Safer Ealing Partnership
Domestic Homicide Review
Overview Report
Death of Martyna
Aged 21 years
Died May 2022

Independent Panel Chair and Author Theresa Breen MA
Date report completed March 2024

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At the trial, Martyna's family paid tribute to her with the following words.

'Martyna was such a kind, gentle soul: she would never hurt anyone or be mean in any way.

She was thoughtful and loving, and everyone who met her fell in love with her. She was brilliantly gifted, especially in music and art, but also so determined and hardworking - she would have gone on to succeed in anything she did.

She was very smart, tenacious and ambitious, but also very humble.

She was destined for great things.'

Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 This report of a Domestic Homicide Review[1] (DHR) examines agency responses and support given to Martyna [2], a resident of West London prior to the point of her death in May 2022.

1.2 Martyna was a Polish national who had lived in the UK for approximately 3 years. Martyna was resident in Ealing at the time of her murder, having moved into the area only weeks before from North London. She had previously moved from the Bristol area in September 2021 to attend University in London.

1.3 Martyna was single. She had split up from her boyfriend of 1 year - John[3] , in the months preceding her murder. She had commenced a fledgling relationship with a friend from work.

1.4 On the night of the murder, Martyna had been at work in a restaurant in Ealing. As she left to walk home with her male friend, shortly after midnight, they were followed by John, who attacked her savagely with a knife causing fatal injuries. Martyna died at the scene despite attempts to save her.

[1] A domestic homicide review (DHR) means a review of the circumstances in which the **death of a person aged 16 or over has**, or appears to have, **resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect** by— **a person** to whom he/she was related or **with whom he/she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship,** or a member of the same household as himself, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.
[2] A pseudonym chosen by the Martyna's sister.
[3] A pseudonym chosen by the DHR panel.

1.5 John ran off but was traced and arrested by police the following evening. He was later charged with Murder with stalking as an aggravating factor.

1.6 The review will consider agencies' contact and involvement with Martyna and John, from when Martyna moved to the UK, until the date of the incident in May 2022. The reason for this timescale was to capture any possible involvement with agencies during her residence in the UK.

1.7 In addition to agency involvement, the review will examine the past to identify any relevant background or trail of abuse before the homicide, whether Martyna accessed support within the community and whether there were any barriers to accessing support. By taking a holistic approach the review seeks to identify appropriate solutions to make the future safer.

1.8 The intention of the review is to ensure agencies are responding appropriately to victims of domestic abuse by offering and putting in place appropriate support mechanisms, procedures, resources and interventions with the aim of avoiding future incidents of domestic homicide, violence and abuse. Reviews should assess whether agencies have sufficient and robust procedures and protocols in place, and that they are understood and adhered to by their employees.

1.9 One of the operating principles for this review has been to be guided by compassion, and empathy, with Martyna's 'voice' at the heart of the process. Any review should seek to articulate the life through the eyes of the victim. As this report starts, the Review Panel would like to express its sympathy to Martyna's family. This murder was a shocking tragedy for the family, and through the Chair, the Panel offer heartfelt condolences for their loss.

Section 2 - Timescales

2.1 The review began in August 2022 and was concluded on 27.03.2024, following final consultation with the panel. Consultation with the family representative and the VSS Homicide Case Worker, led to an extended period for family sign off. See paragraph 5 for further details.

Section 3 - Confidentiality

3.1 During panel, the Chair explained that all information discussed at DHR panel is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed by panel

members to third parties without discussion and agreement with the CSP/DHR Chair. The disclosure of information outside these meetings would be considered as a breach of the subject's confidentiality and a breach of the confidentiality of the agencies involved. The findings of each review are confidential until publication. Information is available only to participating officers, professionals, and their line manager.

3.2 The use of pseudonyms is the normal convention to protect the anonymity of individuals and/or families. The family of the victim would normally influence the choice of pseudonym. The victim's sister was contacted by the Chair, via the Victim Support Service (VSS) Homicide Case Worker (HCW). They met via Teams calls and were supported by the HCW.

3.3 Martyna's sister Alicja[4] chose the pseudonyms that are used for their family in this report. The Chair chose the other pseudonyms used in this report and they have been used to protect the identity of all the subjects of the review. These are listed in two tables below and explain the relationship to Martyna. Whilst the normal convention would be to use culturally sensitive pseudonyms, where the ethnic identity of witnesses was unknown, the Author has selected contrasting English names who protect those referred to in this review.

3.4 Understandably, the family were in deep distress from the devastating loss of their daughter and sister and were impacted by the fact that the judicial proceedings were taking place in the UK.

Table 1[5] are people referred to throughout police statements.

Pseudonyms:	**Relationship to Martyna**	**Police interview / MG11 statements reviewed in the DHR[6]**
Martyna	N/A	N/A
John	Ex-boyfriend-perpetrator	N/A

[4] A pseudonym chosen by the Martyna's sister.
[5] Explained further in section 5.
[6] Denotes the Police statements (MG11) and/or taped interviews (which were later transcribed) that were taken during the police investigation and also served to the Coroner for Inquest. They were disclosed by the police panel member to the DHR Chair to serve a statutory purpose.

Pseudonyms:	**Relationship to Martyna**	**Police interview / MG11 statements reviewed in the DHR[6]**
Alicja	Sister	Police MG11 taken. Spoken to by the report author.
Gabriela	Mother	No police MG11 taken. Not spoken to by the report author.
Millie	Ex Flatmate Bristol	Police MG11 taken. Not spoken to by the report author.
Becky	University friend	Police MG11 taken. Not spoken to by the report author.
Tom	University friend	Police MG11 taken. Not spoken to by the report author.
Julia	Work colleague and friend	Police MG11 taken. Not spoken to by the report author.
Martin	Male friend	Police video interview taken. Not spoken to by the report author.
Rachel	John's mother	No police MG11 taken - telephone interview with the author.

Table 2[7] are people directly interviewed by report author.

Pseudonyms:	**Relationship to Martyna:**	**Interview with report author[8]**
Jane	Work colleague and friend	Police MG11 taken - telephone interview with the report author.
Sean	John's friend	Police MG11 taken - teams interview with the report author.
Jed	John's friend	No police MG11 taken - telephone interview with the author.

[7] Explained further in section 5
[8] The interviewees were contacted and spoken to by the author, either by phone or Teams. Also seen by police. See detail at section 5.1.

Pseudonyms:	**Relationship to Martyna:**	**Interview with report author[8]**
Mark	John's friend and previous manager	No police MG11 taken - telephone interview with the author.

3.5 Martyna was 21 years old at the time of her murder. She was of white European ethnicity.

3.6 John was 30 years old at the time of this incident. He was of black Nigerian ethnicity.

Section 4- Terms of Reference.

4.1 The panel considered the TOR in the Home Office statutory guidance and the specific TOR set out at 4.5 below agreed the Terms of Reference at the meeting (attached at Appendix 1)

4.2 The purpose of the DHR is to:

- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims.
- Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result.
- Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a co - ordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity.
- Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse.
- and Highlight good practice.

(Multi-Agency Statutory guidance for the conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews 2016 section 2 paragraph 7)

4.3 The aim of the DHR is to identify the most important issues to enable lessons to be learned from homicides with a view to preventing homicide and ensuring that individuals and families are better supported. In order for these lessons to be learned as widely and thoroughly as possible, professionals need to be able to understand fully what happened in each homicide, and most importantly, what needs to change in order to reduce the risk of such tragedies happening in the future.

4.4 Timeframe under Review

4.4.1 The review will cover the individuals listed at Section 2 above. The scope for this review was January 2020 to May 2022 and the reason for this period is that it initially appeared that Martyna appeared to have entered the UK during this time to study. It later transpired that she had moved to the UK in May 2019, but as agencies had already examined all possible contacts with her, it was unnecessary to vary the timeframe, and this was explained to the panel. Martyna moved in with her sister in September 2019 and this period was explored and enabled an understanding of the family dynamic and her understanding of UK life and culture, which will be critical to understanding her life, communities, and support networks.

4.5 Case specific Terms

4.5.1 Subjects of the DHR

Victim: Martyna, aged 21 years

Perpetrator: John, aged 30 years

4.5.2 Specific terms: Key Lines of Inquiry:

The Review Panel and Chair considered the 'generic issues.

4.5.3 The following **Case Specific Terms** were examined:

- **Were medical concerns appropriately considered when a hospital attendance occurred?**
- **Where suicidal concerns were raised, were any mental health referrals made?**

- **Is there sufficient Mental Health publicity and notifications for public awareness?**
- **Was Martyna aware of the patterns of coercive behaviour.**

4.5.4 The Review Panel and Chair discussed and agreed additional enquiries that the Chair would pursue with friends and family members if able:

- Whether any family, friends or colleagues were aware of any abusive behaviour from the perpetrator to the victim, prior to the homicide, and whether this had been shared, by them, with professionals.
- Whether there were any previous victims of John.

Section 5. Methodology

5.1 Following Martyna's murder, a formal notification was sent by the MPS to the Chair of Safer Ealing Partnership on 20.05.22 with an explanation that the case was being examined as a homicide, and to enable the CSP to determine whether the case should be conducted as a DHR. After taken into consideration the guidance on DHR and assessing the information received Ealing CSP took the decision that a DHR was required in this case. The HO was notified on 21.06.2022. There were some delays in progressing as the CSP were unable to locate the initial police referral[9] which impacted in setting meeting dates. This was resolved on 05.10.2022. Whilst this did not impact on the conduct or findings of this review, this initial referral confusion led to the MPS Specialist Crime Review Group (SCRG), along with other agencies, being officially notified of the decision to undertake a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) on 21.11.2022.

5.2 On 26.07.2022, Theresa Breen was appointed as Independent Chair and Author.

5.3 The review began in early August 2022, with meetings with the CSP to discuss and agree proposed panel attendees and propose dates. There were some discussions about whether the lack of any local (Ealing) agency knowledge relating to Martyna should cause the DHR to be held in another geographical area.

[9] Email JP- 15.09.2022 and email VW 28.09.2022

5.4 The Chair met with the police Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) on 12.09.2022 and was briefed as to the prosecution case summary. The police investigation was still live, and the provisional trial date was not set until May 2023.

5.5 Due to challenges in identifying any relevant addresses and therefore any agency who may have known the victim or perpetrator in those locations, the initial scoping documents were not sent to identified agencies (in London, Gwent and Bristol) until 21.11.2022, with a return date of 18.12.2022.

5.6 The first panel meeting was held on 12.04.2023, to discuss scoping documents and panel members determined which agencies would be required to submit written information and in what format. No immediate, urgent interventions or actions were identified by panel members and timescales were set for submission of the Chronologies/ Independent Management Reviews (IMR's).[10]

5.7 A mixture of IMR and summary information was received from agencies. From the scoping returns, it appeared that very little interaction with agencies had taken place. Those agencies with substantial contact realised from the chronologies were asked to produce IMR's. IMR's were compiled by an agency representative independent of line management of the case. The content of the IMR's is discussed at section 14 under analysis.

5.8 The other material that was relied upon in this review was transcripts of police accounts and statements made to police at the time of the incident[11] which were submitted as part of prosecution and inquest file. Table 1 and 2 at Section 3 indicate those witness accounts relied upon for this review, and those spoken to by the author of this report. Police interview summaries or statements were shared by police for a statutory purpose (DHR), so these accounts were viewed as 'statements of truth'. They had been submitted to the trial process but also the inquest process and accepted by the Coroner.

5.9 The author cross-referenced each interview summary and/or MG11 statement with those of the other witnesses, drawing inferences from the

[10] Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) are detailed written reports from agencies on their involvement with a victim or perpetrator.
[11] These are listed in Section 3.

described behaviours and actions. It is not the role of the DHR panel to produce evidence of the level 'beyond reasonable doubt'. That is the role of the police. It is sufficient to look at information on the 'balance of probabilities' to draw an inference from the information, which is what the author (on behalf of the panel) did in this case for the purpose of informing learning. Where information is so strikingly similar, the author considers it supports information disclosed by other witnesses.

5.10 The Chair approached and spoke with 5 individuals who are listed at section 3 in this report. Their accounts are listed at section 6. In the case of a DHR, it is not unusual for other friends and family to be approached by an author to assist the DHR process.

5.11 The statutory guidance states, '*The benefits of involving family, friends and other support networks include..... obtaining relevant information held by family members, friends and colleagues which is not recorded in official records. Although witness statements and evidence given in court can be useful sources of information for the review, separate and substantive interaction with families and friends may reveal different information to that set out in official documents*'[12].

5.12 The author offered the opportunity to conduct the interviews with witnesses, in order to understand how Martyna, and John interacted with others and in the community. The author offered an interview over Teams video conferencing, but each decided to contribute through a telephone interview. The author took hand-written notes of the discussions and summarised their contributions for this report.

5.13 The author offered John the opportunity to be interviewed as part of this review. This contact was complicated initially by the prison service personnel being unaware of the DHR process, reluctant to answer emails or calls, and their raised concerns about consent issues for access to serving prisoners. These complications form a recommendation in this review. Via the prison Probation Officer, John requested that he was written to personally, so this was done, and he did not acknowledge the written correspondence, so has not been spoken with.

5.14 The panel met 5 times by Teams Video conferencing, with additional work being carried out by telephone and email exchange. Thereafter, a draft Overview Report was produced which was discussed and refined at

[12] Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews- Section 52.e

panel meetings before being agreed. Martyna's sister et with the panel at the conclusion of the draft report to ask questions and provide feedback.

Section 6. Involvement of Family, Friends, Work Colleagues and Wider Community.

6.1 Martyna's family

6.1.1 Martyna's family consists of a mother (Gabriela), father and sister (Alicja). Her parents live separately in Poland. Her sister lives in the Bristol area and speaks and writes in English. Martyna's sister assisted the police investigating team, acting as an intermediary to facilitate conversations with the family and police during their investigation. She also facilitated contact with her mother Gabriela on behalf of the author, reporting progress of the review. The author then wrote separately to Gabriela but did not have further verbal contact.

6.1.2 Martyna's mother and sister attended the trial where an interpreter was present. From the date of the incident, great care was taken not to retraumatise the family members. The Family Liaison Officer (FLO) was tasked by the CSP to inform the family that a DHR was to be undertaken and to provide relevant Home Office DHR leaflet, and an Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse leaflet (AAFDA), translated in Polish. The police had no contact details for Martyna's father, so the Author was unable to speak with him during this review.

6.1.3 The author met with Alicja via Teams on 3 occasions and corresponded via email.

6.2 John's family

6.2.1 John's known family consists of his mother- Rachel and two older brothers who reside in the UK, and a father who resides in Nigeria. Rachel was interviewed by the Author> his brothers from whom he was estranged have not been spoken with during this review. John, his brothers, and parents originate from Nigeria.

6.2.2 Rachel (John's Mother)

6.2.3 Rachel gave background history for John. She says that the family came to the UK in 2006 for work, settling in the Bristol area. John was 14 years old. Rachel and her husband separated in 2007 with him returning to Nigeria.

6.2.4 They all spoke English as a first language, so there were no language or communication challenges. John attended secondary school where he settled in well, personally, and academically. To her knowledge, he did not experience any difficulties in school and never reported any issues personally to her. When asked about the impact of race and culture, she was clear that it did not present any difficulties for John in school. He attended secondary school in the Bristol area and later college, until he was 21 years old when he got a role in IT and Tech.

6.2.5 Although John was very private and she had never seen him with a girlfriend, Rachel recalled one incident at home when he was about 23. He was lying on the floor in his room and crying and said, 'it's finished'. He didn't say any more about the incident. She recalled that he was on anti-depressants for a period, but John rarely spoke of his private issues and never told her why he was upset. She would occasionally chastise him to tidy up his room.

6.2.6 John moved out of home when he was 23 years old (2015/16) to live in Bristol. Despite there not being a specific incident to cause a family breakdown, Rachel rarely saw him after he moved out and he didn't contact her or family members until he moved to Wales. He appeared to be doing well at work. John unexplainedly cut off contact with his two brothers.

6.2.7 At one point, Rachel reported him as a missing person when she had had no contact. He was seen by police but didn't want his whereabouts disclosed. Rachel next saw him in person in January 2021 (after COVID Lockdown) at a train station. They embraced and cried, and she told him to come home and communicate with his brothers. John said he would be back in touch, but her calls to him went unanswered and she had no further contact with him until the incident in May 2022.

6.2.8 Rachel attended John's flat after his arrest to clear and empty his property and described it as being in an 'uninhabitable' state. The mess that she encountered led her to believe that John had had some sort of

emotional breakdown, to be living in 'that state'. She described that this was not the son she recognised.

6.3 Alicja (sister)

6.3.1 Alicja provided a written police statement which was summarised for this report. She also spoke with the author on three occasions, giving family background and further information[13] about her knowledge of Martyna's relationship(s) to the assist this review.

6.3.2 Alicja had a close and loving relationship with Martyna, despite being 18 years older. Alicja described that Martyna had stayed with her before moving to London to study in September 2021. Martyna first mentioned John to her in May 2021. Alicja had met John only once in person in September 2021. She revealed that Martyna had discussed ending the relationship with John prior to her move to London due to the distance and transport challenges but they agreed the relationship was worth 'giving it a go'. Alicja referred to 2 specific incidents.

6.3.3 On 05.05.2022, Martyna called Alicja[14] and Alicja states she was crying. Martyna explained she had spent the previous six months trying to end the relationship but said that John had tried to take his life by suicide 3 times, including in the previous week. Each time John would blame Martyna causing her to be completed stressed and causing depression. Martyna revealed had stopped working and going to university for a week because of the pressure, she said she couldn't face it and was distraught by it. She said she felt pressured and trapped to stay in the relationship as every time she tried to end it he would try to take his life by suicide and then blame her. Martyna said she had spent so much time talking to the police and it felt like she had to deal with all his mental health issues alone. Martyna agreed that she would come to stay with Alicja in Bristol.

6.3.4 On 12.05.2022, Alicja followed up the call with a WhatsApp message to encourage Martyna to visit although did not receive a reply (which was not unusual for Martyna). She was slightly worried but accepted her sisters' normal habit was not to reply to messages. Alicja did not think John was good for her because of the stress he caused, but also did not consider that Martyna was ever scared or threatened by him. She was informed of her sister's death some days later.

[13] Covered at Section 13
[14] This was their last contact.

6.4 **Friends**

6.4.1 Martyna appeared to have made many friends during her short time in the UK. John on the other hand appeared to have no real friends. The person he described to Martyna as a best friend (Sean) was in fact a work acquaintance.

6.4.2 **Millie** (ex-housemate in Bristol between July 2020 and September 2021). Millie provided a police statement which was examined for this review. She was not interviewed by the author as details were unavailable. Alicja had indicated that Marion was extremely distressed, so she felt unable to disclose her contact details to the author. Therefore, her police statement is used as the source document. She knew that Martyna met John on HINGE after COVID lockdown, in Spring 2021. John lived in Newport, and as neither John or Martyna drove, they relied on public transport, and he stayed often at their shared house. She described Martyna as a private person, who eventually trusted her to talk about her relationship, and said she was sometimes annoyed John did not communicate enough. Millie considered him to be sociable. Martyna appeared very relaxed in his company.

6.4.3 Martyna informed her that the plan was that John and Martyna would have an open relationship when she went to University, so that she could have the University experience, which Millie understood to mean that they would be together but also see other people. Marion did not probe this to enquire what John thought of the plan.

6.4.4 After Martyna moved to London, Millie noticed that she stopped chatting in the group chat, so she messaged her privately. The last message she received in late November 2022, was from Martyna (privately), saying she was really busy with University work and actual work. She did not mention John in the message. She did not hear from her again.

6.4.5 **Becky** (university friend in London). Becky provided a police statement. She was not interviewed by the author and did not respond to requests to be interviewed. Martyna met Becky in September 2021 at the University halls of residence but lived in a different flat. She described Martyna as her ‘best friend’, they got on instantly, were very close, and often discussed personal issues. She knew Martyna had met John online, thought they had been together under 2 years, but became official

boyfriend and girlfriend just before she came to University. She initially spoke about her relationship very positively, saying she 'was really in love with him' and always spoke about how much they cared for each other. Martyna described that John had a business and was very wealthy, although she didn't understand what he did for work.

6.4.6 Becky met John twice (early February and March 2022) and thought he seemed like a really nice guy. On the first occasion, John demonstrated his caring attitude when they had all gone out and one of their party had mislaid his identification. She described John as 'respectful and persuasive with the doorman to gain them entry'. On the second occasion, he had attended the halls of residence to support Martyna who was involved in a dispute with her flatmate. He said that Martyna was getting worried and scared. He explained that he had come down to stay with her, as he wanted her to feel comfortable and safe. Martyna moved out of the flat.

6.4.7 In January 2022, Martyna told her that she was 'falling out of love' with John. She was overwhelmed with university work, worrying about her studies and with the added pressure of her relationship. Martyna disclosed that she repeatedly asked John for space and if they could take a break and have a bit of space from each other. Martyna told Becky that John began 'blackmailing' her in relation to his mental health, and every time she spoke about them breaking up, he would say he was going to kill himself. She revealed he had threatened to hurt himself because of her asking for a break on about three (3) occasions.

6.4.8 In late April, Martyna confided that she had tried to break up with John and in response he had taken an overdose, explaining he had taken a large quantity of medication and had then boarded a train. Martyna had got in contact with the Police but explained that he had tried to do the same thing later the same day, so called the police again to make sure that he was okay. She had contacted a friend of his called Sean. Sean allegedly disclosed he owed money and thought John was worried about that. John later called her and shouted angrily, 'Why did you call the police?' Becky believed that Martyna was very overwhelmed with this. They agreed that they both did not think he was actually trying to harm himself but was using the threat to try and manipulate Martyna. Becky had limited contact to give Martyna space to process this and next heard from Martyna on 16.05.2022, who was apologising for her late response to a previous text message. They arranged to meet in person later in the week to talk about everything that was going on with her.

6.4.9 **Tom** (university friend- resides in USA). Tom provided a police statement which was examined for this review. He was not interviewed by the author, due to the trauma he felt of the case. Tom met Martyna at University, whilst on the same course becoming close friends in February 2022. He knew her for 8 months. He knew about Martyna's long-distance relationship with John, although he never met him personally. Martyna didn't speak about John often or about being excited to see him. Tom had the impression it was an unhealthy relationship but had no specific incidents to refer to.

6.4.10 On 27.04.2022, he noticed a change in her demeanour in class and texted her that she looked 'incredibly miserable', which was unusual for her. After class, he told her that he wasn't going to force her to talk but was there if she wanted someone to talk to. She responded saying, 'Talking about things will not change anything', whilst laughing. He considered it was not a genuine laugh. They arranged to go for a drink after lectures on 28.04.2022. Martyna missed the first lecture, and during the second lecture, she messaged to say that she 'could not find the will to get out of bed'. Tom then did not then hear from Martyna for 3 weeks. He started calling and texting her after the first week, getting no response. After the third week, he raised concerns with course mates and lecturers, repeatedly calling her, but she did not answer the phone.

6.4.10 On 13.05.2022, Tom received a long message from Martyna, which he described as 'very out of character', as their communication was normally in person. She apologised for the lack of contact, explained some things in her life had fallen apart. Tom responded that he was grateful that she was okay. He had no further contact with her.

6.5 Work Colleagues

6.5.1 **Jane** (friend and work colleague). Jane provided a police statement which was examined for this review. She was also interviewed by the author by telephone. A number of Text (voice note) exchanges were also reviewed between Jane and Martyna. Martyna had told her John had come to the restaurant before, but she had not met John. Martyna told her in the weeks before the murder she tried to break up with him and he said he couldn't live without her. He went missing for a few days and wrote a suicide note. She reached out to one of his friends (Sean) through social media, who John had mentioned before. Martyna had never met any of his friends or family. Martyna told her that John had stated had a really successful company for which he went on work trips and his friends

invested in. John said his brother was in debt. Sean told her that was a lie and that John' company was a failure, and he was in trouble with debt collectors. This caused Martyna to believe her relationship with John was a lie and they broke up. Jane had noticed that when Martyna seemed off and not her usual self, it meant she was having problems with John.

6.5.2 Martyna would often talk about John, as when Jane met her they were at the end of their relationship. She said that Martyna told her that he said he couldn't live without her and that he would threaten suicide when she tried to break up with him. During the week commencing 9.05.2022, Martyna had made it clear that they were no longer together, and they hadn't spoken for a few days, but John had been trying to contact her. They had been on and off over the previous few months, but Martyna wanted to make it final. She seemed worried and she said he had said to her "WE WILL BE TOGETHER NO MATTER WHAT" and "I WILL FIND YOU". Martyna didn't know what John meant by this and was a bit scared. She said that she might stay with a friend for a few days. Neither Jane or Martyna recognised the danger in his words/ threats and did not perceive his actions as a risk to Martyna.

6.5.3 **Julia** (worked with Martyna and Martin at the restaurant). Julia provided a police statement which was examined for this review. She was not interviewed by the author. She described herself as Martyna's best friend at work. They had discussed Martyna's ex-boyfriend although she did not know his name. She described him as being Nigerian and taller than her, they had been together for about 18 months and whilst they didn't live together, he stayed with her regularly. Martyna had said that she had an argument with him as he was going out in London with another girl.

6.5.4 Martyna had never indicated that she was scared of John. But Martyna had commented to Julia that things had 'been funny between them for a while and that he was not the person that he told her he was'. They broke up a month before the incident (April 2022).

6.5.5 **Sean** (previously worked with John). Sean provided a police statement which was examined for this review. He was also interviewed by the author by Teams. He had previously worked with John between 2016-18 in a research company in Bristol, before John left for another job in Wales. They stayed in touch sporadically, with occasional catch-up calls, although he didn't consider him a close or genuine friend, as John always

appeared to want something (borrowed money, stay at his house). Sean thought he could be charming, outgoing but also manipulative. He described John as 'proud'. The said that John bragged about sleeping with 200 women which seemed unlikely as he was always 'frustrated' when his on-line female contacts didn't reply to messages. They were more 'work colleagues' than friends. Sean suspected that John had some mental health issues, and considered he behaved strangely on occasion, appearing frantic and chaotic. John would often take a week off work at a time for apparent 'exhaustion'.

6.5.6 In late March or early April 2022, John called him asking to borrow money (£500-700) as he said his business had collapsed (legal debt), he had no savings and said he could not pay his rent and bills. Sean was unable to help but he checked with another friend and established that John had also asked that person for money (£10,000) but gave a different account. He said he had 'illegal loan sharks' after him and said he would have to 'go on the run' as he was scared. Sean questioned him about the loan shark scenario, and John said he needed to get out of the area as he was worried. He planned to go to Yorkshire and get money from someone he knew there. Sean believed that he was lying about the stories he told.

6.5.7 Two weeks after this initial phone call, John called Sean and said he was outside of a Hospital and had had a breakdown. He was very vague and said that he had discharged himself (this is believed to have been the incident on 02.03.2022 referred to in section 13).

6.5.8 On 29.04.2022, Martyna added Sean on Facebook, and they then spoke. Martyna was worried and told him that John had tried to overdose three times in the last month and that she was really worried about him. Sean told her that this may be because his business was failing, and this was making him feel down. Martyna was shocked as John had told her that his brother's business was failing and that he was doing well and had recently sold £10,000 worth of stock. Sean then called and spoke to John. John said he had taken some 5HTP tablets to help him sleep. Sean confronted John over how upset Martyna was and told him that he needed to take some responsibility.

6.5.9 About 10 days later, Martyna called him again to say John had overdosed again. Sean tried to get some advice from a Charity. He then advised him to go to his GP. Sean again called and told John that he needed to get some help and take some responsibility for what he was

doing to himself and others. John claimed he was £30,000 in debt because of treatment for ulcerative colitis, which is similar to Chron's disease. He said he had paid for this privately, as he was having lots of general problems with his intestines. Sean challenged him on this and asked him why he wasn't getting any treatment on the NHS. John told Sean that it was not that simple because of COVID. John said that he had begun to think that he was also having neurological problems from when he did MMA fights when he was younger (Facebook pictures supported that he was involved in martial arts or Jujitsu). He said that he was being supported by his 'three' brothers.

6.5.10 Sean mentioned Martyna but John said his mental health was private and Martyna had 'blocked him anyway' so he couldn't get in contact with her. Because she had blocked him, he wanted to go to London to see her. On 09.05.2022, Sean called Martyna explaining what John had said about being with his three brothers. Martyna told him that he had two brothers.

6.5.11 In this final call, Martyna explained she was really stressed and was at university and just wanted to help him. She also said that they were not in a relationship anymore, had been split up for 6 months and that she had ended it with him as it was all becoming too much and overwhelming. She did say that she would get back together with him, in the future, if he sorted himself out. She said John had said, words to the effect of 'We are going to be together, whether you like it or not.'

6.5.12 Whilst Sean felt this message had a different tone, he did not interpret that this was dangerous or a specific threat. Sean advised her to be careful and look after herself and stay away from him and to focus on her studies. She explained she had already 'blocked' him as he was becoming too much. In the last call, she told Sean that she thought the suicide threats was an attention seeking ploy rather than him actually wanting to take his life.

6.5.13 Sean considered the news of Martyna's death as totally devastating and unpredictable.

6.5.14 **Jed** (previously worked with John). Jed was not interviewed by police as part of their enquiries, but he was interviewed by the Author, as he had made a call about John's welfare on 22.05.2022, unaware that John had been arrested. He had known John for over 10 years and worked with

him in IT. He became friendly through martial arts training. He was unaware that John had brothers. He described John as 'guarded' and private about his family life and avoided questions about it. He described him as being open in podcasts[15] about his life in multi-cultural Bristol but had not highlighted any issues to him linked to his race or identity. The podcasts have not been identified or viewed by the author.

6.5.15 As friends, they socialised and often stayed at each other's homes. Jed had never met Martyna (or any other female) and described that John was quite vague when he spoke of her. He described that he found John to be a late bloomer with women, who in conversations, had an unusual frustration with women who he felt didn't understand him. Jed thought that John often appeared angry when talking about women and used to romanticise what it would be like to have a 'loyal' girlfriend.

6.5.16 Jed met with him in April 2022, and they had their first meaningful discussion about mental health. John explained he was under a lot of stress and had been 'scammed' out of money (10's of £1000's) in recent months when he had tried to start an IT / Tech business venture. John's identity was linked to business success, so talked of hiring a private investigator to track down his money. They talked about stress and negativity John described feeling desperation about his situation. John described hearing people talk openly about selling drugs as he walked around town which frustrated him as he tried to establish a lawful business. He was describing how difficult it was to live with poor mental health. Jed asked him about his intentions and although he felt John was exhibiting extreme stress at his situation, a breakdown in his emotions, but he had no concerns about self-harm or suicide.

6.5.17 They had text exchanges on 27.04.2022, and thereafter John did not reply to calls or texts from Jed, leading Jed to call the police on 22.05.2022 to report concerns for his welfare, unaware that John had been arrested.

6.5.18 **Mark** (John's friend and previous manager). Mark had known John for 5/6 years, having worked as John's manager in a market research company (now disbanded). Mark also knew Sean. He took John on as a Team Leader recognising John as more mature than the traditional students employed in the team. Through a mutual interest in mixed martial arts, they became friends but rarely socialised outside of the work

[15] Personal podcasts created by John. Not viewed by the author but referenced as part of Jed's interview.

setting. Mark described John as genuinely positive with a calm demeanour, who was a 'big character' but prone to being a bit sullen and moody. Although John said he dated sporadically, he was unaware of John's history of female relationships. He was aware that John was in a relationship with Martyna but had not met her personally or spoke about her.

6.5.19 In June 2016, Mark moved to another company in Wales and offered John a role with a pay rise. After successfully passing the interview, John moved to take up a role as team Leader. By June 2017, the company was acquired by a larger company requiring some redundancies to be made. Mark confidentially advised John that he would be made redundant, giving him early notice to find another role before accepting the voluntary redundancy package. John spoke often of his developing technology (App) in the music and IT space, stating he had run it past developers. After he left the company, Mark had less contact with him, although John reassured him that he hired people to work with him on his design ideas.

6.5.20 About 6 weeks before the murder (late March 2022), John contacted Mark repeatedly asking to borrow money but initially gave no reason why he wanted it. Mark tried to distance himself, made excuses not to see John, saying he was away with work and suspected that John was lying when he asked what the money was for. John had told Mark that he had no family in the UK, had been 'turfed' out of his flat and he had nowhere to turn. Recalling that John 'bragged' of an extensive record collection that he used to trade (buy and sell for profit), in one call, Mark suggested that he sell some of them and John agreed to do so. On a call later the same day, John was out of breath stating he had been chased out of his house by people who were after him for money, and that he was hiding in an underpass near Newport. John again asked for money saying he had previously sold his record collection, seemingly forgetting that he had spoken of having the records only hours before. Mark decided not to give him money.

6.5.21 The following day, Mark received multiple calls and repeated messages from different numbers. He blocked each one, but messaged John to 'get professional counselling or help'.

6.5.22 About 2 weeks before the murder, John again contacted Mark and asked for money to get a coach or train to London. John did not respond.

Mark was shocked on hearing the news of the murder, reflecting that through his previous messages with John, he had believed John may have killed himself. He had not anticipated risk to Martyna, having never met her nor discussed her with John. He was unable to provide further information to support this review.

6.5.23 **Martin** (witness who was with Martyna at the time of the murder). Martin provided a police video interview as a witness to the murder; the summary was examined for this review. He was not approached or interviewed by the author. It was considered due to his traumatic witnessing of the murder; it would be inappropriate to make contact. (His observation is detailed in the Facts of the Case at Section 13).

6.5.24 Martyna and Martin worked at the same restaurant but on different shifts. They had only commenced a fledgling relationship having met privately only three times. Martin was not aware of any of the details of Martyna's relationship with John so was unable to give any context to their relationship. She had given him the impression that it was 'over' as she used the phrase, 'now that I'm single….'

6.6 Employers

6.6.1 The author contacted the restaurant where Martyna worked part-time, by phone and via email, sending a request for contact and including the Home Office information for employers. The original manager and several staff employed there had moved on and no forward contact details were available. Two of the staff had made police statements which were reviewed. The HR department contacted the Chair and were unable to provide any information of Martyna's situation prior to the murder, to assist this review.

6.6.2 The company have taken steps to develop and promote DA training and support for staff across their national network since this incident and their contribution is referenced at Section 16.

6.6.3 It was not possible to contact employers for John. There were no identified employers for John as he was believed to have been attempting to set up an IT business during the timescale of the review. Companies House had no records of his name or address as a listed company or business. He had previously worked in Market Research with Sean.

6.6.4 The account from Mark (a previous manager) is detailed above. The company that Mark and John both worked for is disbanded.

6.7 Wider Community (Academic Research)

6.7.1 The DHR panel was keen to ensure that they consulted with people with knowledge of the Polish community in Ealing. Despite attempts to seek local representation for the panel, it proved difficult to obtain support and local advisors were unable to confirm attendance at any of the panel meetings. The Chair sought to obtain support from a national polish Domestic Abuse Charity to assist with understanding of cultural or diversity issues that may be relevant in this review. They were able to provide assistance by delivering a presentation on culture to the panel, which addressed eastern European challenges with domestic abuse.

6.7.2 In June 2022, however, the first UK wide research was published. The Lincoln University and Edan Lincs research project[16] had been cited in other DHR's with eastern European links and is cited by Vesta[17]. The research concerned domestic abuse within the Polish community living in the UK, with a focus on investigating the barriers to women seeking help for domestic abuse. Whilst focussed on the Polish community, the research also covers Lithuanian and Bulgarian communities. The published work contained some insightful commentary on the challenges that Eastern European women encounter, following their migration to the UK.

6.7.3 The findings highlighted the women's experiences of domestic abuse in the UK, coupled with intersecting disadvantages arising from gender, class, migration histories and immigration status.

6.7.4 The research highlighted that domestic abuse is poorly recognised in Poland. The Polish government is critical of domestic abuse and women's rights campaigns as undermining traditional values, the sanctity of marriage and Polish identity. There is a cultural of families staying together whatever their situation. This is especially so when there are children in the relationship (whilst Martyna had no children, she had experienced her parents' marital breakdown). This can result in the wider

[16] Zielinska, I., Anitha, S., Rasell, M. and Kane, R. (2022) Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and abuse in the UK. Interim research report. Lincoln: EDAN Lincs and University of Lincoln.
[17] Vesta- Specialist Family Support CIC- formerly Polish Domestic Violence Helpline.

family not being supportive of a woman who wants to leave a relationship, which may in turn cause a feeling of isolation.

6.7.5 The research revealed, there is limited recognition of non-physical forms of abuse in Polish law and overall neglect of domestic abuse in state policy with funding cuts for services and the threat to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women. It is difficult to measure the prevalence of domestic abuse amongst Polish women in the UK because crime survey data do not disaggregate by country of birth. Polish women are over-represented in femicide statistics in the UK.

6.7.6 There is low awareness in the community of what constitutes domestic abuse, so the additional challenge for a victim is the recognising, disclosing, and seeking help, both from formal services and from their familial and social networks. Women's responses to abuse came from a lack of awareness about service responses to domestic violence and abuse in the UK, language barriers and a strong fear and mistrust of services prolonged their entrapment within the potentially abusive relationship. Socio-cultural and Polish Catholic Church norms about women's roles within families and the shame and stigma of divorce.

6.7.7 The report's recommendations were developed by contextualising the research findings in the current practice and policy context for domestic abuse provision, including funding cuts to domestic abuse and social services in the past ten years, tighter eligibility for public funds and hostile immigration policies. Many points were considered highly relevant to other groups of minoritised women (Eastern European) and all victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

6.7.8 Summarising, the report stated that domestic abuse is a global issue and just over a quarter (27%) of women who have been in a relationship, report bring subject to physical and/or sexual abuse by their intimate partner (WHO, 2021). The research appeared limited as it does not seem to focus on the cultural and diversity challenges faced by many non-British born victims of abuse in the UK.

Section 7 - Contributors to the Review/ Agencies submitting IMR's

7.1 A large number of agencies were contacted in Ealing but neither Martyna or John were known to any agency, so scoping returns documented 'no contact'**.** Avon and Somerset and Gwent also had minimal contact with either of them.

Agency	**Contribution**
MPS	Summary report/ Police statements
Gwent Police	IMR
University of West London	IMR
University Hospital Bristol NHS Foundation Trust	Chronology
Avon and Somerset Police	Chronology
Local GP service (John)	Chronology

7.2 Each agency provided a chronology of interaction with the subjects of the review, including what decisions were made and what actions were taken. The HO Guidelines make it clear that IMRs should include a comprehensive chronology that charts the involvement of the agency with the victim and perpetrator over the period set out in the 'Terms of Reference' for the review. It should summarise: the events that occurred; intelligence and information known to the agency; the decisions reached; the services offered and provided to the subjects of the review; and any other action taken.

7.3 Each IMR author had no previous knowledge of the subjects of the review nor had any involvement in the provision of services to them. They were selected as people independent from any clinical or line management supervision for any of the practitioners who provided care for them and could provide an analysis of events that occurred; the decisions made; and the actions taken or not taken. The IMR authors were asked to arrive at a conclusion on their own agency's involvement and to make recommendations where appropriate.

7.4 Of specific note in this review, save for the reports of concern for safety (John) police had no information (intelligence or information) on John or Martyna prior to the incident. No criminal records are noted. Neither Adults (Social Care) Services or mental health providers had information on John or Martyna prior to the incident. There is no available information that Martyna sought advice or support from domestic abuse services.

Section 8 - The Review Panel Members were all independent and had no conflicts.

Name	Role/Agency
Theresa Breen	Independent Chair and Report Author
Tracy Mcauliffe	Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor University of West London
Viran Wiltshire	Detective Sergeant, Specialist Crime Review Group, MPS
Fozia Ashraf	Advance Charity
Howard Stanley	Aneurin Bevin UHB – Corporate Services
Aimee Ramiah	Head of Safeguarding, Advance Charity
Kate Aston	Designated Nurse, Adult Safeguarding- NHS NWL[18]
Joyce Parker	Community Safety Team Leader, Ealing CSP
Brenda Otto (BO)	Head of Advocacy Services, Southall Black Sisters
Stephanie Gordon (SG)	DoLS Team Manager, Ealing
Rhys Potter (RP)	Detective Inspector, Gwent Police

Section 9 - Author and Chair of the Overview Report

9.1 Sections 36 to 39 of the Home Office Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews December 2016 sets out the requirements for review Chairs and Authors. In this case, the Chair and Author was the same person.

[18] North West London (NWL)

9.2 Theresa Breen was selected as the Chair of the Review Panel and Author of the report. She retired from British Policing (MPS) in November 2018, after 30 years. As a former senior police officer, she worked across a range of policing disciplines, including Serious Organised Crime, Counter Terrorism and Safeguarding in management positions. She gained experience of reviews working extensively in partnership with other agencies and had experience of working with Eastern European communities. She was a trained Senior Investigating Officer (SIO). She did not work in the borough of Ealing, and was independent from all local agencies and the case.

9.3 She worked across a number of Public Protection and Safeguarding portfolios in London and Surrey, managing and overseeing MAPPA[19] and MARAC[20] processes. As the police Public Protection lead in Westminster, she managed and oversaw Domestic Abuse services, to diverse communities. As a Borough Commander in a West London Borough, she was the core police member of the Safer and Stronger Strategy Group. Operating as 'Gold London[21],' Theresa had overall strategic command of multiple incidents including those involving domestic abuse and homicide.

9.4 Working in partnership, Theresa additionally led the national police implementation of the cross-agency Operational Improvement Review (OIR) recommendations following the terrorist activities across the UK in 2017/18. Theresa is independent and has not worked for any agency in Ealing, Gwent or Bristol and has no connection with any of the agencies involved in this review. She has completed the relevant Home Officer DHR Chair training.

9.5 Theresa has been the Chair and Author for 10 DHR's and is a current Chair and Author for the new OWHR[22] pilot process and an OWHR review. She is a trainer for Sancus Solutions, delivering safeguarding and equality

[19] MAPPA stands for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, and it is the process through which various agencies such as the police, the Prison Service and Probation work together to protect the public by managing the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community.
[20] MARAC is a multi-agency meeting which facilitates the risk assessment process for individuals and their families who are at risk of domestic violence and abuse. Organisations are invited to share information with a view to identifying those at "very high" risk of domestic violence and abuse. Where very high risk has been identified, a multi-agency action plan is developed to support all those at risk.
[21] The generic command structure, nationally recognised, accepted and used by the police, other emergency services and partner agencies, is based on the gold, silver, bronze (GSB) hierarchy of command and can be applied to the resolution of both spontaneous incidents and planned operations.
[22] OWHR is Offensive Weapons Homicide Review is a HO pilot to deal with the under researched and reviewed area of homicides involving offensive weapons in 4 pilot sites across the UK.

training, and delivered the OWHR training to over 90 delegates, including safeguarding and, equality and diversity input.

Section 10 - Parallel Reviews

10.1 A forensic post-mortem (FPM) was conducted on 19.05. 2022, giving cause of death as stab and incision wounds to the neck, chest, and abdomen. The injuries were extensive and consistent with John attempting to decapitate Martyna.

10.2 The Coroner's Inquest was opened on 26.05.2022 and was adjourned pending the criminal Investigation. Upon conclusion of the criminal matter, the Inquest was not resumed and was officially closed on 23.06.2023. The findings of the criminal case are therefore used to inform this review.

10.3 The Crown Court jury concluded that Martyna was murdered by John in May 2022, when John assaulted her with a knife, inflicting fatal injuries. The Judge stated that the attack was 'ferocious and savage' and said,

'*There is no mitigation here. There is no evidence of a mental disorder or disability*'.

John was sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 29 years, minus time on remand.

Section 11- Equality and Diversity

11.1 The Review Panel considered the nine Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation) during the DHR process in evaluating the services provided and have been regularly revisited throughout the Review.

11.2 Equality and diversity were also considered, when examining the 'Key Findings from Analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews' September 2021 (hereafter the HO Analysis 2021) and looking for similarities and

differences in the findings. The key information from 124 DHRs which were reviewed by the Home Office quality assurance process for the 12 months from October 2019 is used to inform this review. The Author additionally considered the information from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data for the year ending March 2022.

11.3 In considering the characteristics, the Author was mindful that approximately 60% of perpetrators were known to have a previous offending history. Of these, three quarters had abused previous partners and one third, family members. This includes a small proportion who had abused both previous partners and family members. John falls into the 40% with no known convictions. He had not come to the attention of police as an offender or suspect. There was therefore no information about previous partners or victims of alleged abuse. The below is a synopsis for each category:

11.4 Sex

11.4.1 Sex always requires special consideration. Martyna was female, and John is male. CSEW data showed that 1.7 million women experienced domestic abuse in the reporting period, which equates to 7 in 100 women. Domestic Abuse is a hidden crime that is often not reported to police.

11.4.2 From an examination of DHR's[23], Home Office records show that the majority (80%) of victims of domestic homicide were female and for perpetrators 83% were male. Additionally, in 73% of cases the perpetrator was the partner or ex-partner. Extensive analytical studies of domestic homicide in reviews reveal gendered victimisation across both intimate partner and familial homicides. Males represent the majority of perpetrators. Females represent the majority of victims.

11.4.3 As women statistically are more likely to be abused, sex is considered a vulnerability. There was no agency records of physical assault during this review and no specific information or intelligence held by agencies that Martyna had been subject to any domestic abuse by John. Many of the witnesses[24], who gave police witness statements or interviews, talk about Martyna being subject to manipulative behaviours (threats of suicide)., without recognising her vulnerability as a woman to this form of

[23] Home Office Research- Key finding from Analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews- October 2019- September 2020.
[24] See section 3- Alicja, Jane, Sean

abuse. As a woman the likelihood that she could have been a victim is high.

11.5 Age

11.5.1 Martyna was a 21-year-old woman at the time of her tragic death. Her ex-partner John was 9 years older (30). They had formed a relationship when she was a relatively young age (19-20yrs) and when he was 28-29 yrs.

11.5.2 Research suggests that age difference can be seen to create a power imbalance. Whilst the age difference in this case, at the outset may have created a power imbalance, because of limited information from witnesses, there was no evidence from friends or family to suggest there actually was, and there was no evidence of Martyna's lack of power within the relationship due to her age.

11.5.3 From the HO Analysis 2021[25], the proportion of victims and perpetrators was examined in different age ranges. Studying the age of victims showed that Martyna was of the average age of women to be more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year. For example, an estimated 28.4% of women aged 16 to 59 years have experienced some form of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years[26].

11.6 Disability

11.6.1 The Equality Act 2010 defines **disability** as: "A physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities."

11.6.2 Whilst there is no information to suggest either Martyna or John fell into this definition relating to physical disability, or learning and communication difficulties, there is suggestion that John was exhibiting some issues with his health including stress and anxiety prior to this murder. This was not being treated and did not have a formal diagnosis which would have suggested a disability.

11.6.3. Although the records were sparse, both Martyna and John had attended for routine medical treatment. In terms of medical information,

[25] Home Office Research- Key finding from Analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews- October 2019- September 2020.
[26] Office of National Statistics, 2019

John had attended hospital on one occasion on 02.03.2022 in a drowsy state stating he had taken some sleeping tablets. He left in a taxi before any medical assessment could have been made. This were not treated as a disability but was possibly indicative of stress.

11.6.4 Neither Martyna and John had a known physical or mental impairment which would have meant they were disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. It was decided that the Protected Characteristic of disability required no specific consideration in this report.

11.7 Gender reassignment – Not Applicable to this Review.

11.8 Marriage and civil partnership

11.8.1 Martyna and John were both single and unmarried. There is limited information to examine in Martyna or John's previous relationships. Martyna had one long-distance relationship prior to John which ended amicably with no suggestion of domestic abuse. According to witnesses, Martyna met John via the internet in 2021. There is no other information available to indicate other relationship, so it appears that John was Martyna's most significant relationship in the period before her murder. Marriage was not relevant to this review. They had not lived together or considered marriage.

11.9 Pregnancy and maternity

11.9.1 Martyna was not pregnant and had no children. This is not applicable in this review.

11.10 Race

11.10.1 Race was considered in this review. Martyna was a white European from Poland. John was a black British man of Nigerian descent.

11.10.2 The dearth in agency interaction meant that the panel was unable to explore race in the context of how it may have impacted on either of them. There were no agency reports that race presented any barriers to accessing services, Martyna's cultural heritage was explored with an expert in polish culture. The panel considered the relevance of polish culture and how it may have impacted on her live. The cultural aspect of the

experiences of eastern European women being subject to domestic abuse has been referenced above at section 6.

11.10.3 At the time of her murder, Martyna had been in the UK for approximately 3 years. She spoke excellent English (according to her university and friends); however, it was still her second language. The level of her reading and writing in English is based on records in university files, and there is evidence from agency records show that communication in English was excellent. Whilst she communicated without interpreters, consideration as to her lack of need for interpreters could have been noted in agency records for clarity. In accessing services, had she chosen to do so, the panel recognised that language would not necessarily have been an issue for her in English, but for other women could be a factor in accessing services.

11.10.4 John had been in the UK since 2006, having settled well into his local school and experienced no challenges in what his friend described as 'multi-cultural' Bristol. From witness accounts, there were no identified communication issues with language, as he spoke English as a first language. John's mother was clear that his race and culture were not relevant in this review.

11.11 **Religion/ Beliefs**

11.11.1 Neither Martyna or Johns' religious beliefs are unknown, and the panel were unable to obtain this information from family members but are not believed to have had a bearing on the events being reviewed.

11.11.2 There is no state religion in Poland. However, the biggest faith group is Roman Catholicism. According to the population census in 2011, about 77% those who deemed themselves religious were Catholics. The panel was unable to establish if religious beliefs impacted on Martyna and John.

11.12 Sexual orientation

11.12.1 The sexual orientation for each is believed to have been heterosexual.

11.13 Intersectionality

11.13.1 Intersectionality was discussed at length during the panel. In simple terms, intersectionality describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on any of the protected characteristics, and/or class and other forms of discrimination "intersect" to create unique dynamics and effects.

11.13.2 In this case, Martyna's age and sex alone create an unremarkable set of characteristics to explore but her presence as a young woman from Poland may have created some disadvantage for her particularly around financial issues, and her need to work to support her studies in London. She supported herself financially paying school fees, housing and day to day living. Language has been explored and Martyna was understood to communicate well in English and was studying at an English university without challenge. Records do not indicate any other known vulnerabilities revealed to agencies.

11.13.3 There are no records to show that John experienced any particular social vulnerabilities. He was an educated young man, working in IT and living in private rented accommodation.

Section 12- Dissemination

- Safer Ealing Partnership.
- All agencies contributing to the review.
- Mayor of London - Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

Section 13 - Background, Overview and Chronology

13.1 This following part of the report combines elements of the background, overview and chronology sections of the Home Office DHR Guidance overview report template. This was done to avoid duplication of information. The narrative is told chronologically to give relevant background history of Martyna and John prior to the timescales under review and as stated in the terms of reference to give context to their history. It is built predominantly on Martyna's life. It is punctuated by subheadings to aid understanding.

13.2 The information is drawn from Martyna's sister, friends, documents provided by agencies and from the police investigation following Martyna's

murder. The information in this section is factual. The analysis appears at section 14 of the report.

13.3 Relevant information prior to the review period

13.3.1 Martyna was born in Poland in September 2000. She had one (half) sister, Alicja, who was 18 years older, who had moved to the UK when she was 6 years old. In 2012, Martyna's parents separated, and Martyna lived with her dad as her mother moved away for a period.

13.3.2 John was born in Nigeria in August 1992. He had two older brothers[27]. He moved to the UK in 2006. Further background details are contained in his mother's account (section 6).

June 2018: Martyna visited Bristol to stay with her sister for 2 months to work in UK for the summer to earn money so she could go back to Poland with enough money to move out of home and rent a room in Poland. At this summer job she met a male (Karl) who worked for the same company at Bristol Airport and got into a relationship. Karl has not been spoke to as part of this review as there is no suggestion the relationship was in any way abusive.

10.08.2018: Source Gwent police IMR: Concern for Safety[28]. An individual[29] reported concerns about John, who he had been communicating with via Facebook. He stated John was confused and disorientated. He explained that John had a brain injury and mental health issues[30] as a result of this. Enquiries were conducted with his family. John's mum stated she has no idea where he was and his brother saw him in Newport city centre 2-3 months before, but they did not speak. It could not be established where John was. The initial call and log were closed.

13.08.2018: Source Gwent police IMR: Report of Missing person[31]. John was reported as a missing person by his mother. A MISPER report was completed, and John was assessed as being a Medium Risk Missing person. Contact was made with him via his mobile. He explained that he wasn't missing and was in Bristol. He had moved to Newport to be away

[27] According to his mother.
[28] Police ref: Niche 1800304557
[29] Enquiries with police reveal that no address or phone number was found with this report and this individual has not been identified during this review.
[30] No evidence has been found to support this information in the review and the alleged witness gave no address or phone number to recontact them.
[31] Police ref: 1800306820

from his mother. He did not wish for his mother to know his address or whereabouts. He agreed to present himself to Police upon returning to Wales. John was an adult male making the decision for his family not to be notified. Police followed correct procedure.

20.08.2018: Source Gwent police IMR: A welfare check was conducted, and John apologised for not being in touch with Police until his return but explained he had lost his phone.

May 2019: After a long-distance relationship with Karl, Martyna moved to the UK to live with him in Bristol (with his brother and wife). They remained together until September 2019, when they split amicably. Martyna then temporarily moved in with her sister, until moving in with another friend between November 2019 - April 2020 when she returned to live with her sister.

13.4 Relevant information during the review

March 2000: Martyna travelled to Australia for a holiday before returning to stay with her sister in April 2022.

January 2021: Martyna met John through an online dating app. Little is known of their relationship at this stage, when they first met in person or how often they met.

July 2021: Martyna moved in a shared house in Bristol with five new tenants, whom she became friends with. John visited her at their shared house on occasion. Martyna's sister met him briefly once.

September 2021: Martyna decided to move to London to study - she stayed with her sister for one week before going to London to study sound engineering, with the hope to eventually work in the music industry. She discussed splitting with John due to the distance and a lack of transport but decided to stay together. She told her sister that this put a strain on the relationship. Excited about the move to London to start her studies, Martyna was slightly scared about how she would cope living in a big city and also pay for her accommodation. She needed to work, which caused stress and pressure. Martyna moved to Wembley, London which was the Student accommodation block for University of West London

17.02.2222: Martyna anonymously reported a complaint about a fellow flat mate via UWL Report and Support online platform. Note: UWL cannot take any further action with an anonymous report. (source UWL IMR).

18.02.2222: Martyna reported the same complaint as previously but named herself as she realised no action could be taken[32]. On an unknown date, John visited her in London to support her through this challenging time.

21.02.2022: Student Welfare officer emailed Martyna after receiving the report via UWL Report and Support platform of an incident with a flat mate whilst living in student halls of residence in Wembley. Martyna reported she had been verbally and mentally abused by a fellow student. (The case note stated that her mental health had worsened in the last couple of months due to this other student verbally abusing her). Martyna did not respond to the Student Welfare[33].

26.02.2022: Martyna wrote to UWL Accommodation team asking to be moved to a different flat as Martyna had complained about a fellow student mental abusing her and how it was affecting her mental health[34].

28.02.2022: UWL Accommodation offered Martyna an alternative flat in the same building at Wembley.[35]

02.03.2022: John attends A and E Emergency Care with an intentional overdose of 5-7 herbal tablets with intent to help him sleep. Denies suicidal intention. Was feeling tired (GCS 15 pearl)[36]. John was encouraged to stay for assessment. Left department prior to being seen. There were no significant concerns regarding Physical Health or MH, so not escalated.

03.03.2022: Student Welfare emailed Martyna again informing her if she wanted support, she could contact Student Welfare[37].

04.03.2022: John had a telephone conversation with his GP presenting with stress and anxiety, reporting recent separation from partner. Requesting time away from work. There is no recording whether self-harm, thought content or other risk factors were considered.

[32] Source UWL IMR
[33] Source UWL IMR
[34] Source UWL IMR
[35] Source UWL IMR
[36] First aid acronym PEARL is used when assessing head injuries and brain function.
[37] Source UWL IMR

04.03.2022: Martyna signed a contract for new accommodation in Ealing and moved in to share the house with three others[38].

08.03.2022: Martyna emailed her Tutor asking if she could have an extra practical session to catch up for her absence the previous week[39].

10.03.2022: Student Welfare emailed one more time to Martyna informing her Student Welfare was here to support her if needed - no response received[40].

11.03.2022: John had a telephone conversation with his GP presenting with stress and anxiety, reporting stress at work. No suicidal ideation noted. Speech and thought content not of concern. Sick note provided. Advised to recontact practice if he wished to access counselling services. There were no significant concerns noted regarding this consolation.

08.04.2022: John had a telephone consultation with his GP, presenting with work related stress and anxiety. A thorough risk assessment of mood, thought, content and ideation was undertaken. Prescribed medication referred for counselling and advised to rebook for review.
(After this point prescription was re-issued after four weeks, which is in line with guidance. There was no indication for face to face follow up, as patients' presentation had indicated low mood but no risk).

20.04.2022: Following John attending his GP, a referral to Primary Care Mental Health (MH) Services was received from John's GP. References low mood and anxiety, being treated by GP with medication. Patient reports counselling may help, hence this referral. This was appropriately triaged, and no acute or urgent needs noted. Therefore, scheduled for assessment.

22.04.2022: Standard letter sent to John, inviting contact to arrange assessment. This is standard process and there is nothing to suggest that he was unwell to the extent that this process should not be followed.

29.04.2022: Source Gwent police IMR: Urgent Welfare Check[41]. MPS contacted Gwent police after Martyna reported concerns about John who had told her he is going to kill himself using a train from Newport to Cardiff to attempt suicide. Further information provided to state that he was at

[38] Source UWL IMR
[39] Source UWL IMR
[40] Source UWL IMR
[41] Police ref: 2200141359

two locations in the South Wales police area, a train station and then that he was on cycle path in Neath having slashed his wrists. He did this as he believed his partner had cheated on him. Officers attended his home address and John was not present. It was noted that his home was in disarray. Consideration was given to raising John as a High-Risk Missing Person, but contact was made with him. John confirmed that he was in Cardiff and didn't know why there was a concern for him. He agreed to meet officers when he returned home to Newport. John presented himself to officers to Newport Central Police Station. He denied sending any suicidal texts or mentioned anything about killing himself. He explained that he went out to clear his mind for the day. Officers checked and he had no injuries to his arms or wrist and was shocked that this had been passed to the police. A Public Protection Notification (PPN) was completed by the Officer highlighting the recent incident and concerns over the condition of his home. However, John refused consent for his information to be shared with another agency.

29.04.2022: Source Gwent police IMR: Concern for Safety[42]. Martyna called police a second time concerned that John would commit suicide if police don't see him, as she explained she had spoken with John, but he hadn't return home. A welfare check was carried out and John explained to officers that he had a counsellor and therapist. He took medication which made him slur his words and didn't know what he was doing. He explained that he and his partner had a disagreement and woke up to a text message which really upset him. Confirmed with officers he was fine. Later that evening, Martyna called the MPS again explaining that she had just phoned John and was worried he was slurring his words and was worried that he may have taken an overdose. Gwent officers re-attended and conducted a second welfare check. John was sleeping on the floor in the hallway amongst rubbish. John confirmed that he was ok and coherent. The door was only slightly ajar with John refusing to open it further. He complained about being disturbed. Officers identified blue tablets on the floor near to him which John confirmed was supplements. Officers explained that they wanted to ensure he was safe and that he wouldn't harm himself. Officers asked why he was sleeping on the floor amongst the rubbish to which he replied, he didn't wish to disclose. He said words to the effect 'that it's the third time Police have been called', at which point officers left. A previous PPN had been submitted, and as there was no new information, a second PPN was not completed.

[42] Police record- Niche 2200142007

30.04.2022: Up until w/c 25.04.2022, Martyna's attendance was good and there was consistent engagement on the university VLE (Blackboard). Martyna did not always attend all timetabled classes in the week but would attend the majority[43].

W/C 02.05.2022: Martyna did not attend class at university[44].

05.05.2022: Martyna called her sister crying, disclosing that she had spent the last six months trying to end the relationship, but John had tried to commit suicide 3 times. Alicja advised her to ignore him and offered her an opportunity to come and stay with her in Bristol. Alicja asked how she could help but stated she had no concerns at this stage.

09.05.2022: Standard letter sent to John's GP regarding his lack of contact and advising the referral was closed. (Again, standard practice, as the responsibility is back on the GP to assess need/risk).

09.05.2022: John called his GP to ask for counselling, he said he had not been contacted. He had not been at home and had missed the letter. The practice advised him to call the Primary Care MH Services (counselling service) and make an appointment on 10.05.2022.

W/C 09.05.2022: Did not attend class at university[45].

09.05.2022: Martyna had a number of text/phone exchanges with over several hours on that day with her friend. In summary:

- In the first voice note, she said John had made three suicidal attempts, was 'using her as a babysitter', and had disappeared. She said he had also lied to her and Sean about his life.
- A second voice note revealed that John had messaged her, asking for a call. Martyna told him, '*we cannot have a call, you do not get to traumatise me emotionally, mentally in any way, shape or form and then come back into my life as if nothing happened*'.
- In the third voice note*, she said she told him, 'if you want to call me to beg me to get you, to get back with you whatever else, then we're not going to have that conversation because we've already had*

[43] Source UWL IMR
[44] Source UWL IMR
[45] Source UWL IMR

that conversation every single week for the last half a year and I'm not having that conversation with you again'.

- In the fourth voice note, she says, '*....calls me in a f****** frantic panic at 8am, so I've slept literally three **** hours today, um, he calls me at like 8am just hyperventilating on to the microphone going through a panic attack crying, doing whatever, being like I love you, please, please give me a chance'*. Martyna asked if John was in danger, confirmed where he was then contacted Sean. She notes, '*I genuinely do not the mental strength to go through this again and again and again…'*
- In the fifth voice note, Martyna states her conversation with Sean and that they found John had been lying to both about his financial situation.
- In the sixth voice note, Martyna reveals that she has found out that Sean and John are acquaintances, not best friends as John has implied.
- In the seventh voice note, Martyna describes a conversation with Sean.. '*he's (John) been going through chronic episodes of depression and like, not just normal depression but like psychotic depression where he's like manic episodes, like threatening to kill himself, threatening to kill someone else, like whatever else, um like he's been going through it for quite a few years now, which I was not aware off*.....
- In the eighth voice note, Martyna indicated she had spoken with John who said, '*he's going to find me and we're going to be together*'. She then blocked John on her phone because he had lied about his identity, and who he was.
- In the ninth voice note, Martyna talks about University, feeling awkward telling roommates and she not sure what to do and of being scared. '*I am actually fucking scared *inaudible* cos I work, we have bouncers, I work only weekends, so every single weekend we have bouncers, so I'm safe at work, at uni the security is very strict so obviously I'm safe at uni, I feel kinda awkward telling all of my roommates about this, I don't know what to do'*.
- In the final voice note, Martyna talks about staying with an unidentified friend, '*I might have to, I'm gonna message my best friend and ask her if I can stay at hers. Probably just gonnna evacuate myself to her house cos this is mental*'

W/C 12.05.2022: Martyna's tutor reported receiving emails from other students in Martyna's group as they were getting ready for a group

presentation assessment. At the last minute, Martyna left her group reassuring them that was due to her personal reasons. To the tutor, Martyna promised to present on her own, but two students sent concerned emails to the tutor regarding the situation. Two students were worried but didn't say why[46].

May 2022: Course leader stated during his class, several students from Martyna's cohort expressed their concern about not having seen or heard from Martyna for some time. Despite their efforts to reach out, they received no response from her. Some students alluded to potential issues with an ex-boyfriend, although they did not suggest it was anything grave. Course leader reached out immediately. After reviewing her attendance and engagement on the dashboard, he noted her last presence on campus was 27.04.2022, so emailed to inquire about her wellbeing and her prolonged absence[47].

May 2022: Martyna replied to the Course Leader. She said that she had 'tragically lost someone very dear to her recently', she was struggling with grief and had been staying with her family as she coped with her mental health. The Course Leader responded the same day to offer his support and guidance on what she could do to get back on track with her studies, apply for extensions and mitigation if necessary. This was the last communication the Course Leader had with Martyna[48].

May 2022: Martyna did not attend class at university.

May 2022: John travelled to London by coach arriving at London Victoria, before travelling by tube to Ealing, believed by police to track down Martyna down, by going straight to the restaurant she worked in. She was not at work that evening. (John was later seen on CCTV pacing back and forth in front of the restaurant with his hood up and his face covered by a scarf). Telephone records later showed that his phone was in the vicinity of Martyna's home address, supporting CCTV evidence that from her place of work, that he went straight to her home. CCTV also showed that John returned to her place of work in Ealing and then spent much of the following hours riding buses in the Ealing area.

May 2022: Martyna arrived for her restaurant shift just before 17:00hrs, with John getting to Ealing Broadway station around an hour later. About

[46] Source UWL IMR
[47] Source UWL IMR
[48] Source UWL IMR

20:00hrs that he bought a knife (for £4.99) from a local shop and was captured on CCTV, again pacing back and forth in the area near to the Martyna's place of work.

Incident in May 2022: Martyna left work with her friend Martin at 23:40hrs in May 2022, followed by John who was wearing a balaclava. He came behind them in an alleyway and then ferociously attacked Martyna with a knife, causing her fatal injuries before running from the scene. The murder weapon (knife) was later found in Round Pond in Gunnersbury Park. Also found in the pond were two mobile phones belonging to Martyna and John and a photo frame with a picture of Martyna and John together. John fled the scene. He was later arrested at Victoria coach station where he was waiting to get a bus back to Bristol.

22.05.2022 Concern for safety (Niche 2200170768): Gwent Police received a call from Jed who lived in Bristol. He had concerns for his friend John. He spoke with him about a week ago and he was here was in a low mood, suicidal and close to suicide[49]. He had attempted to contact John but had no response. No contact was made with Jed due to John being named in the national media. Jed's account to the author of this report is contained above.

Section 14 - Analysis

14.1 Patterns of abuse and coercive and controlling Behaviour[50] by the perpetrator against the victim.

14.1.1 During the period under review, although Martyna had disclosed some worrying controlling behaviours in the weeks preceding the murder to friends, there were no incidents reported to any agency to show that Martyna was being controlled and coerced, bullied, and assaulted by John, but post event information from witnesses suggests a pattern of obsessive behaviour through suicidal threats.

14.1.2 Many victims of domestic abuse including controlling and coercive behaviours, are never brought to the attention of services, simply because

[49] Jed denied this term when interviewed by the Author.
[50] Coercive control is defined 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, emotional.

either they do not recognise their experiences as abuse or because those around them do not. In fact, with Martyna, she believed that John was vulnerable (hence reported her concerns to the police), John was in need of her help, and it was not until the final days that she expressed frustration at his lies and manipulation. Her presentation to police meant that they looked at the information through the lens of 'welfare' and not 'domestic abuse'.

14.1.3 Despite the frustrations with John, Martyna also did not reveal to the staff at UWL that she considered herself a victim. In her messages to Jane on 09.05.2022, she described feeling scared but thought she was safe with 'bouncers at work and security at university'. She also showed disdain for John's harassment of her, suggesting that she would 'stay with a friend til it blew over'. It appears that she did not consider reporting these concerns.

14.1.4 The majority of dangerously abusive relationships do not feature physical violence until much later. They begin with a system of control that is insidious and can become so ingrained that it is impossible to escape. Research[51] indicates that this manipulation may be about controlling the clothes they wear, the people they see, the places they go. These behaviours which have been identified in research in many abusive relationships were not obviously present in Martyna's relationship with John, according to witnesses. However, there is a disclosure of one real form of manipulation, through threats of suicide, which is recognised by researchers[52] as a form of controlling behaviour.

14.1.5 Coercive control and behaviour are noted as a strategic form of ongoing oppression, a continuing 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, to instil fear and self-doubt. 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.

14.1.6 Coercive control within intimate partner relationships has been acknowledged by professionals since Evan Stark's work nearly 20 years ago

[51] Stark, Evan (2007), Oxford University Press: '**Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women In Personal Life**.'
[52] Evan Stark, Jane Monkton-Smith

and since 2015, has been recognised in law. However, this form of restrictive control, often forcing a partner into changing behaviours and/or using the children and extended family within the 'control' has always been a dangerous part of abusive relationships.

14.1.7 Victims of coercive and controlling relationships are often expected to demonstrate their 'loyalty' to their partner and this may result in isolation from family and friends. For many women, this means hiding a lot of the behaviours from their family, to try not to create rift. It is relevant to note that Martyna's immediate family were in Bristol (sister) and Poland (mother), so whilst she may not have obviously hidden them, any potential behaviours would have remained unseen. She did not have a local network when she moved to London.

14.1.8 Many victims of domestic abuse including controlling and coercive behaviours, are never brought to the attention of services, simply because either they do not recognise their experiences as abuse or because those around them do not. In fact, with Martyna, she believed that John was vulnerable (hence reported her concerns to the police) and was in need of her help, and it was not until the final days that she expressed frustration at his lies and manipulation. Martyna did not reveal to the staff at UWL that she considered herself a victim. In her messages to Jane on 09.05.2022, she described feeling scared but thought she was safe with 'bouncers at work and security at university'. She also showed disdain for John's harassment of her, suggesting that she would 'stay with a friend til it blew over'. It appears that she did not consider reporting her concerns to authorities.

14.1.9 The majority of dangerously abusive relationships do not feature physical violence until much later. They begin with a system of control that is insidious and can become so ingrained that it is impossible to escape. Research[53] indicates that this manipulation may be about controlling the clothes they wear, the people they see, the places they go. These behaviours which have been identified in research in many abusive relationships were not obviously present in Martyna's relationship with John, according to witnesses. However, there is a disclosure of one real form of manipulation, through threats of suicide, which is recognised by researchers[54] as a form of controlling behaviour.

[53] Stark, Evan (2007), Oxford University Press: '**Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women In Personal Life**.'
[54] Evan Stark, Jane Monkton-Smith

14.1.10 It appears the Martyna did not disclose the extent of the suicidal threats to her family and friends until late in her relationship breakdown, and in the final weeks/days of her life. Her statements to friends were that the behaviour had been going on for 6 months, although it was only in the weeks before that Martyna called police for help with her concerns about John's behaviour. At that point, her concern was for him, not herself. By presenting her concerns to police as a concern for his safety, she did not proactively seek help for herself. At that stage she seemed unaware of how dangerous his suicidal threats actually were, and what inference can be drawn from those threats.

14.1.11 Friends and family, whilst sympathetic, also appeared unaware or did not recognise the risk associated with these behaviours or identify it as risky or dangerous.

14.1.12 Some controlling and coercive behaviours are often present in the lead up to domestic homicide. There are a number of indicators that are recognised by professionals as indicators of coercive control, and some were identified following this review in the case of Martyna and John. The behaviours are described by the witnesses at different times. These include:

14.2 Assaults (physical):

14.2.1 There is no agency evidence that Martyna had suffered any physical assault from John prior to the murder. That does not mean there was none. Police records in the UK were searched and no information was found.

14.2.2 Her friends also stated that he had **not** assaulted her, and Martyna did not fear him, until the last days when he made the claim, 'We will be together'.

14.3 Isolation from friends and family

14.3.1 Martyna did not have the same direct familial support network that she would have done in Poland, so the isolation was created by the situation she found themselves in. Martyna had recently moved to London and was attempting to create a work, living and education network which was pressured by financial challenges. She had developed a circle of

university friends but had limited contact with her previous friends from Bristol or her sister. No known friends were identified in this review.

14.4 8* step timeline to Domestic Abuse Homicides

14.4.1 A **renowned expert in the field of Domestic Homicide, Professor Jane Monckton-Smith's research identifies the 8* step timeline to Domestic Abuse Homicides[55], which include many of the potential coercive or controlling behaviours displayed by John in this case.**

Stage 1: A pre-relationship history of stalking or abuse by the perpetrator:

Typically, this features at the first stage. In this case, the pre-relationship history is unknown as neither family members or friends were able to share this information. There is no recorded agency information about previous stalking or abuse. It is not known about any of John's previous relationships.

Stage 2: The romance develops quickly into a serious relationship:

Martyna and John met online and quickly formed a relationship, when she was 19 and he was 9 years older. At the outset of the relationship, the potential for power imbalance existed as her relative immaturity would mean she would have almost certainly have been influenced by John at the outset of the relationship. It appeared to be a serious relationship, which she had committed to continuing as a long-distance one although Martyna did contemplate terminating the relationship as she moved to study in London.

Stage 3: The relationship becomes dominated by coercive control:

Witnesses and friends describe a range of John's concerning behaviours which include the threats of suicide, taking medication and reported absences from work. Martyna had not met any of his so-called friends, so was unable to form an assessment of him independent from her own experience. John repeatedly threatened to kill himself yet denied this when asked by police or friends, insisting that he was fine. This is a concerning and emotionally blackmailing behaviour, which is used to control people, and manipulate them to stay in a relationship.

[55] 'Control: Dangerous Relationships and how they end in Murder'', Jane Monkton Smith published 2022.

Stage 4: A trigger threatens the perpetrator's control - for example, the relationship ends, or the perpetrator gets into financial difficulty:

There were several incidents in the lead up to this tragic murder which could be deemed to be triggers. Martyna had made it clear that she had fallen out of love with him due to his lies, and she had specifically told him that the relationship was over. She had told multiple people of her decision. This could have caused John to feel a loss of control in the relationship.

John had revealed some significant financial challenges. There were unconfirmed reports of his need for £10,000 to reportedly pay a loan shark. He asked his friend Sean for money (£500-700). He also told him he owed £30,000 for medical treatment for ulcerative colitis (there was no evidence of this in his medical records). It had not been possible to identify whether Martyna also supported him financially.

When police attended to do a welfare check[56] on 29.04.2022, they found his living conditions to be in decline, with him lying asleep on rubbish on the floor. It is unknown if this was linked to financial worries.

The incident where Martyna discovered his lies and effectively 'blocked' him may have been a trigger and may have contributed to John's feelings of lack of control as Martyna appeared to be moving on with her own life. John knows the relationship is coming to an end, and he could not make Martyna stay. This newfound freedom would have been a frustration for him. Martyna's dependence on him was decreasing.

Stage 5: Escalation - an increase in the intensity or frequency of the partner's control tactics, such as stalking or threatening suicide:

Whilst there is no 'stalking' information prior to the murder, John's clinginess was described by witnesses[57]. On multiple occasions and to several different people, Martyna disclosed that John had threatened suicide[58], referenced by several witnessed mentioned in this review, which she also reported to police. Th threats of taking his life by suicide did not appear to be connected to a domestic abuse / stalking or harassment

[56] Gwent police 29.04.2022
[57] Source Jane and Alycia
[58] Source Sean and Jane interviews

concern, but more a worry about his health concerns. The intensity of John's actions appeared to be over a short period in the weeks before the murder. Martyna did not appear to be personally fearful of these subtle threats towards her safety but she felt more worried and concerned for John's welfare and mental health.

Stalking is often linked to harassment (a course of conduct which amounts to the harassment of another)[59]. In this case, John demonstrated that he was pursuing Martyna, specifically online and by phone. She reported to many witnesses that he was phoning her continuously and would not accept the end of the relationship. Her conversation with Jane on 09.05.2022, reflects that their conversation was a frequent occurrence which caused her immense frustration. Either Martyna did not recognise that his actions were harassment, or she was reluctant to report them as so to the police.

Stage 6: The perpetrator has a change in thinking - choosing to move on, either through revenge or by homicide:

There is no specific evidence that John had a change in thinking, but it is possible that John may have started to believe that she would not reconcile with him. In the week before the murder, Martyna had effectively cut off contact with him. She appears to have not been in contact with her friends, family or the University during the next week, so what happened in the period between is unclear. John also failed to respond to contact from friends during this period. Martyna was starting to build a life without him in it. We cannot be clear about John's thought process when he went to find her in London.

Stage 7: Planning - the perpetrator might buy weapons or seek opportunities to get the victim alone:

Police found evidence of John travelling to London in the days before the murder, stalking outside of Martyna's workplace and near her London home (although he was unaware of her new address), with his face covered. He then purchased a knife in the hours before the murder and continued to pace outside her work premises. This is clear evidence of planning and, evidence to support that this was a deliberate act as this was used as the murder weapon. The panel agreed that the incident was not spontaneous. The additional information that John had disposed of a

[59] Section 1 Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

framed photo of them both with the knife, shows a link to his thought process that they were 'still together'.

Stage 8: Homicide - the perpetrator kills his or her partner and possibly hurts others such as the victim's children:

After stalking her from her workplace, seeing her walking with another man, John savagely attacked Martyna in the street inflicting multiple fatal injuries.

Overkilling involves 'the use of excessive, gratuitous violence beyond that necessary to cause the victim's death.' One of the most significant harms is caused by 'overkill' because, as in this case, it causes intense distress to the families of victims knowing not only that their loved one has been murdered but that such extensive and gratuitous violence has been perpetrated against her. His violence would suggest, that in his mind, he believed he was slighted by Martyna and her rejection of him. He believed he had the right to inflict the fatal blows, and that he could hurt her for the hurt she had in his opinion, inflicted on him. Revenge implies a pre-planned action (stage 6 of the homicide timeline).

The *Femicide Census 2009-2018* and the *Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review 2023,* both define 'overkilling'. The census highlighted that there was evidence of overkilling in over half the femicides across the ten-year period. The Sentencing Review indicated 47% cases involved overkilling.

In more than half (56%) of the overkill cases involving a male perpetrator examined as part of the 2023 Sentencing Review (6.4.1), feelings of jealousy or resentment at the end of the relationship could be considered to be the catalyst for the killing. Of all 99 cases which involved a male perpetrator, jealousy, or resentment at the end of the relationship was apparent and a perceived diminution in control thought to be a catalyst in the killing in 44 (44%) cases.

According to the Femicide Census of 2020, of the 888 women killed by partners during the period to which the census relates, 378 (43%) were known to have separated, or taken steps to separate from the offender. *(Femicide Census 2020).*

Of that number, 142 (38%) were killed within the first month of separation and 70% took place in the shared home of the victim and the perpetrator or the victim's home. *(Femicide Census 2020)*

There is significant research to highlight the fact that the risk to women, from their male partners, rises significantly when there is a withdrawal of commitment to the relationship or a separation.

14.5 Summary of Stages

14.5.1 **Relationship** breakdown, including divorce and separation is a fact that impacts thousands of relationships and families across the UK every day. Whilst many are by agreement, many others have degrees of conflict and escalating tensions caused by the pressures of separation. It is not commonly understood by lay-people or non-experts in the domestic abuse arena, that there is a period of heightened tension where victims of abusive relationships (including those with patterns of subtle control or coercion) are extra vulnerable.

14.5.2 It is often assumed that a victim choosing to separate from an abusive partner or leave an abusive home will reduce the risk to them and their children of further harm. However, evidence from research and surveys of victims indicates that the risk of further violence and harm actually increases at the point at which a victim leaves a perpetrator. A study of 200 women's experiences of domestic abuse commissioned by Women's Aid (Humphreys & Thiara, 2002) found that 76% of separated women had experienced post-separation verbal and emotional abuse and violence, including: 41% subjected to serious threats towards themselves or their children; 23% subjected to physical violence; 6% subjected to sexual violence; and 36% stated that this violence was ongoing. For 60% of the women in the study, fears that they or their children would be killed by the perpetrator had motivated their decision to leave the abusive relationship.

14.5.3 What is unusual in this case, is that Martyna did not perceive herself to be a DA victim and according to most witnesses, although she demonstrated in her final weeks that she suffered the psychological distress, she had not been subject to known physical abuse from John. Although she was private with most of her acquaintances, numerous people were aware that Martyna had terminated the relationship with John. It is entirely likely that she did not see the risk at the point of separation.

14.5.4 Many witnesses independently reported that Martyna had told them of his threats to take his life by suicide. This escalating behaviour by

John towards her was unreported and not disclosed to agencies until after the murder. No anonymous reports were made to police and no 3rd party reports were made by friends highlighting any issues. This suggests that none of the witnesses recognised the risks associated with suicidal threats or how they are recognised as signs of domestic abuse.

14.5.5 The analysis of agency information is limited by the dearth of information. Whilst there was some indication that John was exhibiting stress (he had presented three times to his GP with stress related anxiety[60]), Martyna and John had otherwise extremely limited contact with agencies. There were no concerns regarding the consultations as John had presented low mood but no risk. There were no reports of domestic abuse or violence and there is no indications that at any stage that Martyna considered herself to be a victim. However, there were warning signs that John was a possible danger.

14.5.6 Having analysed the police interactions with John, there were some observations.

- John had no criminal record or intelligence files, so his dealings with police were not influenced by prior interactions.
- In August 2018, when his online friend reported him as potentially suicidal and missing, no other information came to light. John did not seek assistance or medical help and was later found safe and well. That individual has not been identified for this report, so this is a gap in what agency could learn for his mental state at that's time.
- In August 2018, when John's mother Rachel reported him as a suspected missing person, he was found alive and well and said that he did not want his family to know where he was. This indicated a conflict in the family, but no further information is known for this review. The Missing report supports his mother's account that he had distanced himself from his family. As an adult, his wishes to remain 'not found' take priority over those who were seeking to locate him.
- From Gwent Police's perspective, the concern for safety calls (May 2022) were specifically dealing with him as a potential high risk missing person and these calls responded to appropriately, and safeguarding / support was made available. They found no evidence of suicidal ideation and no reference was made that he could be a threat to Martyna. He did not appear to be a threat to himself or

[60] On 04.03.2022, 11.03.2022, 08.04.2022

others and when asked, refused his consent for his details to be shared with other agencies.

- Gwent considered risks and past and present harm and history, which included observation that his house was not 'inhabitable for a human'- the police comment was 'absolutely disgusting it is full of junk, rotting food'. This did not change the (suicide) risk assessment but did mean that a PPN was completed at the time. They also noted the report from Martyna that he 'previously attempted suicide' but John had denied any suicidal ideation, and the officers found no evidence of it.

14.5.7 **Good practice identified:** On each occasion a concern was raised Police responded promptly and appropriately based on the information available. Gwent police and the MPS showed joint working between both Forces and an appropriate response with appropriate information shared between Forces.

14.5.8 Having analysed the university interactions with Martyna, there were some UWL observations:

- Martyna was a diligent student but appeared to be struggling with her mental health due to previous bully and harassment from a fellow student. UWL took appropriate action and moved Martyna to new accommodation.
- Martyna indicated that she then had to deal with a death of someone in April/May so was grieving. That information was later checked with her sister who states that was untrue. She also had not gone to stay with her family in Bristol as she stated.
- Despite this, UWL responded appropriately to her offering support options including connecting with Student Welfare and the offer of counselling services. Martyna did not pursue this line of support. The Student Welfare team reached out to Martyna to offer support, but Martyna chose not to engage. It cannot be verified why Martyna chose to create confusion about a family bereavement but could be linked to her unwillingness to present herself as a victim.
- The university were unaware of the threats that she was receiving from John. Had Martyna engaged with the welfare staff they could have probed more about her health and wellbeing and asked if everything in her life was ok not just the (bullying) incident at that time.

14.5.9 **Good practice identified:** Having the Report and Support platform allows students to voice and raise any concerns they have 24/7 to enable appropriate action to be taken. UWL actions and concerns about Martyna's attendance and engagement were managed appropriately, especially as Martyna wrote back the same day her course leader reached out to her. The feeling of a community amongst students and the university which listens and helps when needed is evidenced by the communication via the students to the tutors and the Course Leader taking immediate action.

14.5.10 UWL acted in the best interest of Martyna and followed processes when a student is absent from studies and reports any issues via our Report and Support platform which is open 24 hour per day, 7 days per week. However, they are putting in place the lessons learnt and ensure they telephone the student when they report any incidents.

Section 15 - Conclusions

15.1 Five specific questions were examined as part of this review.

- **Whether there were any previous victims of John**
- **Were medical concerns appropriately considered when a hospital attendance occurred?**
- **Where suicidal concerns were raised, were any mental health referrals made?**
- **Is there sufficient Mental Health publicity and notifications for public awareness?**
- **Was Martyna aware of the patterns of coercive behaviour?**
- **Whether any family, friends or colleagues were aware of any abusive behaviour from the perpetrator to the victim, prior to the homicide, and whether this had been shared, by them, with professionals.**

15.2**Whether there were any previous victims of John.**

15.2.1 John was not known to police as a suspect or victim. From the interviews conducted with friends and family, no previous partner(s) have been identified, therefore no previous victims.

15.3 Where suicidal concerns were raised, were any mental health referrals made?

15.3.1 On 02.03.2022, John attended A&E with what was described as, 'Intentional Overdose of 5-7 nutrition 5HTB[61] tablets with intent to help him sleep'. He denied suicidal intention, although was noted to be drowsy on admission by ambulance. John did not wait to be seen, called a taxi and left department. The review concludes that the hospital presentation was so fleeting, and John left in a taxi before he was seen by a professional. It was not deemed that he presented a risk because of the nature of the tablets, and this was not followed up. It is impossible to say whether if he had been assessed at this point, whether any intervention would have occurred.

15.3.2 John sought GP help on 04.03.2022, 11.03.2022, 08.04.2022 for work related stress and anxiety. He was specifically asked during the GP assessment and there was no suicidal ideation noted and no concerns in the consultations, although he was referred for counselling and scheduled for assessment through Primary Care MH Services. He was prescribed low level anti-depressants in line with NICE guidance[62]. On 22.04.2022, John was invited to personally arrange an assessment. He did not respond, so his referral was closed.

15.3.3 On 29.04.2022, when Martyna raised potential suicide concerns (about John) with police, indicating he was threatening suicide, John denied them and presented in a way that police officers were unconcerned that he was a risk to himself or others. At this point there were no mental health assessments in the system, so police would have been unable to access any records to vary their assessment or actions. Of note, is that Police officers are not qualified social workers or mental health assessors, and therefore without behaviours suggesting immediate threat or risk, they have no legal powers.

15.3.4 The officers found no evidence of suicidal intent. They did however record a PPN[63], which was not sent to any other agency as John refused consent. In other parts of the UK, a vulnerable adult referral may have been

[61] (5-HTP is a chemical by product of the protein building block L-tryptophan. It is produced commercially from the seeds of an African plant known as Griffonia simplicifolia. 5-HTP works in the brain and central nervous system by increasing the production of the chemical serotonin.)
[62] Evidence based recommendations for the health and social care sector, developed by independent committees, including professionals and lay members and consulted on by stakeholders.
[63] Public Protection Notice

considered. This is any area which the panel discussed at length. In their risk assessment, Gwent police specifically noted that John presented at the police station when asked and stated that despite what his girlfriend (Martyna) had said, he was not suicidal and had no suicidal thoughts. He also explained that he had a therapist and support worker for his MH, he was fully coherent and able to explain what had happened to him (he had accidentally, not intentionally cut his leg) and knew he could call police if he needed help or was in danger.

15.3.5 Whilst hindsight infers that police could have interpreted his threats through the DA lens, correct police procedure was carried out in completing a PPN. However, there is no specific policy preventing the sharing of the details on the PPN. The police indicated that was not submitted due to lack of consent, and in the belief that once it is received by Social Services it is likely that they would open a file and close it due to the information provided on the PPN, specifically his lack of consent. This is learning for Gwent police and a recommendation that they review how information is shared with partners.

15.3.6 Once a PPN is submitted, in theory Social Services would have access to Mental Health services and advice could have been sought by them. It is clear when officers spoke with John, he was not displaying signs that Section 136 of the Mental Health Act could have been implemented. However, had the referral been submitted, in theory, advice could have been sought by Social Services from the mental health team.

15.3.7 When John did not respond to Primary Care MH Services letter (of 22.04.2022), on 09.05.2022, a letter was sent to John's GP regarding no contact and advising referral closed. This is standard practice, as the responsibility is back on the GP to assess need/risk. John made enquiries with his GP about counselling on 09.05.2002 after missing the letter. They invited him to make an appointment by phone the flowing day. Despite advice, he did not follow up arrangements to make an appointment.

15.3.8 However, in other parts of the country, there are different practices for referral to services and based on 'consent', both the GP practice and police acted appropriately with what they were presented with in terms of John's presentation.

15.3.9 In summary, the circumstances under which John came to the attention of Gwent Police was as a high-risk missing person. At no point

was it disclosed that there was any domestic violence or controlling behaviour in the relationship. The MPS relayed the concerns of Martyna regarding John's safety. No-one in Gwent Police had the opportunity to speak to Martyna personally and discuss their relationship and the depth of her concerns. It should also be noted that the relationship between them was described as 'over and had been for between 3-6 months.' The call was being made from London, so geography and distance was considered. It would not have been obvious that the threats to take his life by suicide were linked to John's controlling behaviour as the officers did not have any information suggesting that this was the case.

15.3.10 At the point of dealing with concerns, officers appear to have dealt with him through the lens 'concern for safety' and not made a connection to domestic abuse or stalking/harassment. This is an area where Gwent police are re-enforcing the DA matters training across the force area for front line staff, as in this case there did not appear to be a recognition by police officers that suicidal threats are actually a behaviour designed to control an individual. Internal learning is being addressed.

15.4 **Is there sufficient Mental Health publicity and notifications for public awareness?**

15.4.1 There appear to be no actual mental health assessments in this case. John had 3 telephone GP appointments where he cited work- related stress and anxiety. He mentioned a recent partner breakup but that did not feature as a significant risk factor. Whilst John had been referred for Primary mental health care, he had not been officially diagnosed or assessed for mental health. Whilst voluntarily seeking help from his GP, he failed to follow up the services available for his stress and anxiety. It is also unknown whether he was actually taking the medication prescribed for his anxiety. The plan of care that John received is entirely appropriate with the assessment of risk conducted.

15.4.2 The panel concluded that there is a gap in public awareness of mental health deterioration. However, the fact that John had sought some support for his anxiety and stress indicates that he was personally aware.

15.5 **Was Martyna aware of the patterns of coercive behaviour?**

15.5.1 Martyna did not appear to be aware of the developing patterns of coercive behaviour until she discovered John had lied to her and

presented a double life to her and Sean. She still did not appear to recognise the suicidal threats as concerning or risky towards her.

15.5.2 Whilst he did not expressly state that he would cause her harm, John had pleaded with Martyna not to leave him, was demonstrably emotionally unstable on occasions (suicidal threats), was repeatedly phoning her pressurising her to stay with him, had lied to Martyna and Sean about his financial and work circumstances and he used behaviours in the final days which could be considered obsessive and stalking, although they were not discovered until after the murder. Just because a behaviour does not reach a criminal threshold to charge, does not limit the impact on a victim.

15.5.3 Neither Martyna, or friends or family were able to identify John's behaviours as potential harassment, and capable of reporting them as such. This is learning for all agencies and addressed in a recommendation below.

15.6 **Whether any family, friends or colleagues were aware of any abusive behaviour from the perpetrator to the victim, prior to the homicide, and whether this had been shared, by them, with professionals.**

15.6.1 In this review, there are no agency records linked to family, friends or colleagues prior to the murder where concerns about abusive behaviour were shared with agencies. This could be that wider public awareness of the risks are limited. The lack of agency information suggests that the murder of Martyna by John could not have reasonably been predicted or prevented by agencies. It is also extremely unlikely that any single family member or friend, could have predicted the likely escalation in John's behaviour.

15.6.2 John did not make any direct threats to harm Martyna, but the review and police investigation identified her vulnerability to ongoing harassment from John when exploring the timeline after her death. Martynas describes her acute frustration about the repeated calls and texts over many months, which on reflection could have been addressed as harassment if she (or any of her friends or family) had reported his behaviours to any agency.

15.6.3 There was one identified time that Martyna suggested that she was unsafe. In the text exchanges between Martyna and Jane, she makes a reference to feeling unsafe, '*I am actually fucking scared *inaudible* cos I work, we have bouncers, I work only weekends, so every single weekend we have bouncers, so I'm safe at work, at uni the security is very strict so obviously I'm safe at uni, I feel kinda awkward telling all of my roommates about this, I don't know what to do'.* Martyna did not report these concerns to anyone in an official capacity, which suggests that she did not recognise herself as a victim. Also, in her discussions with Martyna, Jane understood that Martyna had not received a direct threat and was satisfied that Martyna was managing this concern.

15.6.4 Neither Martyna or Jane reported these fears to any agency, but Martyna did however describe that she intended to go and stay with a friend. It is unclear whether she recognised warning signs. She potentially did not know that she was at risk. Indeed, because their relationship did not involve consistent periods of physically abusive behaviour, Martyna's ability to identify individual incidents may have been limited. Martyna was a young woman, in her first serious relationship. This means she may have had very little to compare her relationship with. Life experience and that of your friends and contemporaries are shared through discussion and Martyna's family and friends all agreed that she was a private individual, not prone to discussing personal matters.

15.6.5 It is now clear that the ending of the relationship was a period of heightened risk to Martyna and proved to be the catalyst, or possible trigger, for John's fatal attack upon her. In the hours before she was murdered, Martyna had gone to work, and John was seen 'stalking' outside her work premises. When she left work, he followed her and her companion before attacking her. A later forensic search recovered a photo frame containing a picture of Martyna which was recovered from a pond where he had disposed of it after the murder. The implication is that he had that in his possession at the time of the attack.

15.6.6 There are some limitations of the research in terms of its reliability in determining what men may pose a risk to the wellbeing of women. As research grows, the awareness of the time when an offender poses a risk will inform the debate about risky and dangerous behaviours. Whilst the men that kill women may often demonstrate particular behaviours before doing so, it must be recognised that that is not always the case. John did not present significant behaviour, but he did present some.

15.6.7 John refused to offer any account to police during interview or at his trial about his actions.

Section 16 - Learning

16.1 The narrative around Martyna's murder does present learning for all agencies and services in terms of reinforcing current knowledge of how domestic abuse occurs and the usefulness of using the 8 stages of domestic homicide timeline to inform their assessments and advice.

16.2 Many practitioners working across services, engage with men and women who move in and out of relationships and thus have the ability to pick up on concerning behaviours and take appropriate action.

16.3 Whilst there was extremely limited agency interaction, learning from the review highlights the importance of enquiry and the need for practitioners to be alert to the sometimes-subtle signs that individuals pose an increasing risk of harm to partners/ex-partners, or that they are indeed already causing harm. In particular the review highlights the importance of picking up on behavioural cues and emotional warning signs. These could take the form of emotional instability, evidence of a refusal to accept the end of the relationship, evidence of self-worth being too connected with the maintenance of the relationship, seemingly isolated instances of violence (albeit there were none in this case), and stalking type behaviours. In Martyna's case, it is particularly relevant for the police who had reported concerns of threats to take a life by suicide linked to a relationship ending. Despite geographical distance creating a safety net, John was still able to travel to London and execute his plan.

16.4 Framing the observation of any concerns within the 8-stages timeline can support the practitioner (and /or family and friends) in understanding what they have observed and what other enquiry they might need to make. The narrative also supports our understanding of domestic abuse and domestic homicide as events that can be perpetrated by individuals from all walks of life and that victims can also come from all walks of life. Stereotyping should not blind practitioners to risk where there is evidence that it exists.

16.5 Gwent police initial response was appropriate to address the immediate welfare concerns from MPS about John. Officers have responded to the calls and offered measures regarding John's welfare and submitted a PPN.

16.6 The MPS would normally submit an Adult Pac[64] (Merlin) or ACN[65] if there is a safeguarding concern. In this case, Martyna did not present in this manner, as she was reporting a concern for welfare for someone else and she did not mention DA in that call. The MPS did not consider it be appropriate for the call handler to probe the reason for the suicidal threats.

16.7 The issue of Professional Curiosity, respectful challenge and a greater understanding of the nature of coercive and controlling risk factors should be revisited and strengthen within existing domestic abuse training and approach to domestic abuse risk assessments. For example, frontline staff need to have a greater understanding of how coercion and control influence the way victims of domestic abuse engage with services. Similarly, practitioners working in multiagency.

16.8 However, from both of the above-mentioned police contacts, and using reflection and hindsight to from what is now known, there are several areas of learning that are not specific recommendations but could be considered for learning for Gwent police and the MPS:

- Professional curiosity could have been exercised regarding the text that Martyna received from John and the consideration of the 'content' as a potential indicator of abuse (Gwent and MPS).
- Potentially recording a further PNN having spoken to John and seen him asleep in the hallway (Gwent) and submission of the PNN for shared agency consideration of John's mental health (Gwent).
- Professional curiosity could have been exercised by the MPS and Gwent call handlers as 'suicidal threats' are a recognised coercive and controlling behaviour in abusive relationships.

16.9 No recommendation is required for UWL as they have implemented a plan.

- University protocol ensures that we continually review and revise all processes.

[64] PAC- Pre Assessment Check or Adult Coming to Notice
[65] ACN- Adult Coming to Notice

- UWL will publish and provide better information to students about coercive control eg. what some of the signs are, and not just about Domestic Violence.
- UWL has introduced 'safeguarding' training as mandatory for all staff to be completed on an annual basis where Domestic Violence and coercive control is included as part of the overall training.
- Student Welfare now also telephone an individual that has reported something via our Report and Support platform rather than just sending emails and we keep cases open until a student has been spoken to.
- We are setting up a more robust referral process of students of concern in our accommodation sites to expedite any issues a UWL student may raise.
- Student Support services from September 2023 will be attending each accommodation site explaining what services the university offer's and where and how to find information.

16.10 Martyna's employers identified and addressed learning. They have a workplace protection system in place called 'We care', which has a variety of services that gives their employees an opportunity to speak to an impartial trained professional surrounding mental health, wellbeing, financial wellbeing, and health support. Additionally, Their HR representatives are fully available to all employees to reach out to seek advice or speak to on any concerning matters.

16.11 Their intent is to implement communications internally for all employees to be fully aware of all the support internally and the support available to those in potential domestic violence situations. This communication will be a signpost to some of the existing support and additionally some of the 'watch out' behaviours and resources that are available on the GOV.UK website and provided to them by the Chair.

16.12 This highlights wider learning that could be linked to the Recommendation proposed for the HO. ***Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse*** (EIDA)[66] are able to support HR leads in workplace policies. Sharon's Policy is a free template for HR leads, which encourages staff to report DA and are signposted to support without fear of being dismissed. This could include an approach around perpetrators and if they

[66] https://www.eida.org.uk/news/new-domestic-abuse-statutory-guidance-highlights-employers-duty-care

are concerned about their behaviour etc (Respect) offer support. Standalone policies highlight an organisation is absolutely committed to not just DA but wider VAWG.

16.13 In Ealing, as in many areas, there is a lack of community awareness, and this has been addressed with a national recommendation, which can also be supported in Ealing through the business community. The practical application of accessible resources (Ask for ANI scheme and what DA is), are helpful guides that could be shared. Employers have duty of care, and encouraging a community awareness campaign through localised DA training may support wider knowledge of DA and associated behaviours.

Section 17- Recommendations

17.1 In retrospect, despite a lack of agency involvement, there were clear themes in Martyna's case which practitioners have now identified as learning concerning the assessment of risk, additional risks of stalking behaviour and risks at points of separation.

17.2 The behaviours which Marytna experienced were not obvious or understood by friends or families, and not evident to any agency involved in this review. Where they have had involvement (with victims or perpetrators), practitioners do identify and apply the 8 stages model to those risks.

Recommendation 1

In response to research and academic developments concerning domestic homicides (specifically connected to controlling behaviour and suicidal threats), the community safety partnership (in Ealing and Gwent) should review, reinforce, and develop the learning offer to ensure this is addressed in single and multi-agency training, and continues to do so through its workforce (including practical support like 'Ask for Angela' or 'Ask for Ani' campaigns).

Recommendation 2

In response to research and academic developments concerning domestic homicides (specifically connected to controlling behaviour and suicidal

threats), the MPS and Gwent police to ensure that there is a re-focus on DA training to ensure that coercive and controlling behaviours are understood by all officers and staff.

Recommendation 3

That Home Office (HO)**,** provide guidance and training in respect of DHR's, their purpose and necessity for multi-agency learning, to HMP Prison Service.

Recommendation 4 (National and to be included in HO action Plan)

HO to explore awareness raising and deliver a public / employer / education (including secondary or university education) focussed campaign on the risks that may be present during the period leading up to and, including separation in a relationship.

Section 18- Action plan

18.1 This action plan is a live document and maybe subject to change as outcomes are delivered.

Recommendation	Scope of recommendation	Actions	Lead	Milestones	Projected completion
1. In response to research and academic developments concerning domestic homicides (specifically connected to controlling behaviour and suicidal threats), the community safety partnership (in Ealing and Gwent) should review, reinforce, and develop the learning offer to ensure this is addressed in single and multi-	Local	Ealing's three-year MVAWG Action plan 2023-27, includes a specific action to develop a boroughwide VAWG training programme accessible for all organisations including businesses and community groups to ensure that victims/survivors receive an appropriate response if they disclose. This action will incorporate the	Safer Ealing Partnership (SEP)	Training development is reviewed quarterly and monitored at Ealing's MVAWG Strategic group. Training programme developed with stakeholder engagement.	In progress and fully implemented by 31/03/2027

Recommendation	Scope of recommendation	Actions	Lead	Milestones	Projected completion
agency training, and continues to do so through its workforce (including practical support like 'Ask for Angela' or 'Ask for Ani' campaigns).		recommendation and campaigns.			
2. In response to research and academic developments concerning domestic homicides (specifically connected to controlling behaviour and suicidal threats), the MPS and Gwent police to ensure that there is a re-focus on DA training to ensure that	Local	The MPS have a dedicated VAWG action plan, under Pillar 1 – Building Trust and Confidence and Commitment 3, the MPS will prioritise Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) by investing resources to improve capacity and capability.	WA BCU – Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	WA BCU regularly updates progress of their staff training programme to Ealing's MVAWG Strategic group.	In progress and fully implemented by 31/03/2027

Recommendation	Scope of recommendation	Actions	Lead	Milestones	Projected completion
coercive and controlling behaviours are understood by all officers and staff.		The Safer Ealing Partnership will seek assurances from the Met police that their training programme reflects this recommendation.			
3. To ensure that all agencies are conversant with the purpose and role of DHR's, that Home Office (HO) provides guidance and training in respect of DHR's, their purpose and necessity for multi-agency learning, to HMP Prison Service.	National	This action should be reviewed by the Home Office as it relates to ensuring that HMP Prison Service build capabilities around their potential roles within the DHR process.	Home Office	Home Office have reviewed and provided guidance to HMP Prison service on the DHR process.	To be agreed by Home Office
4. HO to explore awareness raising and deliver a public /	National	**(National** and to be included in HO action Plan**)**	Home Office	HO have engaged with the DfE.	To be agreed by Home Office and

Recommendation	Scope of recommendation	Actions	Lead	Milestones	Projected completion
employer / education (including secondary or university education) focussed campaign on the risks that may be present during the period leading up to and including separation in a relationship.					Department for Education

Section 19: Appendix 1.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context
Described in Report

Purpose of review

1. Conduct effective analysis and draw sound conclusions from the information related to the case, according to best practice.

2. Establish what lessons are to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and support victims of domestic violence, including its impact on children in the home.

3. Identify clearly what lessons are both within and between those agencies. Identifying timescales within which they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result.

4. Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate; and

5. Prevent domestic violence homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working.

6. Highlight any fast-track lessons that can be learned ahead of the report publication to ensure better service provision or prevent loss of life.

Terms of Reference for Review

1. To identify the best method for obtaining and analyzing relevant information, and over what period prior to the homicide to understand the most important issues to address in this review and ensure the learning from this specific homicide and surrounding circumstances is understood and systemic changes implemented. Whilst checking

records, any other significant events or individuals that may help the review by providing information will be identified.

2. To identify the agencies and professionals that should constitute this Panel and those that should submit chronologies and Individual Management Reviews (IMR) and agree a timescale for completion [Note: Review of current membership and who should be invited to join the Panel].

3. To understand and comply with the requirements of the criminal investigation, any misconduct investigation and the Inquest processes and identify any disclosure issues and how they shall be addressed, including arising from the publication of a report from this Panel. Any parallel investigations to be identified.

4. To identify any relevant equality and diversity considerations arising from this case and, if so, what specialist advice or assistance may be required.

5. To identify whether the victims or perpetrator were subject to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and whether perpetrator was subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP) and, if so, identify the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with respect to disclosure of the minutes of meetings

6. To determine whether this case meets the criteria for a Serious Case Review, as defined in Working Together to Safeguard the Child 2015, if so, how it could be best managed within this review [Note: there are no children involved]

7. To determine whether this case meets the criteria for an Adult Case Review, within the provisions of s44 Care Act 2014, if so, how it could be best managed within this review and whether either victim or perpetrator(s) were 'an adult with care and support needs.

8. To establish whether family, friends or colleagues want to participate in the review. If so, ascertain whether they were aware of any abusive behaviour to the victim prior to the homicide (any disclosure; not time limited). In relation to the family members, whether they were aware if any abuse and of any barriers experienced in reporting abuse, or best

practice that facilitated reporting it [Note: Information pending the police briefing]

9. To identify how the review should take account of previous lessons learned in Ealing Council and from relevant agencies and professionals working in other Local Authority areas.

10. To identify how people in Ealing/ Bristol and Wales * Council area gain access to advice on sexual and domestic abuse whether themselves subject of abuse or known to be happening to a friend, relative or work colleague.

11. To keep these terms of reference under review to take advantage of any, as yet unidentified, sources of information or relevant individuals or organisations.

CASE SPECIFIC:

- **Were medical concerns appropriately considered when a hospital attendance occurred?**
- **Where suicidal concerns were raised, were any mental health referrals made?**
- **Are there sufficient MH notifications for public awareness?**
- **Was Martyna aware of the patterns of coercive behaviour?**

Panel considerations (generic)

1. Could improvement in any of the following have led to a different outcome for Martyna, considering:
   a) Communication and information sharing between services with regard to the safeguarding of adults and/or children
   b) Communication within services
   c) Communication and publicity to the general public and non-specialist services about the nature and prevalence of domestic abuse, and available local specialist services

2. Whether the work undertaken by services in this case are consistent with each organisations:
   a) Professional standards
   b) Domestic abuse policy, procedures and protocols

3. The response of the relevant agencies to any referrals from [insert start date] relating to [insert names]. It will seek to understand what decisions were taken and what actions were or were not carried out, or not, and establish the reasons. In particular, the following areas will be explored:
   a) Identification of the key opportunities for assessment, decision making and effective intervention in this case from the point of any first contact onwards with [insert names]
   b) Whether any actions taken were in accordance with assessments and decisions made and whether those interventions were timely and effective.
   c) Whether appropriate services were offered/provided, and/or relevant enquiries made in the light of any assessments made.
   d) The quality of any risk assessments undertaken by each agency in respect of [insert names]

4. Whether organisational thresholds for levels of intervention were set appropriately and/or applied correctly, in this case.

5. Whether practices by all agencies were sensitive to the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the respective individuals and whether any specialist needs on the part of the subjects were explored, shared appropriately and recorded.

6. Whether issues were escalated to senior management or other organisations and professionals, if appropriate, and completed in a timely manner.

7. Whether any training or awareness raising requirements are identified to ensure a greater knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse processes and/or services.

8. Identify how the resulting information and report should be managed prior to publication with family and friends and after the publication in the media.

Section 20: Home Office QA Panel Feedback Letter

Home Office
Interpersonal
Abuse Unit
Tel: 020 7035

London
SW1P 4DF

4848 2 Marsham Street

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Nazia Matin
Community Resilience Manager
Perceval House
14/16 Uxbridge Road
Ealing
W5 2HL

21st May 2025

Dear Nazia,

Thank you for submitting the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) report (Martyna) for Ealing Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to the Home Office Quality Assurance (QA) Panel. The report was considered in May 2025. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

It was noted that the report does well to draw out the issues in this case and represent the voice of the victim, despite a very limited amount of agency contact. This is helped by the contributions of family and friends. The victim's family were provided with information about the review and about advocacy support translated into Polish, which was noted as good practice. A Polish Domestic Abuse Charity also delivered a presentation to the panel, which addressed Eastern European challenges with domestic abuse.

There are some aspects of the report which may benefit from further revision, but the Home Office is content that on completion of these changes, the DHR may be published.

Areas for final development:

- Pseudonyms are listed for all the family and friends that the review drew information from, but several of these are not then mentioned in the report at all. It is also unclear why there are two separate tables of pseudonyms (3.4).
- Section 6 sets out the information known from each family member or friend, which is helpful. However, some of this could be better represented as part of the chronology as it refers to specific events and dates.

- Section 9.1 states that the Chair did not work specifically in the borough of Ealing. Please also confirm her independence of local agencies and the case.
- The independence of panel members should also be confirmed.
- There are instances where anonymity is potentially compromised, which require amendment:

  ○ The date of death is given (1.6, 4.4.1, 10.3 & page 32). Only the month and year is required. ○ The date of sentencing is given (10.3). ○ Giving the months and year of the victim's date of birth is not required only age at death.
- The Action Plan is missing timescales, which should be included.
- There is currently no information on the sentencing of the perpetrator, which should be added if possible.

Once completed the Home Office would be grateful if you could provide us with a digital copy of the revised final version of the report with all finalised attachments and appendices and the weblink to the site where the report will be published. Please ensure this letter is published alongside the report.

Please send the digital copy and weblink to DHREnquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk. This is for our own records for future analysis to go towards highlighting best practice and to inform public policy.

The DHR report including the executive summary and action plan should be converted to a PDF document and be smaller than 20 MB in size; this final Home Office QA Panel feedback letter should be attached to the end of the report as an annex; and the DHR Action Plan should be added to the report as an annex. This should include all implementation updates and note that the action plan is a live document and subject to change as outcomes are delivered.

Please also send a digital copy to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner at DHR@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

I would like to thank you, the report chair and author, and other colleagues for the considerable work that you have put into this review.

Yours sincerely,

Home Office DHR Team