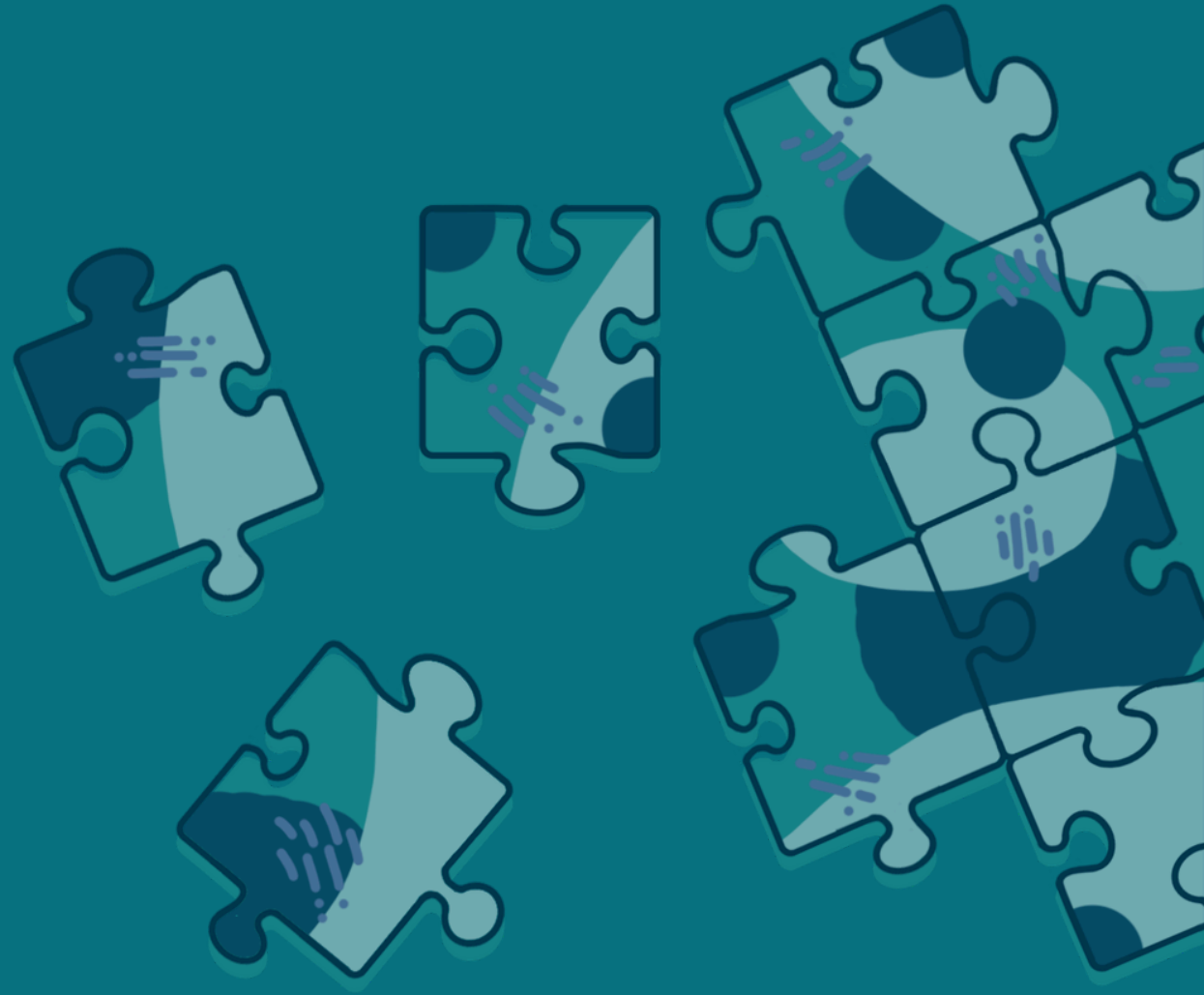


LESSONS LOST?

A further analysis of Domestic
Abuse Related Death Reviews
involving those selling or
exchanging sex

Phoebe Perry
September 2026



Foreword

Mari Edwards

CEO of Beyond the Streets



Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews are intended to help us understand what happened, what could have been done differently, and how future deaths might be prevented. At their best, they offer an opportunity for honest reflection, accountability and change. But they also ask us to engage with lives that have been reduced, in official records, to incidents, risks, diagnoses, behaviours and missed opportunities.

This report seeks to look beyond those records.

It focuses on Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews where there was involvement in selling or exchanging sex, whether by the victim, the perpetrator of the domestic abuse leading to the death, or another person connected to the case. It examines what these reviews tell us about people's lives, the violence and adversity they experienced, the services they came into contact with, and how their experiences were understood.

The findings are both important and deeply concerning.

They show that people involved in selling or exchanging sex were often known to multiple agencies and were frequently living with interconnecting experiences of domestic abuse, trauma, poverty, ill health, substance use, housing insecurity and exploitation. Yet their involvement in the sex industry was often poorly understood, insufficiently explored or represented through language that narrowed professional curiosity rather than deepening it. This matters because language, assumptions and professional understanding shape practice. They influence what questions are asked, whose account is believed, how risk is interpreted, and whether a person is recognised as needing safety, compassion and support. Where services fail to understand the impact of trauma, coercion and structural inequality, they may also fail to recognise what someone is communicating through their contact with them, their attempts to seek help, or the ways in which they are trying to survive.

The report also highlights the limited involvement of specialist sex industry expertise in many reviews. This is a significant gap. Without that expertise, there is a risk that reviews reproduce the same misunderstandings that may have shaped agency responses during a person's life.

At Beyond the Streets, we believe that the women we support should not be defined by the circumstances in which they were harmed, nor by the language used about them in professional records. The individuals whose lives are reflected in this report were friends, family members, colleagues and members of their communities. They had

relationships, hopes, identities and futures that mattered.

We owe it to them, and to those who loved them, to ensure that learning from their deaths leads to more than recommendations on paper.

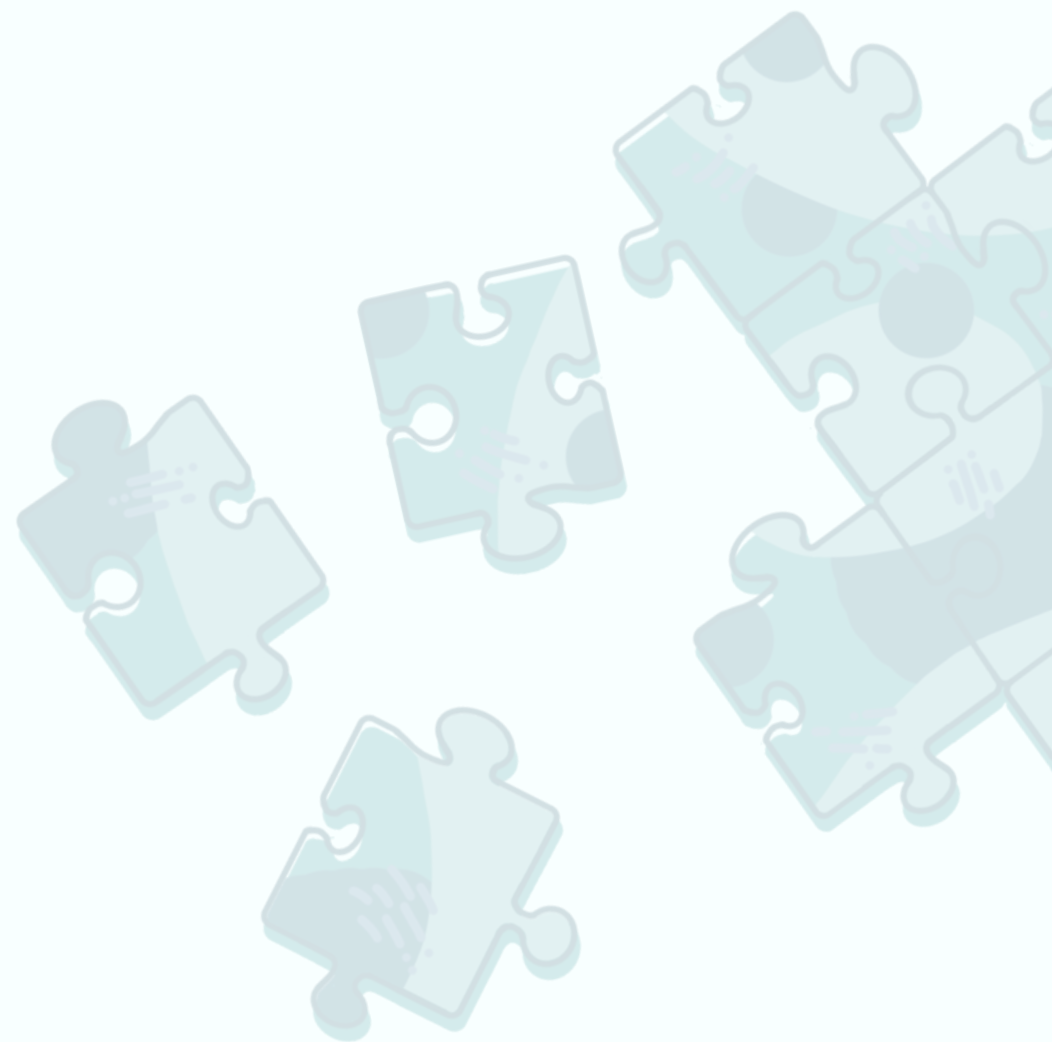
That means asking difficult questions about how systems understand those who are involved in selling sex, how professionals respond to trauma and abuse, and whether services are genuinely equipped to recognise coercion, exploitation and risk. It also means ensuring that future reviews are informed by the right expertise, are willing to challenge organisational defensiveness, and remain focused on the person whose life has been lost.

This report is an invitation to do that work with greater honesty, curiosity and compassion.

I am grateful to our team for the depth and care of this analysis, to those who contributed their expertise, and above all to the families, friends and colleagues whose reflections help us remember the lives behind the reviews.

Mari Edwards

**Chief Executive Officer
Beyond the Streets**



Foreword

Frank Mullane, MBE

CEO of Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse



This report very clearly brings out the safeguarding dis-service done to persons who are killed or who die by suicide, who were involved in selling or exchanging sex. It is important because it unveils significant and many weaknesses, that we can do something about, in our Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) process and in professional safeguarding responses.

Its central theme is that the subjects of these reviews, who were involved in survival sex, are not defined by that activity. As the report says “They had identities, relationships and aspirations. They had full lives.” However, professional responses to when those persons sought help, and DARDR report authors, sometimes used language which gave low status to these individuals. That validates Nils Christie’s findings around the “Ideal victim” that the individual would not be involved in matters likely to include selling or exchanging sex.

At the beginning of my career in this sector, I was struck by Professor Neil Websdale’s (founder of domestic homicide reviews in the USA), comment that the people we are writing about in reviews, suffered such great compromises because of the acts of perpetrators but also because of structural inequalities, multiple adversities and other traumas. Yet, as this report reveals, many professionals did not see these compromises, and they and many DARDR report authors made simplistic and ill-informed judgements about the lives of persons who sell or exchange sex.

DARDRs have huge potential to improve safeguarding, but the report found that in most reviews, there was no input from those with specialist knowledge of the sex industry on the review panel. Without this expertise, the review is likely to be uninformed about the distinct vulnerabilities of the victims and may fail to recognise the barriers to support the victims’ experience.

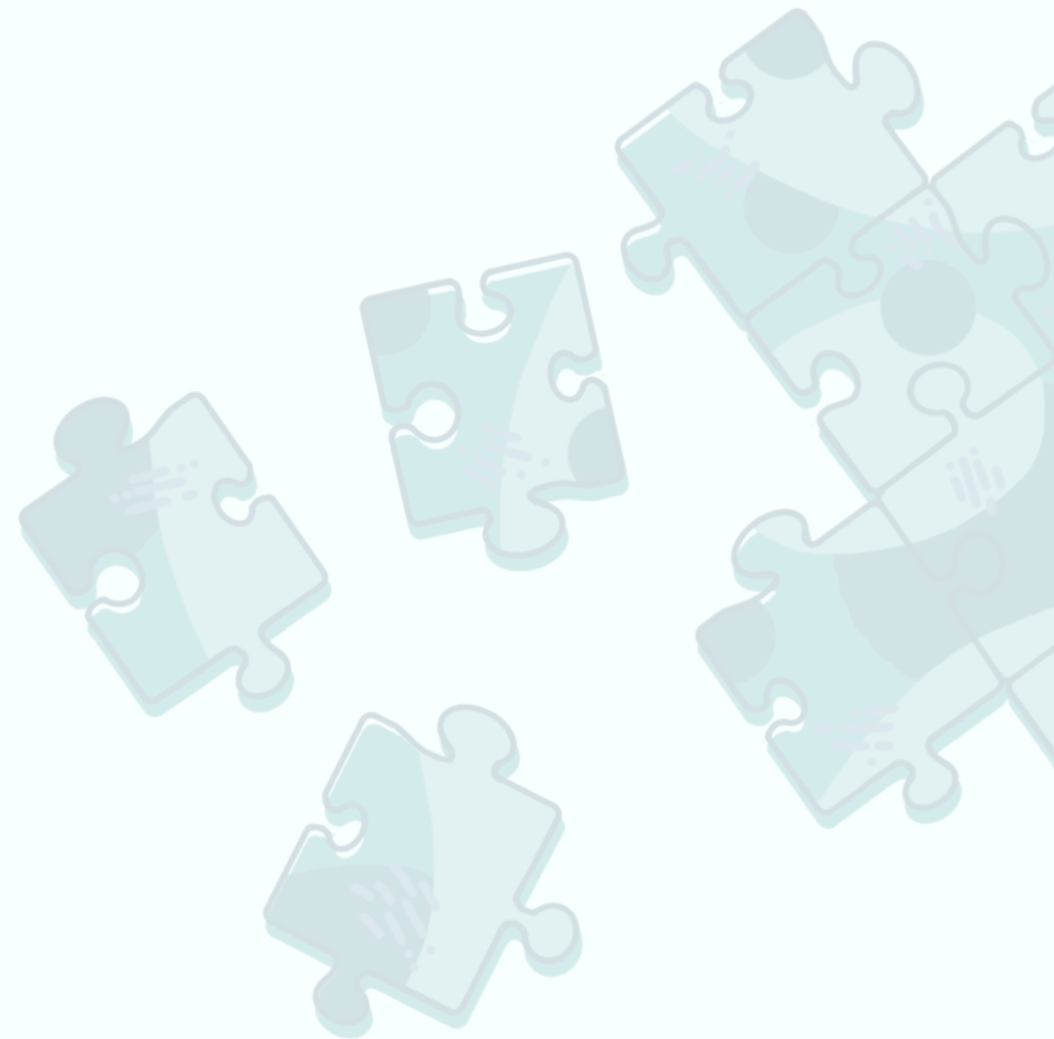
The value of DARDRs is primarily in the change that they achieve – i.e. how much domestic abuse and fatal domestic abuse is prevented. But before reviewers settle on the recommendations that will achieve change, they surely need a clear and informed understanding of what could have been done differently by agencies which might have saved life. That won’t be achieved by assessing services from the perspective of the professional. It might be achieved by looking at the life lived through the eyes of the victim and seeing how she or he perceived what the services were offering. From this perspective, the DARDR authors may be less inclined to describe victims’ lives as chaotic and more likely to recognise the

agency response as not trauma informed. And that leads to the recommendation in this report that Community Safety Partnerships should embed trauma-informed practice in commissioned services.

This report should be read as an invitation to professionals to get more curious and to seek a better understanding of the lives of those who sell or exchange sex and to use that knowledge to save lives.

Frank Mullane, MBE

**Chief Executive Officer
Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse**



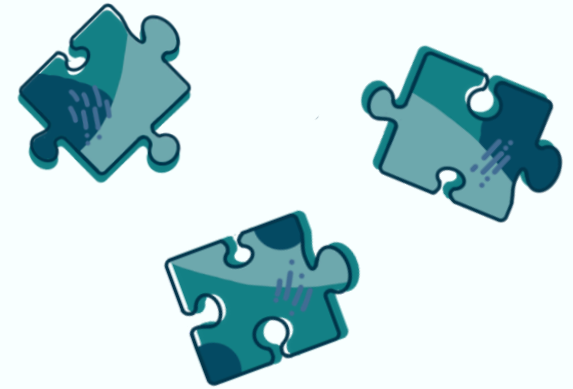
Acknowledgements

This report has benefited from the expertise, insight and generosity of a number of individuals and organisations.

We are particularly grateful to our external reviewers, whose thoughtful feedback, constructive challenge and professional expertise have helped strengthen this report throughout its development:

- **Ellie Butt**, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at Refuge.
- **Emerita Profesor Khatidja Chantler**, internationally recognised researcher in gender-based violence including domestic homicide, self-harm, gender and minoritisation.
- **Dr James Rowlands**, Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Chair and Researcher.
- **Dr Nicola Sharp-Jeffs**, Independent Economic Abuse Expert.

We would also like to thank those who provided advice and support during the research process. In particular, we are grateful to **Richard Potter**, Independent Researcher at Analytics Cambridge and author of Home Office commissioned reports on Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, who provided valuable advice regarding the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Library and aspects of the data collection process.



We are also grateful to colleagues within the **Home Office Interpersonal Abuse Unit** who met with us to discuss the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Library.

Our thanks also go to the **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** and her office, for their engagement and discussions relating to the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Library.

Finally, we would like to thank **The Josephine Butler Educational Trust** for its contribution towards this research and for supporting this work.

Whilst many individuals and organisations have contributed to the development of this report, responsibility for the final analysis, interpretation and conclusions remains with Beyond the Streets.

Remembering the Lives Behind the Reviews

At Beyond the Streets, we believe it is important to include the voices and lived experiences of the family members, friends, and colleagues of those whose lives have tragically been lost or taken, within this report. Through these reflections, we hope to remember people through the lives they lived, and the relationships they had, rather than through their untimely deaths. These reflections, offered by loved ones throughout the DARDR process, bring to light qualities such as care, warmth, resilience, and connection with others. They provide an often-excluded human contrast to formal agency records.

Many of the individuals were remembered through the positive relationships they had with others. One woman was described as **“a quiet, loving daughter who didn’t have a bad bone in her body”**, who was **“loved and respected by all who knew her”**. Another woman was described as **“a kind and gentle soul who always looked for the good in people”**.

One woman was recalled as **“loving and much-loved”** and deeply missed by those she left behind, and many were **devoted parents**, who **“always put their children first”**, and were considered central, and important figures within their family units.

A mother described her daughter as **“my only child, my life”**, stating that her life now feels **“purposeless and hopeless”** without her, with another woman remembered as **“family-oriented”** and **“always smiling”**. Some were also described as **loyal, hardworking, kind, and valued by those they crossed paths with**, who **“stepped in when needed”** and were **reliable** in both their professional and personal lives. Others were described as **intelligent, and creative, with aspirations for their future**, or were remembered for their **humour, for finding the good in people, and the way they brought people together**.

Many of the individuals referenced within the report were facing severe adversity within their lives but were still able to remain optimistic about the future, staying connected with those around them even throughout the most difficult of times. Their roles in their families and communities were significant.

They were more than their behaviours, appearances, or circumstances. They had identities, relationships and aspirations.

They had full lives.

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Key Findings and Recommendations

This report provides a thematic analysis of 44 Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) involving identifiable sex industry involvement. It discusses important and recurring themes which are related to the wider dynamics of domestic abuse experienced by those who were selling and/or exchanging sex.

The findings presented below reflect the themes most directly linked to the recommendations arising from this research. Whilst these represent some of the most significant patterns identified across the 44 DARDRs, they do not capture the full breadth of analysis. Additional themes are explored in greater detail throughout the report.

Key findings

Sex industry involvement was rarely a standalone issue

Many of the individuals identified within the reviews were experiencing domestic abuse alongside a number of overlapping forms of harm. A number of common experiences such as sexual exploitation, poverty, poor mental health, substance misuse, and housing insecurity were identified across the reviews. It was a common finding that a single-issue approach was taken by professionals, and the cumulative effect of multiple forms of harm was not recognised.

Almost all individuals identified as either selling and/or exchanging sex were also known to multiple agencies prior to their death, with information usually being held across multiple services. Despite this multi-agency involvement, reviews repeatedly identified failures regarding the effective sharing of information, with multi-agency communication often being found to be lacking.

Recommendation 7:



Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) should strengthen multi-agency support for individuals with multiple needs. Attention should be given to the effective sharing of information between agencies. CSPs should place significance on the promotion of professional curiosity, as well as coordination between services supporting individuals involved in the sex industry.

Recommendation 8:



The Home Office and CSPs should promote and support the implementation of trauma-informed training and responses that recognise the cumulative impact of multiple forms of harm. Services should be discouraged from taking single issue approaches and encouraged to assess risk holistically.

Understanding of sex industry involvement and adult sexual exploitation was inconsistent

Whilst sex industry involvement was recorded across the identified cases, the detail in which this was recorded was often sparse, and the nature of the sex industry involvement was commonly not explored with appropriate analytical depth. Sexual exploitation was not always recognised, despite there being clear indicators of coercion, grooming, economic control and abuse of vulnerability. Where sex industry involvement was identified, it was rare that specialist expertise was employed to assist with the review process, and was only applied across a small minority of reviews.

Recommendation 1:



The Home Office should ensure that all DARDR Chairs receive training on sex industry involvement, adult sexual exploitation and trauma-informed practice. Where a review identifies that an individual was selling and/or exchanging sex, CSPs and DARDR Chairs should ensure specialist services with expertise in supporting those affected by the sex industry and sexual exploitation contribute to the review process.

Recommendation 3:



The Home Office should develop national guidance on adult sexual exploitation. It should support practitioners to identify exploitation early on as a safeguarding concern, supporting them to respond appropriately. Guidance should explicitly recognise the links between child sexual exploitation, adult sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and involvement in the sex industry.

There were significant gaps in demographic data and analysis

Information relating to protected characteristics was frequently missing. A significant number of reviews did not consistently explore how these factors may have shaped individuals' experiences and circumstances and the barriers to support they were likely facing. Subsequently, opportunities to understand the impact of structural inequalities were often missed.

Recommendation 2:



DARDR Chairs and review panels should ensure that protected characteristics data is collected, recorded and analysed thoroughly. This should include data on ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, disability, care experience and immigration status, and any other characteristics necessary to understanding the victim's circumstances leading to the death. Reviews should explicitly consider how these factors may have influenced vulnerability, help-seeking behaviours, risk and barriers to accessing support.

Language and professional assumptions influenced understandings of risk and vulnerability

Reviews frequently described individuals identified to have been selling and/or exchanging sex as "chaotic", "non-compliant" or "difficult to engage". Such language often revealed assumptions being made about individuals' lives, and the failure to acknowledge their wider life experiences. In some cases it appeared that these narratives shaped professional perceptions and responses.

Protective measures did not always prevent ongoing harm

Reviews were often found to identify recurring concerns relating to the implementation, enforcement and breach of protective orders, and in several cases it was found that domestic abuse continued, and escalated, despite a protective order being in place. The reviews included in this report demonstrate that further learning is needed regarding the effectiveness of protective measures and their associated safeguarding responses.



Recommendation 6:

CSPs should ensure that training, quality assurance processes and review methodologies actively challenge victim-blaming language, stereotypes and assumptions relating to those who sell and/or exchange sex. Reviews should critically examine how these influences shape professional perceptions of individuals who sell/or exchange sex.

Recommendation 4:

The Home Office should undertake a thematic analysis and review of DARDs involving protective orders. Emphasis should be placed on identifying recurring issues which relate to implementation, enforcement and breaches. Any findings of significance should inform future development of domestic abuse protection measures and associated practice guidance.



Transparency and accountability within the DARDR process require strengthening

Significant delays were identified between deaths and publication of reviews in a number of cases. Through completing the analysis, it was discovered that not all completed reviews were publicly available through the DARDR Library, which subsequently has reduced the opportunity for national learning and accountability.



Recommendation 5:

The Home Office should strengthen oversight of DARDR timescales. CSPs should be required to record and report any delays between death, commissioning and publication, and their reason for the delay. Where reviews exceed expected timescales, clear explanations should be publicly available.

Recommendation 9:

Beyond the Streets supports the continued development and resourcing of the Domestic Abuse Related Deaths Accountability and Oversight Mechanism to ensure recommendations arising from DARDRs are monitored, implemented and reviewed at both local and national levels.



Recommendation 10:

The Home Office should ensure that all completed DARDRs approved through the statutory quality assurance process are published on the DARDR Library, unless there are evidenced safeguarding, legal or confidentiality reasons preventing publication. A clear timeframe for publication should be established and monitored, with mechanisms in place to follow up on and address cases where this deadline is not met. Where publication is limited to an executive summary or redacted report, the rationale for this decision should be explicitly stated.



These findings demonstrate that individuals involved in the sex industry often experience multiple and interconnected forms of harm, which are not always fully recognised within safeguarding systems or the DARDR process. The recommendations presented here are intended to strengthen understanding of sex industry involvement, improve responses to exploitation and domestic abuse, support more effective multi-agency working, and enhance accountability and learning within the DARDR process. Through implementing these recommendations, there is an opportunity to improve both the quality of reviews and the systems designed to prevent future deaths.



Introduction

Beyond the Streets

Who We Are and What We Do

Beyond the Streets is a UK charity with over 25 years' experience of working to raise awareness of the sex industry and survival sex, challenge the societal norms that perpetuate harm, and transform responses by providing direct support, shaping policy, and equipping others to take action.

Our vision is of a society where everyone is able to live safe and independent lives, free from the structural inequalities and societal norms that compel women into selling sex.

To achieve this vision we:

- Deliver trauma-informed, person-centred support directly for women across the UK.
- Provide specialist training to statutory and third-sector professionals.
- Produce evidence-based resources and reports grounded in research, lived experience and practitioner insight.
- Facilitate and convene an Affiliate Network of 28 projects and organisations across the UK responding to the needs of, and injustices faced by, women experiencing sexual exploitation and/or involved in the sex industry.

The Affiliate Network aims to strengthen connections and share learning by working in active collaboration around influencing, training, advice and support that progress our shared goals. Our partnerships and training programmes equip professionals to engage with women in the sex industry with understanding, curiosity and compassion — supporting better outcomes and coordinated local responses.

Our Trauma-Informed Approach

At Beyond the Streets, how we do things is as important as what we do. We're committed to being person-centred and trauma-informed in all that we do, whether that's in our support for women, our engagement with decision-makers and professionals, or our interaction with colleagues. We are a Gold Level Committed to Trauma Informed Organisational Practice organisation, accredited by Nicola Lester Psychological Trauma Consultancy, in partnership with Thrive LDN.



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NICOLA LESTER
PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA
CONSULTANCY
VALID UNTIL MAY 2029



Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews

Statutory Framework and Purpose

Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs), formerly known as Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), were first established under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, and became a statutory requirement in England and Wales in April 2011. They are a 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 current or former intimate partner, family member, or member of the same household, with the main purpose being to identify any lessons that can improve responses to domestic abuse and prevent future deaths. They are not intended to determine culpability, reinvestigate the death, or to apportion blame on agencies involved, rather, they have a focus on taking a holistic approach to understanding how agencies worked individually and together, and whether opportunities for intervention prior to the death were missed. The [Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews Statutory Guidance](#), which formally replaced previous Domestic Homicide Review guidance, was published by the Home Office on 15 September 2026.

Professional Curiosity

As set out within the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Statutory Guidance (2026), DARDRs are expected to examine how and why events occurred, rather than simply whether procedures were followed.

Throughout the review process, there is significance placed on professional curiosity, with DARDR Chairs, panel members and contributors encouraged to question assumptions and examine wider contextual factors, going beyond determining whether policies and procedures were simply followed, but also reflecting on whether they were appropriate, adequate, and effective.

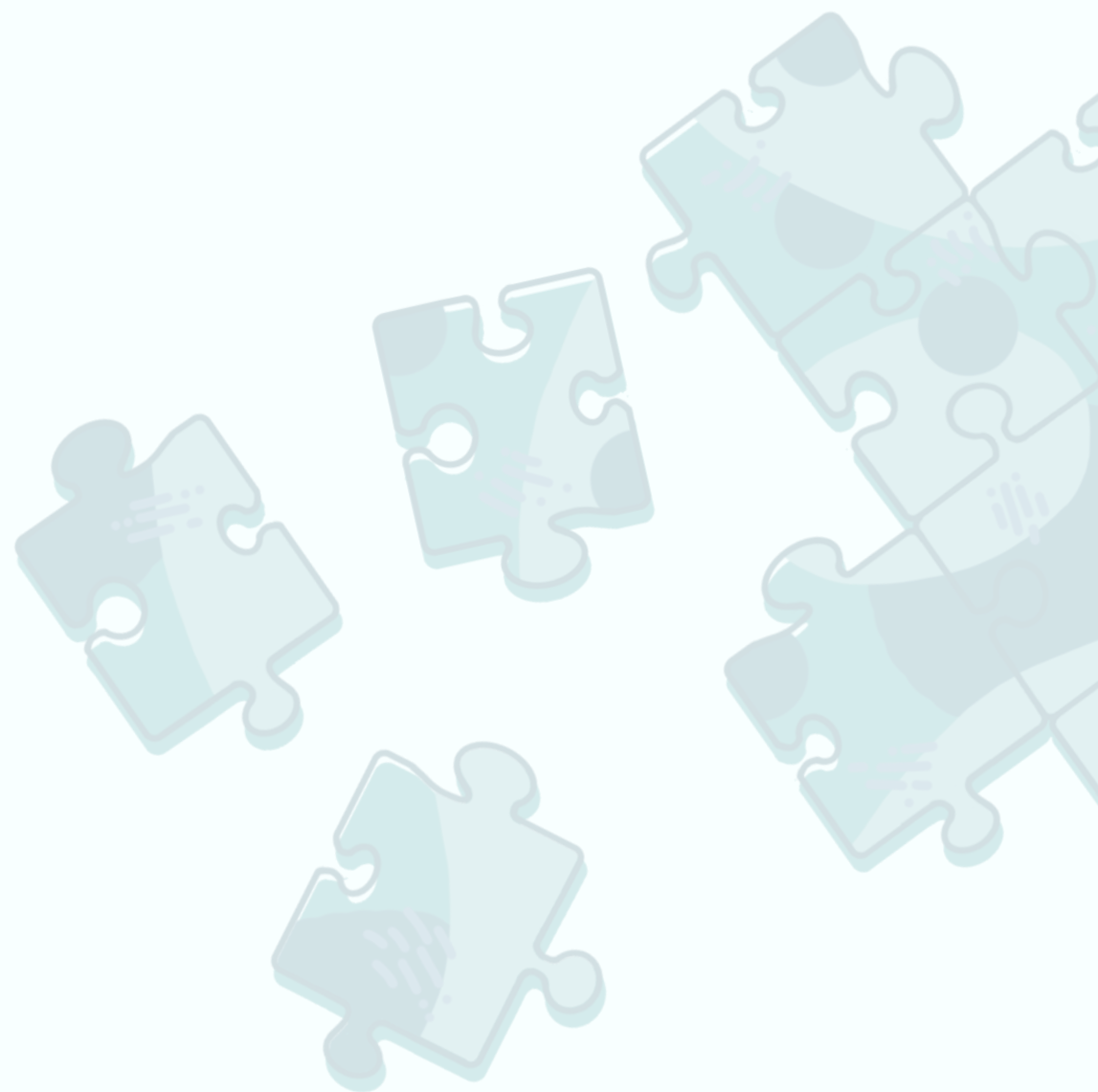
Incorporating Lived Experience and Specialist Perspectives

It is expected that family members, friends, colleagues, community members, subject specialists and, where appropriate, perpetrators of abuse, are included within the review process to capture information, and provide nuance which is unlikely to be held in official records. These perspectives can contribute important insights into the experiences and interactions that preceded a death.

Evolving Policy and Terminology

In 2016, the Home Office published its [Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews](#). Whilst the majority of reviews included in this analysis were conducted under the 2016 statutory guidance, some pre-date its publication and were undertaken under earlier guidance. Since its publication, there has been increasing recognition that domestic abuse can contribute to deaths beyond homicide, with particular recognition of domestic abuse-related suicides. In 2026, the Home Office-funded [Domestic Homicide Project](#) found that suspected victim suicide following

domestic abuse was the most recorded typology across its full five-year dataset (38%), attributing this to improvements in case identification rather than an increase in cases. This broader understanding of domestic abuse-related deaths is reflected within the 2026 DARDR Statutory Guidance, which states that the reviews were renamed "to better reflect the range of the deaths that fall within the scope of a review, including homicides, suicides and unexplained deaths that may have resulted from domestic abuse". The Government's commitment within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to updating statutory guidance, alongside recent policy reforms that take a broader approach to domestic abuse-related deaths, has led to the term Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) being adopted in place of Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), though both terms may be encountered within domestic abuse-related policy, guidance and research. To reflect the current statutory framework and evolving policy landscape, the term DARDR is used throughout this report.



This Report

Why This Research Matters

Perpetrators of domestic abuse continue to cause significant harm across England and Wales. This harm can have profound and long-lasting impacts on victims through injury, trauma, social isolation, and death, and affects people across all communities, including those who sell and/or exchange sex. Despite growing recognition of the vulnerabilities faced by this population, there has historically been limited analysis on how sex industry involvement is represented within DARDRs.

Building on Previous Learning

In 2023, Beyond the Streets published [Lessons Learnt? DHRs through a Sex Industry Lens](#), which identified DARDRs across 21 local authorities, where there was a link to the sex industry. It was the first known review of DARDRs involving individuals with links to the sex industry. This research was initially undertaken to develop a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding these deaths, to identify patterns and trends, and to explore missed opportunities for intervention and professional responses. Since our 2023 research, the Home Office has launched their [DARDR Library](#), which has improved access to all publicly available reviews. In principle, all published DARDRs should now be accessible to the public, relevant stakeholders and professionals via the Home Office



DARDR library, allowing for easier access to the learning held within them. However, access alone does not enable understanding of the wider patterns and systemic issues that emerge across these reviews. Using this library, Beyond the Streets was able to identify 21 additional reviews between the publication of our 2023 research and December 2025. By bringing together learning from multiple DARDRs, this report builds on the work of individual reviews to identify recurring themes and support evidence-informed improvements to policy and practice.

What This Report Examines

This updated research builds on the foundations of the 2023 report and aims to identify the current extent and nature of sex industry involvement within DARDRs, to explore the characteristics of victims and perpetrators as well as case characteristics, to examine patterns of domestic abuse and vulnerability, and to provide analysis on any recurring themes found within the reviews' learning and recommendations.

Terminology

Language and the Sex Industry

Language relating to the sex industry is an often-debated topic, with different terms carrying particular meanings and perspectives. We use phrases such as 'those who sell and/or exchange sex' and 'selling and/or exchanging sexual services' in order to acknowledge the diversity of experiences among those involved. We also use the term 'sex industry' as a broad, umbrella term, whilst also recognising that it encompasses a wide range of realities and does not fully reflect every individual's experience.

Understanding Sexual Exploitation

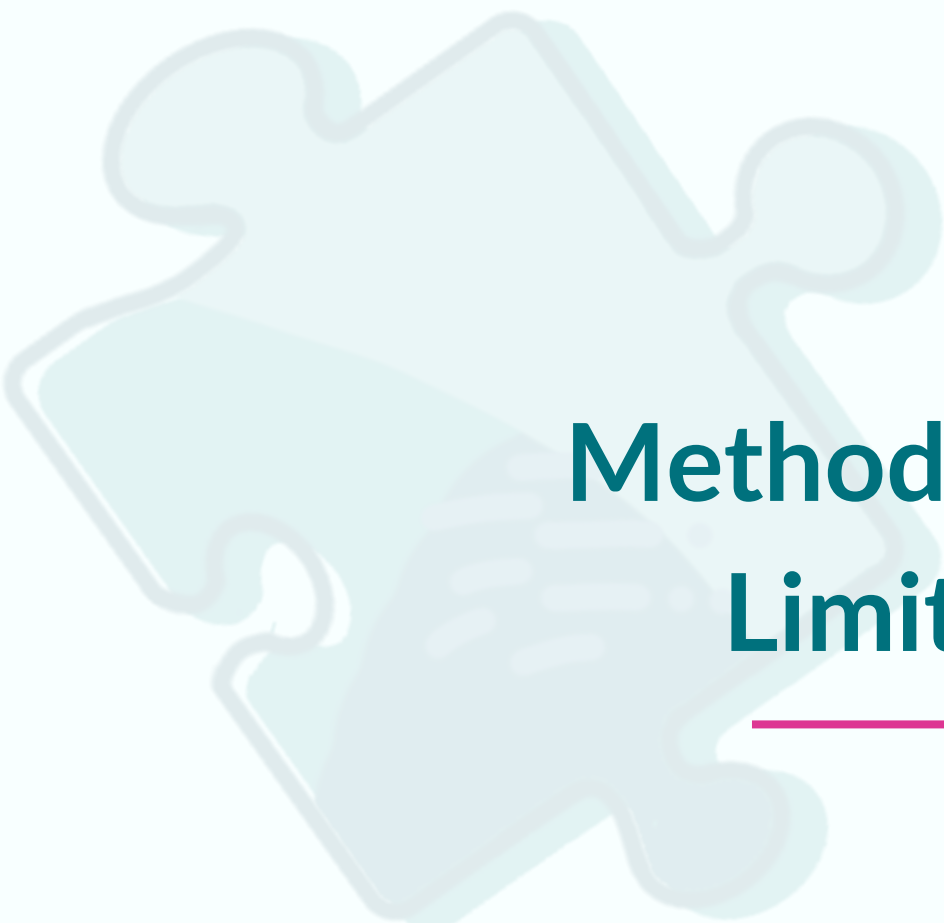
The term 'sexual exploitation' is also used in several ways. In some instances, this reflects the terminology used by review authors, panels or agencies within individual DARDs. In others, the term is used as part of the author's analysis where the circumstances described, such as coercion, grooming, financial control, abuse of vulnerability, or another person profiting from the sale or exchange of sex, indicate exploitation. We recognise that these experiences do not always fit neatly into distinct categories and that involvement in the sex industry may involve coercion, abuse, exploitation, survival needs, agency, or a combination of these experiences.

Our Use of the Term 'Survival Sex'

At Beyond the Streets, we find that 'survival sex' is a useful term for us in being able to recognise and explore where a woman's involvement in the sex industry is the result of meeting a survival need. It helps us to understand a woman's experience of selling and/or exchanging sex within the wider narrative of their life experiences and the structural constraints they are facing, rather than assuming they view their involvement as a choice or a form of employment and without requiring them to bear the weight that comes with the term 'exploitation'. It contributes towards the recognition of the diversity of women's experiences within the sex industry, allowing us to provide each individual woman with specialist support that is trauma-informed and women-centred, whilst also considering her specific experiences. A fuller explanation of this approach can be found in our resource: [Survival Sex: Understanding and Reconnecting](#).

Where we discuss existing research, DARDs or other published material, we have retained the terminology used by the original authors where appropriate.





Methodology and Limitations

Methodology

This section outlines the methodology used to identify, select and analyse Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) involving individuals with links to the sex industry. It sets out the inclusion criteria, data collection and coding processes, and the analytical approach adopted for the study.

Inclusion Criteria and Definitions

All DARDRs included within the analysis were sourced from the Home Office's DARDR Library (the national repository of Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews) and were included in the analysis where the victim, perpetrator, or a significant third party was identified as being involved in the sex industry, either currently or historically.

Throughout this report, the terms victim and perpetrator refer to the individuals identified as such within the DARDR. The victim refers to the person whose death is the subject of the review, including deaths classified as homicide, suicide, neglect or accidental death where domestic abuse was identified as a contributing factor. The perpetrator refers to the individual identified within the review who subjected the victim to the abuse which led to their death.

Identifying and Selecting Cases

At the time of data collection, the DARDR library contained 625 reviews published between April 2011 and December 2025, all of which were considered for analysis. A keyword search (see Appendix 1) was then developed based on Beyond the Streets' professional knowledge and practice and was applied across reviews available on the DARDR Library. This enabled the identification of 35 reviews which referenced sex industry involvement. The identified reviews were then manually examined to determine inclusion in or exclusion from analyses. A further eight reviews were not published on the DARDR Library, but were included in this report, as they were available on Community Safety Partnership (CSP) websites at the time of our 2023 report (see Appendix 2). An additional unpublished review, completed in 2024, was shared directly with Beyond the Streets and was included solely for the purpose of quantitative analysis due to the sensitive nature of the case.



Domestic Homicide Reviews where sex industry involvement was identified

In total, 44 DARDRs were identified and included within this report. References to DARDRs throughout this report relate to this aggregated sample of 44 reviews, comprising reviews identified in both our 2023 study and those subsequently identified through the updated analysis.

Review Availability and Publication Challenges

Of the 44 reviews, 38 (86%) were published as overview reports, with five (11%) published as an executive summary, and one (2%) as an overview report and Serious Case Review (see Appendix 3). Whilst it is recognised that there may be legitimate reasons for limiting publication, such as safeguarding children left behind, and that such limitations are permitted under statutory guidance, reasons for non-publication were not always provided. It was therefore not possible to determine why some full reviews were unavailable, or to assess the impact this may have had on the depth of available information. The publication of executive summaries in place of full overview reports also affected transparency in some cases, particularly where no explanation was provided for the decision to limit publication.

A small number of reviews raised concerns regarding the completeness of the review process itself, including delays in commencing reviews, limited engagement from relevant agencies, a lack of access to key information, missing Individual Management Reviews (IMRs), unclear panel membership and, in one case, disagreements between contributors which were reported to have affected the review process. Whilst these issues were identified in only a small number of reviews, they nevertheless had implications for the quality and depth of the learning available for analysis.

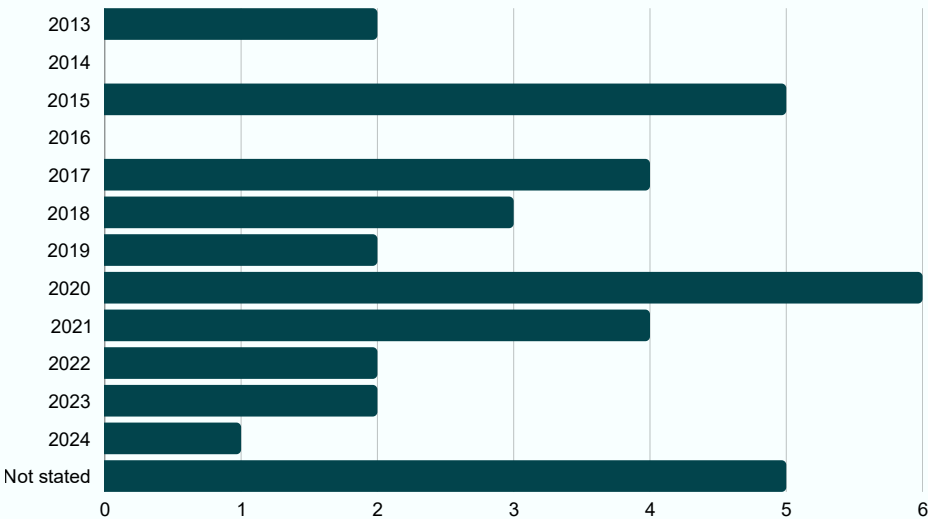
In addition to the 44 included cases, four further reviews contained references to the sex industry but did not indicate any direct involvement by either the victim or perpetrator (see Appendix 4). As these reviews did not identify direct sex industry involvement, they were not included within the dataset.

These references included the use of terms such as "prostitute" during arguments or allegations of "prostitution" as a form of abuse. In one case, the review author also reflected on how services may sometimes pathologise women, resulting in more nuanced aspects of their lived experiences being overlooked (see section 'How Risk and Vulnerability Were Understood').

Overview reports provide a full account and analysis of the case; executive summaries present a condensed version; Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) examine child safeguarding concerns in cases of serious harm or death.

Comparison with the 2023 Study

In total, 23 (52% of) DARDRs were included in our 2023 report, with 21 new DARDRs identified for the purpose of this research (48%).



Our 2023 report examined all relevant reviews identified through manual searches of CSP websites, which were published up to July 2022. Of the 21 newly identified reviews, 16 had been published prior to July 2022, two were published after July 2022, two did not specify a publication date, and one remains unpublished. As the previous report relied on manual searches of CSP websites, rather than the DARDR Library, the identification of a substantial number of additional pre-July 2022 reviews demonstrates the challenges associated with locating DARDRs through dispersed publication routes and suggests that not all eligible reviews were readily identifiable through website searches alone.

The distribution of deaths was broadly consistent across both samples. Homicide represented the majority of reviews in both the 2023 dataset (n=18, 78%) and the newly identified reviews (n=14, 67%), whilst suicides accounted for a smaller but significant proportion of cases (n=4, and n=5, respectively). Accidental deaths were uncommon in both samples, and only one review within the updated dataset was classified as either a suicide or accidental death.

Method	Previous Report	%	Current Report	%
Homicide	18	78%	14	67%
Suicide	4	17%	5	24%
Accidental Death	1	4%	1	5%
Suicide or Accidental Death	-	-	1	5%
Total	23	-	21	-

The similarity between the two samples suggests that the additional reviews identified through the DARDR Library broadly reflected the composition of the original dataset.

Limitations of the DARDR Library

It is important to note that the DARDR Library does not contain all completed DARDRs. As part of this research, Beyond the Streets undertook exploratory work to better understand the publication process, including engagement with the Home Office and a Freedom of Information request submitted to their Public Safety Group. Through cross-referencing the DARDR Library with an external dataset of completed DARDRs that had been through the quality assurance process between October 2019 and September 2021, substantial discrepancies in publication were identified, with 264 of 514 (51% of) reviews within that dataset not available on the DARDR Library. A significant proportion of completed DARDRs are, therefore, not publicly accessible through the library. Locating these additional reviews for analysis would have required searches across CSP websites and this was not deemed feasible within the resources available for this current study.

Scope of the Analysis

It is of note that not all individuals identified as being involved in the sex industry were the victim whose death formed the subject of the review. Across the sample, sex industry involvement was identified among victims, perpetrators, and in a small number of cases, significant third parties whose experiences were relevant to the circumstances surrounding the death. The analysis therefore focuses on sex industry involvement within domestic abuse-related deaths more broadly, rather than solely on victims involved in the sex industry.

Demographic analysis was undertaken on 37 of the 44 DARDs included within the dataset. In these cases, the individual identified as being involved in the sex industry was either the victim whose death was the subject of the review or the perpetrator of the abuse leading to that death. This included a range of forms of involvement, such as selling or exchanging sex as well as being subjected to sexual exploitation.

The remaining seven reviews were excluded from demographic analysis (see Appendix 5). In these cases, the sex industry link related either to a third party connected to the case rather than the primary victim or perpetrator, or the available information did not provide sufficient evidence to confirm the suspected sex industry involvement.

These seven reviews nevertheless remained part of the wider dataset and were included within the thematic analysis.

Demographic findings presented throughout this report therefore relate only to the 37 cases in which the person identified as being involved in the sex industry was the victim or perpetrator within the review.

Data Analysis and Coding

All data were coded and analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Each review was manually coded and recorded into an Excel spreadsheet. The analysis was undertaken through a combination of deductive coding, informed by themes identified in our 2023 research, and inductive coding, to identify new themes and patterns. Themes were then developed iteratively through reading, grouping of codes, and refinement of the analysis phase.

To support comparison across cases, descriptions of sex industry involvement were coded into a series of analytical categories. These categories were developed based on the information provided within the reviews and reflect the researchers' interpretation of how sex industry involvement was described, rather than necessarily the exact terminology used by review authors. In some instances, reviews explicitly referred to experiences such as sexual exploitation. In others, categories were assigned based on the circumstances described within the review, for example where coercion, grooming, abuse of vulnerability, financial control or another person profiting from the sale or exchange of sex indicated exploitative dynamics. Where the available information did not provide sufficient detail to determine the nature of an individual's involvement in the sex industry, cases were recorded as having an 'unknown context'.

Limitations

The findings of this research should be understood in the context of several methodological limitations relating to data access, data quality and analysis. This section considers these limitations.

Data Access

The study was dependent on the availability of published DARDRs. Whilst efforts were made to identify additional reviews beyond those available through the Home Office DARDR Library, it was not possible to establish a complete dataset of all completed DARDRs. As discussed in the methodology, cross-referencing with an external dataset identified substantial discrepancies between completed and publicly available reviews. The findings should therefore be understood as reflecting the accessible sample of DARDRs, rather than the full population of reviews.

Data Quality

The depth and quality of information available varied considerably between reviews. Whilst most were published as full overview reports, a small number were only available as executive summaries, which limited the level of detail available for analysis. DARDRs are also produced by different authors and review panels, resulting in a variation in terminology used, the issues explored, and the level of focus given to particular aspects of a case. As a result, some experiences and characteristics may be underrepresented within the available data.

Analysis

The identification of cases relied on a keyword search informed by professional knowledge and practice, followed by manual review of each DARDR. Given the variation in language used across DARDRs, it is possible that some reviews involving sex industry involvement were not identified. It is also important to note that thematic analysis requires interpretation by researchers, meaning that alternative researchers may have organised codes and themes somewhat differently. To mitigate this, themes were developed iteratively through repeated reading, coding and refinement across the dataset.





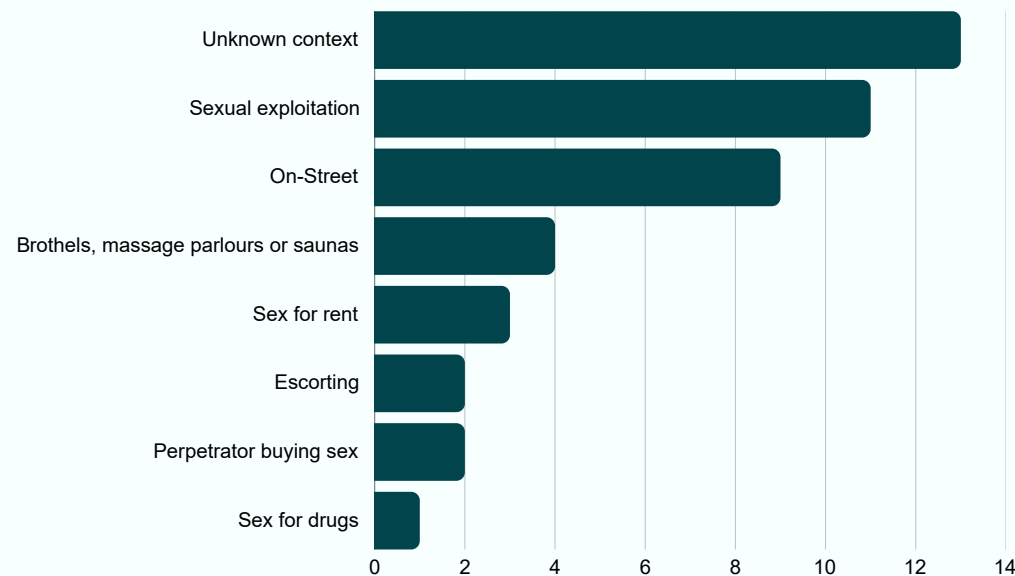
Findings

Sex Industry Contexts

This section examines how sex industry involvement was identified and understood within the 44 DARDs included in the analysis. It explores the different contexts in which involvement occurred, who was connected to the sex industry within the reviews, and any emerging dynamics.

Types of Sex Industry Involvement Identified

Sex industry involvement was identified across a range of contexts. The largest category was unknown context (30%, n=13), followed by sexual exploitation (25%, n=11) and on-street sale of sex (20%, n=9). In one case, a woman was identified as being involved in both on-street sale of sex and brothel-based activity, therefore the number of contexts recorded exceeds the total number of DARDs by one.



It is important to distinguish between cases where sex industry involvement was identifiable and cases where the specific context of that involvement was known. In 33 reviews (75%), involvement in the sex industry could be clearly established by the researcher from the information provided. However, in 11 reviews (25%), involvement was more ambiguous and based on phrases such as "may have been", "believed to be", "possible prostitution" or unverified information. As a result, uncertainty remained regarding whether sex industry involvement had occurred and, if so, its precise nature. The largest category is therefore 'unknown context' (30%, n=13), whereby the sex industry context is either loosely described or not explicitly defined. An example of this is a case where a review states it was recorded in notes written during the 23-year-old female victim's life, that implied she may have been involved in "sex work", with no further detail given. Another example is where the review stated there were boxes of prescription drugs with unknown names found within a 22-year-old female victim's house, which the review interpreted as indicating that there may have been "some kind of sex work going on". The coding framework used to categorise sex industry involvement, including the treatment of explicit and implicit references, is described within the Methodology section.

Consequently, the largest category within the dataset consisted of cases where the nature of the individual's involvement in the sex industry could not be clearly established from the information provided within the review. The prevalence of reviews falling within the 'unknown context' category may reflect limitations in how sex industry involvement was identified, recorded and/or explored within DARDs. In several reviews, involvement in the sex industry was acknowledged but not examined in significant analytical depth.

Who Was Involved in the Sex Industry

Who Was Involved in the Sex Industry	Number of DARDs	%
Victim	25	57%
Perpetrator	11	25%
Victim and Perpetrator	6	14%
Accomplice	1	2%
Perpetrator's partner	1	2%
Total	44	-

In the majority of cases (57%, n=25), the victim of the domestic abuse-related death was the individual identified as having a connection to the sex industry. In 25% (n=11) of cases, the individual connected to the sex industry was the perpetrator of the domestic abuse-related death. In 14% of cases (n=6), both the victim and perpetrator were connected to the sex industry. There was little evidence of involvement by individuals beyond the victim and perpetrator, with only two isolated cases involving either an accomplice or the perpetrator's partner. Overall, sex industry involvement was most frequently associated with the primary victim of the homicide or domestic abuse-related death.

The Nature of Sex Industry Involvement

A connection to the sex industry was also not limited to selling and/or exchanging sex. It included experiences of sexual exploitation, the purchase of sex, facilitating or profiting from the sale of sex, and other forms of involvement. To better understand the nature of this involvement, cases were further coded according to the role individuals played within the sex industry. As some cases contained multiple forms of involvement, categories are not mutually exclusive, and totals therefore exceed the total number of DARDs.

Nature of Sex Industry involvement	Number of DARDs	%
Victim Selling	23	52%
Sexual Exploitation of Victim	8	18%
Perpetrator Selling	8	18%
Perpetrator Buying	4	9%
Perpetrator Pimping	3	2%
Sexual Exploitation of third party	2	7%
Victim Buying	1	5%
Accomplice Selling	1	2%
Victim Brothel Keeping	1	2%
Sexual Exploitation of Perpetrator	1	2%

Unlike the categories exploring who was involved, which assign each DARD a single primary sex industry context, individuals could be coded to more than one type of involvement where reviews described multiple experiences. For example, a case categorised primarily as sexual exploitation might also involve someone profiting from another person's sale of sex, or purchasing sex. The categories demonstrating the nature of involvement are therefore not mutually exclusive and do not directly correspond to the primary sex industry context categories.

The type of sex industry involvement varied depending on who was involved in the sex industry, with the greatest variation found in cases where only the victim was identified as selling or having sold sex (Appendix 6). This is unsurprising given that victim-only involvement represented the largest group. These cases spanned multiple contexts, including on-street, brothel-based, escorting, sexual exploitation, and transactional exchanges (for example, sex for rent/drugs), with the highest proportion (36%, n=9) recorded as taking place within an unknown context.

Where perpetrators were involved in the sex industry, there was again, a high proportion of unknown contexts (n=4), alongside on-street involvement (n=2), transactional exchanges (n=2), purchase of sex by the perpetrator (n=2) and sexual exploitation (n=1). However, perpetrator involvement was associated with a narrower range of sex industry contexts, with no cases involving escorting or brothel-based activity. Given the relatively small number of cases involving perpetrator-only sex industry involvement, these findings should be interpreted with caution and are not sufficient to draw broader conclusions regarding the nature of perpetrators' involvement.

Gendered Dynamics

The distribution of sex industry involvement was gendered, and whilst the dataset included individuals of different genders, including male victims and cases involving same-sex relationships, women accounted for the majority of individuals identified as having sex industry involvement. This was particularly evident amongst those identified as selling and/or exchanging sex and those experiencing sexual exploitation. Men were more frequently represented as perpetrators of domestic abuse and, in some cases, as those purchasing sex, controlling the sale of sex, or profiting from it. Although the experiences of male victims and others represented within the dataset remain important and should not be overlooked, the overall pattern aligns closely with wider evidence regarding gendered inequalities, violence against women and girls, and the disproportionate impact of exploitation and abuse on women. These gendered dynamics are explored in greater detail throughout the report.

Sexual Exploitation and Power Dynamics

Sexual exploitation was identified across multiple patterns of involvement, including cases where only the victim was involved in the sex industry, only the perpetrator was involved, and cases where both the victim and perpetrator were involved. This was particularly prominent in cases where both the victim and perpetrator were involved in the sex industry, with sexual exploitation accounting for four out of six cases.

In the cases where both victim and perpetrator involvement was identified, there were patterns of domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, and exploitation.

Several cases involved a 'pimping' dynamic, where the victim was forced or pressured to sell sex by the perpetrator, often to fund the perpetrator's drug use, with one case explicitly stating that the victim was forced to sell sex on-street, then punished through violence for doing so. One case contained a contested account, where a 35-year-old male victim had previously described consensual engagement in group-sex activity in exchange for money, with the 24-year-old female perpetrator framing this at trial as a form of sexual abuse and "enforced prostitution" against her. It is clear, therefore, that when both parties were involved in the sex industry, there were patterns of severe harm and significant imbalances of power between parties. It is also important to note that these findings relate only to cases where both victim and perpetrator involvement in the sex industry was explicitly identified within the review. It is possible that similar dynamics, including sexual exploitation, were present in other cases but were not recognised or explored within the available reviews.

Recommendation 1:



The Home Office should ensure that all DARDR Chairs receive training on sex industry involvement, adult sexual exploitation and trauma-informed practice. Where a review identifies that an individual was selling and/or exchanging sex, CSPs and DARDR Chairs should ensure specialist services with expertise in supporting those affected by the sex industry and sexual exploitation contribute to the review process.

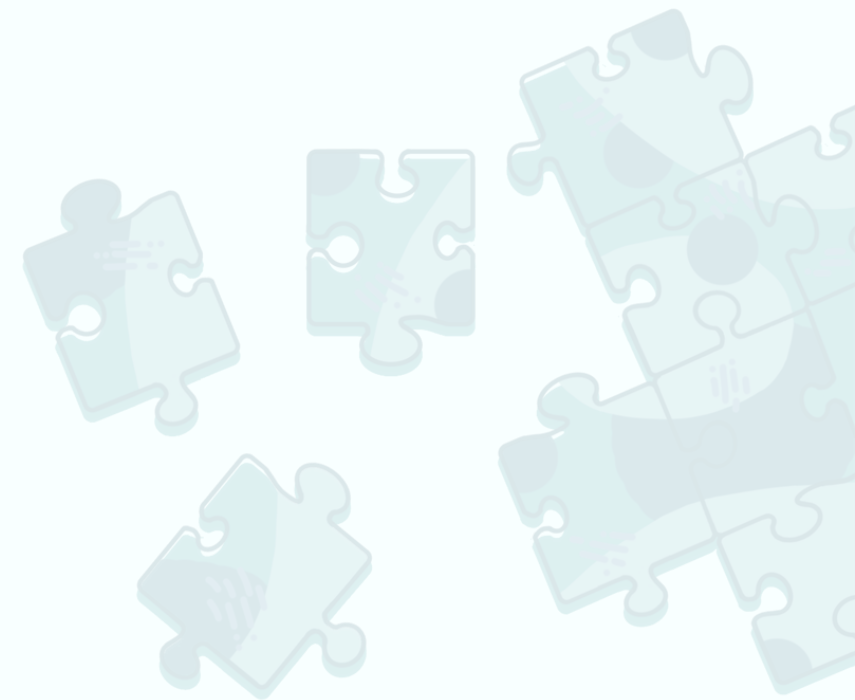
Case Characteristics

This section examines the characteristics and experiences of individuals connected to the sex industry within the DARRs included in this analysis. It explores demographic information, relationship contexts, contact with services, and common experiences in order to develop a clearer understanding of who was represented within the reviews and the circumstances surrounding their lives. It also considers the limitations of the available data and the implications of missing information.

As outlined in the Methodology section, analysis within this section is based on 37 DARRs in which the victim whose death was the subject of the review, or the perpetrator of the abuse leading to that death, was identified as having direct involvement in the sex industry (see Appendix 7). This included individuals who sold or exchanged sex, or were identified as having been subjected to sexual exploitation.

Gender

The demographic profile demonstrates the strongly gendered nature of the cases reviewed. The majority of those involved in the sex industry were female (n=31, 84%), with five males (14%) and one transgender female. Whilst the findings demonstrate that domestic abuse and sex industry involvement affect people of different genders, women represented the overwhelming majority of individuals identified within the sample.



Sexuality

Sexuality was not recorded well across the dataset, with 78% having no sexuality recorded (n=29). Of those who did have sexuality recorded, five (14%) were heterosexual and three (8%) were gay or lesbian.

Age

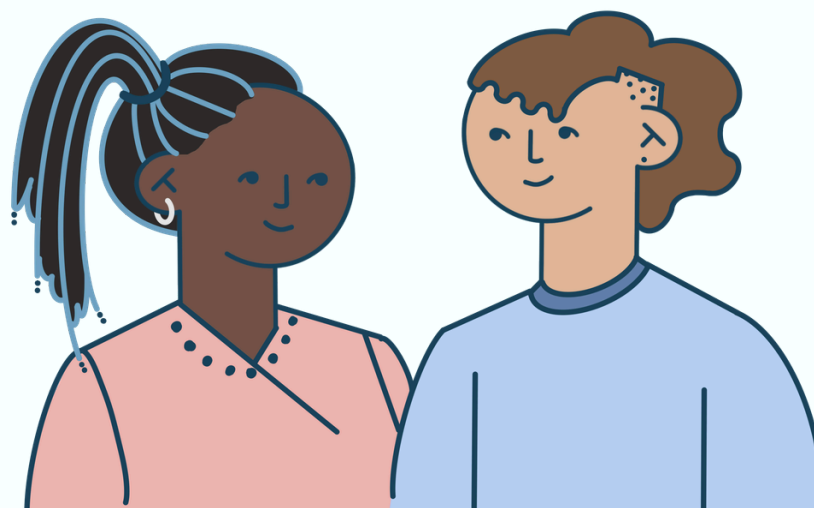
Most individuals were relatively young, with the largest groups being 25-34 (n=11, 30%), and 35-44 (n=11, 30%). When combined, 22 individuals (60%) were aged between 25 and 44. Six individuals (16%) were between the ages of 18 and 24, and two individuals (6%) were aged 45 or older. One individual was recorded as being in their 40s, and in six cases (16%), no age was recorded anywhere in the review.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity data was often missing from reviews, with 12 cases (32%) having no ethnicity recorded. Amongst identified ethnicities, 19 (51%) were White, with one individual from each of the following ethnicities:

- Black Caribbean
- Chinese
- Mexican
- Mixed White and African Caribbean
- Mixed White and Asian
- Mixed White and Black British

Age Differences Between Parties: When considering cases where an age was recorded, the individual involved in the sex industry was younger than the other identified party within the review in 22 out of 37 cases (59%). In these cases, the average age difference was seven years, with a range of one to 20 years. In three cases there was a 10-15 year age difference, in a fourth case a 19-year age difference, and in a fifth case a 20-year age difference. In all cases where there was an age difference of 15 years or more, the person selling sex was in their 20s. These age differences may further reflect the significant power imbalances between parties highlighted in the preceding section.



Nationality

Nationality was similarly poorly recorded, with 10 cases (27%) having no nationality recorded. In cases where nationality was identified, 19 individuals (51%) were British, two were Irish (5%), two were Romanian (5%), with one individual recorded from each of the following nationalities: Bulgarian, Chinese, Jamaican and Mexican.

Missing Demographic Data: A notable finding was the extent to which demographic information was inconsistently recorded across reviews. Information relating to sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, care experience and neurodivergence was frequently absent or only partially recorded. Information relating to disability was also often limited, despite many reviews identifying mental health difficulties, physical health conditions, or other needs which may have met the definition of a disability. This limited opportunities to understand how different aspects of an individual's identity and life experience may have shaped their experiences of domestic abuse, exploitation, involvement in the sex industry, vulnerability and/or engagement with services. There was also limited consideration of socio-economic disadvantage, despite recurring references throughout the reviews to poverty, housing insecurity, homelessness and financial hardship.

The absence of this information should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence that these factors were not relevant; rather, it may reflect a lack of consideration or exploration within reviews.



Religious beliefs not recorded: 33/37 cases (89%)

Sexuality not recorded: 29/37 cases (78%)

Ethnicity not recorded: 12/37 cases (32%)

Immigration status not recorded: 11/37 cases (30%)

Nationality not recorded: 10/37 cases (27%)

Age not recorded: 6/37 cases (16%)

Care experience identified in only: 4/37 cases (11%)

Neurodivergence identified in only: 3/37 cases (8%)

Sexual health concerns identified in only: 4/37 cases (11%)

Common Experiences

Relationship Contexts

The majority of cases involved intimate partners (n=24, 65%), with a further seven (19%) involving former intimate partners. Only six cases (16%) involved other domestic relationships, including a child to parent relationship, a grandchild to grandparent relationship, a household member, a friend, a carer, and a partner of a relative.

Contact with Services

The majority of individuals in this study were already known to services before their death (n=35, 95%), with high levels of overlapping needs. This proportion is notably higher than wider national findings from the Domestic Homicide Projects' [2026 report](#), which found that the victim and/or suspect was known to a partner agency in 70% of incidents. Nevertheless, both datasets highlight the visibility of many domestic abuse-related deaths to services prior to the fatal incident and the importance of effective multi-agency responses.

Individuals were most commonly known to:

- NHS services: 34 (92%)
- Police: 31 (84%)
- Housing services: 25 (68%)
- Substance misuse services: 21 (57%)
- IDVA/domestic abuse services: 17 (46%)

Around one-third of individuals were known to:

- Children's Social Care: 13 (35%)
- Probation/Prisons: 12 (32%)
- Charity sector services: 12 (32%)
- Adult Social Care: 11 (30%)
- Adult Safeguarding: 11 (30%)

Care experience

Four individuals were identified as being care experienced, however it is important to note that care status was frequently not discussed within reviews, therefore this may reflect an underreporting of care experience rather than an absence of it.

Recommendation 2:



DARDR Chairs and review panels should ensure that protected characteristics data is collected, recorded and analysed thoroughly. This should include data on ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, disability, care experience and immigration status, and any other characteristics necessary to understanding the victim's circumstances leading to the death. Reviews should explicitly consider how these factors may have influenced vulnerability, help-seeking behaviours, risk and barriers to accessing support.

Relationship Types

Typology	Number of DARDs	%
Intimate Partner (Homicide)	24	55%
Intimate Partner (Suicide)	9	20%
Adult Family (Homicide)	7	16%
Intimate Partner (Accidental Death)	2	5%
Carer Relationship (Homicide)	1	2%
Intimate Partner (Possible suicide, possible accidental death)	1	2%
Total	44	-

Intimate partner relationships account for the majority of cases (82%, n=36) when all typologies are combined, with intimate partner homicide alone representing 55% (n=24) of all the DARDs, intimate partner suicide 20% (n=9), adult family homicide 16% (n=7), and a carer-related homicide, and intimate partner-related death which was either suicide or accidental. Whilst intimate partner deaths predominated across the dataset, the data also demonstrates that suicides formed a notable minority of cases, which reflects the broader shift within DARD practice towards recognising domestic abuse-related deaths beyond homicide alone.

Domestic Abuse

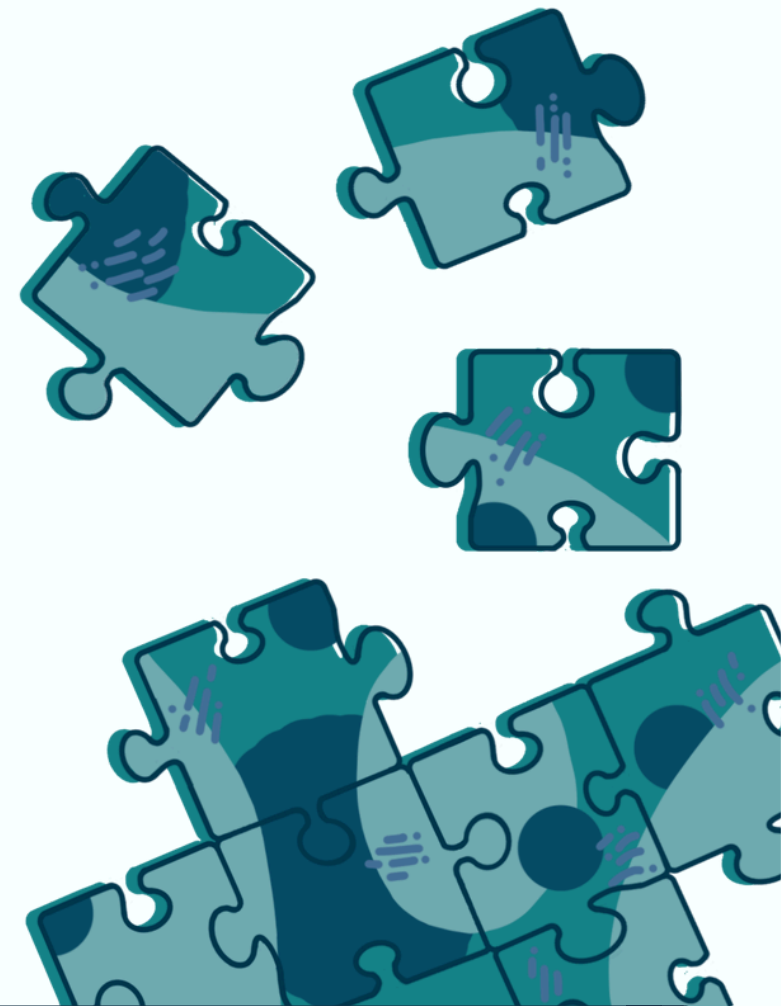
This section examines the characteristics and experiences of individuals connected to the sex industry within the DARDRs included in this report. It explores demographic information, relationship contexts and contact with services, in order to better understand the circumstances of those represented within the reviews. It highlights recurring patterns, and considers the limitations of the available data and the implications of missing information for understanding risk and support needs.

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse Experienced	Number of DARDRs	%
Coercive and controlling behaviour	41	93%
Physical abuse	36	82%
Emotional/Psychological abuse	35	80%
Threats and intimidation	29	66%
Economic abuse	27	61%
Sexual abuse	15	34%
Sexual exploitation	11	25%
Technology-facilitated abuse	10	23%
Harassment/Stalking	9	20%
False imprisonment/restriction of liberty	2	5%
Reproductive coercion	2	5%

Domestic abuse was an almost universal feature of the sample, with 43 of the 44 individuals identified as being involved in the sex industry having experienced domestic abuse during the review period (98%). In the remaining case, no evidence was identified that the individual was experiencing domestic abuse during the period under review. Domestic abuse did however remain present within the wider context of the case. The review concerned the homicide of a 46-year-old female victim by her half-brother. The review noted that the victim had previously experienced domestic violence in a former relationship. The perpetrator also had a known history of domestic abuse-related behaviour, including a domestic-related assault on a former partner, a domestic violence perpetrator marker within probation records, a SARA assessment, and disclosures relating to historical domestic abuse. The review also considered allegations of assault against a female neighbour which were later withdrawn, alongside concerns that a female associate of the perpetrator had threatened the complainant. Whilst the review concluded that there was no evidence that the victim was experiencing domestic abuse at the time of her death, domestic abuse remained relevant to the wider context of the case. As a result, the panel considered whether these

incidents reflected a wider pattern of domestic abuse-related behaviour and vulnerability. Domestic abuse therefore remained an important contextual factor within the review, despite not being identified as a current feature immediately prior to the homicide.



Types of Domestic Abuse Identified

Coercive and Controlling Behaviour

The most common form of domestic abuse identified was coercive and controlling behaviour, occurring in 41 cases (93%). This suggests that control, dependency and restriction of autonomy were central features of many individuals' experiences. For example, in one case, a 44-year-old female victim experienced a range of controlling behaviours whereby her 57-year-old male partner controlled her appearance, her friendships, and contact with her daughter, whilst also using her immigration status and fear of deportation in order to maintain dependency and compliance. Similarly, a 26-year-old female victim experienced ongoing monitoring of her communications and movements, alongside attempts by the 26-year-old male perpetrator to control both her personal relationships and her involvement in the sex industry.

Physical Abuse

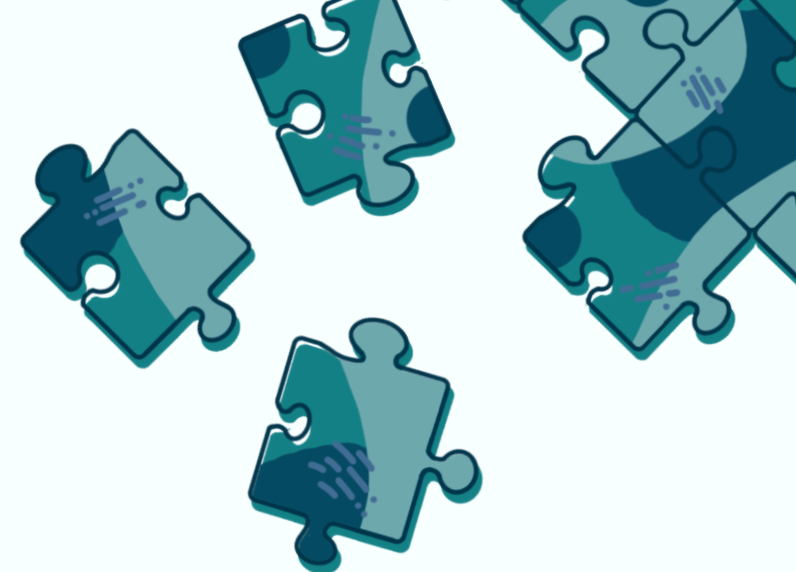
Physical abuse was also common, occurring in 82% of cases (n=36), with several individuals experiencing escalating violence immediately prior to their death. For example, a 50-year-old female victim was subjected to repeated assault, strangulation, suffocation and threats involving weapons over a prolonged period by the male perpetrator of an unknown age, while a 33-year-old female victim reported being punched, pushed down a set of stairs, and grabbed by the throat by her 40-year-old former husband. In many cases, physical violence did not occur in isolation but formed part of a much wider pattern of coercion and control.

Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Emotional and psychological abuse was identified in 80% of cases (n=35). Several reviews explicitly referred to victims feeling trapped, hopeless or unable to leave their abusers. An example of this is where a 44-year-old female victim had previously described her 45-year-old husband's behaviour as "mental torture", reporting persistent accusations, verbal abuse and controlling behaviour which left her feeling trapped and unable to cope.

Threats and Intimidation

In 66% of cases (n=29), individuals were known to have been subjected to threats and intimidation. These included threats to kill, threats towards children or family members, threats linked to immigration status, threats of violence following separation, and threats intended to maintain compliance and dependency, with one example being a 26-year-old female victim who had previously reported how her 36-year-old male partner had threatened to kill her and had previously held a knife to her,



while a 23-year-old female victim experienced repeated death threats alongside escalating abuse from her 43-year-old male partner.

Economic Abuse

Economic abuse was identified in 61% of cases (n=27) and involved restriction through taking earnings, controlling access to money, creating financial dependency and exploitation through using debt and poverty to exert control, as well as directly benefiting financially from an individual's involvement in the sex industry. A 35-year-old male victim, for example, financially benefited from sexual activity the 24-year-old female perpetrator undertook for payment whilst leaving her responsible for significant debt and rent arrears.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse was identified in 34% of cases (n=15), including rape, sexual coercion and pressure to engage in unwanted sexual activity. One female victim (age not recorded) reported rape within a relationship characterised by coercive control, intimidation and violence by the male perpetrator (age not recorded), while another female victim (age not recorded) disclosed repeated sexual assaults alongside domestic abuse and exploitation from her male partner (age not recorded).

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation was identified in 25% of cases (n=11). Several reviews described perpetrators who facilitated, controlled or profited from victims' involvement in the sex industry. In one review, ongoing concerns were recorded, where the female victim's male partner (ages not recorded) accompanied her while she sold sex, controlled

her money and may have acted as her pimp. In another case, a 44-year-old female victim was coerced by her 57-year-old male partner into providing sexual services to other men for his financial gain.

Technology-Facilitated Abuse

Technology-facilitated abuse was also identified in 23% of cases (n=10). Examples included monitoring mobile phones, surveillance of social media accounts, hacking online accounts, tracking communications and continuing abuse following separation through digital means. In one case, for example, it was reported that a 36-year-old male victim had hacked a 26-year-old female perpetrator's email account and sent abusive messages to her friends as part of an ongoing pattern of abuse.

Harassment and Stalking

Harassment and stalking were identified in 20% of cases (n=9), with stalking behaviour often continuing following separation. Common behaviours included persistent unwanted contact, surveillance, monitoring of movements, repeated messaging and telephone calls, and attempts to prevent former partners from moving on.

Other Forms of Abuse

Although less common, two cases recorded false imprisonment and two recorded reproductive coercion. For example, in one case, the 22-year-old female victim's 23-year-old male partner prevented her from terminating a pregnancy and exerted control over her reproductive choices. In another case, it was reported that the 44-year-old female victim was pressured into fertility treatment by the 57-year-old male perpetrator, despite her not wanting another child.

Intersections Between Domestic Abuse and Sex Industry Involvement

Whilst the forms of domestic abuse identified within the dataset were broadly consistent with wider understandings of domestic abuse, there were several ways in which domestic abuse intersected with sex industry involvement. Perpetrators often exerted control over an individual's involvement in the sex industry through multiple forms of domestic abuse. They also, in some cases, benefitted financially from the sale or exchange of sex, controlled access to earnings, or pressured victims to continue selling and/or exchanging sex. There were also cases where domestic abuse and sexual exploitation appeared to be closely connected, which made it difficult to separate one form of harm from the other.

The nature of this relationship varied depending on the individual's role within the sex industry. Where victims were selling and/or exchanging sex, domestic abuse often co-existed alongside wider experiences of vulnerability. Where both the victim and perpetrator were involved in the sex industry, there were frequently significant power imbalances, for example the use of coercive and controlling behaviours and 'pimping' dynamics. This suggests that sex industry involvement was not merely a background characteristic within many reviews, but was often directly relevant to the way domestic abuse was experienced and perpetrated.

Cumulative and Interconnected Harm

These findings suggest that domestic abuse among individuals involved in the sex industry was rarely limited to a single form of victimisation. Abuse was instead typically characterised by overlapping experiences of coercive and controlling behaviour, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and threats and/or intimidation.

The most common combination of abuse across the sample was coercive and controlling behaviour, physical abuse, emotional abuse and threats/intimidation.

This reflects a wider understanding of domestic abuse as a pattern of cumulative and interconnected harms rather than a series of isolated incidents.

As one review noted, the victim was subjected simultaneously to physical violence, coercive control and surveillance, reproductive coercion and economic abuse. The experiences described within these DARDs were therefore consistent with these domestic abuse patterns and also emphasised how coercive control and other forms of abuse could intersect with sex industry involvement.



Children's Experiences Within the Cases

Exposure to Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Related Deaths

At least 69 children of victims and perpetrators were impacted by these deaths, the majority of whom were under the age of 18.

Domestic abuse organisations have long recognised that children are not simply witnesses to domestic abuse, but can be directly harmed by living with abuse and its consequences. This understanding is now reflected in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognises children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right.

Several children were described as living in households where domestic abuse was perpetrated against a parent, with some reviews reporting that children had directly witnessed abuse prior to the death. In several cases, children were present during or immediately after the incident that resulted in the death, with a number exposed to highly traumatic circumstances. For example, one child was present when their mother was killed and was then left alone with her body for a further 36 hours. A Serious Case Review was considered in this case but was not commissioned, as the case was deemed not to meet the relevant criteria. A number of children were also affected by witnessing domestic abuse perpetrated against a parent prior to the death. For example, two children, both under the

age of seven, witnessed violent incidents and were in the care of the perpetrator immediately before the homicide, subsequently becoming subject to care orders and being placed in local authority care. Several children also witnessed the immediate aftermath of the death. In one case, two young children were present in the home and directly witnessed the scene, with an older sibling later discovering their mother's body after the perpetrator confessed to the killing.

There was also a case where a woman was approximately six months pregnant and her unborn child died as a result of the perpetrator killing their mother.



The Impact on Children

Many of the children identified within the DARDRs were already experiencing significant adversity before the death occurred, including exposure to domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour directed towards a parent. Following the death, many experienced further disruption, including changes to their living arrangements, care arrangements, or placement with extended family members.

These findings demonstrate the significant and often long-lasting impact of domestic abuse-related deaths on the children involved. Many of these children had already experienced domestic abuse and other forms of adversity before the death and subsequently experienced further trauma, bereavement and disruption following the loss of a parent.

The impact of these deaths extends far beyond the immediate incident itself and often affects multiple aspects of children's lives, both before and after the death.

The findings reinforce the importance of recognising children as victims in their own right, whose experiences, needs and safety require specific consideration within both safeguarding responses and review processes.



Child Sexual Exploitation

This section explores the extent to which Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was identified within the DARDs included in this analysis. Although only a small number of reviews identified confirmed experiences of CSE, these cases identified recurring patterns of grooming, exploitation and abuse that frequently extended into adulthood.

Patterns of Exploitation

Of the 44 cases identified, five individuals, all female, were identified as having confirmed experiences of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), with one additional individual having possible, but unconfirmed experiences of CSE. There was no CSE identified by review panels within the remaining 38 reviews (86%) (see Appendix 8).

Of the five cases where CSE was identified, four involved grooming or exploitation by older men, and four involved childhood sexual abuse alongside CSE. In one case, exploitation reportedly began during adolescence and involved older men who provided accommodation, money and substances in exchange for sexual activity. These concerns were known to agencies but were not consistently understood through a CSE lens. One review explicitly described exploitation as "a recurring feature throughout her life", identifying a trajectory from childhood sexual exploitation, through adult sexual exploitation, and into later involvement in the sex industry. This suggests that, within these cases, childhood and adult exploitation were often a continuous experience rather than isolated experiences.

Missed Opportunities for Identification and Intervention

Of the five confirmed cases, three review authors identified missed opportunities by the agencies involved to recognise and adequately respond to clear indicators of CSE, for example one review identified repeated indicators of exploitation during adolescence, including missing episodes, association with older men and disclosures suggestive of abuse. Whilst concerns were recorded, the review concluded that professionals did not consistently recognise these behaviours as indicators of child sexual exploitation, which subsequently resulted in opportunities for intervention being missed.

One review which provides an example of the complexity involved in identifying and responding to exploitation demonstrates how professionals were aware of concerns relating to CSE and offending by others, however, disclosures were limited, information was disjointed, and there were significant challenges in identifying perpetrators. Whilst the review acknowledged that agencies held concerns, it concluded that available information was insufficient to enable a full understanding of the exploitation being experienced at the time.

Despite the review's conclusion, the presence of repeated concerns relating to exploitation suggests that opportunities may have existed to further explore these risks, even in the absence of complete disclosure.

Although only a small number of reviews identified confirmed experiences of CSE, the consistency of themes across these cases is worth noting. Childhood sexual exploitation rarely appeared as an isolated experience. Instead, it frequently formed part of a wider trajectory of abuse that continued into adulthood. These findings suggest that experiences of CSE may have long-term implications for later involvement in the sex industry.

Recommendation 3:

The Home Office should develop national guidance on adult sexual exploitation. It should support practitioners to identify exploitation early on as a safeguarding concern, supporting them to respond appropriately. Guidance should explicitly recognise the links between child sexual exploitation, adult sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and involvement in the sex industry.



Protective Orders

Protective orders are intended to reduce risk and provide legal protections for individuals experiencing abuse. This section examines how protective measures featured within the DARDs, including the types of orders used, issues relating to implementation and enforcement, and the extent to which protective measures were identified within the circumstances preceding the death. It also considers what these reviews can tell us about the relationship between protective orders and ongoing risk.

Types of Protective Measures

Across the 44 cases reviewed, 11 (25%) made reference to a protective order being in place either historically or at the time of the death. These included bail conditions (n=4), restraining orders (n=3), non-molestation orders (n=3), Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) (n=2) and one Police Information Notice (PIN). Four additional cases made reference to protective measures that were not directly linked to the victim whose death formed the subject of the review. These included a restraining order obtained by a former partner of the perpetrator, a non-molestation order relating to a family member, safeguarding orders relating to children, and protective measures involving other individuals not connected to the wider case circumstances

Of the 11 cases where protective measures were identified, eight involved female victims and male perpetrators, which reflects wider patterns of violence against women and girls observed throughout the dataset. Although some protective measures related to third parties, previous victims or both parties within the relationship, the majority of cases involving protective orders were situated within a context of male violence against women.

Use and Implementation of Protective Orders

In five of these 11 cases, it was stated that the measures were in place at the time of the homicide, for example in the form of active bail conditions, restraining orders and non-molestation orders. In four cases, these protective measures were recorded as being breached, with some including multiple breaches or continued or resumed contact between the victim and the perpetrator, despite these restrictions being in place.

In addition to the 11 cases where protective orders were, or had previously been in place, at least two cases saw protective measures considered, but not implemented or fully applied, for example, one review mentioned a DVPO which was considered but never enacted.

One review referred to a protective order relating to a third party rather than the victim whose death formed the subject of the review. In this case a restraining order had previously been obtained by another individual against the 35-year-old male victim due to concerns regarding domestic abuse and harassment. Whilst the order was not directly linked to the perpetrator in this case, it provided additional evidence of the victim's history of abusive behaviour and previous agency awareness of risk.

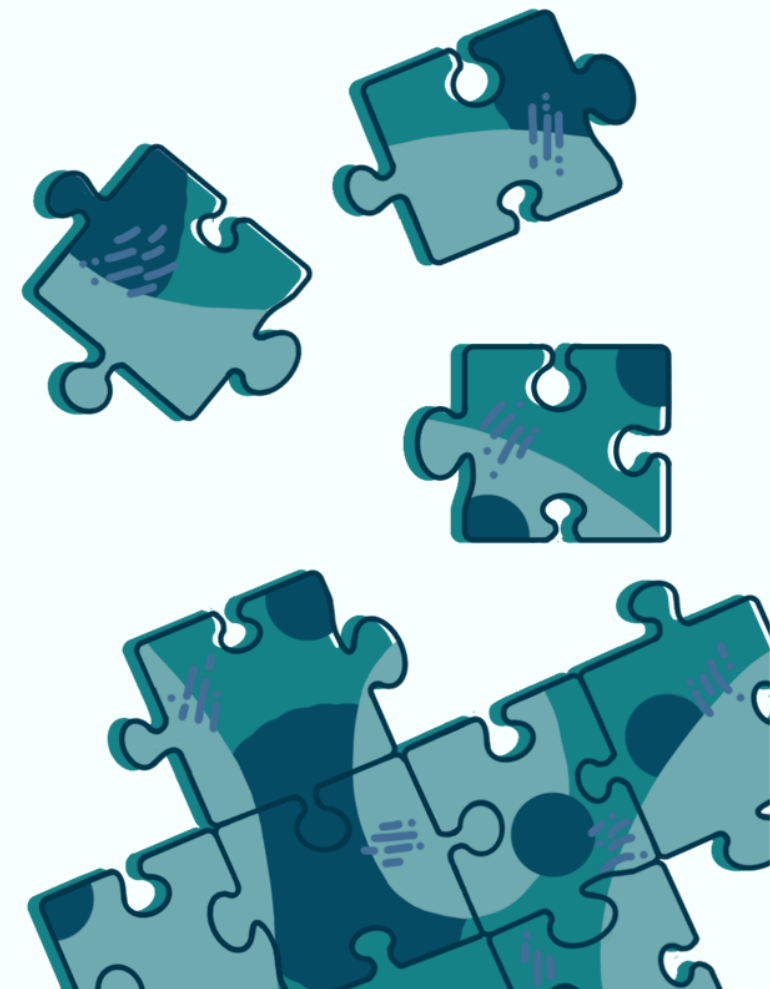
Protective Orders and Ongoing Risk

In at least three cases, the perpetrators of the domestic abuse immediately prior to the death were explicitly referred to as continuing with their harmful behaviour of harassment or violence, despite the presence of protective measures.

Whilst the findings do not permit conclusions to be drawn regarding the overall effectiveness of protective measures, repeated concerns relating to breaches, implementation and enforcement were identified. In several cases, protective measures were breached, contact continued despite restrictions being in place, or protective measures were considered but not implemented. These findings suggest that the existence of a protective measure alone was not sufficient to eliminate risk and demonstrate the importance of enforcement, monitoring, information sharing and ongoing risk assessment where protective measures are used.

Recommendation 4:

The Home Office should undertake a thematic analysis and review of DARDs involving protective orders. Emphasis should be placed on identifying recurring issues which relate to implementation, enforcement and breaches. Any findings of significance should inform future development of domestic abuse protection measures and associated practice guidance.



Review Characteristics

This section examines the characteristics of the DARDR process itself, rather than the individuals involved within the reviews. It explores where reviews were commissioned, how they were conducted, the timescales involved, the extent of specialist expertise represented within review panels, and the contributions made by agencies, family members and friends. The findings provide insight into how DARDRs involving individuals connected to the sex industry are undertaken and where opportunities exist to strengthen learning and review quality.

Geographic Distribution of Reviews

Distribution Across Community Safety Partnerships

In total, there were 44 DARDRs identified where a sex industry context was recognised anywhere in the case, across eight regional areas and 43 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) (see Appendices 9 & 10). Of those 44 DARDRs, six were collaborative or co-commissioned. One CSP commissioned three DARDRs, five commissioned two, with 37 commissioning a single DARDR. There was no meaningful concentration of DARDRs in specific CSP areas, as demonstrated by the low frequency across each CSP. While the proportion of co-commissioned DARDRs appears notable, there is no available national comparator regarding the prevalence of co-commissioned DARDRs. Data from the [Domestic Homicide Review Survey \(2024\)](#), however, indicate considerable variation in how DARDRs are managed and governed across England and Wales, with some arrangements operating across multiple CSPs and local authority areas, making direct comparison difficult.

Distribution Across Police Force Areas

The 44 identified DARDRs were commissioned within 19 police force areas in total (see Appendix 11). The highest number (n=11, 25%) occurred within the Metropolitan Police Service area, with a minor concentration (n=6, 14%) within the Thames Valley policing area. All other DARDRs were widely distributed across the remaining 17 police force areas, with a large minority (n=9) represented by only one review. However, this distribution broadly mirrors wider patterns of fatal violence against women and girls. [Femicide Census](#) data, for example, identified the Metropolitan Police area as recording the highest number of femicides, substantially more than any other police force area, whilst fatalities were otherwise dispersed across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Thames Valley, by contrast, recorded only two femicides within the same dataset. These findings suggest that the apparent concentration of DARDRs within the Metropolitan Police area may reflect the greater volume of domestic abuse-related fatalities occurring within that force area, rather than indicating a distinctive regional pattern in review commissioning. Regional clustering therefore remains weak, and cases are geographically dispersed when considered across both police force and wider regional boundaries.

Regional Distribution

When analysed by region, Greater London saw a higher proportion of commissioned reviews (n=11, 25%), with the South West region commissioning 10 (23%), the South East seven (16%), the North West six (14%), West Midlands five (11%), East Midlands three (7%) and Yorkshire two (5%). A degree of regional variation can be observed; however, significance testing is difficult due to the absence of an appropriate denominator (for example, the size of the sex industry in each region) and the relatively small sample size. Southern regions (Greater London, South West and South East) accounted for 64% of reviews (n=28). However, it is unclear whether this reflects a genuine concentration of cases, differences in local review practices, or broader population distribution. The findings should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Although Greater London accounted for the highest number of reviews, DARDs involving individuals connected to the sex industry were identified across a wide range of geographical areas. No strong concentration was observed within particular Community Safety Partnerships or police force areas. Whilst no cases were identified within the North East, East of England or Wales, reviews were nevertheless distributed across multiple regions of England. This suggests that the intersection between domestic abuse-related deaths and sex industry involvement is not confined to a small number of localities or urban centres, but has relevance for CSPs and services across England.

Region	Homicide	Suicide	Suicide or Accidental	Accidental Death
East Midlands	2	1	-	-
Greater London	11	-	-	-
North West	3	2	1	-
South East	4	3	-	-
South West	6	2	-	2
West Midlands	4	1	-	-
Yorkshire & Humber	2	-	-	-
Total	32	9	1	2
%	73%	20%	2%	5%

The manner of death appears to be broadly consistent across regions, with no strong evidence of significant regional variation, though it is notable that Greater London only identified homicides. As the highest number of reviews were commissioned within Greater London, a higher level of variation within this region might reasonably have been expected.

Homicide accounted for 73% of all deaths identified (n=32), and occurred across almost every region, suggesting that homicide is a defining characteristic of the DARDs within this report. Suicides accounted for 20% (n=9), whilst accidental deaths were relatively uncommon. It is however important to recognise that whilst suicide and accidental death occurred less frequently, they are likely to be underrepresented due to challenges in their identification.

Time between Homicide and Publication

Under the 2016 [Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews](#), reviews were to be completed within six months of the decision to proceed, unless there were exceptional circumstances that justified a longer timeframe. Under the 2026 guidance, this timeframe has been extended to 12 months.

Whilst it is important to understand the timeframes surrounding DARDRs, analysis of the period between commissioning and publication was limited, as commissioning dates were often not reported within the reviews. Analysis of the period between the date of death and publication was, however, possible (See Appendix 12).

Long publication timeframes appeared typical, with most DARDRs taking approximately two years from death to publication. The interval from death to publication ranged from eight months to almost five years (58 months), with a variation of approximately four years (50 months). This finding is consistent with wider research, which has found an average period of around two years between a victim's death and submission of the DARDR for quality assurance, reporting that delays were commonly associated with criminal justice proceedings, family participation, CSP sign-off, and coronial processes (Dangar, 2024). Based on the information available, it is not possible to determine the extent to which longer timeframes reflect case complexity, ongoing criminal proceedings, delays in commissioning, or delays during the quality assurance process. However, the findings suggest that DARDRs involving a sex industry context may often involve complex circumstances that require extended review periods to complete the process.



Recommendation 5:

The Home Office should strengthen oversight of DARDR timescales. CSPs should be required to record and report any delays between death, commissioning and publication, and their reason for the delay. Where reviews exceed expected timescales, clear explanations should be publicly available.

Panel Members and Review Contributors

Review Panel Membership

Domestic abuse services, NHS and health services, local authority services and police were represented on all review panels (n=44, 100%), with a consistent multi-agency approach to panel membership apparent across all reviews. The universal presence of domestic abuse services is notable and aligns with statutory guidance regarding panel membership.

Charity sector support services were the most common non-statutory panel members (80%, n=35). Adult Social Care/Safeguarding and Probation Services were each represented in 70% of reviews (n=31), whilst Mental Health Services and Housing Services were represented in just over half (57%, n=25), and Substance Misuse Services in just under half (48%, n=21). This is notable given that mental health difficulties were identified in 84% of cases (n=31), substance misuse difficulties in 78% (n=29), and housing instability was a recurring feature across many reviews. Specialist expertise relating to the sex industry remained comparatively uncommon and is considered separately.

Agency Type	Number of Cases	%
Domestic Abuse Services	44	100%
NHS and Health Services	44	100%
Local Authority Services	44	100%
Police	44	100%
Charity Sector Support Services	35	80%
Adult Social Care/Safeguarding	31	70%
Probation Services	31	70%
Children's Social Care/Safeguarding	26	59%
Mental Health Services	25	57%
Housing Services	25	57%
Substance Misuse Services	21	48%
Emergency Services	9	20%
Victim Support	9	20%
Educational Bodies	5	11%
MARAC Representatives	5	11%
Sexual Health Services	4	9%
Crown Prosecution Service	2	5%
UK Border Agency	2	5%
Youth Offending Services	2	5%
Faith-Based Organisations	1	2%
SEND Specialist	1	2%

Specialist Sex Industry Expertise

Notably, despite all cases involving individuals connected to the sex industry, specialist sex industry expertise was considerably less common than domestic abuse, health, policing or safeguarding expertise, with specialist knowledge of supporting those selling and/or exchanging sex only incorporated into review processes in five cases (11%). This is a sharp contrast to other, more commonly included services, with specialist knowledge relating specifically to sex industry involvement remaining comparatively limited. Where specialist expertise was present, it included:

- A specialist outreach service supporting people who sell sex on-street
- A specialist sexual health service with expertise in supporting people involved in the sex industry
- A specialist NHS outreach service supporting women who sell sex (identified in two reviews)
- A specialist project supporting people who sell sex, and their families

Why Specialist Expertise Matters

People who sell and/or exchange sex may experience distinct vulnerabilities, barriers to support and forms of exploitation that are not always recognised within standard safeguarding responses. Specialist expertise:

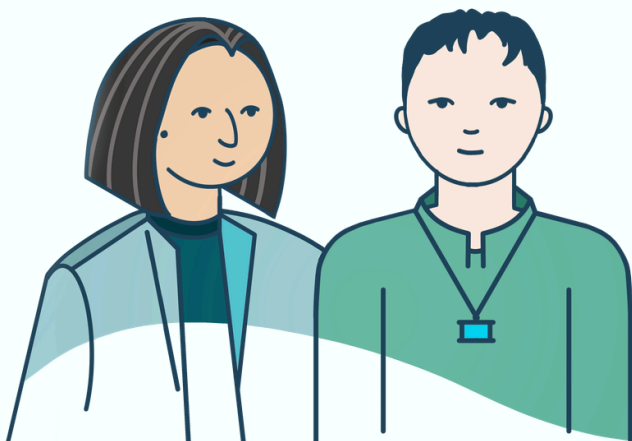
- Improves understanding of exploitation, survival sex and coercion
- Provides insight into barriers to engagement and help-seeking
- Supports more informed risk assessment and safeguarding decisions
- Brings knowledge of the lived experiences of people selling and/or exchanging sex
- Helps ensure learning and recommendations reflect the realities of those involved in the sex industry

Only 5 out of the 44 reviews included specialist expertise relating to supporting people selling and/or exchanging sex.

Agency Contributions to Reviews

Aside from panel membership, a number of different bodies contributed to reviews through the submission of Individual Management Reviews (IMRs), discussions with the DARDR Chair, or through the provision of information relating to the victim or perpetrator's circumstances. Whilst panel membership demonstrates which agencies were represented within the review process, it does not necessarily indicate which organisations directly contributed information to the review. For this reason, agency contributions were examined separately.

Police services were the only agency to contribute to all reviews (n=44, 100%), followed by NHS and health services (n=43, 98%) and charity sector support services (n=42, 95%). Domestic abuse services contributed to 82% of reviews (n=36), whilst mental health services, housing services, substance misuse services and probation services also made substantial contributions. Overall, the findings suggest that information used to inform reviews was drawn from a broad range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations, reflecting the multi-agency nature of the DARDR process.



Agency Type	Number of Cases	%
Police Services	44	100%
NHS and Health Services	43	98%
Charity Sector Support Services	42	95%
Domestic Abuse Services	36	82%
Mental Health Services	32	73%
Housing Services	32	73%
Substance Misuse Services	28	64%
Probation Services	27	61%
Children's Social Care/Safeguarding	24	55%
Adult Social Care/Safeguarding	23	55%
Emergency Services	23	52%
Victim Support	12	27%
MARAC Representatives	9	20%
Educational Bodies	6	14%
MARAC Representatives	5	11%
Youth Offending Services	4	9%
UK Border Agency/Immigration	4	9%
Health Visiting Services	3	7%
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	1	2%
Citizens Advice	1	2%
Faith-Based Organisations	1	2%

Friends and/or Family involved in the Reviews

Friends and Family as Contributors to the Review Process

The majority of reviews (75%, n=33) included contributions from family members, friends, colleagues or other individuals connected to the victim. These contributions were most commonly provided by victims' parents, siblings, children and close friends, and often provided important contextual information regarding lived experiences, relationships and patterns of abuse that were not captured within agency records. This reflects wider research which has highlighted the unique contribution that family members and friends can make to DARDs through the provision of information unavailable within statutory records and insight into victims' lived experiences (Mullane, 2017). The incorporation of these contributions enabled a stronger understanding of ongoing escalation of risk and lived experience, which wasn't always fully captured elsewhere.

In a number of cases, family members played a significant role, for example by participating in interviews, meeting directly with the Chair, reviewing draft review reports, and providing detailed accounts of the victim's life, their relationships, and their experiences. Some families were involved extensively throughout the review process and contributed during multiple different stages. In several cases, involvement of friends and family was more indirect, and may have occurred through previous police statements, or through a single family member representing wider family networks. There were also a number of examples where individuals declined to participate, were unable to participate, or could not be contacted.

Reasons included long-standing family estrangement, family members declining to engage with the review process, concerns regarding their wellbeing, difficulties tracing relatives, family members living overseas, and legal or practical barriers to involvement.

Friends and wider social networks also played a part in several cases and were able to provide information about the victim's life that may not have been known to family members, or obtainable through agency records. Previous research has similarly emphasised the importance of informal networks in understanding victims' experiences of abuse and identifying information that may otherwise remain unknown to review panels (Mullane, 2017; Dangar, 2024).

Direct perpetrator involvement was relatively uncommon, although a small number of reviews (n=4/44) included interviews or other direct contributions from perpetrators.



How Risk and Vulnerability Were Understood

This section explores how language, assumptions and professional narratives shaped understandings of risk and vulnerability within the DARDs. Rather than focusing solely on what was recorded, it examines how individuals were described, how their experiences were interpreted, and the extent to which the victims' life experiences were incorporated into review narratives.

Professional Narratives Within DARDs

Similarly to our 2023 research, a notable theme across the DARDs was the language used to describe individuals involved in the sex industry.

Language Used to Describe Sex Industry Involvement

There was considerable variation in the terminology used between reviews, particularly in relation to sex industry involvement itself. References included "sex work", "sex workers" or "working", "street sex workers", "prostitute", "prostitution", and references to women "prostituting themselves". Survival sex was referenced in one review; however, this was a direct quotation from Home Office documentation, with the review itself otherwise referring to "sex work" and "street sex working". It is also notable that some of the terminology used within reviews mirrored language used by perpetrators as part of abusive and coercive behaviour. In several cases, perpetrators accused women of being "prostitutes", "whores" or of selling sex, despite there being no evidence that they were involved in the sex industry. These accusations formed parts of wider patterns of degradation, humiliation and coercive control. At the same time, terms such as "prostitute", "prostitution" and women "prostituting themselves" frequently appeared within agency records and review narratives as ostensibly neutral descriptors.

This raises important questions about the extent to which language that is used by perpetrators to shame and discredit women may also be reproduced within professional discourse without critical reflection.

Similar use of sex industry-related language was also identified in a small number of reviews excluded from the dataset, where allegations of prostitution were used as a form of abuse despite no evidence of direct sex industry involvement. Whilst these reviews were not included within the analysis, they highlight how accusations relating to the sale of sex can form part of wider patterns of degradation, humiliation and coercive control. They also demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between actual sex industry involvement and the use of sex industry-related language, as this may influence how an individual's experiences, vulnerability and risk are understood within both agency records and review narratives.

In contrast to this, some reviews did situate sex industry involvement within broader experiences of coercion, exploitation and abuse. These included references to sexual exploitation, coercion, victims being "forced to have sex with men", "pimping", and controlling prostitution for gain.

Narratives of Chaos, Complexity and Engagement

One of the most prominent themes across the reviews was the repeated use of language suggesting chaos and complexity. Individuals were frequently described as "chaotic", with references to "chaotic drug use", "chaotic engagement" with services, "chaotic home lives", and "complex" or "multiple complex" needs. One 26-year-old female victim, for example, was described as "a slightly chaotic sexually active young woman". These descriptions often appeared alongside experiences of domestic abuse, homelessness, substance use, poor mental health and poverty. However, the relationship between these experiences was not always fully explored, and limited consideration was given to how trauma, abuse, and wider structural inequalities may have shaped an individual's circumstances and behaviour.

Narratives of Engagement, Risk and Responsibility

Another prominent theme related to engagement with services and the ways in which individuals did, or did not, interact with support. A number of individuals were described as "hard to engage", as having "failed to engage", or as demonstrating "erratic attendance", "unpredictable engagement" or a "lack of engagement". Many were also described as "challenging" or "difficult", with one female victim (age not recorded) characterised as being "ambivalent about seeking and sustaining help". Again, much of this language appeared alongside severe adverse experiences and circumstances, yet these wider contexts were not always considered in detail when discussing engagement with services.

The portrayal of risk and responsibility was also a prominent theme. One woman was described as living a "hedonistic lifestyle", whilst others were described as making "poor choices" or having "misplaced confidence" in managing risk. In one case, a female victim in her 40s who died by suicide following significant abuse from multiple partners was described as having "died as a result of her own actions" and being the "perpetrator of her own death". Whilst this wording appeared intended to describe the immediate cause of death, it is inconsistent with contemporary suicide prevention approaches, which emphasise that suicide should be understood within the context of multiple interacting factors, including trauma, abuse, psychological distress and broader social circumstances, rather than being attributed solely to individual choice or responsibility. Such language risks oversimplifying the complex pathways leading to suicide and may contribute to narratives of individual blame that suicide prevention guidance seeks to avoid.

Agency Language and Professional Perceptions

In addition to the language used by review authors, there were multiple examples within agency records and submissions where the language used appeared to shape how women's experiences and behaviours were understood. In some cases, this language placed emphasis on individual behaviour and responsibility whilst giving less attention to the impact of trauma, coercion, abuse, and disadvantage. Individuals were described as "non-compliant", "volatile", "unmanageable", and, in one case, a 17-year-old female victim was described as a formerly "unruly teenager with an attitude".

One 23-year-old female victim had been described as "manipulative", although the review author questioned whether this behaviour may have been more appropriately understood as a response to trauma or mistrust. Other examples included references to "criminal lifestyles" and individuals making "poor choices".

In some cases, language appeared to shape professional perceptions of risk. This included describing domestic abuse as "marital discord" and the use of language which risked minimising the seriousness of abuse, such as "chastisement". In one review, the author directly criticised descriptions of a 23-year-old female victim as having a "vibrant personality" due to being a dancer, frequently going "clubbing", and having multiple sexual partners. The review questioned whether these characteristics had been inappropriately treated as indicators of risk, rather than attention being focused on the 43-year-old male perpetrator's behaviour and the abuse she had experienced.

These findings suggest that language within DARDs and associated agency records was not merely descriptive. The words used often shaped how risk, responsibility, vulnerability, and service engagement were understood. Whilst some reviews demonstrated a clear awareness of vulnerability, others relied on language that focused primarily on individual behaviour, with less attention given to the wider context of domestic abuse, inequality, disadvantage, and lived experience of systemic and safeguarding responses. Similar patterns were evident in relation to culture, migration and identity.

Whilst some reviews acknowledged factors such as immigration status, language barriers, unfamiliarity with UK support systems, fear of authorities or concerns regarding deportation, these factors were not always explored in depth. As a result, opportunities to understand how these experiences shaped vulnerability, risk and help-seeking may have been missed. Together, these findings suggest that wider contextual factors were not always fully incorporated into understandings of risk and vulnerability within review narratives.



Recommendation 6:

CSPs should ensure that training, quality assurance processes and review methodologies actively challenge victim-blaming language, stereotypes and assumptions relating to those who sell and/or exchange sex. Reviews should critically examine how these influences shape professional perceptions of individuals who sell/or exchange sex.

Lessons Learnt and Lost

This section draws together the most common lessons identified across the DARDRs included in this analysis. Whilst the specific circumstances of each case varied, recurring themes emerged relating to information sharing, risk assessment, professional curiosity, responses to multiple disadvantage, professional assumptions, recording practices and organisational learning. The findings demonstrate a range of systemic challenges in recognising and responding to domestic abuse and exploitation, as well as sex industry involvement, particularly where individuals were experiencing multiple and overlapping forms of vulnerability.

Themes presented in this section were derived from a thematic analysis of the lessons learnt, findings and recommendations identified within the DARDRs. The themes therefore reflect lessons explicitly identified through our own analysis of patterns recurring across the sample. While some of the lessons presented are grounded in the findings of the reviews themselves, the interpretation of their significance for individuals involved in the sex industry represents the analysis of the author of this report.

Multi-Agency Communication, Information Sharing and Coordination

Information Sharing and Coordination Failures

Issues around information sharing and coordination was one of the most common lessons identified across the DARDRs. It is noted that agencies often had knowledge of relevant information, however, failed to share it effectively, link it to additional safeguarding concerns, or connect it to wider patterns of risk and/or vulnerability. It is also notable that information sharing failures not only occurred between agencies but also occurred across geographical boundaries and within single organisations.

A commonly occurring theme was that of information being recorded, with little to no action following this. Examples of this include MARAC referrals being missed or delayed, not repeated when there was an escalation of risk, or being poorly documented.

It was also identified that in a number of cases, responses to individuals experiencing multiple forms of harm were either fragmented or lacking in coordination.

Fragmented Responses to Risk

In one case, police, health visiting services, primary care and children's services all held information about a 31-year-old female victim who was selling sex, suggesting that there was an active escalation in domestic abuse. Information was held across all four of these agencies, however, it was not brought together. It was concluded that these agencies did not develop a complete understanding of the coercive control and stalking she was experiencing, which led directly to opportunities to identify escalating risk and implement protective interventions being missed.

In another case involving a 23-year-old female victim, information relating to domestic abuse, substance misuse, child safeguarding concerns and escalating risk was held across multiple agencies, including children's services, domestic abuse services, substance misuse services and police. Whilst agencies were aware of many aspects of her circumstances, information sharing often failed to translate into coordinated action.

In one case, whilst the female perpetrator, whose age wasn't recorded, was involved in the on-street sex industry, had experienced exploitation, domestic abuse and substance misuse, and had extensive agency contact, a coordinated, multi-agency response was never implemented. The victim was a 50-year-old man who was himself experiencing abuse and exploitation within the relationship. The review concluded that neither the victim nor the perpetrator met service thresholds for coordinated support, and there was never a sustained multi-agency response despite ongoing concerns regarding vulnerability, risk and exploitation.

These findings suggest that information sharing failures were rarely the result of agencies having no information. Rather, agencies often possessed relevant information about domestic abuse, exploitation, mental ill-health, substance misuse, housing instability and safeguarding concerns, but failed to connect that information into a coordinated understanding of risk. Information relating to the sale of sex, sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and wider vulnerability was frequently dispersed across multiple agencies, and was not always shared. As a result, opportunities for early intervention, coordinated safeguarding responses and effective risk management were repeatedly missed, despite substantial agency contact in many cases.

Recommendation 7:

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) should strengthen multi-agency support for individuals with multiple needs. Attention should be given to the effective sharing of information between agencies. CSPs should place significance on the promotion of professional curiosity, as well as coordination between services supporting individuals involved in the sex industry.



Risk Assessment, Professional Curiosity and Recognition of Abuse

Risk Assessment and Professional Curiosity

Throughout the DARDs, issues related to risk assessments were repeatedly identified, as they were often incomplete, delayed, not regularly updated, or focused on individual incidents rather than cumulative patterns of harm. Professional curiosity was also frequently identified as lacking, and agencies often relied on victim disclosures as opposed to actively exploring indicators of abuse. This is notable given the emphasis within the 2026 statutory guidance on examining how and why events occurred, critically analysing agency decision-making, and developing a broader understanding of risk and vulnerability beyond recorded incidents alone.

Missed Opportunities to Recognise Abuse

Domestic abuse, coercive control and sexual exploitation were frequently not recognised despite there often being multiple warning signs. Several reviews highlighted failures to link repeated incidents together into a coherent assessment of escalating risk. For example, in one case involving a 22-year-old female victim, domestic abuse

and sexual exploitation concerns were known to multiple agencies however DASH risk assessments were not consistently completed, and professionals did not always fully explore the long-term grooming and exploitation she had experienced since adolescence, therefore opportunities to identify the escalating risk were missed. In another case, a 31-year-old female victim presented to services with indicators that should have prompted domestic abuse enquiry, however, no routine enquiry was undertaken. Although there were indicators of coercive control, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse perpetrated by her 35-year-old estranged husband, these concerns were not adequately explored, and the abuse she was experiencing remained largely hidden, therefore reducing opportunities for intervention and protective action. Another case highlighted how agencies repeatedly recorded that a male perpetrator exercised coercive control over a female victim (no age recorded in both cases), including controlling her movements, finances, personal relationships and involvement in selling sex. Agency records indicated that professionals were aware that he was benefiting financially from her selling sex and was acting as her pimp. Despite this, the perpetrator was able to continue coercing, exploiting and abusing the victim over a prolonged period, before ultimately murdering her.

Sex Industry Involvement as a Safeguarding Concern

Individuals' involvement in the sex industry was also sometimes documented but was not consistently recognised as a potential indicator of vulnerability, exploitation or safeguarding risk. It appeared that, in a number of reviews, professionals focused more on presenting issues such as substance misuse, offending behaviour or mental health difficulties, and gave significantly less attention to

exploitation linked to sex industry involvement. As a result, patterns of abuse, coercion and exploitation were not always fully recognised, and opportunities to identify escalating risk were missed.

Responses to Interconnected Vulnerabilities and Trauma

Multiple Disadvantage and Fragmented Responses

In a number of cases, reviews repeatedly identified difficulties in responding to individuals experiencing multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously. For example, domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental ill health, trauma, homelessness and sexual exploitation commonly co-occurred. Services, however, often responded to these issues separately, rather than taking a holistic approach. Individuals' 'non-engagement' was often identified as a challenge, rather than an indicator of trauma, and despite their co-occurring support needs, individuals were sometimes deemed to fall below the eligibility threshold for support until risks had escalated significantly or they were in crisis.

In a number of cases, these vulnerabilities were further compounded by wider structural factors, including poverty, housing insecurity, immigration-related issues, disability, poor physical health and social isolation. However, reviews did not always consider how these factors interacted to shape vulnerability, risk and access to support, and socio-economic disadvantage was rarely recognised as part of the cumulative risk individuals were experiencing.

Some reviews also appeared to accept the lack of support provided due to strict service thresholds and eligibility decisions at face value. In a number of cases, there was limited critical evaluation of whether alternative interventions might have been appropriate, with the

decision that an individual did not meet thresholds for support being accepted without further consideration of the associated implications for risk management. This was particularly notable in reviews involving individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage, where significant levels of vulnerability were recognised by agencies but fell across multiple service remits. As a result, individuals could remain highly visible to services whilst simultaneously being unable to access coordinated support. This contributed to a cycle of crisis presentation, short-term intervention and the withdrawal of support, with longer-term needs often remaining unaddressed.

Understanding Cumulative Vulnerability

In one case, a 30-year-old female was experiencing domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, immigration-related vulnerabilities, social isolation and coercive control simultaneously. It was identified within the review that these issues were being reinforced by one another, and her immigration status was being used by the 28-year-old male perpetrator as a tool for coercive control, which in turn, increased her dependence on him and simultaneously limited her ability to seek support. It was identified by the DARD author that rather than representing separate and distinct vulnerabilities, these factors were in fact interconnected, and as a collective, they increased her risk of harm significantly. The result of this was that she became increasingly more isolated, and dependent on the perpetrator, with no safe route to accessing support.

It was consistently demonstrated within reviews that sex industry involvement rarely occurs in isolation, and usually co-existed alongside issues such as domestic abuse, poverty, trauma and/or homelessness. The above example demonstrates how sex industry

involvement formed part of a much broader pattern of vulnerability and was never present as a single issue.

Recommendation 8:

The Home Office and CSPs should promote and support the implementation of trauma-informed responses that recognise the cumulative impact of multiple forms of harm.

Services should be discouraged from taking single issue approaches and encouraged to assess risk holistically.



Bias, Assumptions and Hidden Victims

Professional Assumptions and Stigma

In several reviews, it was found that assumptions and biases influenced professional decision-making, with those involved in the sex industry often negatively viewed due to either their substance misuse, offending history, mental ill-health, homelessness or perceived “lifestyle choices”. Subsequently, the domestic abuse and sexual exploitation they were experiencing was obscured, alongside any safeguarding concerns that may have compounded this abuse.

Hidden Victims and Under-Recognition of Abuse

Of the five cases involving male victims, one involved domestic abuse within a same-sex relationship. In this case, a 24-year-old man who sold sex was experiencing domestic abuse from his 43-year-old male partner. The review concluded that his experiences were not consistently recognised through the lens of domestic abuse and highlighted the need for greater awareness of male victims, the

particular vulnerabilities of men who sell sex, and same-sex domestic abuse more generally. In this case, opportunities for safeguarding interventions, such as more assertive risk management, were missed.

The Influence of Stereotypes on Safeguarding

Several reviews also suggested that involvement in the sex industry had an influence on how individuals were perceived by professionals, with victims being viewed through a lens of “lifestyle”, and “chaotic behaviour”. There was a lack of understanding around how sex industry involvement often coexists with issues such as trauma and domestic abuse, with evidence of stigmatising language and assumptions about people who sell sex potentially obscuring any safeguarding concerns, which can lead to an absence of professional curiosity.

Recording, Governance and Organisational Learning

Recording and Documentation

Another repeated theme which emerged throughout the DARDRs was poor recording practices and documentation management. Information was found to be incomplete in a number of cases and, where information had been recorded, records were often inconsistent or inaccurate. In some cases, written records of safeguarding concerns, referrals, decisions or actions were incomplete, unavailable or missing altogether, making it difficult to establish what information had been known, shared or acted upon. Much of this related to important safeguarding information, including MARAC referrals, domestic abuse disclosures and safeguarding actions.

In one review concerning a 30-year-old female experiencing coercive control, stalking and domestic abuse from her 34-year-old estranged husband, it was found that records across health visiting, primary healthcare and safeguarding services lacked sufficient detail, rationale and analysis. Indicators of abuse had not been fully documented, and information relating to referrals and liaison between different services was missing. As a result, practitioners did not develop a complete understanding of the escalating abuse she was experiencing. Risk assessments were therefore either missed or incomplete, as were opportunities for safeguarding.

From Recording to Safeguarding Action

It was also clear that information relating to individuals’ involvement in the sex industry was often recorded on systems, however they were commonly recorded as descriptive entries, and did not trigger any safety planning or safeguarding intervention. In one case, concerns around a female victim (age not recorded) of possible sexual exploitation and coercive control by the perpetrator (age not recorded) were recorded repeatedly across multi-agency records, but no safeguarding mechanism was ever triggered. It is therefore a concern that information is not always simply missing, but is in fact present, but not being analysed or connected to wider patterns of risk.

Organisational Learning and Accountability

It was noted by one report author that a review referenced lessons that were consistently present across previous DARDRs, and this was a theme throughout a number of the reviews. It is clear that organisational learning was frequently not being embedded into frontline practice.

There was also contradictory information in some reviews. A number presented findings which suggested that opportunities had been missed, or that weaknesses existed within systems, communication practices and safeguarding responses, whilst simultaneously concluding that a death was not preventable. In several cases, little attempt was made to reconcile these positions.

Whilst hindsight bias must be avoided, the absence of discussion regarding how identified failings related to conclusions about preventability limited the analytical depth of the reviews and reduced opportunities for wider learning. This is particularly noteworthy given the emphasis within the 2026 statutory guidance that DARDRs should provide an opportunity for agencies, communities and society as a whole to consider each victim individually and treat every death as preventable.

Recommendation 9:

Beyond the Streets supports the continued development and resourcing of the Domestic Abuse Related Deaths Accountability and Oversight Mechanism to ensure recommendations arising from DARDRs are monitored, implemented and reviewed at both local and national levels.



Good Practice Relating to Sex Industry Contexts

Whilst much of the analysis presented in this report focuses on missed opportunities, learning and systemic challenges, examples of positive practice were also identified across the DARDs. However, practice specifically relating to sex industry involvement was relatively limited. Compared to the substantial number of lessons learnt and missed opportunities identified across the reviews, there were few examples of good practice directly connected to recognising or responding to sex industry involvement. Given that all 44 reviews included in this analysis involved individuals connected to the sex industry, this is a notable finding. The examples discussed below nevertheless provide valuable insight into the approaches and practices that may strengthen understanding, engagement and safeguarding responses in future reviews.

Specialist Expertise and Understanding

Where examples of good practice were identified, they were more commonly related to domestic abuse, safeguarding, multi-agency working, or trauma-informed practice than to sex industry involvement itself. A small number of reviews involved professionals or organisations with specialist knowledge of the sex industry and sexual exploitation, and these services were able to provide expertise regarding barriers to engagement and exploitation dynamics. However, only 5 of the 44 reviews (11%) included specialist sex industry expertise, and it can be argued that this should be standard practice in reviews where there is a sex industry link.

Outreach and Flexible Support Models

Some reviews did highlight the value of outreach-based support models when working with people involved in the sex industry, for example, when specialist services engaged individuals through street outreach, harm-reduction approaches, and flexible engagement rather than relying solely on appointment-based services. Such approaches were identified as particularly important where individuals were struggling to engage with mainstream services.

Trauma-Informed Practice

It is also important to recognise the reviews where agencies had advocated for trauma-informed approaches. One review helpfully highlighted that it is important to understand behaviours which are often described as chaotic or complex, and recognise that they may in fact be trauma responses. This was where a review criticised services for focusing on behaviours rather than lived experience.

Whilst some examples of effective safeguarding were identified, there were comparatively few that demonstrated an appropriate understanding of sex industry involvement or sexual exploitation. Given that all 44 reviews involved an individual connected to the sex industry, this is significant. It suggests that sex industry involvement was often not viewed as a significant analytical lens through which to understand risk and vulnerability, and whilst reviews frequently explored individuals' circumstances and support needs in detail, they were less likely to critically examine how sex industry involvement may have shaped their experiences of interacting with services.



Discussion

Understanding Risk and Vulnerability

We began this report with a section dedicated to the lives behind the reviews. The individuals at the centre of them were not defined by their involvement in the sex industry, nor by the circumstances in which they died. They were daughters, sons, mothers, fathers, partners, friends and members of their communities. The reflections provided by family members throughout the review process serve as an important reminder that behind each review is a life that mattered, and a death that left a lasting impact on those around them.

Collectively, the findings within this report demonstrate that involvement in the sex industry rarely occurred in isolation and frequently existed alongside other interconnected vulnerabilities and experiences of exploitation. Despite this, both agency responses and DARDs frequently appeared to consider them separately, rather than as cumulative issues. Reviews, therefore, sometimes risked reducing individuals' lives and experiences into a collection of disconnected incidents or service contacts, rather than developing a genuine understanding of how they interacted to shape risk.

Throughout the reviews, socio-economic disadvantage was frequently evident, however was rarely recognised as such, or rarely analysed as a significant contributor to vulnerability in its own right. Factors which were likely to have contributed to poverty were often presented as background details rather than specific structural inequalities that likely shaped individuals' involvement in the sex industry. Experiences of exploitation, ability to access support, and capacity to leave abusive situations were not always identified as contributors. Through obscuring the role that poverty and social exclusion play in creating

and sustaining vulnerability to abuse, important opportunities to understand the wider structural causes of risk and harm appear to have been missed.

One of the most notable findings within this report was that victims were far from hidden, with the overwhelming majority of individuals identified within this report already known to multiple agencies prior to their deaths. For many, information relating to their individual vulnerabilities linked to the sale and/or exchange of sex was already present within agency systems. The challenge identified across the reviews was therefore not necessarily one of visibility, but of interpretation and a lack of professional curiosity. Information was commonly available, but the failure to bring it together into a coherent understanding of risk meant that opportunities to identify patterns and escalation of vulnerability and harm were not always recognised. These findings raise important questions about how vulnerability is understood, not only within safeguarding systems, but also throughout the process of commissioning, completing, and publishing DARDs. Cases where important information was documented but was not acted upon, concerns were recognised but not explored, and vulnerabilities were recorded but not connected to wider patterns of harm, were commonly raised within the reviews. The issue is therefore not solely whether information is shared amongst agencies, but whether sufficient professional and analytical curiosity is subsequently applied to understanding what that information could indicate, especially when considered as part of a person's wider life experience.

Learning Lost Within the Review Process

One theme which emerged from the analysis is the extent to which learning can be lost throughout the DARDR process itself. Not only when opportunities to generate learning are missed, but also when recommendations are not implemented. There was also considerable variation in the extent to which reviews analysed sex industry involvement, sexual exploitation and wider vulnerability. Reviews were generally strongest where they situated analysis of domestic abuse, exploitation, trauma and sex industry involvement within the wider context of disadvantage and structural vulnerability the individual was experiencing. They were weaker where sex industry involvement was treated as background information, where vulnerabilities were considered individually rather than cumulatively, or where procedural analysis outweighed consideration of lived experience.

The reviews which formed this report demonstrated multiple examples of incomplete information, missing demographic data, unclear descriptions of sex industry involvement and limited, or in some cases, no exploration of whether victims were being exploited. In almost one-third of cases, the specific context of sex industry involvement could not be established. Similarly, information relating to ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, immigration status, religion, care experience and neurodivergence was frequently absent. The absence of this information ultimately limits opportunities to understand how different aspects of a person's identity and experiences may have shaped their experience of accessing support. Learning was also identified around the accessibility of the DARDR process itself. This research identified that not all completed DARDRs were publicly available through the Home Office DARDR Library.

Through cross-referencing the library against an external dataset of reviews that had completed the Quality Assurance process, substantial gaps in publication were identified. As a result, a significant proportion of completed reviews could not be accessed through the library and were therefore unavailable for inclusion within this analysis. This was further limited by the publication of executive summaries in place of full overview reports, without any reason provided. This finding raises concerns about transparency and accessibility. In the absence of publicly available data on the total number of completed DARDRs, it is not possible to determine how representative the library is of all reviews undertaken. This has implications for researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, CSPs and families who seek to understand what happened, and how future deaths might be prevented. A comprehensive library of DARDRs is not simply an issue of administration: it is fundamental to the ability of DARDRs to fulfil their intended purpose.

Recommendation 10:



The Home Office should ensure that all completed DARDRs approved through the statutory quality assurance process are published on the DARDR Library, unless there are evidenced safeguarding, legal or confidentiality reasons preventing publication. A clear timeframe for publication should be established and monitored, with mechanisms in place to follow up on and address cases where this deadline is not met. Where publication is limited to an executive summary or redacted report, the rationale for this decision should be explicitly stated.

The Importance of Specialist Expertise

Specialist expertise is a critical component of effective learning and recommendation development. Although the 44 reviews within this report involved a sex industry context, specialist expertise relating to supporting individuals who are impacted by the sex industry was present in only a small minority of cases. Specialist expertise shapes the questions that are asked, the risks that are identified, and how individuals' experiences, vulnerabilities and support needs are understood. It can also play an important role in challenging assumptions, stereotypes and victim-blaming narratives that may influence professional decision-making, helping to ensure that experiences of exploitation, survival sex and domestic abuse are recognised and analysed within their wider context.

The importance of specialist expertise is reinforced by the revised statutory guidance, which includes involvement in the sex industry amongst the vulnerabilities to be considered within DARDR analysis and sexual exploitation amongst the aggravating factors that review authors are expected to examine. Without this expertise on DARDR panels, there is a risk that sex industry involvement will continue to be viewed primarily as additional information, rather than significant contextual information central to understanding a person's experiences. Specialist expertise should not be regarded as optional, as it is essential to ensuring that reviews fully analyse the circumstances preceding a victim's death and identify effective opportunities for learning. However, meaningful involvement of specialist services requires sufficient resourcing and capacity. Without investment in specialist organisations and mechanisms to support their participation in the review process, opportunities to bring

expertise on sex industry involvement, sexual exploitation, survival sex, and the experiences of those selling and/or exchanging sex may continue to be limited.

Recognising Sexual Exploitation

Another theme which emerged was how sexual exploitation impacted individuals who were selling sex, and how this was understood within safeguarding systems. Whilst 11 cases were identified as involving sexual exploitation, exploitation-focused language was used in just over half. In the remainder of cases, exploitation was recognised through our analysis of the circumstances provided within the review, rather than the review explicitly recognising and/or naming exploitation. Sexual exploitation is being inconsistently recognised by the relevant agencies and within DARDR processes, regardless of whether there are indicators that should prompt much greater scrutiny.

The Power of Language

Similarly, the language used throughout reviews warrants consideration, with individuals frequently being described as chaotic, non-compliant, manipulative, difficult to engage, or as having made poor choices. This language was often presented alongside evidence of trauma, and adverse experiences. Whilst it is not uncommon for language to appear descriptive, it also shapes professional understanding of a person's circumstances and life experiences, influencing how vulnerability is recognised and how professionals respond. The use of language is not a peripheral issue within DARDRs and must be considered as an important factor in how individual circumstances are understood and learning is generated.

Gendered Patterns of Harm

The findings within this report are also strongly gendered, and whilst the dataset included individuals of different genders, the majority of those involved in the sex industry were women, and the majority of perpetrators were men, and therefore align closely with wider patterns of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Power imbalances related directly to domestic abuse, or individuals' involvement in the sex industry, featured prominently throughout the data. Women were disproportionately represented amongst those selling and/or exchanging sex and those experiencing sexual exploitation, with several reviews also describing men who controlled, profited from, or exploited women's involvement in the sex industry.

At the same time, the experiences of male victims and others represented within the dataset remain important and should not be overlooked.

It is important to recognise that involvement in the sex industry should not be understood separately from wider discussions around gender inequality, VAWG, and the structural disadvantages which increase women and girls' vulnerability to abuse and exploitation, including socio-economic disadvantage, social marginalisation and stigma (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher, 2009).

Multiple Disadvantage and Service Thresholds

There are also some broader questions regarding how those facing multiple disadvantage are responded to by services. In a number of reviews, there were situations described where individuals did not meet the threshold for intervention and support, despite experiencing significant and often multiple levels of vulnerability and harm. When services respond to individual needs in isolation, rather than recognising their wider experiences and support needs, important connections can be missed and appropriate support may not be provided. As a result, individuals with experience of sex industry involvement often remain highly visible to multiple services, but are unable to access the coordinated support they need. This raises important questions about whether current systems are equipped to recognise and respond to cumulative vulnerability, and whether they need to move beyond crisis driven responses, and towards approaches that are longer-term, holistic, and trauma-informed.



Ultimately, the findings support that there remains considerable scope for DARDRs to more fully examine the relationship between domestic abuse, exploitation, cumulative vulnerability and involvement in the sex industry. At their best, Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews provide an opportunity to understand a person's life in all its complexity and to identify learning that can prevent future deaths. Involvement in the sex industry must never be treated as solely a contextual detail. Doing so risks obscuring the ways in which vulnerabilities are connected and driven by systemic inequality, gendered harms and VAWG.

If the purpose of DARDRs is to honour the lives which have been lost by preventing future harm, then understanding the full context of their experiences must remain central to the review process. It is by doing this that the focus can remain where it belongs, which is not solely on the death that occurred, but on the whole person whose life was lived before it.

Glossary

Adult Safeguarding - Processes and measures aimed at protecting adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Bail Conditions - Restrictions imposed on an individual while criminal proceedings are ongoing.

Care Experienced - A person who has spent time in the care of a local authority.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - A form of child sexual abuse where a child is manipulated, coerced or exploited for sexual purposes.

Community Safety Partnership (CSP) - A local multi-agency partnership responsible for improving community safety and commissioning Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.

Coercive and Controlling Behaviour - A pattern of behaviour intended to dominate, isolate, intimidate or control another person.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) - The public body responsible for prosecuting criminal cases in England and Wales.

DASH Risk Assessment - A Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment risk assessment used to identify and assess domestic abuse risk.

Deductive Coding - An analytical approach that applies pre-existing themes or concepts to data.

Domestic Abuse Protection Notice (DAPN) - A legal measure intended to provide immediate protection following domestic abuse incidents.

Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) - A court order designed to provide longer-term protection from domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) - A multi-agency review examining the circumstances surrounding a death where domestic abuse is identified as a contributing factor.

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) - The former term used for Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.

Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) - A short-term protective order used in domestic abuse cases.

Economic Abuse - A form of abuse involving control over a person's finances, resources or economic independence.

Emotional and Psychological Abuse - Behaviour intended to cause emotional harm or psychological distress, including insults, humiliation, degradation, gaslighting, intimidation, threats and persistent criticism. Emotional and psychological abuse frequently forms part of a wider pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

False Imprisonment - The unlawful restriction of an individual's freedom of movement.

Grooming - A process through which trust, dependency or emotional connection is developed to facilitate abuse or exploitation.

Harassment - Repeated unwanted behaviour that causes fear, alarm or distress.

Home Office DARDR Library - The national repository of publicly available Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) - A specialist practitioner who supports individuals experiencing domestic abuse.

Individual Management Review (IMR) - A report prepared by an agency involved in a DARDR examining its contact with the people involved and identifying learning.

Inductive Coding - An analytical approach where themes are developed directly from the data.

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) - A meeting where agencies share information and coordinate responses for those at high risk of domestic abuse.

Glossary

Neurodivergence - A term describing differences in the way people think, learn and process information, including conditions such as autism and ADHD.

Non-Molestation Order - A court order designed to protect an individual from abuse, threats or harassment.

On-Street Sale of Sex - The sale or exchange of sexual services in public spaces.

Perpetrator - The individual identified within a review as responsible for the abuse that contributed to the death under review.

Pimping - Controlling, facilitating or profiting from another person's sale or exchange of sex.

Police Information Notice (PIN) - A non-statutory police warning formerly used in cases involving harassment.

Protective Order - A legal measure intended to protect an individual from abuse, harassment or violence.

Reproductive Coercion - Behaviour intended to control another person's reproductive choices.

Restraining Order - A court order prohibiting an individual from contacting, approaching or harassing another person.

SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment) - A structured professional judgement tool used to assess the risk of domestic abuse and intimate partner violence.

Serious Case Review (SCR) - A review examining child safeguarding concerns where a child has died or experienced serious harm.

Sex for Drugs/Rent - The exchange of sexual activity for drugs or substances/accommodation or housing.

Sex Industry - An umbrella term used throughout this report to describe the sale or exchange of sexual services and related activities.

Sexual Exploitation - A form of abuse involving coercion, manipulation, deception or abuse of vulnerability for sexual purposes.

Stalking - Persistent unwanted attention, monitoring or contact that causes fear or distress.

Statutory Guidance - Official guidance issued under legislation outlining expectations and responsibilities for practice.

Survival Sex - The sale or exchange of sex in order to meet a survival need, such as housing, food, safety or income.

Technology-Facilitated Abuse - Abuse carried out through technology, including monitoring, surveillance, online harassment or tracking.

Thematic Analysis - A qualitative research method used to identify and analyse patterns or themes within data.

Trauma-Informed Practice - An approach that recognises the impact of trauma and seeks to avoid re-traumatisation while promoting safety, empowerment and understanding.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) - A policy and practice framework recognising forms of violence and abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls.

Victim - The individual whose death is the subject of the review.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Key Word Search used Across Reviews

Search Terms

Prostit*	solicit
sex	loiter
street	pimp
survival sex	groom
traffic*	sugar
exploit*	porn
escort	BDSM
sauna	Camming
massage	Entertainment
brothel	Lap
onlyfans	Club
only fans	Punter
model	Webcam
website	Exchange
strip	

Appendix 2 – CSPs with Reviews Included in the Report, which are Unpublished

<u>CSP</u>	<u>Number of DARDs from 2023 Report not published on DARD Library</u>
Bath and North East Somerset	1
Bolton	1
Bournemouth	1
Buckinghamshire	1
Croydon	1
Leicester	1
Stoke-on-Trent	1
Swindon	1
Total	8

Appendix 3 – Type of Report

<u>Type of Report</u>	<u>Number of Reports</u>	<u>%</u>
Overview report	38	86%
Executive Summary	5	11%
Overview report and Serious Case Review	1	2%
Total	44	-

Appendix 4 – Cases Used only for Contextual Purposes

<u>Case type</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Example</u>
Abusive communications	Perpetrator accused the victim of selling sex in text messages	“65 text messages... In the messages, the perpetrator accuses the victim of fraud, prostitution...”
Abusive communications	Perpetrator used accusations of selling sex and sexualised insults	“Several weeks later... calling [the victim] a ‘prostitute’, a ‘slut’, and accusing her of sleeping with staff members.”
Coercive and controlling behaviour	Perpetrator made repeated, unfounded allegations of the sale of sex as a form of abuse	“Allegations of prostitution were made, including calling her a ‘prostitute, whore, dirty woman’... these claims were unfounded.”
Professional commentary	Commentary was used in an unrelated DARDR demonstrating how women are often labelled in ways that obscure lived experience	“When women enter services it is often because of something that is wrong with them – their drug use, offending behaviour, prostitution or mental illness... rendering their lived experience invisible.”

Appendix 5 – Cases Excluded from Demographics where the Person involved in the Sex Industry was not the Victim or Perpetrator Identified within the Review

<u>Case description</u>	<u>Reason excluded from demographics</u>
Family concerns about coercion into the sex industry by a relative acting as a pimp	Individual was an accomplice, not the primary perpetrator or victim
Concerns about the perpetrator exposing an ex-partner to sexual exploitation	Individual was a third party, not the primary perpetrator or victim
Allegation of sexual acts by the perpetrator with a minor in exchange for money/drugs	Relates to child sexual exploitation of a third party
Perpetrator disclosure of purchasing sex from women as he could "hurt them during sex"	Relates to purchase of sex from third parties
Perpetrator reported multiple instances of purchasing sex	Relates to purchase of sex from third parties
Perpetrator linked via his phone to exploited individuals	Suggests possible purchase of sex, however with insufficient detail
Unproven suspicion of brothel management (denied with no further action taken)	Limited information with no further action taken

Appendix 6 – Sex Industry Contexts in relation to who was involved in the sex industry

<u>Sex Industry Involvement where</u>	<u>Number of DARDs</u>	<u>%</u>
Accomplice involved in sex industry		
On-Street	1	100%
Perpetrator involved in sex industry		
On-Street	2	18%
Perpetrator buying sex	2	18%
Sex for rent	2	18%
Sexual exploitation	1	9%
Unknown Context	4	36%
Perpetrator's girlfriend involved in sex industry		
Sexual exploitation	1	100%
Victim involved in sex industry		
Brothels, massage parlours or saunas	3	12%
Escorting	2	8%
On-Street	4	16%
Sex for drugs	1	4%
Sex for rent	1	4%
Sexual exploitation	5	20%
Unknown Context	9	36%
Victim and Perpetrator involved in sex industry		
On-Street	1	17%
On-Street; Brothels, massage parlours or saunas	1	17%
Unknown Context	4	67%

Appendix 7 – Demographic Data

Gender	Number	%
Female	31	84%
Male	5	14%
Transgender (Male to Female)	1	3%
Sexuality	Number	%
Heterosexual	5	14%
Gay/Lesbian	3	8%
Not stated	29	78%
Age	Number	%
18-24	6	16%
25-34	11	30%
35-44	11	30%
45-54	1	3%
55-64	1	3%
In 40s	1	3%
Not stated	6	16%
Perpetrator relationship to victim	Number	%
Intimate partner	24	64.90%
Ex-intimate partner	7	18.90%
Adult child	1	2.70%
Adult grandchild	1	2.70%
Household member	1	2.70%
Former friend	1	2.70%
Self described carer	1	2.70%
Partner of Victim's family member	1	2.70%
Ethnicity	Number	%
White	19	51%
Black Caribbean	1	3%
Chinese	1	3%
Mexican	1	3%
Mixed White and African Caribbean	1	3%
Mixed White and Asian	1	3%
Mixed White and Black British	1	3%
Not stated	12	32%

Nationality	Number	%
British	19	51%
Irish	2	5%
Romanian	2	5%
Bulgarian	1	3%
Chinese	1	3%
Jamaican	1	3%
Mexican	1	3%
Not stated	10	27%
Immigration status	Number	%
British Citizen	19	51%
EU Citizen	4	11%
Settled Status	2	5%
Visitor on a Tourist Visa	1	3%
Not stated	11	30%
Religious Beliefs	Number	%
Catholic	2	5%
Christian	1	3%
No formal practice, but referenced spiritual beliefs (talked about God/Jesus informally)	1	3%
Not stated (married in an Islamic ceremony but her religion isn't stated directly)	33	89%
Services known to	Number	%
NHS	34	92%
Police	31	84%
Housing	25	68%
Substance Misuse Services	21	57%
IDVA/DA Services	17	46%
Charity Sector	12	32%
Adult Social Care	11	30%
Children's Social Care	13	35%
Prisons/Probation	12	32%
Education	7	19%
Local Council	5	14%
Adult Safeguarding	11	30%
DWP	1	3%
Youth Offending Services	1	3%
Religious Organisation (Church)	1	3%

Known to services	Number	%
Yes	35	95%
No	2	5%
Substance Misuse	Number	%
Yes	29	78%
None identified	8	22%
Mental Health Concerns	Number	%
Yes	31	84%
None identified	6	16%
Physical Health Concerns	Number	%
Yes	28	76%
None identified	9	24%
Sexual Health Concerns	Number	%
Yes	4	11%
None identified	33	89%
Disability	Number	%
Yes	12	32%
Possibly	1	3%
None identified	24	65%
Neurodivergence	Number	%
Yes	3	8%
None identified	34	92%
Care Experienced	Number	%
Yes	4	11%
None identified	33	89%

Appendix 8 – Child Sexual Exploitation Data

<u>Child Sexual Exploitation</u>	<u>Number of DARDR's</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	5	11%
No	39	89%

Appendix 9 – Region where DARDR was Commissioned

<u>Commissioned by</u>	<u>Number of DARDR's</u>	<u>Percentage of DARDR's</u>
Greater London	11	25%
South West	10	23%
South East	7	16%
North West	6	14%
West Midlands	5	11%
East Midlands	3	7%
Yorkshire & Humber	2	5%
Total	44	100%

Appendix 10 – CSPs DARDRs were Commissioned by

<u>Commissioned by</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bournemouth Community Safety Partnership	3
Bolton Community Safety Partnership	2
Buckinghamshire Community Safety Partnership	2
London Borough of Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership	2
Manchester Community Safety Partnership	2
Safer Gloucestershire	2
Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership	1
Brent Community Safety Partnership	1

Appendix 10 – Continued

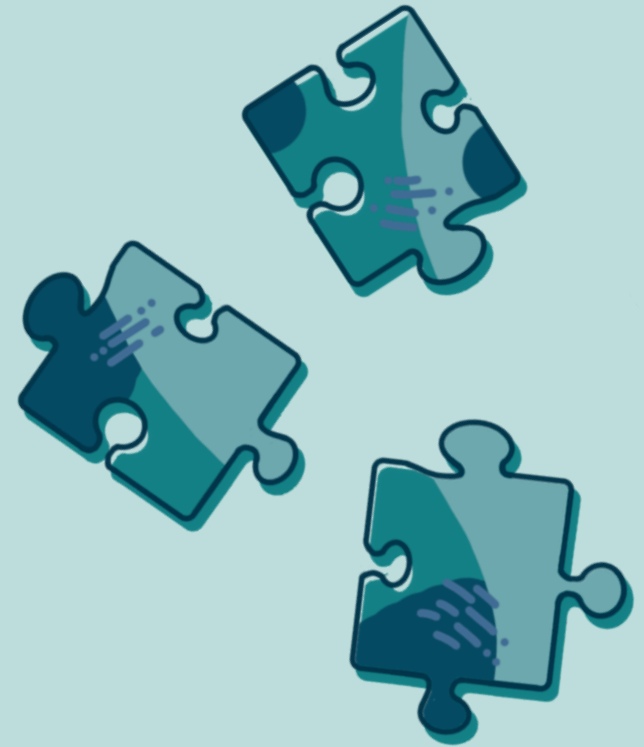
<u>Commissioned by</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bristol Community Safety Partnership	1
Chiltern & South Bucks Community Safety Partnership	1
Dudley Community Safety Partnership	1
East Surrey Community Safety Partnership	1
Gloucester City Community Safety Partnership	1
Harrow Community Safety Partnership	1
Kirklees Community Safety Partnership	1
LBHF Community Safety Partnership	1
Leicester City Community Safety Partnership	1
Lewisham Community Safety Partnership	1
Liverpool Community Safety Partnership	1
London Borough of Newham Community Safety Partnership	1
Merseyside Safeguarding Adult Board	1
Newham Community Safety Partnership	1
North East Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership	1
North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	1
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board	1
Safer Brent Community Safety Partnership	1
Safer Bristol Community Safety Partnership	1
Safer Communities Torbay	1
Safer Croydon Community Safety Partnership	1
Safer Devon Community Safety Partnership	1
Safer Kingston Partnership	1
Safer Leicester Community Safety Partnership	1
Safer Stronger Doncaster Community Safety Partnership	1
South Gloucestershire Safer & Stronger Communities Strategic Partnership	1
South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership	1
The South Vale Community Safety Partnership	1
St Helens Community Safety Partnership	1
Stoke-on-Trent Community Safety Partnership	1
Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Authorities Group	1
Swindon Community Safety Partnership	1
Thames Valley Police	1
Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership	1
Wycombe Community Safety Partnership	1

Appendix 11 – Police Force Areas DARDRs were Commissioned in

<u>Police Force</u>	<u>Number of DARDR's</u>	<u>%</u>
Metropolitan	11	25%
Thames Valley	6	14%
Greater Manchester	4	9%
Wiltshire	3	7%
Avon and Somerset	2	5%
Devon and Cornwall	2	5%
Dorset	2	5%
Leicestershire	2	4%
Merseyside	2	5%
Staffordshire	2	5%
West Midlands	2	5%
Gloucestershire	1	2%
Humberside	1	2%
South Yorkshire	1	2%
Surrey	1	2%
West Mercia	1	2%
West Yorkshire	1	2%
Total	44	-

Appendix 12 – Time Between Death and DARDR Publication

Total DARDRs where date of death and publication date are both available	38
Average number of months between death and publishing	26
Median number of months between date of death to publication	24
Shortest number of months between date of death and publication	8
Longest number of months between date of death and publication	58



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