Action on elder abuse

Elder Domestic Abuse

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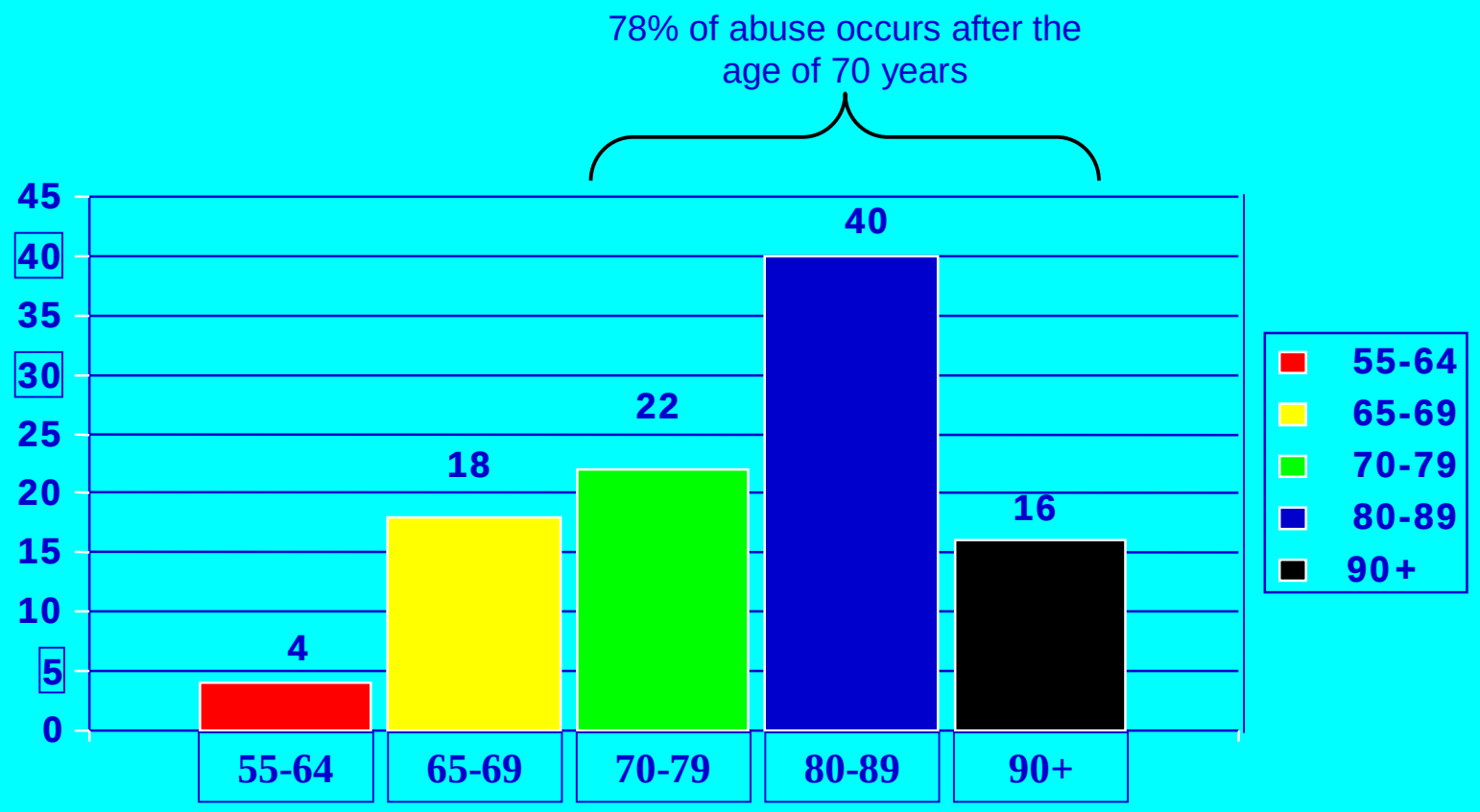
‘a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person….

…any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality. (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family)

(ACPO,2004)

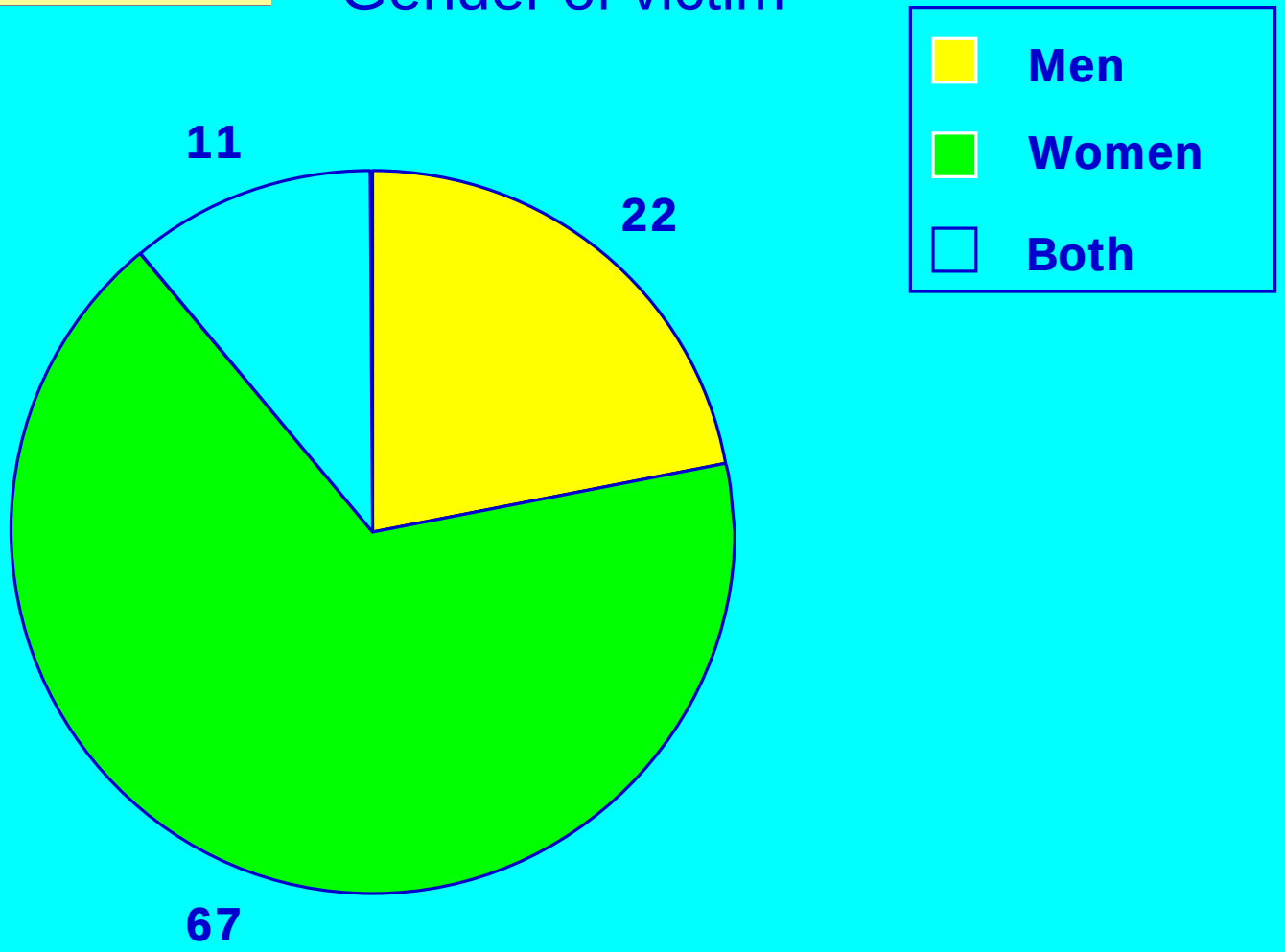
Source: *Hidden Voices*

Age of victim



Source: *Hidden Voices*

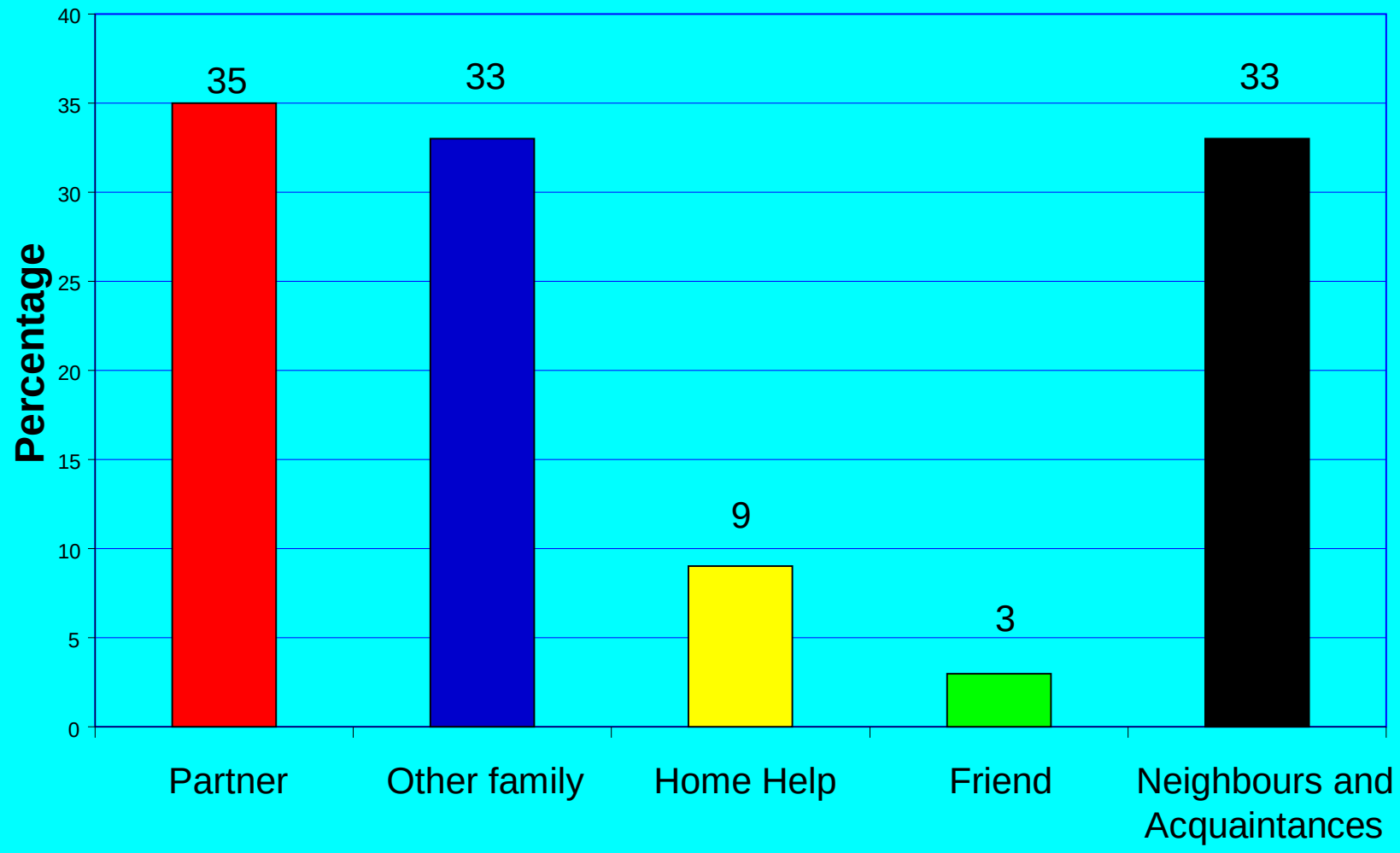
Gender of victim



UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People - 2007

The Perpetrators

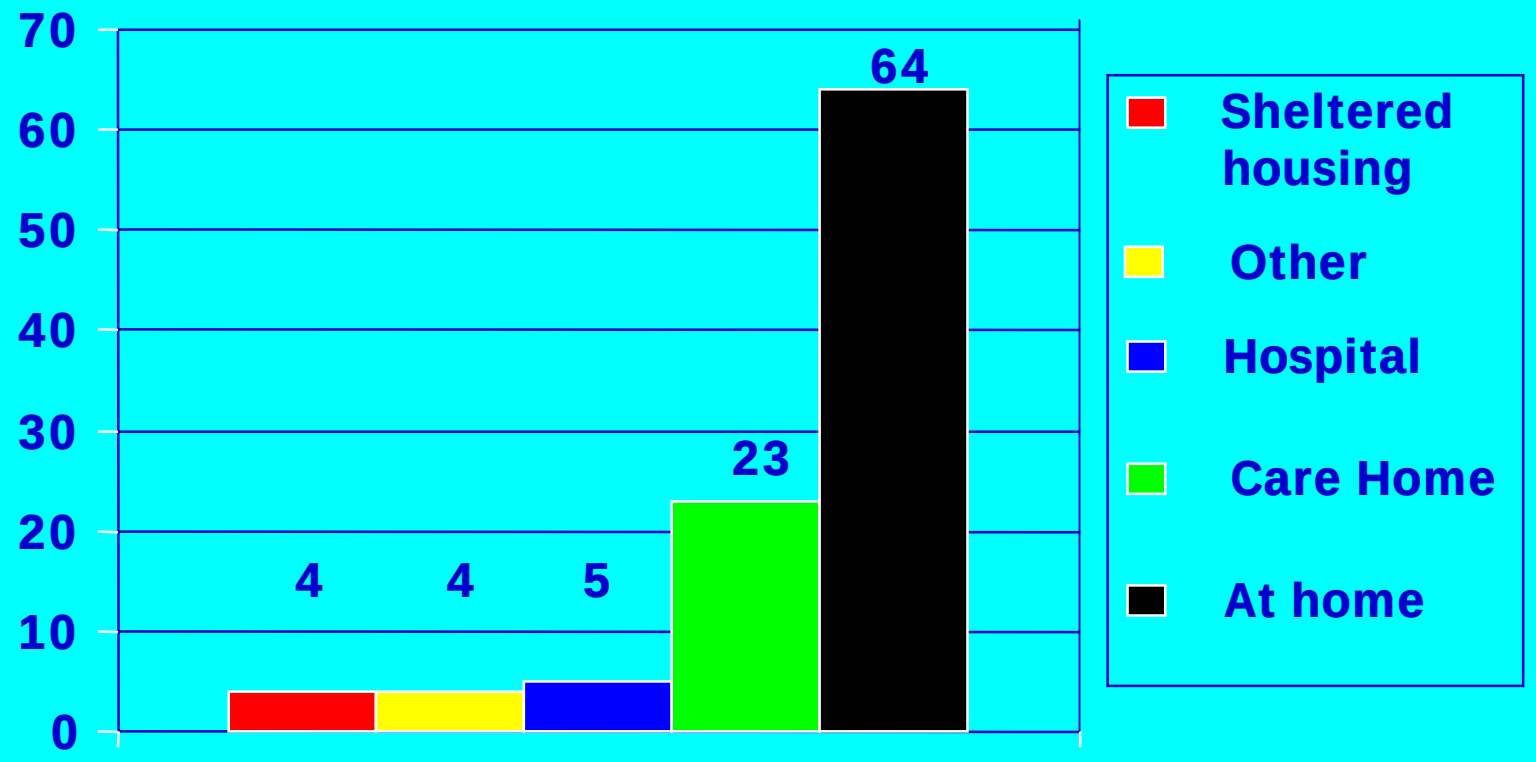
Percentage of all respondents who had experienced abuse in the last year



Action on elder abuse

Source: Hidden Voices

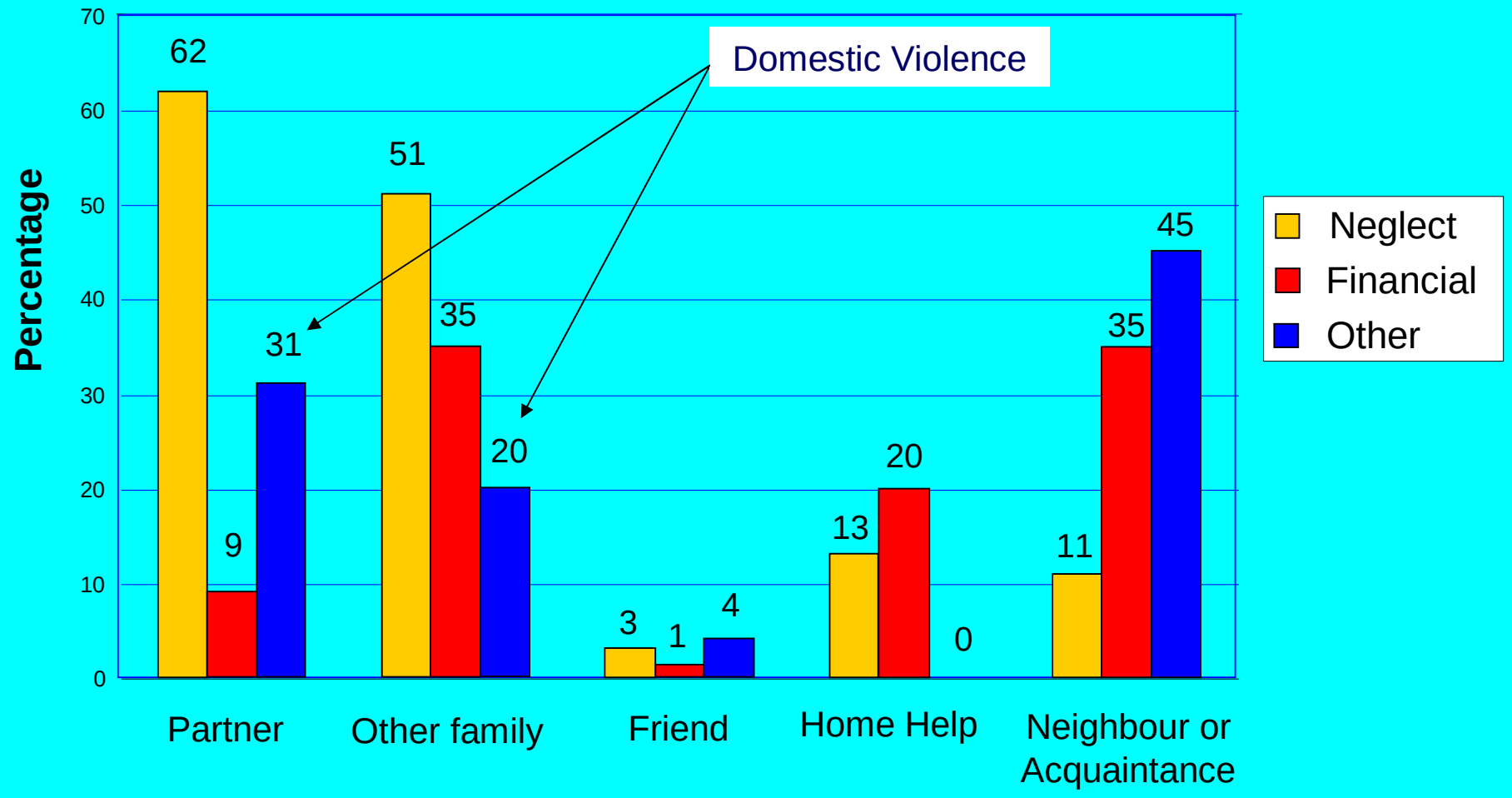
Where abuse occurs



UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People - 2007

Abusers and Type

Percentage of those who had been identified as abusers in the last year



Reasons for the hidden nature of abuse

I am completely dependent on my abuser.

I'm so ashamed and embarrassed that my own family member could be behaving in an abusive or neglectful way

I'm afraid if I break the "family secret," the person hurting me will get back at me in a way worse than what is happening now.

Long term conditioning by the abuser

Failings in the system.

And for 39 years I got on with it.

"I was married at sixteen but I met him at fifteen. And from the beginning really – but you don't see it when you're in it. From the beginning, the violence and the power – you're just ruled by fear. Or I was, just by fear. And what he would do to you if you ever left. And I always believed that and you do believe that. . . .

But all the way through you ask for help but you don't actually stand there and say will you help me, my husband beats me up. For many years I'd looked for help through the doctors, the Health Board, various numbers that were there to ring.

But when you rang they wouldn't be there or they would say ring back later.

Older Women and DV in Scotland
(Centre for Research on Families and Relationships: 2003)

Domestic Violence grown old…

Mary Russell, 81 years, died of a bleed to the brain following a "domestic-related" incident at her home in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, in October last year. She had made eight 999 calls over the preceding seven months

A serious case review found that because the couple were elderly and frail, police were inclined to treat the domestic violence allegations as a social care issue rather than possible crimes. The different agencies involved in the case failed to communicate adequately with one another. Despite Mrs Russell's repeated 999 calls, the emergency teams that arrived at the house had no knowledge of previous callouts.