

DUDLEY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW INTO THE DEATH OF 'Nezha'

MARCH 2022

The formal scope was 1st of JANUARY 2017 to MARCH 2022

LEARNING BRIEF

safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership

LEARNING BRIEF

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CASE

safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership

1. This DHR concerns the death of two people – Nezha and Ahmad. In March 2022, Ahmad contacted West Midlands Police, stating that: “he was being intoxicated by a female from Syria.” A woman was heard in the background, stating that she was dying. Ahmad could be heard to say that he had “got her.” He sounded confused and explained that he had been poisoned and that they were both dying of intoxication. Officers attended the scene and the working hypothesis was that that Ahmad murdered Nezha before taking his own life

2. There was no recorded history of domestic abuse with Nezha, but there were incidents of alleged domestic abuse with previous partners. Ahmad had 4 passports (UK, Ukrainian, Turkish, USA) and was a licensed firearms holder.

3. Ahmad had a child. The Mother of the child is Ayesha and she is a previous partner to Ahmad. In July 2010, Ayesha reported that she had been assaulted by Ahmad and had injuries consistent with such an assault. Ahmad was arrested and charged. However, Ayesha withdrew from the Criminal Justice process and the case was withdrawn. after the child had been born, Ayesha filed for divorce citing ‘due to violence’

6. The Panel also believed that immigration status may, potentially, be relevant. Both Nezha and Ahmad were immigrants to Britain from Syria and Iran respectively. Nezha entered Britain in 2011 and Ahmad entered in 2010. Both were granted settlement and indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

5. Nezha was born in Syria and Ahmad was born in Iran. From the submissions received by the Panel, it is assumed that Nezha understood verbal English and written English. However, the Panel obviously assumed that English was not Nezha’s first language. This would, undoubtedly, be relevant when Nezha engaged with services, seeking their support

4. With regard to Ayesha, these allegations had been dismissed as fabricated by a Judge in the Family Court and another previous partner declined to support any process of investigation. it would be naive for the Panel to assume these allegations have no bearing on this Review. Additionally, the Panel was aware of the report published by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner concerning the impact of the Family Court on survivors of domestic abuse.

safe & sound

Dudley’s Community Safety Partnership

7. In June 2011, Nezha commenced her post-graduate studies. Her PhD was in Life Sciences. The costs associated with her study were met – in the first year – by the Syrian Government and after the first year was complete, the University waived further tuition costs. During her studies, the Panel learnt that Nezha engaged with the University – on a contractual basis – to undertake a variety of work, including as a laboratory demonstrator, an invigilator, and a casual tutor for undergraduate students

8. When Nezha left the University in 2021 – after completing her studies, it is likely that her income reduced significantly and this may explain why she was residing (in September 2021) in a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO).

9. Ahmad's PhD programme was in clinical biochemistry. Ahmad's PhD career was not entirely successful. He pursued a programme of 'English for Academic Purposes' but did not pass the one module that he commenced in 2016 and he did not complete his MA in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education module that he commenced in September 2017. Ahmad did not complete his PhD prior to the critical incident. It is assumed by the Panel that Ahmad and Nezha met whilst at the same university.

LEARNING BRIEF

KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED BY THE PANEL



safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership

1. The incidence of traumatic events in adolescence and early adulthood

Nezha arrived in the UK seeking asylum and fleeing conflict in her country of birth. For Nezha, the Panel believes that she left Syria in 2010, or thereabouts.

2. Was there a formal recognition of disability

When Nezha reported a burglary, she informed officers that she had a disability but did not offer any further clarification. At another incident, Nezha suggested that both she and Ahmad were registered as disabled and were in receipt of disability benefit. The Panel received no evidence to support this suggestion.

3. Knowing the full history of Ahmad

Both the Staffordshire Police and the West Midlands Police were aware that Ayesha (Ahmad's first Partner and Mother of the child) had made a number of allegations that Ahmad had assaulted her when they were in a relationship. Additionally, the Staffordshire Police arrested a person (who was in fact Ahmad, using an alias) on suspicion of importing heroin. For evidential reasons, no prosecution occurred – but the use of the alias had implications.

6. Subtle signs of coercion and control

As noted, a frequent mode of contact with General Practice was for Nezha and Ahmad to make joint visits. The GP noted that Ahmad would often lead the conversation and speak on behalf of Nezha and – at telephone consultations – the Panel noted that he referred to Nezha exhibiting signs of sleep apnoea and sounding as though she were choking. While in isolation, these softer signs of a potential safeguarding risk are less visible, but when domestic abuse and safeguarding concerns are viewed as a whole, they can provide a picture that may otherwise go unseen. The Panel concurred that the recording and consideration of the rationale for co-attended appointments would be beneficial as a domestic abuse indicator (see IRIS, 2022).

5. Transferring abuse from one partner onto another

There was a period when Ayesha (who made allegations of abuse) would make contact with Ahmad – frequently this concerned the care and welfare of the child. Contact between Ayesha and Ahmad also occurred when Ahmad was in a relationship with Jameela, another previous partner, and also Nezha. Ahmad would often refer to this contact as harassment and it appeared to cause considerable distress and distraction for him.

4. Hearing the voice of Nezha

There were occasions when – in a literal sense – Nezha's voice was not heard. The Panel received submissions noting that Ahmad would 'do most of the talking' when joint visits to the GP were made. It is noteworthy, of course, that joint visits to the GP were the most frequent mode of contact for Nezha. The Panel noted that – as time moved on – the opportunities available to her to, perhaps express concern and to 'tell her story' diminished significantly. At the same time, it appears from the accounts received that Ahmad became more visible and more dominant.

safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership

7. Nezha's accommodation and lived experience

Nezha was registered as a resident in one property that she shared with Ahmad. However, toward the end of the scope of the Review, there is reference to Nezha living in a house of multiple occupation. This occurred approximately six months after she reported the theft of approximately £10,000 – an allegation that could not lead to a prosecution due to a lack of evidence. The Panel noted that Nezha's employment with the University ceased in 2021. This, no doubt, had significant financial implications

8. The licensing of the firearm

The Panel was informed that Ahmad's GP reported that they received a 'consent to disclose medical information form' and invited Ahmad to provide consent, along with a fee for payment. This was not received and the GP did not share any information about Ahmad with West Midlands Police (WMP). The Enquiry Officer from the joint Firearms Licensing Unit did not identify that the incident concerning the arrest of Ahmad in February 2020 was the same Ahmad that was applying for a firearm. Had this been confirmed, and given the nature of the offence, WMP was clear that Ahmad would not have been granted a firearms licence.

9. The effect of dominance.

The Panel learnt that the GP noted that Ahmad often arrived late for appointments, requested medication late, had poor compliance with medication, did not attend for some appointments and requested that his name was changed on EMIS to include the title 'Dr.' This may be seen as someone who wished to control their circumstances

12. The incident in Plymouth

The Panel set aside some time to discuss the tragic incidents that occurred in Plymouth in August 2021. The Office of the Coroner held an Inquest into those events and in February 2023 the Inquest Jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing of all of the victims. The Panel noted, from the press release from the Plymouth Coroner, that a comprehensive Preventing Future Deaths Report had been completed and that recommendations had been made to the Home Office. Additionally, the Panel noted that the failings highlighted by the jury's findings, which contributed to the shootings, will likely be used to make widespread changes to UK gun laws

11. Ahmad's behaviour in the 12 months prior to the incident

In 2021, Ahmad contacted the Ambulance Service when he accidentally consumed methadone when he mistook it for a soft-drink in his fridge. The incident was attended by the ambulance service and notification was sent to Practice X. Critical thinking and safeguarding oversight on receipt of this notification could not be seen

10. Nezha's healthcare history

Ahmad was quite involved in Nezha's healthcare. The degree of intrusion into the healthcare record of a partner could be seen as a form of coercion and control. They attended the GP Practice together on ten occasions and similarities in consultations included bloods tests, reports of weight loss, musculoskeletal pain, mental health and COVID vaccinations. Recognition and analysis of these themes was not evident in line with domestic abuse training and policy

safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership