



**\*\*Sent on behalf of the NCCSP\*\***

## **Employers encouraged to help victims of domestic abuse**

**25/1/21**

An official review into the circumstances surrounding the death of a woman from King's Lynn has highlighted how more needs to be done to encourage employers to help and support employees who may be victims of domestic abuse.

The Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) into 'Maria' has highlighted how the abusive control and coercion she suffered during her relationship led to her death at the hands of her former partner in September 2018.

The review (commissioned by Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership (NCCSP)) has been published in an anonymised form, to share the lessons the agencies involved can learn from the tragedy - including the need for employers to be made more aware of the signs of domestic abuse.

**Mark Stokes, chair of the NCCSP, said:** "We wish to express our deepest sympathy to Maria's family, friends and colleagues at this difficult time.

"While our thoughts are with all who loved Maria we owe it to her to learn any lessons we can and work to help others who may find themselves in similar situations.

"Her sad death is a timely reminder that domestic abuse can occur in many forms, not just physical but emotional and psychological.

"We all need to be trained to see the signs of coercive, controlling and harassing behaviour so we can help family, friends and loved ones find the right help and support."

The DHR involving Maria, who worked at the same company as her ex-partner, identified a total of three recommendations;

- Health services, such as GP's surgeries, consider engaging with the countywide [Domestic Abuse Champions Network](#) to support victims of domestic abuse.
- The Community Safety Partnership continues to actively promote a 'Domestic Abuse Toolkit' for employers to ensure they have the right workplace policies and procedures in place to help victims of domestic abuse.
- Norfolk continues to develop its awareness raising with regards to the contribution that behaviours such as stalking and harassment contribute to the risk of significant harm or homicide following the breakdown of a relationship.

The release of the report comes only two months after the county's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Group (DASVG) overseen by the NCCSP, launched the [HEAR campaign](#) to urge organisations from across Norfolk to help employees who may be suffering such abuse find help and support.

The DHR was one of the reasons for the launch of HEAR - to ensure employers continue to **Help**, **Educate** and support employees affected by domestic abuse, while having an **Awareness** of the subject and the right policies in place to **Respond** accordingly.

So far 34 organisations representing some 23,155 employers have signed the HEAR pledge.

“Only by working together can we say no to domestic abuse and I would encourage those organisations who haven’t already done so, to sign up to the HEAR Pledge,” added Mark Stokes.

“Friends, family and workplace colleagues need to also recognise the signs of controlling and abusive relationships, and support the victim to tackle this safely by accessing specialist services.

“No one should suffer in silence - there is help available.”

Maria – as identified in the report – was aged 26 at the time of her death. Her ex-partner pleaded guilty to her murder in December 2018 and subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 19 years 264 days before parole can be considered.

The review has been undertaken in an open and constructive manner with all the agencies, both voluntary and statutory, engaging positively.

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a locally conducted, multi-agency 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 relative, partner or member of the same household.

The Review can be found online via the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board’s website at <https://www.norfolksafeguardingadultsboard.info/>

### **Help for employers:**

Companies and employers have an important role to play in helping to prevent domestic abuse where it impacts on the workplace – and when a victim’s work, productivity and safety are affected – whether working at home or in the office.

The HEAR campaign was launched on 25 November – traditionally White Ribbon Day – in a bid to encourage as many businesses as possible from across the public and private sector to help victims of domestic abuse. More information can be found on the [HEAR campaign web page](#).

Employers who want to ensure they are providing a safe and effective work environment for their staff can also find the Employers’ Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) Toolkit at:

<https://www.eida.org.uk/toolkit-for-employers/> or visit

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/domestic-abuse/employers-and-workplace-policies>

### **How to find help:**

In an emergency always call 999.

Domestic abuse is not just physical it comes in many guises including controlling/coercive behaviour.

For further help and support please visit the following websites:

1. [Norfolk Constabulary](#)
2. [Norfolk County Council DA information / #ThingsNeedToChange](#)
3. [Home Office multi-lingual DA information](#)
4. [National Stalking Helpline \(0808 802 0300\) / Stalking and Harassment information](#)

The NCCSP has also produced a series of short films for people to recognise the different types of abuse. The #ThingsNeedToChange films can be found here:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/domestic-abuse/things-need-to-change>

**Notes to editors:**

The Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership brings together organisations from across Norfolk to tackle crime and disorder, and ensure the county remains a safe place for people to live, work and visit. The members of the Community Safety Partnership represent local councils, policing and fire services, youth offending, health and housing.