

Rehan (Adult 4) - Serious Incident Review

Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership



What happened? In May 2018, Rehan a 19 year old male contacted South Yorkshire Police (SYP) stating that his father had threatened him with violence and had tried to force him into an arranged marriage, with a girl from Pakistan since he was 5 years old. Rehan disclosed to the police that arguments had taken place with his father, which had resulted in him hitting him and pinning him to the wall by his neck. SYP referred the case to the domestic abuse support service and secured Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs) for Rehan and his younger siblings. SYP served the orders without the presence of Social Care despite assertions that attempts were made to request the allocated Social Worker to attend as well.

Rehan approached Housing Solutions for support with re-housing. However, due to his living circumstances at the time (he was staying with friends and family) he was not considered to be at risk of homelessness and was advised by the access officer to return for further help in the event that he became homeless. The access officer did not probe any further based on the presenting information nor did they escalate this case to management.

In June 2018, SYP completed a DASH risk assessment at a secure address. Rehan was found to be at high risk of serious harm and was referred into MARAC. Further to this a Karma Nirvana Risk assessment was completed and graded as high risk based on:

- Rehan's lack of consent to the marriage and feeling fearful of his safety
- Potential risk to his younger siblings
- Previous assaults and threats made by his father

The domestic abuse service contacted Housing Solutions to advocate on Rehan's behalf having completed a housing assessment form to initiate the process of securing emergency accommodation. Housing Solutions found an adult hostel for Rehan. However, on arrival Rehan did not feel comfortable staying there due to the complex needs of the mostly older residents including alcohol users, and the cost implications for him as an employed person that he

was not supported to understand; causing him to return to his families address.

A press article appeared on the internet and via social media covering this story, which prompted a complaint by Rehan's father who expressed his unhappiness about the media coverage. Likewise, after the incident, Rehan shared with the domestic abuse team that he was equally unhappy about the media article as he felt that it contained enough information to identify him and his family causing widespread discussion in his community. Rehan asked for the article to be removed from social media; however this did not happen as it was felt that the awareness raising element of the story was more important and it was found that his father had already divulged some of the information himself.

Towards the end of June 2018, Rehan rang the domestic abuse team to identify who the Forced Marriage lead is within South Yorkshire Police in order to retrieve his passport. Rehan had at this stage decided to consent to the marriage and wanted no further support.

What did it tell us? The review found that Rehan would have benefitted from being offered additional support through the re-housing process. When Rehan initially contacted Housing Solutions to enquire about re-housing, further information about his circumstances should have been explored and obtained by the access officer. The review found that there may not be enough housing options available locally in terms for accommodating young males who are fleeing domestic abuse / Forced Marriage.

The work completed by SYP to safeguard Rehan and his siblings by securing FMPOs was expedited quickly. However, the police did not consult with Rehan prior to the news publication, and could have managed this situation more sensitively.

We do not know if Rehan changed his mind to go ahead with the Forced Marriage due to pressure from his family or because of the failure of services to identify his vulnerability as a male victim of domestic abuse and source appropriate accommodation to meet his needs.

What can we do now?

Workers should refer to the local Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse pathway particularly when considering a strategy meeting when FMPOs are being applied for.

All staff members and agencies to ensure that they maintain accurate record keeping and understand the importance of correct recording.

Undertake further probing and checks on people who may pose a risk of being abused and forced into something they do not want to do in preparation for keeping them safe.

Recognise male victims of domestic abuse and think about the appropriateness of accommodation in order to meet their needs.

Consider the timing and nature of any future publicity around forced marriage and honour based abuse taking into account the views of the victim and appropriate levels of anonymisation.

