



Domestic Homicide Review – Overview Report

‘Dora’



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June 2018

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Preface

'Dora' is not the real name of the person whose homicide prompted this domestic homicide review. Her family asked for her to be referred to by that name because it has a special meaning to them. The family also asked that Dora's son, who admitted to murdering his mother, be referred to as 'Johnny' throughout this report.

The Safer Caerphilly County Borough Council Domestic Homicide Review Panel would like to express its profound condolences and sympathy to Dora's family; their loss of a much-loved mother and grand-mother is still keenly felt.

The panel would also like to thank Dora's family and her many friends for their support during such a dreadful time; it has been invaluable, particularly in attempting to view what happened through Dora's eyes. We would like to assure them all that in undertaking this review, we are seeking to learn lessons from this tragedy and to improve the response of organisations in cases of domestic abuse.

The key purpose for undertaking a domestic homicide review is to enable lessons to be learnt from homicides where a person is killed because of domestic abuse. To achieve that, professionals need to be able to understand fully what happened in each homicide, and most importantly, what needs to change to reduce the risk of such tragedies happening in the future. Dora's death met the criteria for conducting a domestic homicide review under Section 9 (3)(a) of the Domestic Violence, Crime, and Victims Act 2004, because her homicide was caused by a person to whom she was related. The Home Office defines domestic violence as:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional'.

Controlling behaviour is: *'A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.'*

Coercive behaviour is: *'An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'*

The term domestic abuse will be used throughout this review as it reflects the range of behaviour encapsulated within the above definition and avoids the inclination to view domestic abuse in terms of physical assault only.

A tribute to Dora from her family

Dora was a warm, caring person who believed in fair play and looking out for the underdog.

She had many interests and passions and touched many people in positive ways.

She also had a great sense of humour!

She leaves a legacy of writings, charitable involvement and kind acts. She was loved very much by her family and friends and is greatly missed.

1 **Introduction**

This is the report of a domestic homicide review (DHR), following the death of Dora on Tuesday 3rd May 2016; she was murdered by her son Johnny, (not his real name). It has sought to provide an independent examination of what services were provided or might have been provided to Dora by agencies that may have had contact with her, by analysing service provision, discussing any lessons identified and making recommendations, with the aim of improving the service provided to victims of domestic abuse in Caerphilly and elsewhere.

1.2 **Dora**

Dora was 75 when she died. She was a remarkable woman in many respects. She had numerous friends and associates, all of whom say she was an immensely kind and charitable lady who was always willing to help others. Dora was a regular attendee at her local church, where she contributed to its bible classes and she also worked at a charity shop. She was a member of a local historical society and having attended Welsh classes, she was excited to have secured a paid job as a bilingual tour guide at a local tourist attraction, where she had previously worked on a voluntary basis. She died only days before starting her new job.

1.3 Dora and Johnny were said to have been 'very close'; what happened was a complete shock to Dora's family and to her many friends. Local agencies knew virtually nothing about her, so there were no obvious warning signs that such tragic events were likely to unfold.

1.4 **Johnny**

Johnny was 47 when he killed his mother. He appeared at Cardiff Crown Court on 1st November 2016, where he pleaded guilty to murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, with a tariff of 12 ½ years. Following the 12 ½ years, Johnny will be eligible for parole.

1.5 When sentencing Johnny, the judge remarked, "*You accept that what you have done was 'a terrible thing'. This was the tragic and senseless murder of a good mother by her son...for your mother this would have been a terrifying ordeal. I accept that you are genuinely remorseful for the brutal acts you inflicted upon your mother*".

Comment: *There are some anomalies in the information Johnny provided to various people in the months leading up to Dora's murder, for example, the length of time he had been addicted to heroin (30-years, 20-years and 15-years respectfully) and the extent to which he was responsible for caring for his mother.*

1.6 **Contributors to this review**

In addition to Dora's daughter, four of Dora's closest friends, her employer and her parish priest have been interviewed by the review chair. Their contribution has been very much appreciated, but unfortunately none of them were able to shed light on why this dreadful event happened. The chair attempted to speak with Johnny's previous female partners, but for various reasons which will be explained as this report progresses, that was not possible.

Comment: *The inability to glean from Johnny's previous partners some insight into their relationship with him, has inevitably had an impact upon the richness of information available to the review panel.*

1.7 **Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership**

The County Borough of Caerphilly is comprised of 33 wards and has a population of just fewer than 180,000. It has the fourth highest number of people per square kilometre in Wales, the third highest percentage of people aged under 16 in Wales and the fifth lowest percentage of people aged over 65 in Wales.

1.8 Domestic abuse has a major impact on children, young people, adults and communities in Caerphilly. This issue affects people from all communities and backgrounds, and victims are often affected by other complex issues such as poverty, mental ill-health, alcohol and drug misuse and poor parenting.

1.9 In 2016 strategic governance for domestic violence and abuse and issues linked to the national 'Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' agenda was held by the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership, which is the statutory Community Safety Partnership for Caerphilly.

1.10 Domestic Abuse is one of the five priorities of the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership which are set out in the Single Integrated Plan.

1.11 The work in relation to Domestic Abuse is undertaken on behalf of the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership by the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Board.

2 **Establishing this Domestic Homicide Review**

In line with agreed protocols, on 28th June 2016 the police notified the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership of the circumstances of Dora's death.

2.1 The partnership learned that Dora and Johnny were mother and son and that they had lived together since Johnny's divorce in 2006.

- 2.2 Johnny had called for an ambulance on 3rd May 2016, saying he had injured his mother with a chainsaw in the garden. When paramedics arrived, they were met by Johnny; he was distressed, and he had some minor injuries.
- 2.3 He led the paramedics into the garden where they saw Dora lying on the ground; she had already died.
- 2.4 While waiting for the police to arrive, Johnny told the paramedics that he had been cutting wood in the garden with a chainsaw when his mother had climbed on to a tree-stump and had attacked him with some logs. He said he had lost consciousness while operating the chainsaw and that it had become caught in her clothing and that it may have cut her.
- 2.5 When the police arrived, Johnny told them that his mother had been pulling, pushing and hitting him. He said he had never seen her behaving like that before and that she had just gone *“Nuts”* and *“Ballistic”*. He added that he was pushing her away and somehow, he hit his head and the chainsaw got caught-up in her clothing.
- 2.6 One of the paramedics asked him if he and his mother had been arguing and he said, *“Nothing, nothing, nothing at all, no argument, nothing. She just went [expletive redacted] off the wall. I love her so much and she just went [expletive redacted] crazy.”*
- 2.7 Johnny was arrested, but because of his injury, he was taken straight to hospital. While there, he said to an officer, *“I don’t know what happened, she started coming towards me with a piece of wood, I still had a chainsaw in my hand. We both fell to the floor. The chainsaw was still on and cut my leg and hand. My automatic reaction was to push the chainsaw away from my leg and at this time, I made contact with my mum’s neck.”*
- 2.8 Having taken legal advice, Johnny declined to answer any questions when he was interviewed about his mother’s death at the police station. He was charged with murdering Dora and was remanded in custody.
- 2.9 As mentioned previously, because Dora and Johnny were related, and they had been members of the same household, the Safer Caerphilly Community Partnership commissioned this statutory domestic homicide review; the Home Office was formally notified of the decision on 2nd July 2016. This review began in October 2016 after the court case and was concluded in June 2018. The Community Safety Partnership acknowledges that the review has taken longer than anticipated; the operational and logistical difficulties experienced are understood and the learning will be taken forward at a regional level as part of the Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence structures.

2.10 All agencies were asked to undertake a review of the information in their possession to identify any relevant contact they may have had with Dora and with Johnny. They were also asked to seal their records.

2.11 **The purpose of a Domestic Homicide Review**

The purpose of a Domestic Homicide Review is to:

- Establish what lessons are to be identified from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and support victims of domestic abuse, including their dependent children
- Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted upon, what is expected to change as a result (and who is responsible in each agency for overseeing completion of any actions)
- Apply those lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate
- Identify what needs to change to reduce the risk of such tragedies happening in the future to prevent domestic abuse homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children, through improved intra and inter-agency working
- Ensure the review is conducted in line with best practice, with effective analysis and conclusions of the information related to the case
- Determine whether family, friends or colleagues want to participate in the review and if so, whether they were aware of any abusive behaviour from the alleged perpetrator to the victim, prior to the homicide.

2.12 **Principles of the review**

The review panel has striven to understand the 'story' of what took place between Dora and Johnny and paint for itself a picture of their relationship:

- It has been conducted objectively, independently and is evidence-based
- It has been guided by humanity, compassion and empathy, with Dora's voice at the heart of the process

- It has asked questions to prevent future harm and to learn lessons for the future
- It has respected the principles of equality and diversity
- It has been conducted in a spirit of openness and transparency, whilst safeguarding confidential information, subject to legal constraints
- It has planned to effect change and to disseminate lessons that were identified during the process.

2.13 **Terms of reference for the review**

The review has:

- Invited responses from agencies or individuals identified through the process and requested Individual Management Reviews (IMR's) from each one that was involved with Dora, and/or Johnny (See 'Individual Management Reviews' section below)
- Considered each agency's involvement with Dora and Johnny between 1st January 2002 and Dora's death on 3rd May 2016, subject to any information emerging that prompted a review of any earlier incidents or events that were relevant. (See 'Scope of the Review' below)
- Sought the involvement of Dora's family and friends and Johnny and his previous partners, to provide a robust analysis of what happened
- Determined how matters concerning family, the public and media should be managed before, during and after the review and who should take responsibility for it
- Taken account of coroners or criminal proceedings (including disclosure issues) in terms of timing and contact with Dora's family and friends to ensure that relevant information could be shared without incurring significant delay in the review process or compromise to the judicial process
- Considered whether the review panel needed to obtain independent legal advice about any aspect of the review
- Ensured that the review process took account of lessons learned from research and previous domestic homicide reviews.

2.14 The review has addressed:

- Whether the incident in which Dora died was an isolated event or whether there were any warning signs and whether more could be done to raise awareness of services available to victims of domestic violence
- Whether there were any barriers experienced by Dora or family/friends/colleagues in reporting any abuse in Caerphilly or elsewhere, including whether they knew how to report domestic abuse should they have wanted to
- Whether Dora had experienced abuse in previous relationships in Caerphilly or elsewhere, and whether this experience impacted on her likelihood of seeking support in the months before she died
- If there were opportunities for professionals to 'routinely enquire' as to any domestic abuse experienced by Dora that were missed
- Whether Johnny had any previous history of abusive behaviour to an intimate partner, a relative or a co-habitee and whether this was known to any agencies
- If there were opportunities for agency intervention in relation to domestic abuse regarding Dora and Johnny or to dependent children that were missed
- If there are any training or awareness raising requirements that are necessary to ensure a greater knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse processes and/or services in the region
- Whether there are any equality and diversity issues that appear pertinent to Dora, Johnny and any dependent children e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2.15 **Scope of the review**

After discussion, it was agreed to review each agency's involvement with Dora and with Johnny from the beginning of 2002 to the date of Dora's death on 3rd May 2016.

Comment: *It was immediately apparent that there was very little agency information available to the panel about the relationship between Dora and Johnny, so the scope of the review was extended to include the period Johnny was known to have been in personal relationships with at least two previous female partners.*

2.16 As well as the IMR's, each agency was asked to provide a chronology of interaction with Dora and with Johnny, including what agency decisions were made and what actions were taken. The IMR's considered the terms of reference and whether internal procedures had been followed and whether, on reflection, they had been adequate. The IMR authors were asked to arrive at a conclusion about what had happened from the perspective of their own agency and to make recommendations, if appropriate.

2.17 **Methodology**

This overview report has been compiled from analysis of the multi-agency chronology, the information supplied in the IMRs and during interviews with Dora's daughter, three of her best friends, her employer and her parish priest. Johnny has also been interviewed. None of Johnny's previous partners have been spoken to (see later), but the original witness statement made to the police by his most recent partner has been reviewed and elements of it are included in this report.

2.18 The findings of previous reviews and research into various aspects of domestic abuse have also been considered. Dora had limited involvement with services and although family and friends participated in the review, the panel felt there may have been gaps in the information they were able to provide. Where appropriate therefore, the report will reference what the panel know from other reliable sources about adult-child to parent violence.

2.19 **Participating agencies**

The following agencies were asked to give chronological accounts of their contact with Dora and with Johnny, between 2002 and 3rd May 2016:

- South Wales Police
- Gwent Police
- Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
- Wales Community Rehabilitation Company
- Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services
- Llamau
- Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service
- Kaleidoscope
- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB)
- Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

2.20 **DHR Panel Chair and Overview Report Writer**

The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership commissioned Paul Johnston to undertake the role of review chair and report author. Paul has senior management experience in many aspects of homicide review and investigation and has been involved in several domestic homicide reviews in England and Wales. He has been a special advisor to an organisation that provides domestic violence and sexual abuse services, including a male perpetrator programme and an IDVA service for high-risk victims. He is a member of an international investigation facility into sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones and is a consultant to an independent European human rights advocacy service that seeks to secure justice for victims of human rights abuses, mainly in Eastern Europe. He is an expert witness in several cases before the European Court of Human Rights involving abduction, murder and domestic abuse femicide.

2.21 Paul is not a member of the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership and is not associated with any of the agencies involved in the review. He was once a member of the West Yorkshire Police, but retired from that organisation 13-years ago; he has not been employed by the police in any capacity since that time.

2.22 **The DHR Panel**

The review panel was made up as follows:

Name	Organisation
Paul Johnston	Chair/report author – Johnston and Blockley
Robert Hartshorn	Head of Public Protection, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Rebecca Haycock	Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Regional Team (Newport City Council)
Sue Hurley	Independent Vulnerable Person Manager, South Wales Police
Nicky Brain	Superintendent, Gwent Police
Heather Nicolls/Sinead Lewis	National Probation Service
Lisa Meredith	Gwent Area Planning Board - Regional Substance Misuse Team Manager

Jayne Wheeler-Sexton	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB)
Becky Griffiths	Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult social services
Fiona Davies	Safeguarding Specialist WAST – (attended one meeting)
Jacqueline Hay & Sam Lewis (change of post-holder)	Head of Women’s Services – Llamau
Diana Binding	Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

2.23 The review panel met on the following dates:

11 th October 2016	3 rd August 2017
24 th November 2016	20 th October 2017
2 nd March 2017	

2.24 **Parallel processes**

There was a thorough police investigation into the circumstances of Dora’s death and subsequent court proceedings, which resulted in the conviction of Johnny for her murder.

2.25 Dora’s death was referred to the Coroner, who opened an inquest and then adjourned it because Johnny had been charged with her murder.

2.26 **The police investigation**

Investigators could not find any independent witnesses to what happened to Dora, nor was a motive ever established for her murder.

2.27 The police discovered that Johnny had purchased the chainsaw two-years previously and that it had been professionally serviced on a regular basis. They also established that the safety mechanisms were functioning properly and that if dropped/let go of, the saw would stop automatically.

2.28 The police spoke to a delivery driver who had given a package to Johnny during the afternoon of Dora’s murder. In the driver’s opinion, Johnny behaved in a ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ manner. When he first asked Johnny if he would take the parcel, he initially

said "No", but then said, "Of course I will". The delivery driver said that Johnny's tone of voice was initially aggressive, but it then changed to what he described as being normal.

2.29 CCTV footage was discovered of Dora shopping that afternoon. She appeared to have been fit and well and although it is not possible to be sure from CCTV footage alone, she did not appear to have been pre-occupied or concerned about anything.

2.30 Just over half-an-hour after the CCTV footage was recorded, a neighbour heard somebody shouting "Oi" or "Ai" loudly from the vicinity of Dora's house. The neighbour shouted back "What do you want?", but there was no reply. Around the same time, he heard a chainsaw being used.

2.31 Another witness saw Johnny 'jet-washing' in the garden and then using a machine that sounded to him to be a hedge-trimmer. Someone else saw Dora hanging-out some washing in the garden, just after 5pm. That witness could also hear a chainsaw.

2.32 The telephone call by Johnny asking for an ambulance was made less than 20-minutes later.

3 Summary of what agencies knew about Dora and Johnny

As mentioned previously, agencies knew virtually nothing about Dora and very little about Johnny. The next section of this report will detail what each agency did know before the dreadful events of 3rd May 2016. An analysis of the involvement of the agency will also be included.

3.1 South Wales Police

What South Wales Police knew about Dora

Apart from receiving two telephone calls from Dora about Johnny, one to report an assault on him and the other to report him missing from home (see below), South Wales Police had no contact with Dora.

3.2 What South Wales Police knew about Johnny

On 21st February 2002, Johnny contacted South Wales Police to say he had been in an argument with his wife who had armed herself with a knife and had stabbed him in his shoulder. She was arrested and she admitted what she had done, but Johnny declined to make a statement of complaint and said he did not want any further action to be taken against her, adding that he would not give evidence if the matter went to court.

Comment: *It had been the intention of the review chair to ask Johnny's former wife (Partner B), if she would participate in this review, even though her relationship with Johnny ended about 14-years previously, but that proved impossible because she could not be traced.*

- 3.3 On 17th January 2003, Dora reported to the police that Johnny had been seriously assaulted in Cardiff. He had been struck on his head several times with a wheel-brace, which had caused serious fractures to his skull. An arrest was made, but other than that, no further details of how the case was progressed are now available.
- 3.4 Johnny contacted South Wales Police in August 2003, to say that Partner B had damaged his car while trying to get in it to remove some of her property. She was arrested, but then Johnny told the officers that the matter had been resolved and that she had offered to pay for the damage. No further action was taken.
- 3.5 In July 2004, Johnny reported that he had been assaulted by a group of male teenagers in an unprovoked attack; he had been hit with a bottle and had been kicked and punched. The police made enquiries and found witnesses to the attack, but despite a thorough investigation, the identity of the assailants and the motive for the incident were never established.
- 3.6 On 22nd October 2005, the police and an ambulance were called to Johnny's home, because he was thought to have suffered a heroin overdose. He was taken to hospital. The police searched the premises and found a small amount of heroin and some other drug paraphernalia. Johnny was arrested after his discharge from hospital and was later found guilty of possession of the drugs. He was sentenced to a Community Order for 12-months.

Comment: *Johnny was not living with Dora at that time.*

- 3.7 During the early-hours of 23rd December 2012, Johnny and his then partner (Partner C), became embroiled in an argument outside a nightclub. The police attended and discovered that the couple had been out together that night and had been drinking. The incident was witnessed by door staff and was captured on CCTV. Johnny pushed Partner C to the ground and when she got to her feet again, he grabbed her around her throat. They had both been drinking. Partner C was not injured and said she would not support a prosecution. Nevertheless, Johnny was arrested; he admitted assaulting her and said he was sorry. He was given an official caution by the police.

Comment: *It was established that the couple had been in a relationship for 8 – 9 months and that they were living with Dora.*

The review has identified good information-sharing practices between South Wales Police (where the incident happened) and Gwent Police (where both Johnny and Partner C lived).

- 3.8 On 20th June 2014, police officers saw Johnny and Partner D sitting in a large van, which was parked in Cardiff. He was in the driver's seat and she was the front-seat passenger. Between them, strapped in a child-seat, was a young child. Another man approached the driver's side of the van and handed a small object to Johnny, in exchange for what looked like cash. He then left and the van was driven away. When the police stopped it, they found a small amount of heroin in the passenger foot-well. Neither Johnny nor Partner D admitted it was theirs, so they were both reported for summons for possession of a controlled substance. Both were later found guilty and were fined.

Comment: *Partner D died quite suddenly of a rare disease prior to the commissioning of this review. The child was her 18-month-old daughter. The police made an urgent referral to Children's Services immediately after the incident mentioned above.*

- 3.9 During the afternoon of 6th September 2015, Dora telephoned the South Wales Police to report Johnny missing from home. She said he had gone out in her car to meet a friend in Cardiff, but he hadn't returned, which was out of character. She explained that she had made enquiries with the police custody suites and the hospital to see if he was there and had also tried his mobile phone, but he hadn't answered it. Less than two-hours later, Dora telephoned the police again to say Johnny had returned home and that he was safe and well.

3.10 **Analysis of the involvement of South Wales Police**

When it was necessary to make arrests in respect of allegations of assault, South Wales Police acted efficiently and in-line with the policies and procedures that were in place at the time. The fact that some information has not been available to this review is due to data loss during the transition from one computer system to another.

- 3.11 Again, during the investigation of the incidents where Johnny had been the victim of assaults, policies and procedures were followed correctly and there was evidence of a concerted effort to find the culprits.

- 3.12 When the police attended the incident outside the nightclub, they could see that Partner C was upset, but she had no visible injuries. Even though she was drunk, she made it clear that she would not make a statement of complaint. Nevertheless, the police arrested Johnny, who was also drunk, which was good practice. The following day they interviewed him when he was sober and after he had admitted assaulting Partner C, the police went back to Partner C to see if she might change her mind

about making a complaint. She did not, even though she told the officers that there had been 'previous incidents' between them; she would not elaborate further. Again, this was an example of good practice by the police.

- 3.13 The officer ensured that an appropriate risk-assessment was carried out, which indicated that Partner C was at 'medium-risk' of harm, so referrals were made to Gwent Police, Cardiff Women's Aid and the Women's Safety Unit.

Comment: *The referral was made to Gwent Police because Partner C lived in that policing jurisdiction.*

Women's Aid and the Women's Safety Unit have told this review that they did not have any information about Partner C; there appears therefore to have been a breakdown in communication between them and South Wales Police.

This incident was the first occasion that Johnny had come to the notice of the police as a perpetrator of violence.

- 3.14 The incident that resulted in the prosecution of Johnny and Partner D for possession of a small amount of heroin was also handled professionally and proportionately. The officers were rightly concerned for the welfare of the child and they made sure that Cardiff Children's Social Services were notified of the situation as a matter of urgency.

- 3.15 **Gwent Police**

What Gwent Police knew about Dora

The only contact Gwent Police had with Dora was when she contacted them about Johnny or when the police called at her house about him.

- 3.16 **What Gwent Police knew about Johnny**

In June 2006, Gwent police were called to a private address (not Dora's home), because Johnny had been banging on the front door. When they got there, they arrested him for a public order offence. Apart from the fact that he had an injury of some sort, no other details are known about the incident.

- 3.17 In August 2007, the police received a complaint from a woman that Johnny had been verbally abusive to her while she had been walking her dog. Dora had apparently been with Johnny at the time. Officers went to Dora's house, where they spoke to her about the incident. There were no offences disclosed and no further action was taken.

Comment: *The officers did not speak to Johnny about the incident.*

- 3.18 On 7th January 2008, a request was made of Gwent Police by the police in Carmarthenshire to assist in the arrest of Johnny for supplying Class A drugs. He was duly arrested.

Comment: *Johnny's arrest was part of a prolonged investigation after he had conspired with others to supply heroin and crack-cocaine.*

- 3.19 In October 2011, Johnny was arrested at Dora's house having been recalled to prison because he had breached the conditions of his licence, having tested positive for heroin (he had previously been sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment for drugs supply).

Comment: *The term of imprisonment was the culmination of the Carmarthenshire investigation mentioned above. A condition of his licence was that he remain clean from drugs; the recall to prison was because he had failed a drugs-test.*

- 3.20 The following month, a member of the public reported that a vehicle owned by Dora was being driven erratically. The police stopped it and breathalysed Johnny who had been driving. The breath-test was negative and he was given a warning about his driving.

Comment: *Dora was not in the vehicle at the time. There is no suggestion that Johnny was suspected of driving while under the influence of drugs.*

- 3.21 On 16th January 2012, Johnny reported to the police that the same vehicle had been damaged while it had been parked outside Dora's house.

- 3.22 In early April 2013, Gwent Police received a call from Caerphilly Social Services, who were requesting that a 'marker' be placed on the address of Partner C, because the social worker was concerned for her safety. Partner C had apparently told the social worker that Johnny had threatened her.

Comment: *There are significant gaps in the minutes of the MARAC as well as detail of who (if anyone) completed the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk-assessment (DASH risk-assessment). A recommendation of this review is that the administration of the MARAC is improved.*

- 3.23 The police spoke to Partner C, but she did not want to discuss the situation. All she wanted was for her possessions to be returned to her. The police went to see Johnny to give him a verbal harassment warning.

Comment: *Partner C declined an invitation to participate in this review and to respect her privacy, only the basic facts of her association with Johnny has been included in this report.*

3.24 On 6th September 2015, Dora reported to the police that Johnny was missing from home, but less than two-hours later, she called back to say he had returned home safe and well. She said there had been a misunderstanding and he had apparently been with friends.

3.25 The next time Gwent police had any dealings with Johnny was when he was arrested on 3rd May 2016, for murdering Dora.

3.26 **Analysis of the involvement of Gwent Police**

Gwent Police had very little contact with Dora. Its dealings with Johnny were all in line with the policies and procedures that were in place at the time.

3.27 **Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)**

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has responsibility for the management of high and very high risk of harm offenders and those subject to multi-agency public protection management. It is a statutory criminal justice service and was established as the National Probation Service (now combined with Her Majesty's Prison Service and renamed) on 1st June 2014, along with 21 community rehabilitation companies (CRCs) that manage low and medium risk offenders. Together, HMPPS and the CRCs have replaced the former 35 Probation Trusts. HMPPS retains ownership of historical records of cases that were previously managed by Probation Trusts.

3.28 **What HMPPS knew about Dora**

HMPPS had no contact with Dora.

3.29 **What HMPPS knew about Johnny**

Johnny was given a 12-month Community Rehabilitation Order on 15th April 2002, for obtaining a pecuniary advantage by criminal deception. He told the court that he had committed the offence to fund his addiction to heroin and cocaine.

3.30 Probation records show that support was given to Johnny to address his misuse of heroin; he completed a reduction programme and was 'clean' at the end of the order. He also secured employment as a delivery driver.

3.31 On 21st December 2005, he was sentenced to a Community Order with a 12-month supervision requirement and a requirement that he engage with employment services. He had already been referred to a substance misuse service and said he was abstinent from heroin. He said he was living with his mother, but that he was eager to secure independent accommodation.

3.32 Johnny was sentenced to 78-months imprisonment on 6th June 2008, for possessing heroin with intent to supply it. He completed an 'Addressing Substance Related Offending Programme' while in prison and was released to Dora's address after she had agreed for that to happen. He was recalled to prison on 17th October 2011, because of heroin use. He was released again on 11th November 2011.

3.33 It was when he was on that period of licence that he and Partner C formed a relationship. Probation records show that on 5th April 2013, the police gave him a verbal harassment warning and he was told not to contact her or her family and that the case was discussed at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) on 29th May 2013. His licence expired on 10th July 2014.

3.34 **Analysis of the involvement of HMPPS**

Policy and procedure was adhered to throughout the time Johnny was subject to Probation supervision.

3.35 **Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (Wales CRC)**

Wales CRC supervise low and medium risk offenders in the community, subject to licence conditions or community orders. It delivers the sentence of the courts and is responsible for the delivery, oversight and enforcement of Community Payback Requirements, by ensuring that offenders complete the unpaid work-hours ordered by the court.

3.36 **What Wales CRC knew about Dora**

Wales CRC had no involvement with Dora.

3.37 **What Wales CRC knew about Johnny**

Wales CRC supervised Johnny to manage a 200-hour unpaid work requirement of a Community Order imposed at court on 13th November 2014 for theft and handling stolen-goods. His first appointment was on 25th November 2014 and after successful completion of the programme, the order was terminated on 11th June 2015. He had he attended 24-appointments during that time and had failed to attend on five-occasions, due either to ill-health or employment reasons, all of which were acceptable to Wales CRC.

3.38 **Analysis of the involvement of Wales CRC**

The unpaid work requirement was well managed and was satisfactorily completed.

3.39 **Summary of social care, medical, mental-health and substance misuse services**

3.40 **Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services**

Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services department, provide assessment under the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. The department works with adults over 18 who reside within the county of Caerphilly and present to the Local Authority as requiring an assessment under the legislation. The department is responsible for identifying individuals' social care needs and working to resolve them with the person concerned. Following an assessment, there are a range of services the organisation provides and the department also works closely with colleagues in health and the third sector, making referrals as appropriate.

3.41 **What Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services knew about Dora**

The Adult Social Services Department had no contact with Dora.

3.42 **What Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services knew about Johnny**

In December 2015, Johnny sought assistance to access opioid substitution treatment and for treatment for Hepatitis C. The referral was forwarded to the Social Services Substance Misuse Team. During assessment on 28th January 2016, he said he lived with his mother and that he was her carer. His needs were not something Social Services could assist with, so he was referred to the Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service (GSSMS) and the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS).

Comment: *An entry in the GP's notes dated 17th December 2015, states that Johnny was still using heroin and that he was asking to be prescribed Codeine because he did not have any money to buy heroin. He was not given a prescription and was advised to contact GDAS.*

3.43 Johnny was referred again in February 2016 by the Caerphilly substance misuse team due to his mental health and Hepatitis C status. He was deemed unsuitable, because he was not with secondary mental health services and was also not in treatment for his Hepatitis C.

3.44 The social worker telephoned Johnny and arranged to meet him at Drugaid on 28th January 2016. Johnny said he had been an intravenous heroin user for about 20-

years and that he had recently found out that he had Hepatitis C and wanted to commence treatment for it. He also said he had very little contact with treatment services and was put off by *"The hoops they make you jump through"*, that he did not require counselling, peer support or relapse prevention. He just wanted a methadone 'script' and Hepatitis C treatment.

3.45 Johnny explained that he lived with his mother, who he cared for. Apart from the Hepatitis C, he said he was generally in good health. He also said had been injecting in his groin and was therefore at risk of hitting an artery and losing his leg. He added that he was not working, although he had many jobs over the years. He was managing financially, although most of his spare money went on heroin.

3.46 The following day, the social worker spoke to GSSMS and was told that Johnny had been referred to GDAS because had not met GSSMS's treatment criteria. Johnny's Hepatitis C treatment, his injecting into his groin and a reactive mental-health problem were discussed and he was re-referred to GSSMS.

3.47 On 2nd February 2016, the social worker telephoned GSSMS again and was told that they would still not accept Johnny into treatment. The social worker then telephoned GDAS who said they had a four-month waiting-list for methadone treatment. He then called Johnny to tell him about the waiting-list and to say that a doctor who prescribed on behalf of GDAS, also did it privately and he could be seen immediately. It would however, cost him about £300 initially and then £30 per-week.

3.48 Johnny was angry and frustrated and he queried why someone who could pay could get treatment immediately, but he had to wait for months. He also said he did not want support with rehabilitation, housing, social benefits or with accessing community services. The social worker told Johnny that he was welcome to telephone him if he needed any help in the future.

3.49 **Analysis of the involvement of Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services, Substance Misuse Team**

In February 2016, the social worker appropriately asked Johnny about his carer relationship with Dora and was told that they lived in separate parts of the house and that he was there to help his mother if she needed it. He acknowledged that there were no formal care arrangements between himself and his mother.

3.50 The referral by the social worker was allocated within prescribed timescales and was appropriate.

3.51 **ABUHB Specialist Substance Misuse Service (GSSMS)**

What GSSMS knew about Dora

GSSMS had no contact with Dora.

3.52 **What GSSMS knew about Johnny**

In 2012, Johnny was referred to GSSMS by his GP for help with his heroin misuse. He did not meet the service criteria because he was not in contact with secondary mental-health services, there were no child protection issues and no physical health complications, so he was advised to contact Kaleidoscope or Drugaid (non-statutory substance misuse agencies).

Comment: *GSSMS referral criteria is:*

- *Mental health issues (must be with secondary mental health services)*
- *Pregnancy*
- *Child Protection concerns*
- *Physical health complications*
- *Alcohol Related Brain Damage*
- *Requiring in-patient alcohol detox due to physical health complexities*
- *Receiving treatment for Hepatitis C*

3.53 He was referred again in January 2016, by the Caerphilly drug and alcohol team following a self-referral on 7th January to their contact number. He was offered an assessment appointment for 18th January 2016, but he cancelled the appointment. Following an internal discussion, it was determined that he still did not to meet the service criteria for the same reasons as previously. His details were passed to the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS – a non-statutory substance misuse agency), who work with clients that do not meet GSSMS criteria.

3.54 Johnny was referred again in February 2016 by the Caerphilly drug and alcohol team due to his mental health and Hepatitis C status. He was deemed unsuitable, because he was not with secondary mental health services and was also not in treatment for his Hepatitis C.

Comment: *Since the inception of the new GDAS service in 2015, Hepatitis C diagnosis is not an essential GSSMS complex service criteria requirement, because community drug and alcohol services can support clients with Hepatitis C diagnosis as well as other medical services such as GP and Hepatitis teams. GSSMS support clients if there are complex co-morbid issues, where community drug alcohol services cannot offer the appropriate level of clinical or specialist therapeutic interventions. Gwent conducts a weekly Joint Allocation Meeting (JAM) where referrals into the*

appropriate level of service can be discussed. Multi-agency representatives attend these meetings including GSSMS, GDAS and other parties, where appropriate.

3.55 **Analysis of the involvement of the GSSMS**

Policy and procedure was adhered to throughout, but the reason why Johnny cancelled his appointment on 18th January 2016 was not documented, nor was the rationale behind the decision that he did not meet the GSSMS criteria following the cancellation of his appointment.

3.56 The letters that were sent to Johnny and to the Caerphilly substance misuse team unusually did not suggest GDAS as an appropriate alternative agency.

3.57 **Kaleidoscope**

Kaleidoscope is a charity that provides treatment and support for people with substance misuse problems and their concerned others. Between 2010 and 2015, they provided Gwent Prescribing Services to people with opiate dependencies for both community and criminal justice providers. From May 2015 onwards, Kaleidoscope has been commissioned as part of a consortium to provide a community and criminal justice integrated service including clinical and therapeutic support to service users through the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service, named GDAS. GDAS provide a variety of services and interventions including:

- Referral and assessment
- Harm reduction support
- Prescribing services, primarily for opiates and/or alcohol
- Psychosocial interventions including 1:1's and group work
- Significant other support
- Recovery

3.58 **What Kaleidoscope knew about Dora**

Kaleidoscope had no contact with Dora.

3.59 **What Kaleidoscope knew about Johnny**

Johnny attended for a nurse assessment on 20th June 2011 and he saw a doctor for a review four-days later. He said he was living with his mother, that he had no children and that he was unemployed.

3.60 On 22nd July 2011, he attended another review with his prescribing doctor. He reported occasional heroin use on top of his methadone prescription after having a row with his girlfriend. A treatment contract was put in place to require him to

attend weekly with his case manager and to undertake a medical review with the prescribing doctor. He attended similar medical reviews in August and October 2011.

- 3.61 On 10th February 2016, Johnny telephoned the service via the single point of contact making a self-referral into treatment and to ask for a substitute opiate prescription. He said he was injecting 1gm of heroin daily. He added that he was living with his mother who was 70 and that recently she had broken her leg.
- 3.62 This self-referral was initially directed to the criminal justice aspect of the integrated service, as Johnny had previous treatment episodes with the Drug Intervention Programme. The criminal justice component confirmed that Johnny did not meet their criteria and on 17th February 2016, the community engagement substance misuse team telephoned Johnny and arranged an initial assessment meeting on 24th February at 2pm.
- 3.63 On 24th February 2016, he attended the initial assessment with the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service engagement team. He said he did not have a partner and that he was a carer for his mother. He also said he had recently been diagnosed as Hepatitis C positive. He was given a substance misuse risk-assessment, which did not raise any concerns. He said he had no thoughts about harming others and that he had not been in any special hospitals or been involved in violent incidents. He did say that he sensed a lack of control over his life.
- 3.64 It is stated within Johnny's PalBase case management notes that he had requested that no letters be sent to his home address.

Comment: *PalBase is a web-based solution which was developed with the help of drug intervention programme agencies in England and Wales to manage people referred for treatment and care.*

Substance misuse assessments (initial, comprehensive and risk-assessments) include a variety of key areas including safeguarding to self and others, harm reduction as well as understanding of service user therapeutic, holistic and prescribing needs. The assessments ask about family members and the impact this may have on the individual's substance misuse behaviour. At this time there were no particular questions about the needs of a carer such as Johnny. Family support services are offered within GDAS, but this is aimed at significant others. A recommendation to come out of this review is that the needs of a carer are taken into consideration.

- 3.65 Records show that on 4th March 2016, Johnny attended a Naloxone group meeting and was issued a naloxone kit. Johnny had said he had attended the Drug and Alcohol Service meeting the previous week.

Comment: *Naloxone is a medication used to block the effects of opioids, especially in overdose.*

3.66 On 4th March 2016, Johnny telephoned to ask when his next Drug and Alcohol Service appointment was. On 23rd March 2016, he was referred by the engagement team to an active treatment worker. He was contacted by the service on 30th March to offer him an appointment the following day. During the conversation, he asked how long the waiting list was for substitute opiate medication.

3.67 On 1st April 2016, he completed a care plan. He said that his 'triggers' to return to heroin use were 'traumatic events in life such as relationship breakdown, job loss and deaths'. In this appointment PalBase states that Johnny asked about the waiting list and he was advised that there was still a lengthy wait. PalBase does not confirm if a timescale was discussed, but it does state that later in April 2016, Johnny was told he was fourth on the waiting list.

Comment: *GDAS operate a waiting list as and when required dependent on the demand for substitute prescribing. The waiting list operates on one-by-one basis unless determined by clinical need. There is not always a waiting list because services cannot predict demand and there is a maximum number of prescribing placements at any one time. All service users on a clinical waiting list receive therapeutic and harm-reduction support from either the engagement or active treatment teams whilst waiting for a prescription. This is in line with Welsh Government key performance indicators.*

3.68 He completed a comprehensive assessment on 21st April 2016. He said he had previously been in addiction units and that he had been 'kicked-out' due to clashes of personality with other patients. He said he was caring for his mother and that she was not aware of his heroin use and neither was his sister. He added that his mother was old and that he had to do everything for her, including the shopping and housework.

Comment: *The extent to which Dora knew of Johnny's continued use of heroin (or other drugs) is not known. Certainly, at the time she agreed he could stay at her house upon his release from prison, she will have known he was serving a sentence for drug-related matters.*

3.69 **Analysis of the involvement of Kaleidoscope**

The treatment and non-structured interventions provided to Johnny were compliant with the Welsh Government treatment framework and the various assessments that were undertaken all adhered to best-practice guidance.

3.70 No safeguarding risks were highlighted and his reporting of feeling a lack of control over his life was not an unusual response and is an area of dependent behaviour that is addressed during treatment.

3.71 It is a recommendation of this review that the substance misuse assessments ask a specific question about whether the service user referred into treatment has any specific carers needs in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

3.72 **Llamau**

Llamau is Wales' leading charity tackling homelessness and abuse. It provides an integrated domestic abuse service within Caerphilly, including prevention and early intervention, high-quality support, multi-agency working and longer-term recovery. Within Caerphilly, Llamau provides both refuge and out-reach support for victims and their families alongside a wide range of community-based programmes and specialist support services for children and young people.

3.73 **What Llamau knew about Dora**

Llamau had no contact with Dora.

3.74 **What Llamau knew about Johnny**

Llamau had no direct contact with Johnny, but his partner at the time, Partner C, was referred to them in April 2013.

3.75 The referral had been made by the Mental-Health Team. Llamau arranged for Partner C to meet a specialist member of staff, which she did. Partner C was referred to the MARAC on 29th May 2013.

3.76 **Analysis of the involvement of Llamau**

Llamau's established procedures were followed throughout in respect of Partner C.

3.77 **GP's records - Dora**

On 20th December 2015, Dora was taken to the hospital accident and emergency department by ambulance having suffered a fall off her front door-step at midnight; she had a broken ankle which required surgery.

Comment: *This was a routine admission and there was nothing in Dora's presentation that gave rise to consider routine questioning about domestic abuse.*

3.78 Dora returned to the hospital on 5th January 2016, for a follow-up appointment at the fracture clinic and then again on 2nd February 2016, when the plaster-cast on her ankle was replaced with a walking boot. On 14th March, Dora attended another follow-up appointment at the clinic; she said she was driving again and that she was not in any pain.

3.79 **GP's records - Johnny**

On 13th January 2012, Johnny visited his GP requesting help to come off a 15-year addiction to heroin. The GP referred him to the Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service, but he did not meet their criteria for treatment.

3.80 On 14th February 2012, Johnny was assessed by the Drug and Alcohol Reduction Service because he had requested Subutex treatment for his long-standing opiate addiction (he stated he had been addicted since he was 19). Subutex therapy was not provided and Johnny was advised to go back to his GP. A letter was sent to the GP to that effect.

Comment: *The Subutex Assisted Opiate Withdrawal Programme is designed to help those dependent on narcotic pain killers, heroin and other opiates to become drug free with little or none of the pain usually associated with coming off the drug.*

3.81 A letter within the GP's notes indicate that on 27th February 2012, Johnny attended the Moon Bridge detoxification centre, requesting treatment for his long-standing opiate addiction. He said he had been using drugs since he was 16 and that he had realised he had a heroin problem when he was 27. He added that he had tried various treatments over the years, with some success. He was accepted on a Subutex programme, which was to be administered by a chemist.

Comment: *The Moon Bridge detoxification centre no longer exists. Its doctor at the time made a statement to the original police investigation simply saying she met Johnny on 24th June 2011 through the Kaleidoscope programme and then again in 4th March 2012 in a private capacity. The doctor handed her notes and her prescribing log to the police, but they have since been destroyed because they were not used in evidence.*

3.82 A letter to the GP dated 10th May 2012, stated that Johnny had been heroin-free since using Subutex, which was now being reduced. The letter added that he was now attending regular meetings with 'Narcotics Anonymous', that he was sleeping much better and was looking to be Subutex-free within the next few months.

3.83 A further letter from Moon Bridge dated 12th June 2012, provided an update on Johnny's treatment programme. He was reported to be detoxified from heroin and that he had not used illicit substances throughout the detoxification programme. He

had been discharged with no follow-up but was still engaged with his worker in the Drug Intervention Programme and with Narcotics Anonymous.

3.84 Johnny saw his GP on 16th November 2015 and said he was concerned about his friend who may recently have been diagnosed with Hepatitis C and who was now in treatment. Johnny said he was worried that he too may have Hepatitis. He added that he was currently smoking cannabis but was not taking any other drugs. He was referred for tests for Hepatitis.

3.85 As mentioned previously, an entry in the GP's notes dated 17th December 2015, stated that Johnny was still using heroin and that he was asking to be prescribed Codeine because he did not have any money to buy heroin. (He was not given a prescription and was advised to contact the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service).

3.86 On the same day, Johnny referred himself to Adult Social Services, asking for support from the Substance Misuse Team. The person who received the call described Johnny as sounding emotional; he said he wanted to make a change to his life, that he had been using heroin for 30-years and was currently using 1gm daily. He said he had lost his family, had no social life and no money. He also said he could have Hepatitis C which had been the catalyst for seeking help and that he was waiting for the test results. He added that he wanted help either that day or before Christmas.

Comment: *The call was progressed for an assessment with GSSMS and an appointment was made to assess his individual needs on 18th January 2016. Johnny's social worker was notified of the appointment.*

Johnny cancelled the appointment with GSSMS. His case was discussed at a Joint Allocations Meeting on 25th January 2016 and it was agreed that his details would be passed to the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS), a non-statutory substance misuse agency who work with clients that do not meet GSSMS criteria.

3.87 On 21st January 2016, Johnny was confirmed as being positive for Hepatitis C. The notes stated that he was still using heroin, that he had been referred for a scan and to GDAS for further blood tests.

3.88 Finally, a letter in the hospital notes dated 29th January 2016, states that a new referral was made to GSSMS on Johnny's behalf by his social worker in the Substance Misuse Team.

3.89 **Analysis of GP involvement**

The involvement of the GP's in the care of Dora and of Johnny was routine and established procedures were followed.

3.90 **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

As mentioned previously, on 5th April 2013, the Caerphilly Social Services Mental Health Assessment Team asked the police to place a marker on Partner C's address. A police officer spoke to her, but she did not want to discuss the matter in any detail. At her request, the officer saw Johnny and warned him not to contact or communicate with her. The officer had been told that Partner C had been advised to engage with Women's Services (Llamau) to be risk assessed and referred into MARAC, but being unaware whether that had happened, the officer made the referral.

Comment: *As mentioned previously, it is not known whether a DASH risk-assessment was made, but even without one, there will have been sufficient concern to warrant a referral to MARAC.*

3.91 **Analysis of the MARAC**

The review panel's ability to analyse the MARAC process has been limited because the DASH risk-assessment, MARAC referral and a full attendance list for the meeting of 26th May 2013 cannot be found. Although the panel had access to the minutes of the meeting, they were not of sufficient detail to have been of any benefit to this review.

Comment: *It has not been possible to make an assessment about whether opportunities for agencies to share information were effectively utilised.*

3.92 **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust**

Dora

On 19th December 2015, at nearly midnight, a female neighbour had witnessed Dora falling off a step. An ambulance was dispatched and Dora was taken to hospital in it, suffering from an injury to her left ankle; she was in considerable pain.

Comment: *The identity of the neighbour is not known*

3.93 **Johnny**

During the early-hours of the morning on 13th October 2007, the police contacted the ambulance service asking for assistance at Dora's address. They had received a call from a male (Johnny), who was screaming that he wanted the police and an ambulance. He was taken to hospital by ambulance where it was recorded that he had been assaulted and that he had a laceration to his forehead. There is no mention within the documentation as to who the assailant was.

- 3.94 On 3rd May 2016, Johnny telephoned the service saying that his mother was in the garden and was unresponsive. With difficulty, the call-taker coaxed Johnny to perform CPR (he kept leaving the phone). When the crew arrived, they found Dora in the garden; she had already died. The police were in attendance. Johnny had minor injuries and he was taken to hospital.
- 3.95 The next section of this report outlines what Johnny told the review chair about his relationship with his mother.

4 Interview with Johnny in prison

The review chair wrote to Johnny to explain that a domestic homicide review was taking place and to ask whether he would be prepared to participate in it. He responded immediately saying he would take part and arrangements were then made to interview him in prison.

Comment: *Accounts provided by convicted perpetrators are often a useful source of information for domestic homicide reviews. When an interview does take place, invariably it is not possible to challenge what is said by the perpetrator, and there could be any number of reasons why explanations provided may be inconsistent with other known aspects of a case. Such contributions, while welcome, should always be treated with due scepticism and with an open-mind.*

- 4.1 Johnny was extremely polite and softly-spoken throughout the interview. He started by asking what domestic homicide reviews were intended to achieve and how and why they had come about. He appeared genuinely interested in the process, but his response was, “Good luck with that one, you’ll find no lessons to be learned, because there aren’t any. There was no rhyme nor reason to what happened – it just did”. He said he could see why there was a need to review agency involvement with people who had long-standing relationship issues, but that he and his mother simply did not have any. He added that there had been no ‘build-up’ to what had taken place; he and his mother had always enjoyed a good relationship and furthermore, she had always been there for him when he needed her the most.
- 4.2 Although Johnny appeared to be more than content to chat about his life in general, the review chair did gain the impression that he was being less than open when it came to discussing his past relationships with women and about his drug use. All he would say about relationships was that there had been two or three women in his life over the years and although there had been problems with all of them, he had never been violent or abusive, because it simply wasn’t in his nature to behave like that. He admitted that there had been times over the years when he had been ‘out of control’ through alcohol or drug misuse, but said that even on those occasions,

his character was such that he would be more prone to “Acting daft” or “Falling asleep”, rather than becoming violent or even argumentative.

4.3 He was asked specifically about his relationship with Partner C. He said that all he had ever done was to try and “Look out for her”, as best he could.

4.4 When asked about his drug issues, he said he had not used anything harder than ‘weed’ for several months prior to his mum’s murder. He went on to say that at no time had he suggested that anything other than a spontaneous and ‘one-off’ clash between two people who had ‘inexplicably lost-it’ had been the cause of what happened between him and his mother. He stressed that up to that point, he had been fully compos-mentis, he had not been suffering from the effects of any drug or alcohol and that he did not have mental-health issues.

Comment: *The urine samples taken after his arrest indicated the use of heroin and cocaine at some point prior to the murder and although the analyst was unable to comment on whether Johnny was affected by any of the drugs at the time he murdered his mother, it clearly demonstrated that he had been using harder drugs than ‘weed’.*

4.5 In answer to a specific question about his not meeting the criteria for opioid substitution treatment and whether that may somehow have contributed to what happened, he laughed and said it was no use searching for excuses, because there were none. He added that his inability to get opioid substitution treatment had nothing to do with the death of his mother and he had never sought to shift the blame elsewhere for what had happened. He also said that psychiatrists had spent over ten-hours trying to work out if he was mad, but they had found nothing wrong with him mentally.

4.6 **Witness contributions to the review**

The next section of this report deals with interviews conducted by the review chair, or where an interview was not possible for whatever reason, a summary of what the witness told the police during the murder investigation.

4.7 **Involvement in the review of Dora’s family and friends**

Dora’s daughter

Dora’s daughter was interviewed at her home in England. She is referred to under the assumed name of Debbie throughout this report. The following is a resume of what Debbie said:

- 4.8 Debbie said that her mother led a full and interesting life. As a young woman, she had worked in an administrative capacity in London, before moving abroad to teach English to foreign students. When she returned home, she took up a post as a clerical trainer within a large company, where she stayed until she was 50. Seeking a new challenge, she then became a coach driver, but she gave that up to look after her husband who had dementia. Around the same time, she graduated with a degree in English.
- 4.9 Debbie added that after her mother's husband had passed away, she became a college lecturer, teaching English to overseas students.
- 4.10 She said her mum had numerous hobbies, such as the church, learning languages, doing charity-work and being fully involved with an historical society. She greatly enjoyed caring for and helping others and she was an extremely popular and well-known lady in her local community. She was also a keen writer and had written several books and stories, two of which had been published, something that she was immensely proud of.
- 4.11 Debbie and her mum always kept in regular contact through e-mails, text-messages and telephone calls and that they would often meet for lunch. She added that her mum and Johnny would usually stay with her and her family over the Christmas period.
- 4.12 On 13th April 2016, Debbie and her mum met for lunch. Debbie had arranged for her mother's book to be printed and she wanted to give the copies to her. She said they had a lovely lunch together and just chatted generally; her mum did not mention having any issues at home or with Johnny. That was the last time Debbie saw her mum; the last time she was in contact with her was on 1st May 2016, when she sent her a photograph by e-mail that had been taken the day before.
- 4.13 Debbie said that Johnny was her biological half-brother and that he was younger than her. She added that he had always been eccentric and 'hyper' at times, but that he was very good natured. He had not been particularly academic when at school and left when he was 16. He couldn't wait to leave home because he didn't get on very well with his step-father, but when he did leave, he soon began drinking and taking drugs because he 'got in with the wrong crowd'. Despite that, Debbie said she maintained a very close relationship with Johnny and they kept in regular contact with each other.
- 4.14 She said that a long time ago, Johnny had been a heroin addict, but she thought he had been clean of drugs for the last eight-years, after he had completed a rehabilitation programme that had been paid for by their mother.

- 4.15 She said that a few years ago, Johnny and their mum went to Turkey on holiday. While there, Johnny fell off a mountain-bike and spent two-weeks in hospital with a serious head injury. That had been the second time he had received a bad head injury, which left him with insomnia.

Comment: *Debbie said that they were a very close family and that she, Johnny and their mother would often go on holiday together and with other members of the family.*

- 4.16 Debbie said the last time she saw Johnny prior to the events of 3rd May 2016, was when she went to her mum's house four-weeks earlier to visit them and to help her mother sort out a problem with her laptop computer.

- 4.17 She said that Johnny had a very strong work ethic and that most of his employment had been as a courier, but as far as she was aware, he had not worked during the previous few months. She added that he was an outgoing and gregarious person and had been since childhood.

- 4.18 Debbie added that in recent years, Johnny had developed intellectually and he had a real interest in current affairs and he enjoyed discussing issues with their mother. They spent hours, 'putting the world to rights'; both were very passionate about a huge range of topics. Both were also active members of the church and Johnny had spoken to the congregation on several occasions when he demonstrated the reflective and thoughtful side of his character.

- 4.19 She said that friendship and loyalty had always been important to Johnny and that he had made some solid relationships over the years. He is a caring person and he would always be the first to offer help if anyone was in difficulty. Debbie said that Johnny couldn't stand injustice, especially for people who are already in a bad situation, such as the homeless and those with health problems or issues with money.

- 4.20 Debbie said Johnny's caring side came to the fore when their mother broke her ankle in December 2015. He provided complete support for her, taking on all the household chores and taking her to her classes, talks and to meetings with friends. She said their mother was unable to put any weight on her foot for about six-weeks, during which time Johnny was permanently on duty. She commented on how patient he had been with her during what must have been a frustrating time.

- 4.21 Debbie commented that the relationship between her mother and Johnny was good; she described her mother as being Johnny's 'rock' and said they supported one-another. She added that there had never been any violence or even a serious fall-out between them. Her mother did sometimes tell Johnny what to do and he would respond just by telling her that he would do it without needing to be told.

- 4.22 Debbie said that a few years ago, her mother had been left some money in a will and she gave some of it to her and some to Johnny. Johnny used it to buy a house, where he lived with his girlfriend, Partner A. He also rented out some of the rooms and very quickly it became a 'rowdy' house, with the tenants abusing alcohol and drugs.
- 4.23 The relationship between Johnny and Partner A lasted at least 10-years; they had lived together in a shared house prior to moving to the one Johnny had bought. Debbie said that things were usually calm between the pair, but that Partner A was insecure and would sometimes lose her temper and attack Johnny with her fingernails or throw things at him. She added that Johnny always 'kept his cool' and did his best to calm her down. He never retaliated and he would try to hold her at arms-length, which usually worked because he was much taller than her. Debbie added that she had witnessed some of Partner A's outbursts first-hand and that she had been completely out of control. She said she was amazed at how patient Johnny had been in those situations.
- 4.24 Debbie said that about one or two-years later, Johnny met another young woman whom he eventually married (Partner B). Debbie described Partner B as a 'head-case' and said that Johnny lost everything because of the debt she got him into. Debbie added that Johnny had been badly assaulted around the same time by some men to whom he owed money. He and Partner B split-up about 10-12 years ago, which was when he went back home to live with Dora.

Comment: *As mentioned previously, efforts were made to trace Partner B to invite her to participate in this review. Unfortunately, she could not be found.*

- 4.25 Debbie said that around mid-2014, a relationship between Johnny and Partner C commenced. Debbie said that things between them appeared to be good and they came to her house together with Dora for Christmas.
- 4.26 Around January 2016, Johnny and Partner E began a relationship. Debbie said she had never met her, but Dora had told her that she was nice and that she was a hard-working family person. Debbie said that Partner E had often stayed at her mother's house, so her mother had got to know her quite well and thought a lot of her.

Comment: *Partner E has not responded to any telephone messages inviting her to contact either the review chair or the police about participating in this review. The chair has written to her and has visited her home address, all to no avail. Partner E did however make a written witness statement to the police during the investigation into Dora's murder, a brief summary of which is included later in this report.*

4.27 Debbie said she was still at a complete loss as to why Johnny would attack their mother. She added that he is not by nature a violent person and that he had always been calm and in control of himself in the past. It is her belief that it was all a terrible accident. She regularly visits Johnny in prison, because he is all the family she has left on her mother's side and because she knows that her mother would want her to visit him.

4.28 **Friend One**

Friend One was interviewed at her home in Wales. She is referred to under the assumed name of Rachael throughout this report. The following is a resume of what Rachael said:

4.29 Rachael said she had been a very close friend of Dora for over 15-years. Rachael also knew Dora's two children and was aware that Johnny had split from his wife some years ago and had then moved in with Dora. She added that Dora's daughter lives in England, but that they spoke to one-another frequently on the telephone or by e-mail and they would meet-up occasionally.

4.30 Rachael described Dora's relationship with Johnny as being "*Very motherly*" and she added that she was very loyal to him. Rachael thought Johnny was rather 'odd', but not in an intimidating or scary way. She thought he was sometimes 'needy', for example on one occasion she and Dora had been chatting and Johnny interrupted them just because he wanted Dora to look at what he was watching on the television. She added that he was sometimes immature and acted as if he was a child seeking attention.

4.31 Rachael said she had always considered Johnny to be a nice person who would do anything for anyone and it was obvious that Dora and Johnny had a good relationship. There never appeared to be any problems with them living together and Dora said it was "*Handy*" having him around and that she enjoyed his company. Around Christmas time, Dora fell and injured her ankle. She couldn't drive, so Johnny took care of her and drove her around. At no time did Rachael see any friction between the pair; they talked to one another in a loving and caring manner and clearly enjoyed one-another's company.

4.32 She last saw Dora the day before she was murdered. She had unexpectedly arrived at Rachael's home just after lunch and had with her a bunch of flowers. Dora thought it was Rachael's birthday, but she had the date slightly wrong and they laughed about it. She stayed for a couple of hours and they chatted generally about their shared interests and about Johnny and his new girlfriend. Dora said she had stayed at her house with her teenage daughter because they were moving and needed somewhere to stay for a few nights. Dora didn't mention any difficulties or concerns about the situation, other than saying it was difficult having a teenager around.

4.33 Rachael stressed that she and Dora had been the very best of friends; they were much alike in that they could both be strong-willed and opinionated, but they had a mutual fondness for and a trust of one another. Rachael is in no doubt that had Dora felt the need to confide in anyone, it would have been her. Dora never spoke ill of Johnny and Rachael never had any concerns about her well-being as far as Johnny was concerned.

4.34 **Friend Two (also Dora's work-colleague and employer)**

The chair interviewed Dora's friend (Friend Two) at her place of work in Wales. She is referred to under the assumed name of Wendy throughout this report. The following is a resume of what Wendy said:

4.35 Wendy met Dora about eight-nine years ago, when they were both members of their local historical society. She found her to be a committed, loyal and hard-working person who always kept herself busy. She said she liked Dora enormously and got to know her well because over the years, not only had she been involved in the historical society, but she had volunteered to help with a youth eisteddfod as a costumed interpreter.

4.36 Wendy said she had only met Johnny two or three times and, on each occasion, he was with Dora. She never had a meaningful conversation with him, but she was aware that from time-to-time, he had behaved oddly while at the heritage centre, although she had not witnessed it herself.

4.37 She last saw Dora during the evening of 27th April 2016, at an historical society meeting. They chatted about Dora's recently published book and Wendy bought a copy. Wendy said that Dora was her usual self; happy, chatty and relaxed and that she didn't seem to have a care in the world.

4.38 **Friend Three**

Friend Three was interviewed over the telephone because she lives abroad. She said very much the same as Wendy, but she had met Johnny on a few more occasions than she had. She said she had always considered Johnny to be rather strange and that she never felt entirely comfortable in his company, even though Dora had been present on every occasion. She added that Johnny never did anything wrong or even said anything out of turn in front of her, but he just made her feel slightly uneasy for some reason. She added though, that never for a moment did she think he posed any sort of threat towards Dora and that Dora had never given her any reason to think there may have been a problem between the pair of them. She also said she was sure that had there been anything, Dora would have confided in her; they had been good friends.

4.39 **Friend Four**

Friend Four took several weeks to decide whether to participate in the review. She has done so only on the proviso that her identity is not divulged, because she would not wish to cause offence to Dora's family or in any way to sully Dora's memory.

4.40 She wholly agrees with the general sentiments expressed by other friends of Dora during this review, in that Dora never suggested that she and Johnny had any problems between them and she certainly did not give the impression that he was abusive towards her.

4.41 However, her impression was that Dora was overly keen not to discuss her son with anyone, so much so that at times she did wonder whether he may have done something terrible in the past and that Dora may have been ashamed of him. Friend four said that Dora was the sort of person who would always honour a person's privacy anyway, but there had been several occasions when conversations between them could naturally have led to discussing Johnny, but she had abruptly changed the subject.

4.42 Having said that, she too felt she had been close enough to Dora that had she felt threatened in any way, she would have said something to her. She added that she was completely shocked at what Johnny did, but she regretted the fact that Johnny's sister appears still to believe that what he did to their mother was a genuine accident.

4.43 **The Parish Vicar**

The chair interviewed Dora's Parish Vicar at the Vicarage in Wales. The following is a resume of what the Reverend said:

4.44 The Reverend had taken up the post only about a year before Dora's murder. The two soon became good friends, with Dora being an active member of the congregation. The Reverend said she was a lovely and very interesting person, full of energy and fun and added that in the relatively short time they had known one another, there had been nothing Dora said or did that caused any concern whatsoever about her relationship with her son.

4.45 The Reverend said that occasionally Johnny agreed to deliver readings during church services. He was rather awkward in his gait and in his delivery and appeared a little shy. The Reverend gained the impression that he was not too comfortable in the company of numerous elderly parishioners and that the parishioners found it equally difficult to converse with him. The reverend added that it was just a general awkwardness on his part; there was never any hint of aggression in his demeanour

or anything of a sinister nature and that he and Dora clearly liked being in one-another's company.

Comment: *The review panel acknowledge that neither Dora's friends or family had any inkling she might be suffering abuse from her son and acknowledge also that it is entirely likely the attack on her was an isolated event. The panel is also aware though that when a person is experiencing abuse from their child – either an adult or young person – feelings of shame or embarrassment can be very strong and difficult to overcome. Those who are parents to their abusers describe feeling a sense of failure, shame and self-blame that they face this situation. It also means they are less likely to disclose the abuse for fear of getting their children into trouble. These relationships can also increase the pressure to remain silent or remain in the abusive situation.*

4.46 **Johnny's previous female partners**

In the hope of shedding some light on Johnny's relationship with women, efforts were made to trace and interview his known female partners.

- Partner A - Could not be traced
- Partner B - (Johnny's former wife), could not be traced.
- Partner C – Did not want to participate in this review.
- Partner D - Died some years ago.
- Partner E (Johnny's partner at the time he murdered Dora), did not respond to numerous requests to contact the review chair. She had however, made a written witness statement to the police during the investigation into Dora's murder.

5 **Other areas explored by the review panel**

It was evident from an early stage of this review that there was little information held by agencies about Dora and about Johnny. It was known though, that Johnny had sought assistance to access opioid substitution treatment and had Hepatitis C and that he had been referred by his doctor to GSSMS for help with his heroin use. He did not meet their treatment criteria and was referred onwards to other non-statutory substance misuse agencies.

- 5.1 The Caerphilly Substance Misuse Team referred him again in January 2016, after Johnny had asked them for help. He was offered an assessment appointment on 18th January 2016, but he cancelled it. He was referred again in February 2016, and as

before he was deemed unsuitable, because he was not with secondary mental health services and was also not in treatment for his Hepatitis C.

- 5.2 The review panel considered it prudent to explore whether there may have been a link between Johnny waiting for a prescription in relation to his heroin use from early February 2016 and the attack upon his mother only three-months later.
- 5.3 As mentioned previously, on 10th February 2016, Johnny asked for a substitute opiate prescription. He said he was injecting 1gm of heroin daily. He added that he was living with his mother who was 70 and that she had recently broken her leg.
- 5.4 On 24th February 2016, he attended for an initial assessment with the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service. He said he did not have a partner and that he was a carer for his mother. He also said he had recently been diagnosed as Hepatitis C positive. He was given a substance misuse risk-assessment which did not raise any concerns. He said he had no thoughts about harming others and that he had not been in any special hospitals or been involved in violent incidents. He did say that he sensed a lack of control over his life.
- 5.5 He attended a Naloxone group meeting on 4th March 2016 and the same day he telephoned to ask when his next Drug and Alcohol Service appointment was. On 30th March, he was offered an appointment and during the telephone conversation, he asked how long the waiting list was for substitute opiate medication.
- 5.6 In April 2016, he completed both a care plan and a comprehensive assessment. During the assessment, he said he had previously been in addiction units and that he had been 'kicked-out' due to clashes of personality with other patients. He said he was caring for his mother and that she was not aware of his heroin use and neither was his sister. He added that his mother was old and that he had to do everything for her, including the shopping and housework.
- 5.7 When Johnny was arrested for Dora's murder, he provided a urine sample.

Comment: *Normal procedure would have been to provide a blood sample, but due to Johnny's long-term use of heroin, taking blood was not possible. Drug concentrations in urine are not open to meaningful interpretation, but most drugs are detectable in urine for up to 24 to 48-hours after their last use.*

- 5.8 Analysis of the urine indicated the use of heroin and cocaine at some point prior to sampling. Due to the extended time-period that urine can cover, it was not possible for the analyst to comment on whether Johnny was affected by any of the drugs at the time he murdered his mother.

- 5.9 When the review chair asked about his drug issues during the interview in prison, he said he had not used anything harder than ‘weed’ for several months prior to the murder; clearly that was not true. He went on to say that at no time had he suggested that anything other than a spontaneous and ‘one-off’ clash between two people who had ‘inexplicably lost-it’ had been the cause of what happened between him and his mother. He stressed that up to that point, he had been fully compos-mentis, he had not been suffering from the effects of any drug or alcohol and that he did not have mental-health issues. In answer to a specific question about his not meeting the criteria for opioid substitution treatment and whether that may have somehow contributed to what happened, he simply laughed and said it was no use searching for excuses – there were none, which was why he had not sought to shift the blame for what had happened elsewhere. As mentioned previously, when told of the purpose of the domestic homicide review process, his response was, “*Good luck with that one, you’ll find no lessons to be learned, because there aren’t any. There was no rhyme nor reason to what happened – it just did*”.

6 Addressing the Terms of Reference

- *Involvement of Dora’s family and friends*

Dora’s daughter, several of her friends and her local Vicar have all participated in this review and their contribution has been invaluable. The review panel would like to thank them all for taking the time to talk about Dora and about Johnny.

- 6.1
- *Determine how matters concerning family and friends, the public and media should be managed before, during and after the review and who should take responsibility for it.*

The panel decided that the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership would be responsible for all media and communication matters. The findings of the review have been shared with Dora’s daughter, who is content for the partnership to retain responsibility for managing any media interest.

- 6.2
- *Take account of coroners or criminal proceedings (including disclosure issues) in terms of timing and contact with Dora’s family to ensure that relevant information can be shared without incurring significant delay in the review process or compromise to the judicial process?*

As mentioned previously, the inquest into Dora’s death was opened by HM Coroner, but was suspended to allow for the criminal justice process to run its course.

- 6.3
- There were no issues around the sharing of information with Dora’s daughter without incurring a delay in the review process or compromise to the judicial proceedings.

- 6.4
- *Consider whether the review panel need to obtain independent legal advice about any aspect of the proposed review.*

No conflicts or issues have been identified that would suggest that independent legal advice will be required about any aspect of this review.

- 6.5
- *Ensure that the review process takes account of lessons learned from research and previous DHRs.*

Previous DHRs conducted nationally have been scrutinised by the chair during this review. Comment and observations from several that have involved adult-child to parent violence have been used to inform this process. Where appropriate, this report has also been enriched by panel knowledge of other reliable sources about adult-child to parent violence.

- 6.6
- *The incident in which Dora died was an isolated event or whether there were any warning signs and whether more could be done to raise awareness of services available to victims of domestic violence.*

There were no identified warning signs as to what was going to happen to Dora and no evidence that it was not an isolated event without any discernable lead-up to it.

- 6.7
- *Whether Dora had experienced abuse in previous relationships in Caerphilly or elsewhere, and whether this experience impacted on her likelihood of seeking support in the months before she died.*

None of the agencies, Dora's friends nor her family have any knowledge or even suspicion that Dora had experienced abuse previously; they all believe she would have sought support had she been in that situation.

- 6.8
- *Whether there were opportunities for professionals to 'routinely enquire' as to any domestic abuse experienced by Dora that were missed?*

There were no opportunities missed by professionals to make routine enquiries specifically about any domestic abuse experienced by Dora; there were though potential opportunities to raise safeguarding concerns for wider family members as part of Johnny's substance misuse assessments and as part of the MARAC process.

- 6.9
- The review panel however, is aware that older people (and many other victims of domestic abuse) often hope that someone will ask them if they are suffering and professional enquiry of this kind is known to increase identification of domestic abuse. It is therefore important that those who work with older people are trained to 'Ask and Act'.

- 6.10
- *Whether Johnny had any previous history of abusive behaviour to an intimate Partner and whether this was known to any agencies.*

South Wales Police had knowledge of one incident concerning Johnny's involvement in abusive behaviour to an intimate partner; he was seen to push Partner C to the ground outside a nightclub and then grab her throat when she stood up again. He was given a formal caution by the police.

- 6.11
- It is unclear what happened during the relationship between Johnny and Partner C. She decided against participating in this review and in the interests of maintaining her privacy, all that can be said is that a report was made to Gwent police to request that a marker be placed on her property and that referrals were made to Women's Aid and to MARAC. (As mentioned previously, Women's Aid had no record of the referral and the MARAC documentation is limited).

- 6.12
- When Gwent Police visited Partner C, she said that Johnny had been harassing her; he was subsequently given a verbal warning by the police.

- 6.13
- *Whether there were any barriers experienced by Dora or family/friends/colleagues in reporting any abuse in Caerphilly or elsewhere, including whether they knew how to report domestic abuse should they have wanted to.*

There is no evidence that Dora experienced abuse prior to the events of 3rd May 2016, nor that she would not have known how to report domestic abuse had she wanted to. However, although stereotyping older people is to be avoided, the panel is aware that experience shows that some older people may feel less able to access services; they may be less aware than younger people of the services and options available to them or they may believe that services are only for younger people, or people with young children.

- 6.14
- It is also known that some older people do not want to involve agencies in their private affairs because of the shame associated with abuse by a family member and a perceived lack of entitlement to receive help. Older victims of domestic abuse will not usually voluntarily disclose the abuse to a professional unless they are directly asked. Fear of the perpetrator, shame or coercive control all form barriers to voluntary disclosure.

- 6.15
- When a person is experiencing abuse from their child – either an adult or young person – feelings of shame or embarrassment can be very strong and difficult to overcome. Those who are parents to their abusers describe feeling a sense of failure, shame and self-blame that they face this situation. It also means they are less likely to involve statutory agencies for fear of getting their children into trouble. These

relationships can also increase the pressure to remain silent or remain in the abusive situation.

- 6.16
- *Whether there were opportunities for agency intervention in relation to domestic abuse regarding Dora and Johnny or to dependent children that were missed.*

There were no opportunities for agency intervention in relation to identified domestic abuse regarding Dora and Johnny, but it is known from previous reviews and through 'Ask and Act' training that domestic abuse intervention should always be a consideration for agencies, especially in respect older people, so that protective or supportive measures that may reduce the risks of harm may be put in place.

- 6.17
- *The review should identify any training or awareness raising requirements that are necessary to ensure a greater knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse processes and / or services in the county.*

The panel agreed during the review, that awareness raising of local specialist domestic abuse services should be carried out, with some targeted within the older population; there is a need for an understanding by members of the public and service providers of the multi-faceted nature of domestic abuse. The current levels of training in domestic abuse procedure and publicity in relation to services available within the region should continue. It was also noted that recent changes in legislation (the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 7 and the pending introduction of 'Ask and Act' under section 15 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015), will require changes in the training and awareness needs for professionals.

- 6.18
- *The review will also give appropriate consideration to any equality and diversity issues that appear pertinent to Dora, Johnny and any dependent children e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.*

The equality or diversity issue that required consideration during the review was the fact that Dora was an older person. Adult child to parent violence is a common dynamic in domestic homicides; between March 2014 and March 2016 there were 13 instances of individuals killing a parent and DHR data indicates an increasing number of older people (aged 60+) are victims of domestic homicide (21.3%).

7 Agency key lessons learned

Generic

- The panel agreed during the review, that awareness raising of local specialist domestic abuse services should be carried out, with some targeted within the older population.

7.1 South Wales Police

- There were no specific key lessons learned as far as South Wales Police was concerned.

7.2 Gwent Police

- Gwent police identified the potential for improved cross-boundary information sharing regarding MARAC. The MARAC process has been reviewed over that past 18-months. The structure and meeting process now includes a requirement for all agencies and other police forces to attend to improve information sharing. It is for the chair to ensure all information is shared between agencies.

7.3 Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

- There were no specific key lessons learned for Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

7.4 Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (Wales CRC)

- There were no specific key lessons learned for the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company.

7.5 Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services

- Practitioners involved with Johnny and Partner C demonstrated they could work with them in an open and honest manner, identifying the presenting issues and identifying appropriate solutions and/or safeguards.

7.6 Llamau

- There were no specific key lessons learned for Llamau.

7.7 **ABHUB Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service**

- There were no specific lessons learned for the Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service.

7.8 **Kaleidoscope**

- Kaleidoscope identified a need for improved understanding of the active offer for carers assessment as outlined in Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Kaleidoscope also recognised that substance misuse assessments lack questions about the needs of carers. Family support services are offered within GDAS, but this is aimed at significant others.
- They also saw the need to utilise 'Opportunities for Ask and Act' (or an active offer of support as a family member) as part of drug assessment where a family member is vulnerable and in need of care.

7.9 **General Practitioner**

- There were no specific key lessons learned for the GP Practitioners.

7.10 **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust**

- There were no specific key lessons learned for the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

7.11 **MARAC**

- Agencies learned that the administration and coordination of the MARAC process was flawed, and that work is required to rectify the situation. In addition, there was an identified need to consider safeguarding concerns for other members of a household.

8 **Conclusions**

- There were no indications to any agency or third party of domestic abuse in the relationship between Dora and Johnny. The panel acknowledges though that adult-child to parent violence is a common dynamic in domestic homicides and up to a third of abuse experienced by older people is perpetrated by family members rather than partners or ex-partners.

- Why Dora was murdered remains a mystery – her daughter and many friends are still at a complete loss as to why Johnny would attack his mother. There is evidence from criminal cases, domestic homicide and serious case reviews that domestic abuse issues for older people often go unrecognised. Older people, more so than their young counterparts tend not to want to involve agencies in their private affairs because of the shame associated with abuse by a family member. Fear of the perpetrator, shame or coercive control all form barriers to voluntary disclosure. Older people (and many other victims of domestic abuse) often hope that someone will ask them if they are suffering and professional enquiry of this kind is known to increase identification of domestic abuse. It is therefore important that those who work with older people are trained to ‘Ask and Act’.
- The review panel speculated whether Johnny’s use of illicit drugs may have had a bearing on what happened, but there is no direct evidence that it did nor has Johnny sought to lay the blame in that direction. Experience shows that risk factors with perpetrators of domestic abuse often include a history of domestic abuse, substance misuse, generalised aggression outside of the home and instability of employment and income; at various times in his life, Johnny fell into one or all of these categories.

9 Recommendations

9.1 Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership/Gwent Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board

- More targeted awareness raising of domestic abuse within older population should be commissioned

9.2 The MARAC

- The findings of this review should be fed into the current local MARAC review into how MARAC’s can best be carried out, including the administration of the process.
- The MARAC process should consider other members of the household, so as to raise safeguarding concerns for other family members.
- Safety planning and opportunities for ‘Ask and Act’ should routinely take place

9.3 **South Wales Police**

- There are no recommendations for South Wales Police.

9.4 **Gwent Police**

- That cross-boundary information sharing in respect of the MARAC is improved
- Officers should be reminded of their responsibilities under Part 7 of Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in respect of safeguarding.

9.5 **Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service**

- There are no recommendations for Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

9.6 **Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (Wales CRC)**

- There are no recommendations for the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company.

9.7 **Caerphilly County Borough Council, Adult Social Services**

- Staff groups should be provided with training in respect of new safeguarding legislation
- Staff groups should be provided with training in respect of new Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence legislation
- Current training for DASH risk-assessment should continue to be available for staff groups

9.8 **Llamau**

- Further awareness raising of local specialist services should be carried out, including the Multi-Agency Centre and the local 24-hour helpline

9.9 **ABHUB Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service**

- There are no recommendations for the Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service.

9.10 **Kaleidoscope**

- Further training should be given to staff on the importance of keeping accurate records of any contacts that are made.
- Individual staff should be reminded of the importance of always filling-in all sections of comprehensive assessment documents.
- Training in respect of active offer of carers assessments for individuals identifying themselves as carers
- Substance misuse assessments should ask a specific question about whether the service user referred into treatment has any specific carers needs in line with the Health and Social Well Being Act 2015.

9.11 **General Practitioners**

- There are no recommendations for the General Practitioners

9.12 **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust**

- There are no recommendations for the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust