

Gloucestershire
Learning Brief: Domestic Abuse Related Death Rapid Review (DARDR)
Bridgit - 2020

1. Overview

This rapid review examines the life and tragic death of Bridgit, a 42-year-old woman from the Irish Traveller community who died by suicide in 2020. The review highlights the cumulative impact of lifelong domestic abuse, cultural isolation, chronic pain, and systemic gaps in safeguarding responses.



2. Key Learning Points

Interconnectedness of Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, and Suicide

Bridgit's repeated experiences of domestic abuse (by family and intimate partners) were closely linked to her deteriorating mental health and eventual suicide.

The review stresses that suicide risk should not be viewed solely as a mental health issue, but as a potential outcome of prolonged abuse and trauma.

Intersectionality and Barriers to Support

Bridgit faced multiple, overlapping barriers: her Irish Traveller identity, gender, faith, and cultural expectations all contributed to her isolation and reluctance to seek help.

Cultural stigma, especially within Traveller and Catholic contexts, compounded her sense of shame and limited her access to support services.

Systemic and Multi-Agency Failures

Agencies often worked in silos, missing opportunities for coordinated, trauma-informed intervention.

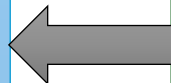
Key risk indicators, such as repeated overdoses, disclosures of abuse, and escalating distress, were not consistently recognized or acted upon.

There was a lack of culturally competent practice and insufficient use of specialist support or community liaison.

Cultural and Honour-Based Abuse

The review highlights the unique challenges faced by Traveller women, including honour-based abuse, community ostracism, and the stigma of leaving abusive relationships.

Bridgit's transition from Traveller site to settled housing increased her isolation and distress, underscoring the need for culturally sensitive housing and support.



3. Recommendations

Embed Cultural Competence

Safeguarding practice must be holistic, trauma-informed, and person-centred, with an understanding of cultural and faith-based barriers.

Strengthen Multi-Agency Coordination

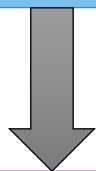
Improve information sharing and joint decision-making across agencies, including Adult Social Care, to ensure wraparound support.

Address Suicide and Self-Harm

Integrate domestic abuse and suicide prevention strategies, with specific attention to cultural stigma and risk factors.

Community Outreach and Housing

Invest in outreach and culturally competent housing support for Traveller communities, involving community liaison officers in strategic planning.



4. Conclusion

Bridgit's case demonstrates the devastating impact of unaddressed trauma, cultural isolation, and fragmented services. The review calls for a shift from incident-based responses to holistic, culturally informed safeguarding that recognizes the complexity of victims' lives and prioritises empathy, collaboration, and timely intervention.