



Western Suffolk
Community Safety Partnership

Domestic Homicide Review
Overview Report

Two deaths in Suffolk
February 2017

Report Author:
Mr Gary Goose MBE

Report completed: November 2017

Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership Domestic Homicide Review: Overview Report

Preface

Before formally introducing this Review, the Western Suffolk Domestic Homicide Review Panel would like to express their deepest sympathy to all of those affected by this awful tragedy.

In particular, the panel notes the contribution of the deceased's family and friends, in particular the surviving children; this Review could not have been completed without their support and challenge. No words that can be written within this report can adequately describe their loss. However, we are motivated to undertake a review and compose a report that properly reflects the circumstances leading to the events of February 2017 and ensures that any lessons learnt are identified so that others can benefit from that learning.

The impact upon those who knew the couple in the years and months prior to the incident is not lost upon us.

The Independent Chair and author of this Review would also like to thank all those staff from statutory and voluntary agencies and organisations who assisted in compiling and reviewing the information culminating in this report; all have been touched by the circumstances.

Glossary

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| DHR | Domestic Homicide Review |
| IMR | Individual Management Review |
| WSCSP | Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership. A statutory partnership comprising several public bodies serving the Western Suffolk district area and responsible for delivering community safety services across the districts. |
| MASH | Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. |

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The format of this report

This Review was commissioned by the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership following notification of the deaths in this case in circumstances which appeared to fulfil the criteria of Section 9 (3)(a) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

This Overview Report has been compiled as follows:

Section 1 will begin with a **summary of the circumstances** that led to the commission of this Review. It will then **explain the process** undertaken to complete it. The Review has been undertaken with due regards to the 2016 refresh of that Home Office Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance¹; this section will demonstrate its compliance and note and explain any departure therefrom that the Chair and Panel felt necessary in the circumstances of this case.

Section 2 of this report will **set out the facts** in this case **including a chronology** to assist the reader in understanding how events unfolded that led to the deaths.

Section 3 will provide an **overview of the information** known to family, friends, employers, statutory and voluntary organisations and others who held relevant information.

Section 4 will **analyse** the involvement of those agencies and actions of others identifying good practice and that lessons can be learned with recommendations arising therefrom.

Section 5 will provide the **conclusion** debated by the Panel and will consolidate **lessons learned and the recommendations arising therefrom**.

To protect the identity of the deceased, their family and friends, the pseudonyms of 'Elizabeth' and 'James' will be used to identify the deceased hereafter and throughout this report.

¹ Home Office Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews, December 2016

Section One

Introduction and the Process of Review

1.1 Summary of circumstances leading to the Review

1.1.1 At just before 1:50pm on a Sunday afternoon in late February 2017 police received a call to an address in a Suffolk market town. The call was made by a member of the family who lived at the address.

1.1.2 Once there, the police were directed to an upstairs bedroom. They found the door wedged shut from the inside and a note pinned to it which said, "PLEASE DO NOT COME IN CALL THE POLICE AND TELL THEM I'M SORRY THEY HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS."

1.1.3 The police forced entry to the room and found the deceased bodies of a man and woman. The woman had been stabbed and the man was hanging from a noose attached inside the loft.

1.1.4 Subsequent enquiries identified the deceased as husband and wife; James and Elizabeth.

1.1.5 The following pseudonyms have been used in this review for the victim and the perpetrator to protect their identities and those of their family members:

'Elizabeth' was a white British female. She was 58 years old at the time of her death.

'James' was a white British male aged 65 at the time of his death.

1.1.6 The couple had been married for 37 years and had a number of children together. The children range in age from late-teens to their early-thirties.

1.1.7 The family had moved to Suffolk from London around 10 years previously.

1.1.8 About a month prior to the incident Elizabeth had moved out of the family home and gone to live with her mother who lived in the same town.

1.1.9 Over the previous 10 years some of the children had left home and therefore at the time of the incident two of them were living at the house with their father.

1.1.10 The subsequent police investigation concluded that there was strong evidence to suggest that James killed Elizabeth on that Sunday morning before killing himself. The nature of the killing suggests a level of pre-planning into both deaths.

1.1.11 At the time of writing HM Coroner has yet to finalise the inquest into both deaths.

1.2 Timescales

1.2.1 The Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership was notified of the deaths by Suffolk Constabulary on the day following the discovery of the deaths.

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- 1.2.2 The Chair of the Community Safety Partnership held DHR Advisory Panel meetings, consulting a range of partners, on 6th March 2017 and again on 15th March and following discussions made a decision to undertake a Domestic Homicide Review. The Home Office was notified of the decision on 15th March; this was just over two weeks after the incident.
- 1.2.3 An Independent Chair was appointed during March; the Review commenced immediately thereafter.
- 1.2.4 The first DHR Panel meeting was held on April 3rd, 2017. At that time little was known to statutory or voluntary agencies about the couple, or indeed the family, and there had been no prior reports of domestic abuse made to any agency.
- 1.2.5 Contact with deceased's family was initiated immediately by the Chair through initial introduction to the Review by the police family liaison officers who had developed an existing relationship with the next of kin. The issue of family engagement will be revisited later within this report.
- 1.2.6 Thereafter followed five further Domestic Homicide Review Panel meetings; 15th May, 26th June, 3rd September, 13th November and 4th December 2017.
- 1.2.7 The Review was completed in December 2017.
- 1.2.8 It was not possible to complete the Review within the six-month timescales set out within the statutory guidance for the following two reasons:
- i) At the time of the commencement of the Review a live and sensitive police investigation was on-going. Given the paucity of prior engagement by the couple with any service it was felt that the majority of information relevant to this Review would necessarily come from family, friends and work colleagues many of whom could reasonably be expected to be interviewed by the police during their murder investigation and asked to give evidence in any forthcoming Coronial proceedings.
 - ii) In order to fully understand the couple's relationship prior to the incident and pressures that may resulted in this tragedy, the Chair of this Review felt it necessary to interview a wide range of family and friends. This included visits to family abroad and giving some family and friends time to grieve allowing them the opportunity to give due consideration as to whether they felt able to engage with this process.

1.3 Confidentiality

- 1.3.1 The content and findings of this Review are held to be confidential, with information available only to those participating officers and professionals and where necessary their appropriate organisational management. It will remain confidential until the Review has been approved for publication by the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel.

1.4 The engagement of Family and Friends with the Review

1.4.1 This DHR sought to engage with the family of the deceased in order to help shape the Review and answer any questions they may have.

1.4.2 There has been full engagement by the family of both the deceased with the Review. That is to say that members of both Elizabeth and James families have assisted us with understanding the couple's relationship. Most importantly, the majority of the couple's children have engaged with the Review. All of those interviewed were provided with written information explaining the Review, the Home Office leaflet for family and friends and offered specialist support.

1.4.3 The Review has also identified a previous marriage of James. His previous wife and the child of that marriage have also been spoken with.

1.4.4 A large number of friends of the couple have been interviewed specifically for the purposes of this Review. It is true to say that Elizabeth had a far wider social circle than James and thus care has been taken to ensure balance in the Review's findings.

1.5 Dissemination

1.5.1 The following individuals/organisations will receive copies of this report:

- Family of the deceased
- Chair of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership
- Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner
- Chief Constable, Suffolk Constabulary
- Chief Executive, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
- Chair, Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England, Eastern Region
- Chair, Suffolk Adult Safeguarding Board
- Chief Executive, East of England Ambulance Service
- GP Practices involved in this Review
- Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board
- Suffolk Safeguarding Children's Board
- Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board
- Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership

1.6 Terms of Reference

1.6.1 The specific terms of reference for this Review are to be found at Appendix A of this Report.

1.6.2 By way of summary, the purpose of this Review is to:

- Establish the facts that led to the incident and identify whether there are any lessons to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies worked together to safeguard the victim.
- Identify what those lessons are, be clear about how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result.

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- Establish whether the agencies or inter agency responses were appropriate leading up to and at the time of the incident: suggesting changes and/or identifying good practice where appropriate.
 - Establish whether agencies have appropriate policies and procedures to respond to domestic abuse and to recommend any changes as a result of the review process.
- 1.6.3 The Panel also considered the wider aspects of a Domestic Homicide Review and worked with the understanding that its overriding purpose is to:
- Prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children by developing a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity;
 - Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse;
 - Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate; and
 - Highlight good practice
- 1.6.4 Given that little was known to agencies for at least the 10 years that the family had lived in Suffolk, that there were indications of issues that existed in the early part of their marriage and it was unknown what the enduring effect of those early issues were, this Review has sought to cover the entirety of the couple's relationship.

1.7 Methodology

- 1.7.1 This Review was undertaken by way of a combination of organisational Individual Management Reviews (IMRs), personal interview by the Chair/Overview Author followed by written summary and reports containing answers to specific questions in some cases.
- 1.7.2 In addition to the receipt of IMRs, reports and personal interviews, the Chair of this Review has reviewed a number of documents to assist in compiling this report including:
- Understanding Domestic Abuse in Suffolk: A study of the experiences of survivors. A report commissioned by the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner 2015
 - Domestic Violence and Abuse: A partnership strategy for Suffolk, 2015-18
 - HM Government Briefing Paper: Domestic Violence in England and Wales, 2017
 - Consolidated actions from previous Suffolk Domestic Homicide Reviews
 - Home Office: Key findings from analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews, 2016
 - Domestic Abuse, Homicide and Gender: Monkton-Smith, Williams and Mullane, 2014

1.8 Contributors to the Review

- 1.8.1 Those contributing to this Review do so under Section 2(4) of the statutory guidance for the conduct of DHRs and it is the duty of any person or body participating in the Review to have due regard for the guidance.
- 1.8.2 All panel meetings included specific reference to the statutory guidance as the overriding source of reference for the Review. Any individual interviewed by the Chair, or other body with whom the Chair sought to consult, were made aware of the aims of the Domestic Homicide Review and referenced the statutory guidance.
- 1.8.3 The following agencies contributed to the Review:
Suffolk County Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
Suffolk Constabulary
Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group
NHS England, Eastern Region
GP Surgery; Primary Care for James and Elizabeth
Solicitor providing services for James
East of England Ambulance Trust
- 1.8.4 The following individuals contributed to the Review.
Family of Elizabeth (three)
Family of James (one)
Children of the couple (undisclosed)
Friends of Elizabeth and James (seven)
- 1.8.5 The following agencies and individuals declined to assist the Review:
None

1.9 The Review Panel

- 1.9.1 The members of the DHR Panel conducting this Review were:

| Name of panel member | Role or job title | Organisation |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Gary Goose MBE | Independent Chair and Overview Author | |
| Melanie Yolland | Communities Officer (Safe) | Mid Suffolk District Council |
| Simon Chase | Safeguarding lead | East of England NHS Ambulance Trust |
| Jim Gooding | MASH lead | Suffolk Constabulary |
| Tina Wilson succeeded by Allison Hassey | Safeguarding lead | Suffolk County Council Children's and Young Peoples Services |
| Clair Harvey | Specialist lead | Suffolk County Council |
| Christine Hodby | Safeguarding Adults lead | Suffolk CCG |
| Tash Nicholson | Patient Safety Manager | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust |

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|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Paul Nicholls | LSCB Manager | Suffolk County Council |
| Jane Ross | Patient Experience and Quality Lead | NHS England |
| Tabitha Griffin | Safeguarding lead | Suffolk CCG |
| Rebecca Hughes | Adult Protection Team | Suffolk County Council |
| Charlotte Belham | Senior Operational Support Manager | National Probation Service |
| Kim Elvin | Adult Safeguarding Manager | Suffolk County Council |
| CLlr Robert Everitt | Chair, WSCSP | Western Suffolk CSP |

1.10 The Independent Chair and Author of the Overview Report

1.10.1 The Community Safety Partnership took the view that a combined role of Independent Chair and Overview Author was appropriate in this case. They appointed Mr Gary Goose MBE to that joint role.

1.10.2 Mr Goose is not employed by, nor otherwise has any conflicting interest with, any of the statutory or voluntary agencies involved in the review. He has significant criminal justice, local government and partnership working experience. Most recently he was involved in local government as Interim Assistant Director, Head of Community and Safety Services, with Peterborough Unitary Authority which included the commission of domestic abuse services. He was formally a detective with Cambridgeshire Constabulary retiring as a Detective Chief Inspector in 2011. He was awarded an MBE for Services to Policing in the 2006 New Year's Honours list. He has previous experience of Domestic Homicide and Child Protection Reviews within both his police and local authority roles. He is now self-employed as an Independent Chair providing Domestic Homicide Review services and has worked, or is currently working, across Suffolk, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and in the Bristol areas.

1.11 Parallel Reviews

1.11.1 At the outset of this Review the Chair liaised with the Chair of the Adults Safeguarding Board and established that no parallel Adults Safeguarding Review was being undertaken.

1.11.2 There are no criminal proceedings outstanding. At the time of writing HM Coroner has yet to conclude the inquests into both deaths.

1.11.3 There are no other parallel reviews.

1.12 Equality, Diversity and Cultural issues.

1.12.1 Throughout the conduct of this Review the Chair and Panel have been cognisant of all aspects surrounding any equality and diversity issues that may arise. As new material arose those aspects were considered as part of the ongoing Review process.

The Review finds that all agencies paid attention to the issues that presented themselves and we do not find that there was any direct or indirect discrimination in

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any of the organisations policies or practices, or indeed displayed by any of the staff working with or for them.

Section Two

The Facts of this case.

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Elizabeth and James had been married for 37 years at the time of the incident resulting in their deaths.
- 2.1.2 They had met in the Harwich area of eastern England in the early 1980s. At the time Elizabeth was in early 20's and James in his late 20's.
- 2.1.3 Within the first year of marriage they had their first child together.
- 2.1.4 They would go on to have three more children. The children now range in age from late teens to early 30's.
- 2.1.5 After an initial short period together in the Harwich area the couple settled in London. They lived in various rented flats to begin with before spending most of their time at a house in east London. The children spent most of their young lives in that area.
- 2.1.6 The family moved to Suffolk around ten years prior to the incident that is subject to this Review. No-one is absolutely sure why they made the decision to move to an environment very different to that in which they had been living however, the general consensus is that they wanted a fresh start for their family and for James's business. Although Elizabeth came from the North Essex/Suffolk border and they met in that area (an area not far from where they settled), most of those spoken to as part of this Review do not believe that was the particular reason for them to choose Suffolk.
- 2.1.8 James was a self-employed carpenter and builder. The move to the property that they owned in Suffolk enabled him to have a work-shop on site and provided an opportunity for the family to live in a property the size of which was simply unobtainable in London.
- 2.1.9 When they moved to Suffolk one of the couple's children had already left home and over time a second did too. This left a family unit of Elizabeth, James and two of the children living in the house. That was the case until the time of the incident that took their lives.
- 2.1.10 After they had relocated to Suffolk, Elizabeth's mother also moved to live nearer to them choosing the same town; in fact she lived around 200 yards or so away from the couple.
- 2.1.11 This Review has learned that before meeting Elizabeth, James had been married once before. He met his first wife in 1972. She was 18 and he was about 20 years old. After meeting they stayed at her grandparents for two years before moving back up to Essex. After marrying they stayed together until 1979; during that time they had one child, a daughter.

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- 2.1.12 For a while, James's first daughter continued to be a part of his life although contact faded over the years; she had not seen him for many years and last spoke to him about three years prior to the incident when he telephoned to speak to her mother (having found out her mother was ill).
- 2.1.13 There were no issues of domestic violence or domestically abusive behaviour during James's first marriage.
- 2.1.14 After the first marriage finished James went through a period, described by his first wife as, 'going off the rails'. He ended up spending time in prison after being convicted of a robbery and an associated indecent assault (on the female victim of his robbery). When released he moved to the north-east Essex area. For a while it is believed that he lived under an alias in order to try and distance himself from his convictions and his time in prison.
- 2.1.15 It was after his release from prison he met Elizabeth. It has become apparent that Elizabeth and James's relationship was initially very intense and they quite quickly moved to marriage.
- 2.1.16 In the early years of marriage there were several occasions when Elizabeth left James, taking the children with her. When she left she told others that James's behaviour towards her was threatening and intolerable and on at least one occasion said that he had hit her.
- 2.1.17 These periods of separation are difficult to date however, those who recall them remember the children being very young, ranging from baby to early school years in age.
- 2.1.18 The length of separation varied from a few weeks to a few months. On one occasion people remember Elizabeth being away sufficiently long enough for her to have arranged new schooling places for her eldest daughter.
- 2.1.19 The separations were sudden, relatives of Elizabeth remember her calling and asking them to come and get her in the middle of the night and them arriving, bundling belongings and the children in the car to get away.
- 2.1.20 Some of the children have limited memories of these separations. For instance, they remember on one occasion living in a caravan around Christmas time with their mum telling them that dad had gone to prison (there is no evidence that he spent any time in prison during their marriage)
- 2.1.21 On each occasion the couple resumed living together.
- 2.1.22 No reports of James's abusive behaviour were ever made by Elizabeth or anyone else to the authorities. All of these incidents occurred whilst the family were living in London.
- 2.1.23 Those who knew Elizabeth say that these early issues left an indelible mark upon her. On each occasion they say she went back to James it was because she felt he

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was able to provide for the children and her. There was a resignation in her that, 'that's how life is'.

- 2.1.24 In around 2005/06 the couple made the decision to move to Suffolk. They moved in late 2006/early 2007. Both were initially fairly active in trying to make friends and integrate in the new way of life.
- 2.1.25 Their house was large enough to cope as the base for James's business and in 2009 the couple entered a new business venture together which operated from their home. The new venture only lasted a couple of years and it closed in 2011.
- 2.1.26 The couple seem to have grown apart during their years in Suffolk. James seems to have become so content with his 'lot' that he began to become, away from his work, a somewhat isolated figure. People describe him in a routine of being up early for work but by the end of the day when he returned home he expected his tea ready for him, he would then retire to his 'office' where he regularly smoked cannabis and had a pint of beer. It is accepted that this routine ended with him going to bed on most days by 7:30pm.
- 2.1.27 Elizabeth wanted more than this and began to develop a social life in the town in which they lived. She began dancing regularly, undertook some courses (creative writing and counselling being two of them), and, after beginning work at a local shop, gained a small but very close group of friends.
- 2.1.28 There is no suggestion that James objected to her socialising, he simply didn't want to do that himself.
- 2.1.29 There is a large body of information to suggest that as time went on Elizabeth became desperate to do something more with her life. She told a number of close friends that there was no longer any intimacy in the marriage; that she was unhappy and many of them could see that she was not the woman she had once been. She told friends about what she described as James's intolerable behaviour towards her. She said he controlled everything she did, she had to give him all the money she earned from her job, he expected her to wait on him completely, he kept the house deliberately cold, she had one book to read and they had no television.
- 2.1.30 Elizabeth began to talk openly with her friends about plans to leave James when their youngest child left for University in September 2017. She said she 'had nothing to stay with him for'. James appears to have been oblivious to this.
- 2.1.31 During 2015/16 Elizabeth began to go out more and more and her social circle increased. She began a relationship with another man and this developed over time into what can be best described as an affair. The relationship was hidden from James and only her very closest friendship group in the town knew of it. She did not tell her sisters or a small group of her best friends who she had known since childhood and who met up with her every year. Despite not knowing the reason, friends noticed a change to a more 'alive' Elizabeth.
- 2.1.32 As the relationship developed Elizabeth began to spend some nights away from the family home, as far as James knew she was staying with friends.

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- 2.1.33 In January 2017 however an anonymous note was posted through the door at the family home exposing Elizabeth's relationship.
- 2.1.34 James called Elizabeth at work and she went home to be confronted about it. She denied the relationship but left James and immediately moved in with her mother. This was around four weeks before the incident that ended their lives.
- 2.1.35 Over the course of that next four weeks Elizabeth became steadfast in her desire not to go back to James. She began to make plans for a future with the man with whom she was in the new relationship.
- 2.1.36 Elizabeth's relatives became aware of the separation, but she remained guarded about what she said about the new relationship, largely denying it until such a time as it became impossible to deny it any longer.
- 2.2.37 It appears James was initially convinced that she would go back to him, as she always had done in the past. He bought a television and there were a number of conversations between them when he said how he would change and that she could go back home. Elizabeth made some visits back to the house to collect personal items but James would only let her take a carrier bag at a time. Her mother opened a bank account in Elizabeth's name and she got a new mobile phone. She did not like going back to the house and when she did go she never took her purse or her phone for fear of James taking them from her.
- 2.1.38 The weekend before the incident James telephoned several of Elizabeth's friends and relatives saying he thought Elizabeth was depressed and that he was sure she would go back to him. All of them told him she wouldn't this time; it was over.
- 2.1.39 James then began to focus on a permanent separation and made an appointment for them both to visit a local solicitor. Elizabeth cancelled that appointment as friends advised her that she needed to see a solicitor separate to James.
- 2.1.40 On the Friday before the incident (which took place on the Sunday) James visited a local solicitor on his own. He was advised that Elizabeth would be entitled to half the assets. He was deeply upset and tearful and it was made clear to him that it was unlikely that he would be able to keep the family home.
- 2.1.41 That Saturday seems to have been fairly unremarkable in that on that evening James sat with his two children and watched a film. On the Sunday morning one of their children had to be at work, the other child took her. Upon return James asked them to 'make themselves scarce' as Elizabeth was coming over to sort out some things.
- 2.1.42 Elizabeth was at home with her mother and her sister and she spoke to James on the phone about going over to collect some bits and talk about money. She asked if her sister could go with her, James refused this in a very aggressive way, shouting down the phone at her and her sister. Elizabeth told her mother and sister that she would only be gone an hour or so but they describe her as being very frightened about going over to the house.
- 2.1.43 When Elizabeth arrived at the house James killed Elizabeth by stabbing her multiple times in an upstairs bedroom before hanging himself in the same room. It is clear

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that a significant level of pre-planning had gone into that tragic event. This will be dealt with in a later section.

2.2 Chronology

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 1972 | James's first marries. |
| 1979 | James's first marriage ends (a daughter is born from this first marriage). |
| 1979 | James convicted of Robbery and Indecent Assault. Sentenced to xx years in prison. |
| 1983 | Elizabeth and James meet |
| 1984 | Elizabeth and James marry. Initially live in Essex before moving to London. |
| 1985 – 1992 | Elizabeth and James separate on several occasions. No reports made to the authorities (dates and frequency are unknown but are known to have separated on at least two, maybe more, occasions) |
| 1985 – 1999 | Four children were born into the family |
| 2006 | Family move to Suffolk. |
| 2009 | Elizabeth and James run a business from their home |
| 2011 | The joint business venture closes |
| 2014 | Anonymous referral to police about unexplained injury to one of the children. Single agency assessment. Closed as accidental injury with no evidence of abuse. |
| 2015/16 | Elizabeth developed a small friendship group and began to socialise more locally. |
| 2016 | Elizabeth began a relationship with one of the male friends within the group. |
| 2017 (January) | Anonymous letter arrived at the family home exposing the alleged affair by Elizabeth with a local man. Elizabeth left home to live nearby with her mother. |
| 2017 (Feb) | Elizabeth went to the family home to collect belongings and was killed by James who then killed himself. |

Section Three

Overview of information known to family, friends and agencies

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This Review sought to involve the surviving children of Elizabeth and James as well as their extended families in its direction and scope. We also engaged with a wide range of friends and work colleagues of both. Some of these friends had known the deceased for almost all their lives, others had developed more recent but intense friendships; this included the man with whom Elizabeth had developed a new relationship.
- 3.1.2 Those spoken to have provided a rich picture as to how both deceased were feeling about their relationship and their hopes and plans for the future. They also provide valuable insight into the past and how that past shaped what was to end up in this tragic event.
- 3.1.3 Reviews always benefit hugely from the engagement of family and friends but in cases such as this, where so little was known to agencies, their involvement takes on even greater relevance and importance.
- 3.1.4 This information both complements and supplements any known by agencies who had engaged with Elizabeth and James prior to the tragedy.

3.2 Friends and family

- 3.2.1 This section will be structured in the following way:
- It will commence with information from those members of the deceased's families and friends who had known them for all or most of their lives. They are able to provide information based upon their own observations of the relationship and what they saw of changes in the couple's demeanour as well as what they were told by either;
 - It will then move to a summary of the information provided by those children of the couple who engaged with the Review;
 - It will conclude with information provided by friends of the couple who had met them since their move to Suffolk.

The order in which this information is included should not suggest a hierarchy of importance or different levels of belief as to the truthfulness of that information. All those spoken to by this Review provided information that they strongly believed to be true and was based upon the love or affection they had for the couple.

3.2.2 Family and long-term friends of the couple

- 3.2.3 **Elizabeth's close family** recall that the couple met in Harwich when Elizabeth was in her late teens, therefore she had known him almost all of her adult life.
- 3.2.4 They describe them as very different characters; Elizabeth being outgoing and funny, James being more serious and a strict disciplinarian. In their view the two families were also very different. James came from a large family but they didn't seem to talk to each other whereas Elizabeth and her family were always talking. James's family was a large east-end of London family with what could be described as old-fashioned values about the roles for men and women. One of Elizabeth's relatives summed this up by a conversation she recalled with James's father when he told her that,
- "She's much better than the last one, she always has his dinner on the table, and if he wants something fetching from the shop, she jumps in that van and runs off to get it".
- 3.2.5 Rather chillingly, one of Elizabeth's relatives also recalls that Elizabeth told her of a conversation she had with a relative of James at his father's funeral when she said that the relative had said to her,
- "Don't wait for him to die before you can become free".
- We cannot verify the accuracy of the conversation Elisabeth said she had, the fact is that Elisabeth repeated her account to one of her own relatives. If the original conversation did take place then the implication is clear, if it did not, then it is illuminating as to what Elisabeth was feeling at the time.
- 3.2.6 There is information from James's family to the effect that James's father was a strong militaristic disciplinarian and that James displayed some of these attributes too, perhaps not changing as the world and society changed too.
- 3.2.7 Elizabeth's relatives remember the early occasions when Elizabeth, in their word's 'ran away' from James because he was violent towards her. Their descriptions of how Elizabeth was when she left him suggest she was certainly very scared of him.
- 3.2.8 There were two if not three separations when the children were very young. On one specific occasion Elizabeth called her sister upset and said, 'He's hit me. Come and get us'. Her sister collected Elizabeth and the children and they found a caravan for them to stay in for a while. James tried to find out where they were and went to the house, banging on her door demanding to see Elizabeth. He would not accept that she was not there and had to be shown that she was not before he would leave. She eventually went back to him. She said she wanted them to be a family and for the children to live in a proper house and be safe.
- 3.2.9 She left for a second time a little while later. This time they went to another caravan park and were there for long enough for the children to be accepted for local schooling. Again, Elizabeth went back to him.
- 3.2.10 The family's view is that Elizabeth left him because she wanted to protect the children. He was often verbally abusive towards one child in particular and this continued for years. He would literally scream at the child, shouting that they were 'useless, pathetic'. It would leave that child shaking and crying and in their view terrified of him.

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- 3.2.11 After these two, or possibly three, early separations there do not appear to have been any more. However, those incidents seem to have left an indelible mark upon the relationship; one from which it would appear it never recovered.
- 3.2.12 Elizabeth's family also say that because they supported Elizabeth during these periods of separation he forbade her from seeing her mother, father and sisters for years. He also stopped the children from seeing them. He thought they were responsible for encouraging her to leave him.
- 3.2.14 When asked if it is possible to say when the relationship began to sour, there was a general view that things were okay when the couple were in Harwich in those early days but the move to London isolated Elizabeth with James being back on his 'own turf'. It may well be that he acted in a way that he thought was expected of him at that time. One of Elizabeth's relatives recalled a conversation not long after they had been married when she said that she used to have a new dress every Friday night but now she had to ask for money for a new pair of tights. Certainly, for many years they understood he wouldn't let her go out to work. James controlled all the money, her wages had to go into his account. Elizabeth was not allowed to have her own personal account.
- 3.2.15 Whilst in London, James had his own business which, like many, had good times and bad and the couple continued to live together in east-London bringing up the family.
- 3.2.16 In around 2005 they made the decision to move out of London and up to Suffolk. It may have been because they knew the general area that it was somewhere that was a natural place for them to consider as an option. The house they bought gave James the opportunity to run his business from home and renovate the house at the same time. Elizabeth knew the area well so it does seem a move that suited them both.
- 3.2.17 When asked about the project to run an additional business from home Elizabeth's family understood this to have been James's idea but that in reality Elizabeth had to do all the work. She didn't like it. It failed because it was never going to work in that location. Elizabeth's efforts at basic bookkeeping were laboured and she struggled. James did not help her but ridiculed her efforts and shouted at her. James blamed Elizabeth for the failure of the additional business.
- 3.2.18 As time progressed in Suffolk, James settled into a routine of working, coming home and having dinner (made by Elizabeth) then going to bed at 7:30pm every night before getting up for a full cooked breakfast every morning. A combination of the move to Suffolk and age had mellowed him and his temper in particular had not seemed so rash. However, as time wore on Elizabeth became more and more unhappy and often sobbed in front of friends and family about how unhappy she was. In recent years she had made it known that she was planning to leave him when their youngest child left home (likely September 2017). She said she had nothing to stay with him for.
- 3.2.19 One of Elizabeth's relatives holds a view that Elizabeth had given up on the marriage. She recalled an incident about 5 years ago when Elizabeth had met with her in London and was in tears saying she needed a break from the atmosphere at home. She was not happy at all but would always go back. She described how Elizabeth would 'sort of brush herself down' and go back to it. She remembers

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feeling heartbroken at Liverpool Street Station on that occasion when Elizabeth went back.

3.2.20 Elizabeth had made it known that there had been no intimacy in the relationship for at least 8 years.

3.2.21 In more recent months they did seem to have noticed an upturn in Elizabeth's mood. They knew she was going out more but it was only when she finally left James after the anonymous note was posted that they became aware of quite how much of a social group she had formed. Elizabeth had not told them that she was seeing someone else but when she left on this occasion they all felt that it was going to be for good. She was not going back and had been planning to leave later in the year; the anonymous letter accelerated things.

3.2.22 The family cited a number of examples given to them by Elizabeth of what they said demonstrated how James had become more and more controlling in recent years:

- Half the lightbulbs were not working, she had to shower in the dark.
- No heating was allowed on and yet he had a brazier in the workshop.
- They had no television.
- They always had to have the bedroom window open.
- Elizabeth said she knew she couldn't cook because James had thrown the dinner at her one night.
- He had stopped her seeing her sisters for the last two years.
- He would not socialise and was becoming more and more isolated.
- He controlled all the money.
- Her mobile phone was in his name.

3.2.23 When she left, Elizabeth stayed with her mother. At the time of the incident she had been there for four weeks. Her mother had set her up a bank account in her own name and she had got a new mobile phone for contact with her friends.

3.2.24 She was very nervous and scared about going back to the house. He would not let her take things in a suitcase she could only take carrier bags with clothes. On one of the occasions she had gone back she told friends that he had bolted the door when she was inside and held her against a wall. When she went to the house she would never take her purse or her phone with her because James would check them. The day of the incident was due to be the very last visit. Elizabeth was very scared about going back. Her sister was at the house and when James rang her she asked if her sister could go too. He said no and shouted at her and her sister down the phone.

3.2.25 When Elizabeth left her mother's house she said she would be no more than an hour. That was the last time they saw her alive.

3.2.26 When asked why they thought James had done what he did this time, given that she had left him several times before, they replied that this time he knew that she

wasn't going back. People were standing up to him and telling him that and James would not like that.

- 3.2.27 Those of **James's family** who engaged with this Review describe James as following in his father's footsteps in that he was the 'man of the house' and ran it as a very 'tight ship'. It was accepted that he could be an intimidating man, certainly when younger, but they were not aware of any physical violence inflicted upon Elizabeth during their marriage. They, too, were very clear that he had mellowed considerably since the move to Suffolk.
- 3.2.28 Some of James' family considered the failure of the business to be the beginning of the end of the relationship. Whilst the move to Suffolk had made them financially better off, when they started the tea rooms they had to borrow money. This placed additional strain on an already difficult marriage. When it failed there was lots of friction and Elizabeth began to distance herself from those of James's family that she had contact with.
- 3.2.29 After Elizabeth left James, and when he realised that she was not going to go back to him, he became focused on the financial future for them. They are aware of how difficult he found the meeting with the solicitor on the Friday before the incident; he realised then that keeping the house was almost impossible.
- 3.2.30 This Review then spoke with **friends of Elizabeth** who had known her since primary school and who met up as a group around once a year. They provided the following information:
- 3.2.31 Elizabeth had lots of boyfriends at school but there was one in particular with whom she had an incident when she was 16. She would not tell her Dad as her dad was a very hard man and very strict with her (this Review is aware of the incident in question; it does not require further detail here).
- 3.2.32 They lost contact after they left school but she found out that she had got married and the friendship started again. A group of four of them got together for a girls' weekend about once a year and always kept in touch. Friends understood that once Elizabeth and James met it wasn't long before they got married.
- 3.2.33 One friend visited Elizabeth at two of her homes in London, she remembers one of them being right near West Ham football ground.
- 3.2.34 It was not long before it was clear that Elizabeth was not happy. Her face would change and you could sense the sadness if the group spoke about going shopping or going on holiday; she would say, 'James wouldn't like that'. She came across as very downtrodden and friends remember having conversations with her telling her that if she wasn't happy then she should do something about it. Elizabeth though always seemed to pick herself and protect James to a certain extent because she would justify not leaving on the basis that he was good to the children.
- 3.2.35 In the period leading up to their 40th birthdays they used to go to a castle in Wales as a group of four and Elizabeth always seemed to face a challenge being allowed to go.

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- 3.2.36 When it was one of their 50th birthday one friend remembered picking Elizabeth up from the railway station and she looked dreadful. She then broke down in tears and sobbed that it had been so horrible because James and one of the children didn't want her to go and did everything they could to delay her and make her miss her train. At that time, it looked as if the 'life was being drained out of her'. Elizabeth always got up early to make the sandwiches for James. She then always had to have their dinner ready when they got home and just ran around after him. There was one occasion when Elizabeth told James that the mayonnaise was shop bought rather than homemade and he went mad throwing it across the room in rage.
- 3.2.37 In the last year Elizabeth seemed to have got some of her life and happiness back. Her hair was glossy and she looked different, happier. Some of her friends knew that she was planning to leave James when their youngest daughter went to University later in the year but she had not told any of them about her new relationship.
- 3.2.38 Elizabeth had told one of the friends about an incident involving Social Services. This was an unsolicited conversation and seemed a bit strange that she should choose to tell her that out of the blue.
- 3.2.39 On the Monday before the incident one of the friends called the family home to speak to Elizabeth in order to arrange this year's get together. She spoke to James who told her that Elizabeth was not there at that time and he didn't know when she would be back. He did say that things were not good there at the time. Later in the week she finally got to speak to Elizabeth who was at work and they arranged to speak in some depth on the Sunday night when Elizabeth would be back at her mum's.
- 3.2.40 The Review also spoke with **James's first wife and daughter**. They provided the following information:
- 3.2.41 They had met in 1972 and they fell immediately in love. She was 18 and he was about 20 years old. They stayed at her grandparents for 2 years before moving back to Essex. They were married and they stayed together until 1979.
- 3.2.42 James' first wife cannot understand what has happened as the James she knew would not hurt anyone. She described their time together as a fantastic period in her life. They had a wonderful social life, James was the life and soul of the party and they would go out every night together to the pub. Their life together culminated in the birth of their daughter in the late 1970's. After their daughter was born James struggled with the change of life that was needed. He valued his social life too much and found it difficult to adjust to staying in with a child to care for. This led to him having an affair, he went back to his first wife but the relationship suffered and he left again.
- 3.2.43 He was never violent or intimidating towards her. She found it very difficult to reconcile the man she knew with what he did to his wife.

- 3.2.44 After he left her he went 'off the rails' a bit, resulting in him ending up in prison. She visited whilst he was in HMP Norwich but after he was released she had moved on and they didn't get back together.
- 3.2.45 They had sporadic contact afterwards because of their daughter, she remarried and her new husband met James and they got on fine. She had met Elizabeth on a few occasions because of the connection to her daughter and was aware that she seemed to run around after him but did not see any signs of any other issues between them.
- 3.2.46 She last saw James about 15 years ago and last spoke with him about 3 years ago when he called her having found out she had been diagnosed with a serious illness. He was quite melancholy about how life might have been different if he had acted differently but there was nothing to suggest any issues that he may have been facing.
- 3.2.47 The Chair of the Review explained to her some of the things that we had been told about James's alleged controlling behaviour; she did not recognise this at all. She was also told about James' habit of going to bed every night at about 7:30 after he had his dinner. She said this was so different to the man she knew she found it very difficult to come to terms with what was to her a huge contradiction.

3.3 The couple's children.

- 3.3.1 This Review is indebted greatly to the children left to cope with this tragedy for their engagement with us. The following is a heavily edited summary of the information they provided in order to protect their private grief.
- 3.3.2 "Dad was never violent to her mum. (name) didn't consider him to be particularly intimidating although he was a big proud man and he could look after himself....."
- 3.3.3 "aware that mum and dad had separated a few times when the children were younger. She didn't know what the reasons specifically for that were although they always got back together. She told me that both had affairs..... but they were adults and they just had to get on with life."
- 3.3.4 "mum was very different to dad in she liked to be social and her dad didn't. She was aware that mum was going out a lot and that in the last year she had changed."
- 3.3.5 "After mum had left, spoke with her on the phone. Mum denied the affair."
- 3.3.6 "After mum had left made financial arrangements to help dad, he seemed positive about this..."
- 3.3.7 "Dad was never controlling, he would give mum anything. Has heard that mum used to cheat on dad. Aware of some of the previous separations. Remembers living in a caravan for a while. Mum told us dad was in prison at the time."

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- 3.3.8 “Dad had mellowed out a lot. Dad used to be quite affectionate. He would tell her how gorgeous she was and she would roll her eyes. She used to snap at him quite a bit.”
- 3.3.9 “Whilst they were in London there were quite a lot of arguments, not so many in (Suffolk). “
- 3.3.10 “Mum and Dad were leading separate lives. Their plans were not the same. After she met (name) she became more detached from us, not as ‘mumsey’. She was two very different people; like a mum at home but very different when she went out. Mum was always flirtatious. She actively searched for attention. Mum didn’t want dad to be social.”
- 3.3.11 “Dad did not control mum. We all had our own jobs. Lightbulbs were not replaced because we wouldn’t clean up the bathroom. Room was not cold. She often used to come into my room to spite him. A new fridge had been ordered before she left. New tv after she left.”
- 3.3.12 “Mum underestimated herself but dad did loads for her. She lacked confidence. He protected her. He tried to get her to do things. He encouraged her to do a computer course, a creative writing course, learn guitar and signed her up for counselling classes.”
- 3.3.13 “After she left dad stopped eating; he lost 2 – 3 stones. He looked like an old man.”
- 3.3.14 “() then explained the difference between her dad from what she experienced in childhood to what she had seen over the last twenty years. She said that the picture being painted by some of her dad controlling and intimidating her mum was not how he now was. He did everything he could for her, he bought her clothes if she wanted them, for instance the dance dresses and shoes, encouraged her to do things and always expressed his love her. She said her mum had changed too in recent years and in the quite recent past had become quite mean in terms of the things that she would say about him; that wasn’t how her mum and been in the past and it wasn’t something that was pleasant to experience.”
- 3.3.15 “As a child she witnessed her dad being very intimidating and threatening to her mum, he also shouted a lot at (name) and in many way’s she knew that this was bullying behaviour although she had never seen him physically assault her mum. She reiterated how he had changed completely though in recent years and because of that she had grown closer to him”
- 3.3.16 “(name) was aware of the previous separations. She thought one of them might have been as a result of an affair by her mum but wasn’t sure. All that had settled down though and her dad could not have been more accommodating of her.”
- 3.3.17 “She knew that her mum had met someone else. She also found out that her mum had been planning to leave in the summer in any case.”

- 3.3.18 “She was aware that her dad had been looking at the internet and saying that her mum was showing signs of depression; in hindsight this was his way of shouting for help because he would have been too proud to ask for help himself”.
- 3.3.19 In interview as part of this Review the interviewer put to (name) all the things that had been said about her father’s controlling behaviour (the cold, the phone in his name, not replacing lightbulbs etc etc). She was very clear; this was a gross exaggeration of what was going on and that her mum had exaggerated things substantially.

3.4 Friends in Suffolk

- 3.4.1 As can be seen from the information already within this report the couple had grown in two very different directions since moving to Suffolk. Elizabeth was outgoing and wanted a more fulfilling social life, James had largely withdrawn himself from socialising outside of his work.
- 3.4.2 Elizabeth formed a close friendship with a colleague from work and from that, in the last couple of years, she had grown a small but very close-knit group of friends in the town. In addition, she had a wider group of friends through her dancing. Her socialising and dancing became more and more frequent over the last year in particular and it appears that she was out most nights of the week. There is no information to suggest that James objected to this.
- 3.4.3 The Review is conscious of being balanced and given their very different numbers of friends it would be easy for the Review to place greater weight on the volume of information that supports Elizabeth’s view of life. The Review acknowledges this as a risk and notes that the information provided to it from Elizabeth’s friends is consistent in its content. The following is a summary of that information beginning with her closest friend from work:
- 3.4.4 Elizabeth told her friend that she had not been happy for at least 20 years and had left him a few times in the past. He had been violent towards her and used to treat (one of the children) really badly.
- 3.4.5 The friend was aware of James’s behaviour. He would regularly call her at work to get things for him on the way home. Elizabeth had to do all the cooking and packed lunches, and told her friend the house had no heating, no television, her money had to go into his account. She always dreaded asking him for money.
- 3.4.6 The couple had not been intimate for at least 10 years, she used to regularly sleep in one of her children’s rooms.
- 3.4.7 The additional business was his idea. She hated it and had to do all the work.
- 3.4.8 Elizabeth had taken up dancing to get out of the house.
- 3.4.9 Elizabeth was planning to leave James and this was the case well before she got involved in the new relationship. Her friend was aware of the new relationship and encouraged Elizabeth to tell James as she thought he was bound to find out. It had

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got to the point where Elizabeth was out almost every night and some occasions she stayed out, not returning until the following morning. Elizabeth told James she was staying at her friends, this was not always the case. She had fallen for (name) though and they were planning to get a place together and make a go of it; she said that Elizabeth had fallen in love with him completely.

3.4.10 The friend remembers the day when the note was put through Elizabeth's front door. When James found out about the note he rang work, was shouting down the phone at Elizabeth. She was physically scared and also worried about what the future would hold.

3.4.11 As a result of that incident Elizabeth moved out and to her mothers. Elizabeth was scared of him physically and was scared that her children would be poisoned against her. Elizabeth told her that one time James said, after she had left, "if I can't have you know one will" and on one occasion when she went back to the house he grabbed her shoulders and pushed her against the wall.

3.4.12 Other friends provided similar information that Elizabeth had told them about her experiences at home:

- Never had control of any money, always had to ask James for some
- Always at charity shops for clothes
- Not allowed to touch the computer, that was James's
- Had to sleep with the window open
- No television
- No heating on
- James refused to replace light bulbs
- No holidays
- James habit of going to bed at 7pm and then up early. Elizabeth had to make all the food and packed lunches every morning

3.4.13 They were also able to provide observations of their own, a summary of which are set out below:

3.4.14 "Elizabeth told her she was unhappy in her home life. Abiding memory of Elizabeth is that she was always carrying heavy shopping bags but always chirpy and chatty. Elizabeth told her that they moved to Suffolk as a fresh start for the business."

3.4.15 "Elizabeth was regularly ill every winter with a chest infection. Elizabeth broke or injured her foot at some point, James didn't take her to hospital a friend had to. Also during the last year Elizabeth complained of sore ribs; she told her to get it looked at but she wouldn't. She described Elizabeth as always thinking she was useless and always putting herself down."

3.4.16 "She had witnessed Elizabeth having to take James's food in to him on a tray. She did everything for him he was very demanding, not very nice."

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- 3.4.17 “James was not sociable, never went out. The only time she could remember was a friend’s surprise do when they had to be there by 7 recalls Elizabeth saying they were home and she was in pyjamas by 8:30. In the last year Elizabeth had got to the point where she went out almost every night. She began to wear more make-up.”
- 3.4.18 “When she left James, she called her to tell her she had done it. She had no money though because it was all in James’s account. She was scared and frightened to go back to the house, she was worried that he would never let her out. Told her to tell the police when she was going to go back. When she did go she never took her purse as James would check it. Elizabeth told her that on one occasion after she had left James said, “if you ever come back you will never leave again”.
- 3.4.19 “She described Elizabeth as living on her nerves. She was the dutiful wife. Elizabeth had told her that when (child) leaves she had nothing to be there for. (Friend) picked her up from home often and she often come out in tears after he had told her she looked a mess. He was always putting her down. He shouted and bullied her about the tea room receipts.”
- 3.4.20 The Review spoke with perhaps **James’s best friend** during their time in Suffolk. He said that they had become very close friends over the years and he had visited the house on numerous occasions. They had got into a habit of having breakfast together on Saturday mornings. This would be regular but not every week. For instance, they would perhaps meet on successive Saturday’s and then not again for another three weeks or so. He was nearly always there early and had got to know Elizabeth and the two children that lived at home. He had observed the relationship between them over the years. He described the friendship between them as typically male, they would talk for hours about all sorts of things but never really about relationships or how they were feeling.
- 3.4.21 He never once saw James be overbearing or intimidating to Elizabeth. James was definitely ‘king of the castle’ but he saw Elizabeth stand her ground with him on several occasions. He described the atmosphere at the house as pleasant. Elizabeth always gave James a kiss before she left for work. He never heard James say a bad thing about Elizabeth in the 10 years that he had known them both.
- 3.4.22 He was aware that the couple had developed very different interests and that Elizabeth went out regularly for dancing and socialising. He said that James wasn’t interested in that and knew that he often went to bed at 7:30 in the evening. He said that in his opinion James probably didn’t give Elizabeth the sort of attention that she wanted; he was always working and had said that he would never retire. He described James as very hardworking. We discussed the issue of attention and whether they had effectively grown apart. It was his surprise 70th birthday party that others referred to when they said that Elizabeth had told them she had spent hours getting ready and then was back home in her pyjamas by 8:30pm. He remembered this well and felt it strange that they had left.
- 3.4.23 James had not told him that Elizabeth had left, he did not know about the relationship and did not know about the anonymous letter. He said that James was a very proud man and acknowledged that this would probably have hit him hard. He had telephoned James on the Friday morning before the incident (which took place

on the Sunday) as they had talked about having breakfast on the Saturday. James appeared to be in a bit of a state and said he had got so much on now and that he 'felt suicidal, but don't worry mate I wouldn't do that'. James didn't elaborate, he said he would go round later to see him. James called at about 5:30 to cancel their meeting. He seemed upset but didn't give any indication of why. He said the incident was a complete shock. There was nothing in the relationship that gave any indication of difficulties in the marriage.

3.5 Information known to Agencies

- 3.5.1 For the duration of their time in Suffolk very little was known about the couple by any of the statutory agencies providing services within the Suffolk area.
- 3.5.2 Police, health services, the various elements of local authorities, the children's schools and other statutory and voluntary agencies have all been asked about their knowledge of the family; very little was known. What was known is set out within this section.

3.6 Health services.

- 3.6.1 The GPs for both James and Elizabeth have engaged with this Review and there are no issues within their recent medical history to suggest any unexplained injuries or illnesses that could or should have prompted a level of additional professional curiosity.
- 3.6.2 Elizabeth had treatment for the broken toe that some of her friends were aware of but there were no concerns about how that had occurred. She did not seek treatment for what she had told several friends were sore ribs which they seem to time as during 2016. She was prone to asthma but there is no indication that she ever complained or indicated that this was anything other than a long-term condition.
- 3.6.3 Examination of her life-long medical records indicate nothing out of the ordinary save for an entry in November 2004 when she attended the surgery with depression associated with 'disharmony at home involving her (age) daughter'. She was referred for counselling but did not follow-up or attend any appointments. She was discharged as a result of her non-attendance several months later. Given the time lapse between that issue and the incident there is no personal knowledge nor written material that can assist this Review further. There were no other similar referrals or conversations after that incident.

3.7 Police

- 3.7.1 Other than the incident which resulted in the two deaths police have only one issue noted for the family during their time in Suffolk.

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- 3.7.2 In December 2014 an anonymous referral relating to a black eye suffered by one of the children who lived at home was received by police. The referrer suspected that the injury may have been caused by her father (James) as the referrer suspected that he may have been violent towards the child in the past.
- 3.7.3 The referral was processed through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which included background checks and research on the family. It was shared with Social Services and it was formally agreed and recorded that it would be best served by a single-agency assessment of the incident. Suffolk's children's social care completed that assessment (the result of which will follow later within this section).
- 3.7.4 Police were called to the incident of February 2017 at just before 2pm. On arrival they forced entry to a bedroom in the property finding the bodies of both James and Elizabeth.
- 3.7.5 They mounted a full murder investigation and came to the conclusion that no-one else was involved in the deaths. The evidence was very clear that James had killed Elizabeth that morning before taking his own life.
- 3.7.6 The police investigation showed that James had been searching on the internet for symptoms of depression on the weekend before the incident. He had telephoned a number of friends of Elizabeth's that weekend suggesting that she was suffering from depression and all told him that was not the case and that she was not going back to him. In the days that followed he searched for ways of committing suicide. On the morning of the incident James made an internet search 'Quickest way to kill with a knife'. From the timings of the computer search it is possible to infer that James had considered suicide days prior to his death but there is only evidence of any intention to murder Elizabeth on the day of her death.
- 3.7.7 A suicide note was found at the address. The note was privately addressed to a member of the family and is not for repeat in this Review other than to say that a section entitled James' personal statement starts being written in the third person and begins stating that Elizabeth was not responsible for the start of the situation. It then continues with a narrative of everything that has occurred and the gradual deterioration of the relationship. The final paragraphs are written in the first person; it appears to begin to provide reasons for the action taken:
- 'Elizabeth is sacrificing my life so that she can change hers. I end up as a sad old man in a cheap flat somewhere and she enjoys the high life, I've worked too hard for too long to allow this.'*
- 3.7.8 The final typed paragraph provides some clarity on James's state of mind:
- 'I don't want to go, and believe me I don't want to hurt your mum, I will make this as quick and painless as I can and selfishly leave you with the aftermath. I apologise from the bottom of my heart, what a nightmare!'*
- 3.7.9 This Review is aware of the nature of the previous convictions of James and has also scrutinised a report completed in another area relating to one of the children; any relevance will be commented upon later within this report.

3.8 Local Authority: Children's Social Care.

3.8.1 The only notable involvement by the local authority with the family was the referral picked up by children's social care from the police in December 2014.

3.8.2 A decision was made to undertake an assessment by way of approach to the family and individual interviews of all those who may be involved.

3.8.3 A letter was addressed to James saying that a referral had been received and that Social Services wished to discuss it with him. A statutory assessment was subsequently carried out which included the child being interviewed separately from Elizabeth and James. All gave consistent accounts as to how the incident occurred.

3.8.4 The matter was closed as follows:

"Management Decision - SA authorised. This assessment was carried out following an anonymous referral. Given the consistent explanations given regarding the bruise to (name's) face it appears this was an accidental injury. There is no further evidence within the assessment to suggest there has been historic violence between (name) and her father. School reports appear positive and (name) appears to be doing very well. There is no role for CYPS at this time."

3.9 Solicitor who met with James

3.9.1 Just over a week before the incident Elizabeth telephoned to make an appointment for both James and her to see a local solicitor. The pre-appointment information provided to the solicitor, presumably by Elizabeth as she had made the appointment, was that they were estranged and they wanted to know where they were financially. The appointment was cancelled before it was due to take place, by Elizabeth.

3.9.2 James subsequently telephoned and made an appointment to meet with the solicitor. That particular solicitor does not usually see clients on a Friday, so the solicitor suspects, although cannot recall, that he presented as being upset or in need of urgent advice.

3.9.3 The solicitor recorded that she spent 2 ½ hours discussing James's case with him and the following is a summary of what he told her:

3.9.4 A few months ago he got an anonymous letter saying that his wife was having an affair with a man called (name). He challenged his wife on this and she said that he was just a friend. He said that he didn't believe her at first but now he does.

3.9.5 He had challenged Elizabeth about what is going on in their marriage and she is not prepared to talk to him but in January she moved out of the matrimonial home and had gone to live with her mother. He said that his property was valued last year at £535,000. It is the house where they had the (business) open for a couple of years. She ran the (business) until she decided that it was too much for her. He is a self-employed Carpenter, doing very well for himself. They moved out of London a few years ago and he has built up his work from nothing and is doing well. He is building bespoke kitchens at the moment.

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- 3.9.6 The solicitor talked about ways forward with options of Separation Deed or Divorce. James said that he would think things through and then get back to them. It is made difficult by the fact that James says Elizabeth won't talk to him although he thinks that it has got a lot to do with (name) who says that he is 'evil.'
- 3.9.7 They spoke about financial options, but it was clear from the conversation that selling the house might be only course of action they could take. James spoke of the difficulties this would present for him and his business especially being able to continue to employ (name).
- 3.9.8 The solicitor described James's demeanour during as quite changeable, which isn't unusual during a first meeting, although he was unusually positive about Elizabeth and talked about her with great affection. He was upset at times, smiling at others. He did get tearful and it was clear he was distressed.

Section Four

Analysis of agency involvement; their responses and the responses of others.

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In 2013 the Government introduced a definition of domestic violence and abuse. This is set out below for the purposes of reference when reading this Review's subsequent analysis.

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as:

“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: a continuing act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim”

- 4.1.2 There is a wealth of information contained within the preceding sections of this report to indicate that the early years of the relationship between Elizabeth and James fall very much within the bounds of a domestically violent and abusive relationship. In later years, certainly for their time in Suffolk, there is information suggesting that whilst no longer violent or intimidating, James maintained a level of control over Elizabeth that would fall within the definition set out above, however, there are those who contend that this was no longer the case.

4.2 Statutory and non-statutory agencies.

- 4.2.1 Section 3.1 within this report summaries the totality of the information known by those agencies and others with influence during the years leading up to the deaths. This section will provide an analysis of agency involvement.
- 4.2.2 This is a case where there was a distinct lack of information known to any agency about the circumstances that prevailed in the family home. There is the single occasion where police and children's social care acted in relation to the anonymous

referral about an injury to one of the children living at the address. This Review will address that issue first before moving onto whether there were opportunities for further professional curiosity amongst those staff or organisations that did encounter members of the family.

4.3 **Police and Local Authority Children's Social Care involvement in the 2014 referral.**

4.3.1 The referral in December 2014 was made to the police and was treated as an anonymous referral to protect the identity of the person who had brought the issue to the attention of the referrer. Given the circumstances that existed about that referral (known to the Review but not repeated here to protect that source), this was wholly understandable at the time.

4.3.2 The referral was made based on someone noticing a black-eye on one of the children when they attended school. The child, 16 years old at the time, had given an explanation of having fallen and thus the injury was accidental. However, the referrer had become aware that the child had previously spoken about their father being violent to them although nothing had been previously reported and there was no existing evidence of those prior facts; the child had also said that the violence encountered previously had ceased. The referrer was motivated to make the referral on the basis that her explanation for this recent injury may not be true.

4.3.3 The referrer was employed by the police but was not a police officer. They reported concerns when they first became aware of the circumstances; questioning the existence of the present injury, albeit explained as an accident, in the light of becoming aware that the child may have previously spoken about violence from her father. This demonstrated a good level of professional curiosity.

4.3.4 The report itself was subject to a process of due consideration and background research through the MASH. The record of James's previous convictions came to light although it was not possible to positively identify him as the person with those convictions at the time due to the historic nature of those offences (having occurred some 25 years previously) coupled with the lack of him having come to notice in recent years. The possibility of it being him was recorded on a 'sensitive' area of the system in use at the time. It was agreed that this referral should be subject of a single-agency assessment. That agency would be Children's Social Care. The information was shared appropriately. Staff from Children's Social Care who worked within the MASH had access to the sensitive information.

4.3.5 Children's Social Care took the view that the assessment would be best served by way of a statutory assessment. They wrote to James informing him that an allegation had been made and seeking a meeting to deal with the issue. After receiving the letter he telephoned, annoyed, saying he would have preferred an unannounced visit but agreed to be seen, although he did say it would be a 'waste of time'.

4.3.6 Elizabeth, James and the child were all subsequently interviewed separately about the issue and provided a consistent account as to how the injury occurred. It was explained as an accident. The case was closed with comments that there was no

additional information to suggest on-going or historical abuse and that her school reports are positive.

4.3.7 During the course of this Review Children's Social Care staff also looked at other information about the family written in 2000 in another local authority area. Scrutiny of that file indicated nothing other than positive parenting with both parents involved fully with caring for their children and addressing any issues that arose. The nature of that source information is not relevant for the purposes of this Review.

4.3.8 In all the circumstances, the closure of the case following assessment, seems entirely appropriate. The information gathered during the assessment did not meet the threshold set out in Section 47 Children's Act 1989 requiring further action. A letter was sent to the family (addressed to Elizabeth and James) letting them know the outcome and offering additional support at any time.

4.3.9 This should not be seen as a missed opportunity to uncover domestic abuse in this case. It was an opportunity, but that opportunity can only progress if those subject to abuse provide the information when it arises. There is no suggestion that Elizabeth was being subjected to physical abuse or violence by the time this issue arose and thus she probably didn't think her unhappiness warranted disclosure when the investigation was based upon a suggestion of physical violence to one of her children. An investigation, appropriate to the circumstances that prevailed at the time was undertaken and there were no other missing pieces of the jigsaw that the authorities were aware of or could reasonably have been expected to have been aware of at the time.

4.4 **Health Services**

4.4.1 The full disclosure of medical records for both Elizabeth and James do not show any opportunities where it is reasonable to consider that professional curiosity could or should have been greater.

4.4.2 The passage of time means that the detail of the 2004 visit by Elizabeth to her GP with depression is lost in time. We do know that she was referred for counselling and did not attend any of the appointments, it is also clear that follow-up letters were sent to try and engage her further. It would be wrong to jump to the conclusion that the depression was based upon her unhappiness with her marriage; it may have been, but equally it may have been because of some difficulties that they faced for a while with one of their children. The medical notes suggest it was to do with the latter.

4.4.3 Elizabeth did not present again with anxiety, stress or depression and seems not to have mentioned any difficulties at home in any of her further visits to the GP.

4.5 **The solicitor who met with James on two days before the incident**

4.5.1 This Review is grateful for the engagement and candour provided by the solicitor whom James visited two days before the incident. The solicitor described James as

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in a changeable mood; one moment deeply upset and the next more relaxed. He spoke positively about Elizabeth. The Review has explored whether the solicitor felt there were any safeguarding concerns in the way in which he presented and what support is available for solicitors who deal regularly with hugely emotive issues.

- 4.5.2 The solicitor in this case noted the peer support that is available from within her own firm but also the Law Society's Professional Ethics Division phone line. Had the circumstances been slightly different, and had the solicitor been concerned that James might have done something to harm himself and/or Elizabeth then they would have been able to advise of the circumstances in which the duty of confidentiality would be over-ridden.
- 4.5.3 Since the experience of this incident the solicitor engaged another client who came in to see her for the first time around four months later. The solicitor was concerned that he seemed to be in a poor frame of mind; he was very flat and unwilling or unable to make eye contact. He had been to his GP who had told him to self-refer to Suffolk Wellbeing²; he had not yet done so and her concern was such that she ensured that he make a phone call to refer himself before he left the office.
- 4.5.4 This latter incident is a good indicator of reflective practice but also reinforces a view that had James presented in a way which caused concern then the solicitor would have sought professional advice and assured themselves of the risk that James posed there and then. In this case the solicitor had noted what James said was engagement with his GP and others who could provide support.

4.6 Other information known about the couple

- 4.6.1 As can be seen from the summaries provided in Section 3, there is some significant level of contradiction in the descriptions of tensions that existed in the marriage and whether James exerted any level of control over Elizabeth in recent years.
- 4.6.2 In order to try and place these situation in some level of context there are some areas of common ground that this Review takes as significant contributors to its tragic outcome.
- 4.6.3 Firstly, the couple separated on several occasions when the children were very young. This was as a result of what Elizabeth took as intolerable behaviour by James. It may well have included physical violence but even if it didn't it was intimidating enough to make Elizabeth scared of him.
- 4.6.4 It is reasonable, from the large body of information known to this Review, to conclude that James must have been an intimidating man in his younger days. Not only is there the evidence of the separations and what others witnessed of that time, but also the relevance of James's criminal convictions.
- 4.6.5 A person's previous criminal history is not always relevant for the purposes of a DHR, however in this case some elements of it are.

² Wellbeing Norfolk & Waveney and Wellbeing Suffolk provide a range of support for people with common mental health and emotional issues, such as low mood, depression or stress

- 4.6.6 James was convicted in the late 1970's of the offence of robbery together with an indecent assault upon the victim of that robbery. For the purposes of clarity, the offence of robbery is committed when:

“A person steals, and immediately before or at the time of doing so, and in order to do so, uses force on any person or puts or seeks to put any person in fear of being then and there subjected to force”

- 4.6.7 The offence of robbery is thus inherently violent, it is about the use of violence or the threats of immediate violence. It is about being personally intimidating.
- 4.6.8 This Review is unclear about whether Elizabeth knew of the specifics of his convictions or indeed whether she knew of his convictions at all. If she did, or if she became aware of them, then that must have only heightened the level of intimidation she must have felt. If she did not, then the convictions themselves remain an indication of James's character at the time.
- 4.6.9 When Elizabeth went back to James on each occasion she gave him more power and control over the marriage and the family. She told her family and friends that she gave in to his behaviour because she felt he could provide for her and the children. This probably led to deep seated resentment in her which at some point was likely to be released.
- 4.6.10 It seems reasonable to conclude that the effect of James's early behaviour towards Elizabeth stayed with her for the rest of their marriage.
- 4.6.11 Whilst the physical violence and intimidation reduced over the years, and there is no evidence of any in recent years, James had achieved such a level of control over her in those early years that he probably felt there were no longer any problems between them; he probably did not even recognise the long-lasting effects of those years. He was the strong man, the provider for the family, she was his wife and she would do what he wanted. Even when she wanted to do other things it was in his gift to accede to them or not.
- 4.6.12 Elizabeth told others that she was deeply unhappy over the years and there is no doubt that this brought her to tears at times. The information from those who have known Elizabeth all or almost all of her life is compelling in this respect.
- 4.6.13 The move to Suffolk came at a time that the family were growing up. James was content with what he had achieved. I have no doubt that in his view he had a good family, a good home and a good life. Elizabeth was there for him; the excesses of the past were gone and no longer a source of tension in his eyes. As that level of contentment grew he became more and more socially withdrawn, in effect 'not bothering with all of that'.
- 4.6.14 Elizabeth on the other hand wanted more out of life still, the children were growing and leaving. She faced the prospect of life looming with a man who in her mind showed her little love, no intimacy and had in many ways settled for a life well below the excitement that she still needed.

- 4.6.15 As she began to grow her social life, remote from the life she had at home with James, it was almost inevitable that she would look for the elements she felt were missing, elsewhere.
- 4.6.16 Contradictions as to what the relationship between James and Elizabeth was really like begin when people talk about their life in Suffolk. Elizabeth's descriptions to her friends were of James being a man who controlled her life, made her life a misery, and gave a number of examples to them of his level of control. All of those friends gave the same account of James' level of control, this is not surprising as it all came from Elizabeth. Yet, this was a man who didn't object to her going out every night of the week, staying out most Saturday nights and going away for dancing weekends.
- 4.6.17 There are of course a number of possibilities for James's acceptance of Elizabeth's social life:
- Was he so sure of their love and that their relationship was for life that if she wanted to go out then she could?
 - Was he complacent about Elizabeth's commitment to their marriage and didn't think she would ever leave him?
 - Perhaps he didn't care what Elizabeth got up to as long she provided for him in the way he was accustomed to?
 - Was he so confident of his control over her that in his view she would never dare go behind his back or leave him?
 - Did he know exactly what was going on and what was likely to happen, if it did he could always blame Elizabeth for breaking up the marriage?
- 4.6.18 Whichever of these it was, the end result was the same; as Elizabeth's confidence grew through her widened social life she clearly decided that she was going to leave James when their youngest child left home later in 2017. Her friendships and her new relationship affair afforded her the security to do it.
- 4.6.19 In contradiction to Elizabeth's version of events, certainly for their time in Suffolk, the children view it very differently. All accept there were difficulties in the marriage when they were young but they all say, very strongly, 'Dad had changed'. They accept that their mother and father were very different people but reject out of hand Elizabeth's view that James was controlling during their time in Suffolk. They have explanations for all the things that Elizabeth used as examples to others of James' controlling behaviour;
- "the light bulbs were not fixed because we kept the room in a mess, dad said when we tidy up he will fix the lights",
 - "Not having a television was just the way we lived",
 - "It was never that cold in the house"
 - "Dad got her anything she wanted"
 - "Mum slept in one of the children's beds not because it was cold but to spite dad when they argued".
 - "It was mum who had changed, she had said some quite mean things to him sometimes".
- 4.6.20 The children's view of family life is their view and theirs alone. It is their reality that no-one else has lived or can place themselves in. They cannot understand why their mum would want to leave their dad when he had mellowed so much. Only they saw the day to day interactions between their parents and therefore it is right that

significant weight is placed upon their view of life. However, there is so much information about Elizabeth's unhappiness that their view has to be balanced in the light of that. In addition, the evidence of the disharmony in the early years of marriage and James's character when a younger man almost certainly left a legacy that the children are likely to have partial memory of and in some cases may have no memory of at all. It would be wrong for this Review not to make mention of this difficult issue.

- 4.6.21 The manner in which the relationship was discovered must have been a hammer blow for a man like James. For an anonymous note to be put through the door exposing it, then to find out that a number of people probably knew about it, and about Elizabeth's plans to leave, was probably humiliating for someone of James's character.
- 4.6.22 That Elizabeth left James following the discovery of the relationship made her vulnerable to the tragedy that followed. All of the evidence and research conducted into deaths following domestic violence and abuse indicates that victims are at their most vulnerable at the time they make their decision to leave.
- 4.6.23 The publication 'Domestic Abuse, Homicide and Gender: Monkton-Smith, Williams and Mullane 2014',³ is helpful in this respect and highlights a number of high risk characteristics of behaviour in considering the risk that is present to a victim. Several are present in this case, none were known to the authorities and only a few were known to a very small number of family and friends; it is only with the totality of what we now know that we can say they were present. They include:
- Separation
 - Previous domestic abuse
 - The victim is frightened that she may be in danger
 - Threats to commit suicide
- 4.6.24 This Review adds more weight to those identified risk factors being truly representative of risk in cases such as this.
- 4.6.25 The evidence of what then followed is clear and identified in the police investigation. To begin he probably thought she would go back to him. When he was told by others that was not going to happen he set in train a sequence of events that ended up with him taking both their lives. His life, as he knew it and expected it to be, had been taken away from him in his view by Elizabeth. He was not prepared to accept that. The prospect of probably having to lose his home, start his business again and probably be living alone in older age, was too much to bare. He had lost control.
- 4.6.26 His final act, in taking the life of Elizabeth and then his own, gave him complete control back.
- 4.6.27 Those who knew how Elizabeth was feeling ask themselves if they could or should have done more. Some of her friends told her to get the police to go with her when she collected her things because she was so scared; she did not take that advice. Some did not know who to speak to or where to go for advice to help Elizabeth and

³ Domestic Abuse, Homicide and Gender. Strategies for policy and practice; Monkton-Smith, Williams and Mullane, 2014

have said there should be a national advice line 'like Childline'. Others say they told her to tell James about the affair she was having and her plans to leave before he found out in some other way. Elizabeth was vulnerable, the single most vulnerable point was when she was alone with James. She recognised that was the case but as is sadly true of many cases she underestimated that level of vulnerability.

- 4.6.28 The learning arising from this Review must be about whether services and advice for victims, witness or those with concerns about people suffering domestic abuse in Suffolk are sufficient as opposed to issues of individual learning for organisations.
- 4.6.29 A significant amount of work has been undertaken in Suffolk to understand the perspective of victims and witnesses, co-ordinate the lessons learned from Reviews such as this, and developing a truly co-ordinated partnership approach to tackling domestic abuse. In 2014/15 the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner funded a research paper; 'Understanding Domestic Abuse in Suffolk, A study of the experiences of survivors'; A partnership strategy for Domestic Violence and Abuse has been put in place; and a mechanism for ensuring that the learning from all safeguarding reviews is now underway.
- 4.6.30 In addition to this Review, Suffolk has been the subject of three previously published DHRs, with two further currently underway. Scrutiny of a consolidated list of recommendations arising from those Reviews shows the divergence of issues that arise out of DHRs. However, the lessons learned during the course of undertaking this Review largely repeat two recommendations that have arisen previously:

Recommendation 1:

A programme of robust communications should be developed aimed at increasing awareness, knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse, coercive control and associated risk among potential victims, family, friends, colleagues, employers, professionals and the community. The campaign should include appropriate sources of support for children, and profile abusive behaviours used by perpetrators with the aim of challenging the behaviour and making it socially unacceptable.

Recommendation 2:

The promotion of a safe and, if necessary, anonymous reporting mechanism should be identified for advice and third party reporting of concerns by those who have knowledge of domestic abuse being experienced or perpetrated by someone they know.

The inclusion of these recommendations does not indicate a lack of activity since previously raised but it is clear that during the course of 2016/17, those seeking advice on domestic abuse felt unclear about what action to take.

- 4.6.31 A third and final recommendation arising from this Review has to ensure that children across Suffolk are aware of what constitutes a healthy respectful relationship. There has been significant progress in recent years with national campaigns around this subject and this Review supports the efforts made. The circumstances of this Review however must cause the following recommendation to be made:

Recommendation 3:

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That all primary and secondary schools across Suffolk help children to understand healthy and respectful relationships.

Section Five

Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

- 5.1 This is a truly tragic case. Four children have lost their mother and father. Others have lost loved family members and friends.
- 5.2 It is clear that there was a significant amount of information known within a small group of family and friends about the unhappiness that existed within this marriage. A marriage that had lasted 37 years. That information was not known to any of the statutory or voluntary agencies that support victims or otherwise tackle domestic abuse within the county. Many of those who knew about the difficulties said they did not know where to go for advice about how to help Elizabeth.
- 5.3 There had been no historic reports to any agency of domestic abuse between James and Elizabeth. There is though, evidence of violence and threats from James to Elizabeth in the early years of marriage causing her to leave him on several occasions. The effect of those early issues never left the couple and, although the violence ceased, the control James exerted on Elizabeth after she had gone back to him on each occasion remained.
- 5.4 This was a marriage that was disintegrating in recent years with a husband and wife who had come to want very different things in life. Elizabeth gained a new circle of friends and with that the confidence to begin a new relationship. She had planned to leave James later in the year but the relationship was exposed by an anonymous letter being posted through the door of the family home. The manner of that exposure contributed to, but cannot be said to have singularly caused, this tragic event.
- 5.5 This Review confirms that the single highest risk factor for extreme domestic violence is at the point of separation. The fact that the couple had been separated for four weeks or so did not diminish that risk as so much continued to develop in those early weeks of separation. In this case, an acceptance that Elizabeth was not going to go back to him, coupled with a realisation that he might well lose what he had considered was likely to be his home for the rest of his life, all came three weeks after Elizabeth had left. That knowledge resulted in this tragic ending.
- 5.6 **Example of good practice and our consolidated recommendations:**
- 5.7 **Example of good practice (professional curiosity)**
The referral to the police in 2014 of the potential of violence towards one of the children by James showed a good level of professional curiosity and is thus a testament to the level of safeguarding awareness in Suffolk police.
- 5.8 **Recommendation 1:**
A programme of robust communications should be developed aimed at increasing awareness, knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse, coercive control and associated risk among potential victims, family, friends, colleagues, employers,

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professionals and the community. The campaign should include appropriate sources of support for children, and profile abusive behaviours used by perpetrators with the aim of challenging the behaviour and making it socially unacceptable.

5.9 **Recommendation 2:**

The promotion of a safe and, if necessary, anonymous reporting mechanism should be identified for advice and third-party reporting of concerns by those who have knowledge of domestic abuse being experienced or perpetrated by someone they know.

5.10 **Recommendation 3:**

That all primary and secondary schools across Suffolk help children to understand healthy and respectful relationships.

Appendix A



**Terms of Reference for the Domestic Homicide Review into the deaths of
(name)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is commissioned by the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership in response to the deaths of (name) and (name) in February 2017.
- 1.2 The review is commissioned in accordance with Section 9, The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.
- 1.3 The Chair of the Community Safety Partnership has appointed Mr Gary Goose MBE to undertake the role of Independent Chair and Overview Author for the purposes of this Review. Mr Goose is not employed by, nor otherwise directly associated with, any of the statutory or voluntary agencies involved in the Review.

2. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the Review is to:

- 2.1 Establish the facts that led to the incident of February 2017 and identify any lessons to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies worked together to safeguard the family.
- 2.2 Identify what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result.
- 2.3 Establish whether the agencies or inter agency responses were appropriate leading up to and at the time of the incident of February 2017; suggesting changes and/or identifying good practice where appropriate.
- 2.4 Establish whether agencies have appropriate policies and procedures to respond to domestic abuse and to recommend any changes as a result of the Review process.
- 2.5 Review the sufficiency of domestic abuse resource and understanding across the County.
- 2.6 Contribute to the understanding of the nature of Domestic Abuse with Suffolk (and nationally).

3. The Review process

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- 3.1 The Review will follow the Statutory Guidance for Domestic Homicide Reviews under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (revised 2016).
- 3.2 This Review will be cognisant of, and consult with, any on-going criminal justice investigation and the process of inquest held by HM Coroner.
- 3.3 The Review will liaise with other parallel processes that are on-going or imminent in relation to this incident in order that there is appropriate sharing of learning.
- 3.4 Domestic Homicide Reviews are not inquiries into how the victim died or who is culpable. That is a matter for coroners and criminal courts.

4. Scope of the Review

The Review will:

- 4.1 Seek to establish whether the events of February 2017 could have been reasonably predicted or prevented.
- 4.2 Consider the period of five calendar years prior to the events (or other timescales as appropriate, to be confirmed at the first Review Panel), subject to any information emerging that prompts a review of any earlier incidents or events that are relevant.
- 4.3 Request Individual Management Reviews by each of the agencies defined in Section 9 of The Act and invite responses from any other relevant agencies, groups or individuals identified through the process of the Review.
- 4.4 Seek the involvement of family, employers, neighbours & friends to provide a robust analysis of the events.
- 4.5 Produce a report which summarises the chronology of the events, including the actions of involved agencies, analyses and comments on the actions taken and makes any required recommendations regarding safeguarding of families and children where domestic abuse is a feature.
- 4.6 Aim to produce the report within the timescales suggested by the Statutory Guidance subject to:
 - guidance from the police as to any sub-judice issues,
 - sensitivity in relation to the concerns of the family, particularly in relation to parallel enquiries, the inquest process, and any other emerging issues.

5. Family involvement

- 5.1 The Review will seek to involve the family in the Review process, taking account of who the family may wish to have involved as lead members and to identify other people they think relevant to the Review process.
- 5.2 We will seek to agree a communication strategy that keeps the families informed, if they so wish, throughout the process. We will be sensitive to their wishes, their need for support and any existing arrangements that are in place to do this.

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- 5.3 We will work with the police and coroner to ensure that the family are able to respond effectively to the various parallel enquiries and reviews avoiding duplication of effort and without increasing levels of anxiety and stress.

6. Legal advice and costs

- 6.1 Each statutory agency will be expected and reminded to inform their legal departments that the Review is taking place. The costs of their legal advice and involvement of their legal teams is at their discretion.
- 6.2 Should the Independent Chair, Chair of the CSP or the Review Panel require legal advice then officers of the Community Safety Partnership will co-ordinate that advice.

7. Media and communication

- 7.1 The management of all media and communication matters will be through the Review Panel.

Gary Goose MBE
Independent Chair and Overview Author