

## **Sandra's Story**

'Sandra' is 40 years old with a history of declining physical health issues, many relating to drug and alcohol use. She was previously in prison for drug trafficking.

She moved to Swindon after being released from prison to make a fresh start. She became involved in a relationship with another drug user and began to decline over a course of approximately six years due to perpetrators drugs misuse and her own drinking to manage the situation.

Her two daughters were removed and placed with paternal grandparents. She had no trust in support services. Sandra had no other family around her and whilst she recognised the abuse in the relationship, she was reluctant to make change because, as she saw it, the perpetrator had also provided her with 'care' when no-one else did.

Her partner was able to isolate her. Sandra was physically, emotionally and psychologically abused.

Sandra regularly came to the attention of the Police and Swindon Women's Aid and other services due to the abuse in the relationship but declined to engage.

### **Victim was admitted to GWH as a result of further physical abuse.**

In GWH the IDVA was able to approach Sandra after staff raised concerns regarding her injuries and obtained her consent to talk.

The IDVA made a good connection with the victim as a result of being able to see her within a safe environment face to face and build trust. The IDVA continued to visit her regularly whilst on the ward to build up a therapeutic relationship. This proved to be successful and on discharge Sandra continued to work with the IDVA, even initiating contact when she had concerns.

On-going engagement eventually enabled Sandra to break away from the relationship and start moving towards some autonomy

Sandra was referred to MARAC for support, and was supported to make an application to move into more appropriate accommodation which would remove her from the immediate vicinity and away from the perpetrator. This gave her increasing independence. She continued to work with Swindon Women's Aid (SWA) and other services over a period of 5 months.

Sandra was also supported through the court process. Since the court case SWA have received no further concerns. We are not aware of any re-admission to GWH, and there has been no contact from the Police raising concerns of further abuse.

**If the Health IDVA had not been available in GWH at the time of this Sandra's admission she would have continued to not engage with services.**