



Domestic Homicide Review into the deaths of Nicola and Davina - 1 page learning summary

DHRs are a way to improve our local coordinated community response. Looking at the death of a person aged 16+ because of DA, they aim to:

- understand what happened
- identify where agency responses could be improved
- learn lessons including how agencies work together
- identify how to improve responses
- to prevent something similar happening in the future

What we have learned

- Nicola's experience of domestic abuse (DA) included:
 - coercive control
 - image-based sexual abuse
 - stalking and harassment
 - animal abuse
 - emotional and verbal abuse
- The DA affected both Nicola's physical and mental health, although this was not recognised by professionals. This shows the importance of more training for professionals to recognise indicators of DA.
- Professionals did not recognise the level of risk the perpetrator posed. Routine enquiry and risk checklists were not used to identify the risk level that Nicola was experiencing.
- Nicola experienced stalking and harassment, both during the relationship and after separation. These were often treated in isolation and not seen holistically as a pattern of abuse.
- This case features the eight stages of the Domestic Homicide Timeline. This is a research-based tool that shows an eight-stage timeline of abuse before a homicide.
[The Homicide Timeline - University of Gloucestershire](#)
- Read the full learning briefing for this review.
[Domestic Homicide Review - Learning briefing - Nicola and Davina.docx](#)

Did you know?

- Domestic abuse isn't just physical violence. Nicola experienced coercive and controlling behaviour, emotional abuse, animal abuse, stalking and harassment and image-based sexual abuse.
- Separation is often the trigger point for a homicide, as per the Homicide Timeline. The perpetrator killed Nicola and her mother Davina a month after Nicola separated from him.
- Stalking and physical assault are significantly associated with murder and attempted murder. This is not only about physical violence but also patterns of coercive control and jealous surveillance.
- DA can impact on physical and mental health. This includes low mood, trouble sleeping, depression, musculoskeletal symptoms, and chronic illness.

What works and what you need to do now

- Would you be confident having a conversation to help someone recognise they may be experiencing DA? Women's Aid has produced a simple online guide to help recognise abusive relationships.
[Women's Aid: I'm not sure if my relationship is healthy](#)
- Would you recognise the risk factors, signs, presenting problems or conditions that can warn (health) professionals that a patient may be experiencing DA?
- Are you confident in using the DASH RIC to identify and assess risk?
[East Sussex DASH Risk Identification Checklist \(DASH RIC\)](#)
- Are you familiar with the Domestic Homicide Timeline? Could you use it to identify patterns of abuse?