3.5.1.2 Incident 1 – 12th April 2011

This was the first contact that the police had with either party and, on this occasion, Frances called the police as Jonathan was damaging her car. She told police, when she called at 18.25 that he was drunk and had got out of the car whilst it was moving and damaged her wing mirror. She told the call handler that she could not see Jonathan and thought he had gone to a bus stop. She was advised to go home and that the police would make contact with her there. She stated that she wanted him to pay for the damage as

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sales-of-acid-products-voluntary-commitments-for-retailers>

she could not afford it and she was worried that he would turn up at her home intoxicated and harass her.

- 3.5.1.3 When the police called he again she told them that Jonathan had just returned to her address. She was asked if there was a problem and when she said yes, she was told that the police would be there as soon as possible. It was noted that there was no sound of a disturbance and she had not called 999. The police tried to recall her at 20.52 but were unsuccessful.
- 3.5.1.4 Police attended the flat and Jonathan attempted to leave but was stopped by the police. Frances told the police that she had previously told Jonathan that the relationship was over. An argument followed when Jonathan was verbally abusive to Frances before assaulting her by grabbing her round the waist from behind and pulling her stomach, yanking her to the ground with each motion intending to cause a miscarriage. She said that she fell to the floor and that he had kicked her in the back and hit her on the head a few times. He had also been racially abusive to her and scratched a swastika into the back of his hand (although it is unclear when this occurred).
- 3.5.1.5 In response to this incident the police attended and noted that there were no visible injuries to Frances. She declined²⁶ medical treatment and provided a VDTP²⁶ statement. He was intoxicated and arrested under suspicion of assault but was unable to be interviewed that day due to the lack of an interpreter. The following morning Jonathan was bailed to a nearby hotel and provided with reassurance about the process and shown where to access food and a pay phone to contact his family. Frances called three times during the day for an update and was moved to a relative's address not known to Jonathan with passing police patrols and a 'Treat As Urgent marker' placed on both addresses. Both parties were strongly advised not to contact each other.
- 3.5.1.6 On 14th September, Frances contacted the police and said she was worried and wanted to withdraw the allegations and phoned again later in the day for an update. Jonathan was interviewed with an interpreter. He stated that they had an argument and Frances had tried to drive off with his belongings in the car and so he had tried to get into the car whilst it was moving. She had braked, and this had caused him to come into contact with the wing mirror which broke. He stated, in relation to the alleged assault, that the only time he had touched her was when she tried to get off the couch and he pulled her by her shoulder to sit her back down. In relation to the swastika, he said that he was drunk and denied saying that he disliked black people.
- 3.5.1.7 The case was referred to CPS who took the decision that No Further Action (NFA) would be taken due to lack of victim engagement and no realistic chance of prosecution. Frances was updated and she indicated that she was satisfied with this outcome and the case was filed.
- 3.5.1.8 On 17th April the police systems were checked for previous domestic abuse between Jonathan and Frances and none were found. The Domestic Abuse Referral Team (DART) sent letters and leaflets to Frances and the midwife was advised of the possible pregnancy.
- 3.5.1.9 The police note, in their IMR, that, in this incident, Frances identified three domestic abuse offences – assault, racially aggravated public order and criminal damage. It is

²⁶ Victim Declines to Prosecute

acknowledged that the incident was classified as common assault and battery because Home Office Counting Rules only require the most serious offence to be classified. As this record has been converted from an old recording system (which is recognised as, generally speaking, being of a lesser quality than the current system) it is not possible to be clear about whether the hate crime offence was officially recorded on the system.

The details of this offence were not fully recorded on the system, nor was a referral made to Victim Support or other agencies as listed in the guidance such as Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI). However the guidance²⁷ states that the victim must give consent to referrals being made to partner agencies. Although Frances stated in her VDTP statement that she was not willing to engage with the police, this does not necessarily mean that she would have declined support from other agencies. This is potentially a missed opportunity to provide additional support.

The Review notes that, if this incident occurred now, Frances would be entitled to an enhanced service which would result in a referral to Lighthouse. The risk identified by officers is reviewed by Lighthouse and, after speaking to the victim, the rating can be made higher if necessary. All medium risk (consent required) and high-risk (no consent required) are referred to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors. Help can also be offered with safety planning and high-risk cases are referred to MARAC²⁸ to try and minimise the harm to victims and other vulnerable parties such as children.

3.5.1.10 After Jonathan's arrest, Frances contacted the police a number of times in a short space of time for an update. It is not clear from the records if there had been a conversation with her about how often she should expect updates. This is clearly stated as a requirement in the revised VCOP 2015. Victims are 'to be informed how often they will receive updates on the status of their case following discussion with the police.'²⁹ Avon and Somerset Constabulary is currently monitoring its compliance with VCOP and adherence to this has become a reportable measure for improvement to the CMB.

The Review is satisfied that Avon and Somerset Constabulary are already working to ensure that the VCOP is adhered to in all cases.

3.5.1.11 Whilst the investigation of this report of domestic abuse followed, in the main, the Force Domestic Abuse Procedural Guidance (DAPG) the guidance states that officers should have considered the use of a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment and no DASH could be found, when compiling the IMR, on the systems. If officers used their discretion not to complete a DASH or if Frances declined to respond to their questions this should have been recorded with the reason on Guardian³⁰ but this also has not been done.

²⁷ HCIPG August 2010, p 8-11 and p 39

²⁸ Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

²⁹ VCOP 2015, p19

³⁰ Guardian is a crime-related incident recording system used by Avon and Somerset Constabulary

If Frances would have engaged but was not asked to complete a DASH this was a missed opportunity to fully assess risk and take appropriate safeguarding actions. However, there are examples of where good practice was followed and, so it might be strange that they did not ask her to complete a DASH. Given that she provided a VDTP statement it seems unlikely that she would have been willing to complete a DASH, but this should have, nonetheless, been recorded.

The Review is satisfied that it is now mandatory for officers to complete a DASH risk assessment for all domestic abuse flagged incidents. If the victim declines to answer the questions, this should be clearly recorded, and officers should give a risk rating based upon their own observations, along with a rationale. Supervisor reviews ensure that the correct procedures are followed.

3.5.1.12 During his police interview, Jonathan made reference to Frances wishing to eat her miscarriage tissues. This disclosure raises concern about her mental health. This may not be true, but there is no record of officers having spoken to her about it. There is no evidence that is indicative of mental ill-health.

3.5.1.13 If a police officer has concerns about someone's mental health now, they can refer into the local Safeguarding Co-ordination Unit. This unit would be able to establish that she is known to mental health services. However, it should be noted that if she was not, then a referral to Adult Safeguarding would have been the only route available as the unit does not currently have direct access to mental health services. It is also unlikely that this concern would reach the threshold for an Adult Social Care intervention.

The Review acknowledges that, with regards to safeguarding Frances, the police have demonstrated good practice. For example:

- **Frances was supported to stay at the home of a relative, an address unknown to Jonathan**
- **Police visited her at this temporary address, checking her intention to stay there by noting that she had an overnight bag**
- **A TAU marker was placed on her mobile phone and temporary address**
- **Jonathan was supported to access a hotel room so that he did not return home**
- **Officers demonstrated a non-judgmental and professional attitude to Jonathan by showing where to access food and a pay phone to contact his family**
- **Both were given strong words of advice about not contacting each other**

3.5.1.14 Jonathan returned to the property and Frances called the police, when he had been there for an hour. Consideration needed to be given to whether this was out of fear. The call handler noted that there was no disturbance to be heard in the background and that Frances did not sound distressed but, of course, this could have been an act which she was using out of fear. The call handler demonstrated good practice by asking a closed question, 'is there a problem?' in case she was not able to speak freely. It is noted by the IMR author however, that Frances's use of English was not fluent and therefore more closed questions could have helped to fully assess the level of risk to Frances and to inform future response officers about the situation they were due to attend.

The Review is satisfied that, although at the time of this call, the call handlers were reliant on remembering training they had attended, the call handlers now use scripts and have prompts on screen to ask questions and give advice to the caller

The Review is satisfied that, overall the incident was investigated thoroughly despite lack of engagement from Frances. Domestic Abuse Procedural Guidance was followed. All appropriate safeguarding measures were put in place and, despite the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service, not to prosecute good practice was followed in offering her support through the DART letter and leaflets sent to her.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Avon and Somerset Constabulary raise awareness with officers about what they are expected to do when a victim declines to engage with a DASH and that they are assured that the appropriate rationales are being recorded.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Avon and Somerset Constabulary should ensure that officers are following best practice by clearly recording that they have spoken to both parties separately when attending domestic abuse incidents, even where the Body Worn Video Camera footage shows that this has taken place.

3.5.1.15 Incident 2 – 13th April 2011

The officer involved in the incident the previous day raised a request for a 24 hour Treat As Urgent (TAU) Jonathan to be placed on Frances's mobile number and temporary address as one of the safeguarding actions in relation to the incident.

The Review is satisfied that this was undertaken in line with standard procedure and there are no recommendations made.

3.5.1.16 Incident 3 – 20th August 2013

A member of the public contacted the police to say that a male was climbing through a window. It transpired that this man was Jonathan. The caller said that Jonathan claimed that he lived there and was shouting for his girlfriend, Frances. Frances came out of the property and told the caller that she knew him, and she talked to him outside of the premises. The call handler asked if there was an altercation and the caller said that all seemed OK. Jonathan and Frances went inside the property and closed the door. The caller was asked if they were satisfied that all was OK, and that Jonathan lived there. The caller said that they had asked Jonathan for evidence that he lived there, and he produced a back-door key. The caller thought that it was odd that he was climbing in the window if he had a key to the door, and the call handler agreed. The caller described Jonathan's demeanour as possibly being on drugs. The police visited the caller and the address and had spoken to both Frances and Jonathan and reported that all was in order. The call was therefore closed, and no further action was taken.

3.5.1.17 The IMR identifies that there was nothing in the conversation to indicate that this was a domestic incident. There is no detail recorded of the conversation between the police and Jonathan, therefore it has not been able to clarify why he did not use his back-door key

but the handling of the case suggests that if there were anything of note the officers would have acted accordingly.

The Review is satisfied that the police responded appropriately to this incident, checking both the safety of the caller during the call and asking if there was any altercation taking place at the time. The police demonstrated good practice in attending the address of both the caller and Frances to check on the welfare of all parties. Neither Frances or Jonathan presented with any concerns and no offences were disclosed therefore no recommendations are made.

3.5.1.18 Incident 4 – 4th February 2015

The 999 operator advised the police call handler that had just received a call but the line had dropped. The operator said that he could hear general talk in the background and he played the recorded message of pressing '55' for emergency services³¹ and a male started to speak saying something about his girlfriend needing an ambulance, he was then unsure and said all was OK. The operator advised that he should replace the handset if he did not require emergency services and he was about to do so when a female was heard by the operator in the background crying and saying, 'I don't know what to do'. The operator said that there may have been another male on the line who just kept saying, 'Hello? Hello?'. The mobile number was provided by the operator, so the police call handler rang this and Frances answered. She was asked if she was OK and she responded, 'yes I'm fine, thank you'. Frances then asked who was speaking. When she realises that it is the police she says that her boyfriend may have just called 999 as she was having chest pains and he did not know what to do. She was asked if she needed help and she said that she got pains in her chest from time to time but that she was OK now. As she still sounded upset, she was again asked if she needed help and she said no. She was then asked if she could speak freely and she said that she could. The call log was closed, and no further action was taken.

3.5.1.19 The police IMR identifies a number of examples of good practice in relation to this incident:

- Frances was asked more than once if she was OK
- A closed question was used to check that she could speak freely
- The call handler undertook a search of her phone number and address to check for previous incidents and would have had the information about the two previous incidents when reaching a decision about how to proceed

With hindsight, the call handler might have asked further closed questions such as 'are you safe?', 'are you in danger?' but, as has been previously stated, call handlers now follow a script, and this would lead them to ask more questions about the safety of the caller.

The Review is satisfied that the police responded appropriately in line with procedures at that time and that the system has now been improved with prompts for call handlers and the introduction of a quality assurance toolkit.³²

³¹ This is a technique used to distinguish between genuine and accidental calls

³² This involves all types of calls being reviewed quarterly by supervisors and tutors of newly inducted staff. The calls are reviewed collectively to ensure consistent scoring in line with guidance. Spot checks are also undertaken by managers and supervisors. Unless urgent feedback is needed, quarterly one to ones are held with call handlers.

3.5.1.20 **Incident 5 – 2nd September 2015**

Jonathan contacted the police to say that he had split up with his girlfriend, Frances, a couple of weeks previously and now she keeps calling him and asking him to go to her flat. Although he says no she keeps calling him crying and hyperventilating. He added that when he first split up with her she tried to kill herself and said that she would stab herself if he left her. He reported that he had told her he was going to contact the police and she had tried to blackmail him by saying that she would tell the police that he had downloaded child pornography.

3.5.1.21 Jonathan wanted the police to speak to Frances and said he was willing to make a statement to police. He said that he had left her flat and lived in a hotel for a few days before moving in with his new girlfriend. He said that he had deleted her number and was confused about how she had got hold of his number. He also stated that his new girlfriend was receiving calls late at night and in the early hours of the morning and, although he could not prove it, he suspected they were from Frances. Jonathan also stated that she had emailed him to say that a mutual friend had a heart attack, so he called her, she then proceeded to cry and ask him to come over. He believed that she had hacked into his email account.

3.5.1.22 Jonathan was asked if there were any bail conditions or restraining orders in place and he said that there was not but that he would like something to be in place. He confirmed that he was currently safe but sounded frustrated and distressed in the call and kept repeating that something needed to be done about her. He said that he did not know if she was suicidal at present but that he had spoken to her about ten minutes earlier and the last time he had seen her he had to call an ambulance. He said she was depressed and would need to be seen.

3.5.1.23 The summary states that they had been together for about 5 years and that Frances was dependent upon Jonathan both financially and emotionally. We know from the radio transmission that officers called Frances to check on her welfare. She was upset because she had been 'dumped' but was OK.

3.5.1.24 The IMR notes that in the police log of enquiries, Jonathan is referred to as 'involved party 1' as opposed to the 'victim' as he could show 'little evidence of harassment'. The officer goes on to record that 'I think that he is being unrealistic to expect no contact from involved party 2'. She describes the messages as 'pleading rather than abusive'. It was recorded that Jonathan had been given words of advice and that he will call again if the contact from Frances continues.

The IMR has identified that there were grounds for further investigation into the offences disclosed. In addition, a DASH risk assessment should have been undertaken with Jonathan and he should have been treated as a victim rather than an 'involved party'. Contrary to the observation of the officer, the DASH questions would have been relevant in gaining the wider context of the ongoing and past abuse. Furthermore, had a DASH been undertaken, then the officer could have made an informed risk assessment and have taken appropriate safeguarding actions. It is also clear that, in classing the incident as standard risk, the officer did not identify that domestic abuse is more than just physical violence. The supervisor, on checking the assessment found no evidence of physical abuse.

This was a missed opportunity to identify risk and provide support for Jonathan. Although coercive and controlling behaviour appeared in the definition at that time, it is possible that the response was reflective of the culture amongst officers at the time to see domestic abuse just as physical violence. This is also supported by the fact that the supervisor did not identify the need for the risk assessment which also supports the view that domestic abuse is not seen as more than just physical abuse. 0

Looking at the comments of the officer about Jonathan being unrealistic in not wanting any contact from Frances, it suggests that the officer minimised the incidents reported by Jonathan and did not investigate them to the level required. It could be that this view impacted upon Jonathan's confidence in the police believing him and therefore dissuaded him from reporting other incidents to the police.

Although this incident happened a relatively short time before the incident which led to Frances' arrest, it is not possible to say that if police had responded differently on this occasion that incident could have been predicted or prevented.

The Review notes the possibility that unconscious bias about the impact of domestic abuse upon a male victim could have been a factor in the approach to this investigation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Avon and Somerset Constabulary takes further steps to raise awareness of male victims of domestic abuse and makes officers aware of their own possible unconscious bias in circumstances involving male victims.

It is recommended that the Force undertakes checking and testing to see whether male victims of domestic abuse are currently receiving expected standards of service by the force.

3.5.1.25 Incident 6 – 23rd September 2015

A member of the public contacted the police to say that Jonathan was heard shouting, 'help me'. Police and ambulance attended, and it was established that Jonathan had received serious injuries as a result of having acid thrown over him.

The Review acknowledges that the police responded appropriately to this incident, attending as soon as possible just over 10 minutes after the call. Frances was arrested and safeguarding measures via TAU markers were put in place for Jonathan and his girlfriend.

3.5.2 Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG)

- 3.5.2.1 This IMR was completed drawing on the GP medical records of Frances which included third party information in the form of letters following consultations and the records of CCG Bristol and South Gloucestershire Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) records.
- 3.5.2.2 The IMR states that, from reading the counsellor's notes, it would appear that Frances had a traumatised background from her childhood in South Africa with a very dysfunctional relationship with her mother and abuse from a previous marriage. She had sought counselling from Intervention Physical Therapies (IAPT) and from her GP's own mental health worker who has a professional background as a Community Psychiatric Nurse. This is an extra service that is more than many GP practices offer. There was nothing in her presentation that suggested that psychiatric or secondary care involvement was needed.
- 3.5.2.3 It is noted that Frances was engaging in counselling and was, perhaps, making some progress.
- 3.5.2.4 Significant entries from the IMR are included in the earlier chronology. In 2013, she disclosed self harm and that on one occasion she had 'hurt her boyfriend'. She was provided with information for her and him about abuse. This was an appropriate response in the circumstances.

It is noted that Frances disclosed to the GP or mental health nurse, on a number of occasions, that she was suffering with depression and anxiety but there is no record in the IMR that these opportunities were taken to ask her about how life was at home. It might be that if a question had been asked, she might have disclosed the abuse she was experiencing.

In the view of the review, this was a missed opportunity.

Recommendation

It is recommended that all GPs in the area sign up to the IRIS project so that relevant prompts are provided to remind staff to ask about domestic abuse and support provided if domestic violence or abuse is disclosed.

The Review acknowledges that the GP maintained a therapeutic relationship with Frances over many years. Counselling was provided by the practice, IAPT and University of West England. There is evidence of good communication between UWE and the GP surgery. This is an example of good practice on the part of UWE.

3.5.3 Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG)

- 3.5.3.1 This IMR was completed drawing on the GP medical records of Jonathan.

3.5.3.2 Jonathan's contact with his GP was very limited. He had registered with the GP in 2012 and had two consultations with the GP in 2013. There is no evidence in Jonathan's notes that he had ever indicated that he was a victim of domestic abuse from Frances.

The Review acknowledges that the contact with Jonathan was very limited and no recommendations are made.

3.5.4 Next Link

3.5.4.1 Frances's contact with Next Link was limited to her interaction on 17th September 2015. She made a call to the Duty Service seeking support. The information given in this call is recorded in the chronology.

3.5.4.2 As this was the only time that Frances was engaged with the service it is difficult to assess practice, but we can see that a full DASH risk assessment was undertaken with Frances and she scored 15 and was, therefore, referred to MARAC. This is the practice that would be expected in the circumstances. She was viewed as a victim of domestic abuse and given appropriate advice for her needs and offered services which she agreed to engage with. It is clear from the notes of the conversation that the worker was victim focused, person centred, and her concerns were listened to and responded to appropriately.

Given where this approach to Next Link falls within the timeline of the few days before the incident we cannot be sure of Frances's motives for making the call. However, the Review is satisfied that it would not have been appropriate for Next Link to ask questions about her intentions or thoughts to harm the perpetrator when she first accessed support and it would not have been right to doubt the validity of any person accessing the service. Had Frances accessed further services or support and mentioned intentions or thoughts to harm others, the Review is satisfied that the workers would have followed safeguarding policy and procedures, and this would have been reported. There are, therefore, no recommendations for Next Link.

Section Four - Conclusions

- 4.1 The way in which the victim died, the weapon used to inflict the injuries that resulted in that death, and the fact that this is female on male violence, have the capacity to mark this review out as somewhat unique and notable. Whilst both the weapon and manner of death are deserving of special attention, this review is ultimately about a domestic homicide and the circumstances that lead to the passing of a young man with his whole life ahead of him.
- 4.2 This review has no reservation in saying that the injuries inflicted upon Jonathan in September 2015 directly led to his decision to end his life in January 2017. That is a natural conclusion to arrive at; there can be no other. There is nothing to suggest that Jonathan, a man in his late-20s at the time of the attack, had anything other than a full life to live. It is important to say that this review is not at odds with the verdicts reached as a result of the criminal process. That is a very different process under, rightly, very different rules.
- 4.3 A relatively small number of agencies and individuals had any prior information that would suggest difficulties within the relationship. This review has considered whether information was appropriately shared between professionals. We come to the conclusion that given the level of disclosure, the balance between individual confidentiality and safeguarding, that it was. It would take a 'sea-change' in the interpretation of current legislation to suggest that those who received information from Frances to the effect that she 'sometimes attacked her boyfriend' when she was suffering from acute anxiety and stress, was something that should have triggered a referral. In the context of what was known at the time professionals acted reasonably.
- 4.4 This review has looked at the Government's approach to the control of acid and it is clear that none of the proposed changes would have prevented an adult from purchasing the 98% pure sulphuric acid used in this attack. We would urge Government to look again, in the light of all of the information that they have to hand, at the controls in place and consider whether controls only of young people are sufficient.
- 4.5 There is evidence that enduring male attitudes to domestic abuse were a factor in this case. Jonathan is described as someone who 'laughed off' previous injuries to the woman with whom he was involved in a new relationship. He also spoke of being ashamed when attending the police station to report harassment by Frances as he spoke to a female police officer. Work needs to continue at a local and national level to change male attitudes to being victims of domestic abuse.
- 4.6 Finally, the circumstances of this case also identify that work carried out in society to improve our understanding of relationships and, importantly, how to act when relationships come to an end, is never wasted.

Section Five – Recommendations

- 5.1 That the Safer Bristol Partnership reviews the services to male victims of domestic abuse in the locality to ensure that, as far as is possible, services are available.
- 5.2 That the Safer Bristol Partnership reviews its publicity and information available to male victims of domestic abuse to ensure that they are providing information to men in the most appropriate places.
- 5.3 That all public facing agencies in the partnership review their training for staff and volunteers to ensure that appropriate responses are given to men reporting domestic abuse.
- 5.4 It is recommended that in light of this case and others, government review its controls over the sale of acid to consider whether they should be extended to adults as well as young people.
- 5.5 That Avon and Somerset Constabulary raises awareness with officers about what they are expected to do when a victim declines to engage with a DASH and that they are assured that the appropriate rationales are recorded.
- 5.6 That Avon and Somerset Constabulary should ensure that officers are following best practice by clearly recording that they have spoken to both parties separately when attending domestic abuse incidents, even where the Body Worn Video Camera footage shows that this has taken place.
- 5.7 That Avon and Somerset Constabulary takes further steps to raise awareness of male victims of domestic abuse and makes officers aware of their own possible unconscious bias in circumstances involving male victims.
- 5.8 That Avon and Somerset Constabulary undertakes checking and testing to see whether male victims of domestic abuse are currently receiving expected standards of service by the force.
- 5.9 That all GPs in the area sign up to the IRIS project so that relevant prompts are provided to remind staff to ask about domestic abuse and support provided if domestic violence or abuse is disclosed.

Appendix One – Terms of Reference

SAFER BRISTOL PARTNERSHIP

Terms of Reference for the Domestic Homicide Review into the death of Jonathan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is commissioned by the Safer Bristol Partnership in response to the death of Jonathan which occurred on 11th January 2017.
- 1.2 The review is commissioned in accordance with Section 9, The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.
- 1.3 The Chair of the Safer Bristol Partnership has appointed Gary Goose MBE to undertake the role of Independent Chair. Mr Goose will be supported by Christine Graham, who will author the overview report. Gary and Christine will work together on the investigations. Neither Christine Graham nor Gary Goose is employed by, nor otherwise directly associated with, any of the statutory or voluntary agencies involved in the review.

2. Purpose of the review

The purpose of the review is to:

- 2.1 Establish the facts that led to the incident on 23rd September 2015 which led to Jonathan's death on 2nd January 2017 and whether there are any lessons to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies worked together to safeguard the family;
- 2.2 Establish whether the agencies or inter-agency responses were appropriate leading up to and at the time of the incident on 23rd September 2015; suggesting changes and/or identifying good practice where appropriate;
- 2.3 Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together safeguard victims;
- 2.4 Identify what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result;
- 2.5 Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate;
- 2.6 Prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity;
- 2.7 Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse; and

2.8 Highlight good practice.

3. The review process

3.1 The review will follow the Statutory Guidance for Domestic Homicide Reviews under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (revised 2016).

3.2 This review will be cognisant of, and consult with, the on-going criminal justice investigation.

3.3 The review will liaise with other parallel processes that are on-going or imminent in relation to this incident in order that there is appropriate sharing of learning.

3.4 Domestic Homicide Reviews are not inquiries into how the victim died or who is culpable. That is a matter for the criminal courts.

4. Scope of the review

The review will:

4.1 Seek to establish whether the events of 23rd September 2015 could have been reasonably predicted or prevented.

4.2 Consider the period up to five years prior to the events (or other timescales as appropriate, to be confirmed at the first Review Panel), subject to any information emerging that prompts a review of any earlier incidents or events that are relevant.

4.3 Request Individual Management Reviews by each of the agencies defined in Section 9 of The Act and invite responses from any other relevant agencies, groups or individuals identified through the process of the review.

4.4 Seek the involvement of family, employers, neighbours & friends to provide a robust analysis of the events.

4.5 Produce a report which summarises the chronology of the events, including the actions of involved agencies, analyses and comments on the actions taken and makes any required recommendations regarding safeguarding of families and children where domestic abuse is a feature.

4.6 Aim to produce the report within the timescales suggested by the Statutory Guidance subject to:

- guidance from the police as to any sub-judice issues,
- sensitivity in relation to the concerns of the family, particularly in relation to parallel enquiries, the inquest process, and any other emerging issues.

5. Family involvement

5.1 The review will seek to involve the family in the review process, taking account of who the family may wish to have involved as lead members and to identify other people they think relevant to the review process.

- 5.2 We will seek to agree a communication strategy that keeps the families informed, if they so wish, throughout the process. We will be sensitive to their wishes, their need for support and any existing arrangements that are in place to do this.
- 5.3 Arrangements will be made to support the family to engage with the review which is not in their first language.
- 5.4 We will work with the police and coroner to ensure that the family are able to respond effectively to the various parallel enquiries and reviews avoiding duplication of effort and without increasing levels of anxiety and stress.

6. Legal advice and costs

- 6.1 Each statutory agency will be expected and reminded to inform their legal departments that the review is taking place. The costs of their legal advice and involvement of their legal teams is at their discretion.
- 6.2 Should the Independent Chair, Chair of the CSP or the Review Panel require legal advice then Safer Bristol Partnership will be the first point of contact.

7. Media and communication

- 7.1 The management of all media and communication matters will be through the Review Panel. A single point of contact will be identified to receive media enquiries and a position statement of 'no comment' will be offered until the conclusion of the review and sign off of the overview report by the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel.