

Adult 3

Domestic Abuse Serious Incident Review Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership



What happened?

Serious, life changing injuries were inflicted on a 59 year old man by his 30 year old son. The son had moved home to live with his parents following a relationship breakdown and loss of his job. He had long term and deteriorating mental health issues and had told agencies that he was going to hurt his father or another family member.

Adult 3's son appears to have grown up in a volatile family situation and witnessed domestic abuse as a child. His relationship with his father seems to have been particularly difficult with the son alleging assault and abuse on several occasions. However it appears the son had also assaulted his mother in the past.

3's son felt alienated from his friends was socially isolated. He stated that he needed someone to talk to at a point when his life was spiralling out of control following his relationship breakdown, conflict over contact with his children, losing his job and his home, moving into his parent's house, conflict with his father and benefit sanctions. He was using cannabis regularly.

Support from mental health services was offered but he did not take this up and he did not feel he could talk to his GP. He did not attend appointments with Mental Health services but also with Addaction and his Probation Officer. He also turned down various offers of temporary accommodation which he later regretted.

He described to the review team a tendency to try to resolve problems through aggression and this is evidenced by police call outs over several years including in relation to his ex-partner and his mother, plus evidence of violence to others within the decade prior to the serious incident and in prison. Leading up to the incident he was

repeatedly telling agencies he would hurt someone and this is what he finally did despite a restraining order being in place. At the time he was under the management of the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) for a previous offence against his father. However CRC were unaware of the deterioration of his mental health after his conviction. His parents had also told agencies they were concerned about his behaviour (the GP) and scared of him (Housing Solutions).

It appears that engagement with the community order was not monitored or enforced effectively and there was no consideration given by agencies as to whether he was complying with the restraining order. Similarly no agency enquired of the wellbeing of Adult 3 and his wife. It does not seem that agencies recognised them as acting as carers to their son. No one agency had the full picture of the situation. Several agencies held information but this was not fully shared and thus support was not synchronised.

What did it tell us?

The review found this case **highlights the need for more consideration of the needs of those at risk of perpetrating violence to family members (adult family violence) and those at risk from them.** This should also be linked to the need to identify and assess those with caring responsibilities.

When presented with familial abuse **agencies need to consider whether family members such as parents may be minimising the risks** to themselves given their concern for their adult child and the caring role they have undertaken.

Sheffield Domestic Abuse Helpline offers support to people experiencing abuse from a family member, call **free on 0808 808 2241.**

What can we do now?

Be aware of **risk factors that characterise adult family violence** cases:

- Family – complex and intergenerational issues
- Caring for someone/being cared for by somebody, linked to mental health, suicidality, depression
- Suicide and homicidal thoughts
- History of perpetrator – previous violence against women, pattern of previous criminality, antisocial behaviour
- Sense of entitlement, including to financial resources
- Addiction issues
- Social isolation of victim or perpetrator

Agencies should be aware that when any of the following three elements (mental health disorders, substance use including alcohol and domestic abuse) are identified it is good practice to enquire about the other factors and ensure support is offered.

Understand that victims of adult family violence:

- May not recognise they are being abused
- May not realise the extent of the risk
- Feel loyalty to the perpetrator
- Feel shame
- Don't want to criminalise family member
- Don't want family member to be homeless