



Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership

OVERVIEW REPORT

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW

in respect of

B

February 2017

Chris Few

December 2020

Left Intentionally Blank

CONTENTS

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	4
<u>Summary of Circumstances Leading to the Review</u>	4
<u>Terms of Reference</u>	5
<u>Review Process</u>	6
<u>Parallel Processes</u>	8
<u>Equality and Diversity</u>	9
<u>Dissemination</u>	9
<u>Family Engagement</u>	9
<u>THE FACTS</u>	10
<u>Background of B</u>	10
<u>Background of K</u>	10
<u>Relationship of B with K</u>	11
<u>Summary of Events</u>	11
<u>ANALYSIS</u>	49
<u>Introduction</u>	49
<u>Effectiveness of Victim Support Services</u>	50
<u>Police Effectiveness</u>	52
<u>Multi-Agency Working</u>	60
<u>Mental Health of B</u>	62
<u>Mental Health of K</u>	66
<u>Stalking</u>	67
<u>LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	72
<u>Appendix A - Terms of Reference</u>	74
<u>Appendix B - Recommendations for action to improve services</u>	80

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Domestic Homicide Reviews were introduced by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), section 9.
- 1.2 A duty on a relevant Community Safety Partnership to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews was implemented by the Home Office through statutory guidance in April 2011. The 'Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews' was revised in December 2016 and that revision provided the framework within which this Review was conducted¹.
- 1.3 A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is defined² as:
- 1.4 A review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:-
- a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
 - a member of the same household as himself,
- held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.
- 1.5 The purpose of a DHR is to:
- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims;
 - Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result;
 - Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate;
 - 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; and,
 - Highlight good practice.
- 1.6 DHRs are not inquiries into how the victim died or into who is culpable; that is a matter for Coroners and criminal courts. They are also not specifically part of any disciplinary enquiry or process; or part of the process for managing operational responses to the safeguarding or other needs of individuals. These are the responsibility of agencies working within existing policies and procedural frameworks.

2 SUMMARY OF CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE REVIEW

- 2.1 The victim (B) and perpetrator (K) had been in a relationship for around 10 months when, in September 2016 she ended the relationship. She was thereafter subjected by K to a campaign of Harassment, Stalking and intimidation. In connection with this B had contact with agencies in Staffordshire and Cleveland.

¹ www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

² Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), section 9 (1).

- 2.2 In February 2017 the body of B was found hanging at her home. She had left notes suggesting attribution of her death to the actions of K.
- 2.3 K was subsequently arrested and charged with Manslaughter, Engaging in Controlling Coercive behaviour and Stalking involving serious alarm/distress with regard to B. K was also charged with Stalking involving serious alarm/distress in relation to five other victims.
- 2.4 On 25 April 2017 a Scoping Panel convened on behalf of the Stafford Borough Community Wellbeing Partnership considered the circumstances of the case and concluded that the criteria for conducting a Domestic Homicide Review were met. A recommendation to commission a Domestic Homicide Review was endorsed by Tracy Redpath, Chair of the Community Wellbeing Partnership, who was present at the meeting.
- 2.5 In June 2017 K pleaded guilty to all charges and in July 2017 he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment with a 15-year licence requirement for the Manslaughter of B and additional concurrent sentences of 4 years imprisonment for each of the other offences. He was also made the subject of a lifetime Criminal Behaviour Order³.
- 2.6 HM Coroner for Staffordshire opened and adjourned an inquest pending the outcome of the criminal trial. That inquest will not now be reconvened.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 The full Terms of Reference for this Review are at [Appendix A](#). The following is a summary of the key points.
- 3.2 The Review considered in detail the period from September 2016, when the relationship of the B and K first came to the attention of agencies, until the date of the B’s death; extended to 1 March 2017 (when K was discharged from Harplands Hospital) for North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust. The review also considered summary information regarding B and K outside of this period including retrospective accounts of the relationship provided by the family and friends of B.
- 3.3 The focus of the Review was on the following individuals:

Name	B	K
Relationship	Victim	Ex-partner of B
Gender	Female	Male
Age (June 2015)	46 years	46 years
Ethnicity	White British	White British

³ A Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) is an Order to the offender issued by a Judge in England and Wales, at the request of the prosecution, under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. A CBO can be issued following a conviction for any criminal offence in a Crown Court, magistrates' court or youth court and can prohibit the offender from doing anything or require the offender to do anything described in the order. A CBO is intended to help in preventing the offender from engaging in behaviour that is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.

3.4 Other individuals referred to within this Report by anonymised initials are:

Q	Husband of B (separated)
F1	Male friend of B
F2	Female friend of B

3.5 In conjunction with the areas for consideration outlined at Section 4 of the Statutory Guidance the Review specifically considered Coercive and Controlling Behaviour directed at B, its impact upon her and the response of services to this.

4 REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 Requests to confirm the extent of their involvement with the subjects of this Review were sent to all statutory and voluntary agencies in Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Cleveland which may have had such involvement. This scoping process was used as the basis for more targeted requests for Management Review and Summary Information Reports.

4.2 Individual Management Reviews and Summary Information Reports were submitted by:

- Cleveland Police
- Refuge provider
- National Probation Service
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
- South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (now Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)
- Stafford Borough Council
- Staffordshire and surrounds CCG (in respect of primary care services)
- Staffordshire County Council
- Staffordshire Police
- Staffordshire Victims Gateway
- Staffordshire Women's Aid
- University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust
- West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

4.3 Consent to access his primary health care records was sought from K but not provided⁴. Consequent to correspondence to K's GP from the Review Panel Chair access to K's primary care records was afforded and information held there was subsequently reflected within a report provided to the Review by the CCG in October 2018.

4.4 The CCG report to the Review highlighted that despite the national DHR guidance, there remains reluctance for the release of the perpetrators' records without consent. This causes significant delays in the production of Chronologies and IMRs and could potentially delay lessons learnt being utilised to change practice and reduce the risks to others.

4.5 The Review Panel noted that consideration of how to access information held by all agencies, including GPs, is undertaken at the commencement of the DHR process.

⁴ GPs are not subject to a requirement to cooperate with a Domestic Homicide Review or comply with the statutory guidance under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). The Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews (2016) does however reiterate Department of Health encouragement for health professionals to cooperate with Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Staffordshire County Council, which manages the commissioning of contributions to DHRs on behalf of the Staffordshire CSPs have undertaken to ensure that this process specifically draws the attention of GPs to the DHR Statutory Guidance and the Department of Health document referenced at paragraph 100 of that guidance.

4.6 Other sources of information accessed to inform the Review included:

- Record of events prepared contemporaneously by Q
- The report of an Independent Office for Police Conduct investigation into referral by Staffordshire Police of B's death and formal complaints from B's family and friends; along with an associated report of the IOPC Decision Maker
- Responses to a formal complaint lodged by a friend of B with University Hospitals of North Staffordshire NHS Trust about responses provided to B by that organisation, South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (see 5.5), which also informed the reports of those agencies to the Review Panel
- Copy email dated 15 February 2017 from B's husband to Staffordshire Police.

4.7 The Review Panel was chaired and the Review was written by Chris Few, an Independent Consultant. Mr Few has had a career in law enforcement and undertaken responsibility in senior leadership roles. He has completed the Home Office online DHR learning provision in 2013, attended a Home Office sponsored AAFDA/STADV facilitated training workshop for DHR chairs in 2017. Since 2008 he has worked as an Independent Consultant in Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City, Derbyshire, South Yorkshire, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire. Since that time, he has chaired Review Panels and written overview reports on behalf of numerous Community Safety Partnerships, Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Local Authorities in connection with Domestic Homicide and Serious Case Reviews as outlined. He has no current or historic personal or professional connection with any of the agencies and professionals involved in the events considered by this Review.

4.8 The Review Panel comprised the following agency representatives:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Jem Milson; Detective Inspector | Cleveland Police |
| • Mathew Hollingsworth; Detective Inspector | Cleveland Police |
| • Service Manager | Refuge provider |
| • John Mason; Deputy Head of Service – | Stoke and Staffordshire National Probation Service |
| • Liz McCourt; Quality Manager | NHS England (North Midlands) |
| • Victoria Baxendale; Safeguarding Lead | North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust |
| • Amy Davidson; Safeguarding Lead | North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust |
| • Sarah Hankey; Quality and Risk Officer | Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (formerly South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust) |
| • Tracy Redpath; Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager | Stafford Borough Council (Chair of the Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership) |
| • Victoria Cooper; Community Safety Lead | Stafford Borough Council |

- Lisa Bates; Lead Nurse - Adult Safeguarding Staffordshire CCGs (in respect of primary care services)
- Julie Long; Principal Community Safety Officer Staffordshire County Council
- John Maddox; DHR Coordinator & MASH Principal Officer Staffordshire County Council
- Simon Brownsword; Head of Safeguarding Staffordshire Police,
- Victoria Downing; Senior Investigating Officer Staffordshire Police,
- Paul Cooke; Deputy Head of Safeguarding Staffordshire Police
- Mark Harrison; Review Team – Specialist Investigations Staffordshire Police
- Joanne Moss; Coordinator Staffordshire Victims Gateway
- Dickie James; Chief Executive Staffordshire Women’s Aid
- Janice Johnson; Senior Nurse – Safeguarding University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust
- Carly Manning; Head of Safeguarding West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- Nicola Albutt; Head of Safeguarding West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

4.9 In addition to the Scoping Panel Meeting in April 2017 the Review Panel met on three occasions in July 2017, October 2017 and June 2019 to consider contributions to and emerging findings of the Review. The final draft of the Review report was endorsed by the Review Panel on 19 December 2019 and forwarded to the Chair of the Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership. On 10 July 2020 the report was endorsed by the Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership.

4.10 Completion of the Review was significantly impacted by delay in completion of the IOPC investigation, the report of which was provided to the Review Panel Chair in April 2019, and subsequent agreement of agency contributions to the Review. Endorsement of the final report by the Community Wellbeing Partnership was further delayed as a consequence of the Covid19 pandemic.

5 PARALLEL PROCESSES

5.1 Staffordshire Police identified the circumstances surrounding the death of B as a Critical Incident and convened a Gold Group, chaired by an Executive Police Officer, with terms of reference:

- To ensure effective investigation into abuse suffered by B
- To support the respective investigation by the DHR, Independent Police Complaints Commission (now Independent Office for Police Conduct⁵, IOPC) and Her Majesty’s Coroner
- To identify and manage any factors that may have an effect on vulnerable victims and our communities to maintain confidence
- To identify any learning and ensure it is implemented at the appropriate time.

5.2 A criminal investigation into the death of B was conducted in parallel with this Review. This led to the conviction and imprisonment of K for Manslaughter, Engaging in Coercive and Controlling Behaviour, and Stalking involving serious alarm/distress with regard to B. K was also convicted of Stalking involving serious alarm/distress in regard of 5 other victims.

⁵ In January 2018 the former Independent Police Complaints Commission became the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). For consistency the acronym IOPC is used throughout this report for both organisations.

- 5.3 In accordance with Section 12 of the Police Reform Act 2002, Staffordshire Police referred the death of B to the IOPC on 28 February 2017. A Death or Serious Injury (DSI) investigation was consequently commissioned. Formal complaints from the sister and a friend (F2) of B were subsequently referred to the IOPC on 13 March 2017 and the investigation was certified as subject to special requirements⁶ on 30 June 2017.
- 5.4 The report of the IOPC investigation, along with an associated report of the IOPC Decision Maker was released to the Chair of the Review Panel in April 2019. A summary of the IOPC report was published by that organisation, also in April 2019.
- 5.5 A formal complaint was lodged by a friend of B (F2) with University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust regarding the involvement of that Trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust and South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. This was dealt with through the hospital Trust's internal procedures with engagement from the other organisations concerned. Responses to the complaint informed the respective agency contributions to the Review.
- 5.6 HM Coroner for Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire opened and adjourned an inquest pending the outcome of the criminal trial. That inquest will not now be reconvened.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 6.1 The Equality Act 2010 sets out the protected characteristics that may be considered in this review by the panel. Those characteristics include: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.2 Equality is about ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics. Diversity is about taking account of the differences between people and groups of people and placing a positive value on those differences.
- 6.3 The only protected characteristic applicable to B was her sex. The availability and responses by services to B in this review inherently reflect that she was a woman.

7 DISSEMINATION

- 7.1 The final decision on dissemination will sit with the Stafford Borough Community Wellbeing Partnership. In addition to publication of this report the dissemination list will however include:
- The family of B, and friends who contributed to the Review
 - The Chief Executives of agencies which contributed to the Review
 - The Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
 - Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board will be sighted because of the clear implications of this review on the approach to victims of stalking and harassment.

8 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

⁶ An IOPC investigation is subject to special requirements if there is an indication that police officers may have committed a criminal offence or behaved in a manner which would justify the bringing of disciplinary proceedings.

- 8.1 All family members and friends of B were advised that the Review was taking place at its outset⁷. Meetings with individuals who wished to contribute to the Review were postponed at the request of the Police to prevent compromise of the criminal prosecution and then the IOPC investigation. In January 2018 the Review Panel chair was advised that the IOPC no longer had any objection to him meeting with family members and friends of B.
- 8.2 On 17 January 2018 the Review Panel Chair met with B's husband and sister and explained the review process and focus, including its relationship with the parallel processes. On 18 January 2018 he similarly met with two friends of B, referred to in this report as F1 and F2. Information provided by and the views of these family members and friends are included within the body of this report. The Review Panel is very grateful for their contribution to the Review.
- 8.3 Family members were asked if they would wish a pseudonym to be used for B in this report. They collectively stated that they did not and initials, having no relationship to those of individuals, have therefore been used to anonymise the report.
- 8.4 K was advised of the review at its outset. No response was received to correspondence from the Review Panel Chair.
- 8.5 Members of B's family and her friends were given sight of this report on completion and prior to its submission to the Home Office.

⁷ Establishment of contact with family members was through the Police Family Liaison Officer who hand delivered and explained letters from the Review Panel Chair, which included details of available support and advocacy services.

THE FACTS

9 BACKGROUND OF B

- 9.1 The Victim, B, was aged 46 years at the time of her death. She had one older sister. Both of B's parents are deceased, her father when she was aged 7 and her mother around 9 years prior to B's death.
- 9.2 From the age of 16 B lived alone and was described as independent. She worked in retail outlets in Staffordshire.
- 9.3 B had one child who was born in 1989. The father of B's child did not feature in his life.
- 9.4 In 2006 B married Q.
- 9.5 Outside of the events subject of this Review B was only known to the Police as the victim of an unrelated theft of her motor scooter in 2013.
- 9.6 In 2014 B was raped by two men at a Scooter Club rally. This was not reported to the Police at the time and B did not make Q aware of what had happened. It was however described by F2, who was aware of it, as having had a serious impact on her life and marriage.
- 9.7 B had known K in the 1980s. She met K again about 15 months before she died and subsequently left Q to live with him. Notwithstanding their separation B remained on good terms with Q and they have been described as best friends.

10 BACKGROUND OF K

- 10.1 K was 46 years of age at the time of B's death.
- 10.2 K was known to the Police as a high-risk domestic violence perpetrator in connection with Harassment, Stalking, Battery, Threats to Kill, Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm, Common Assault, and Criminal Damage offences.
- 10.3 In 1998 K was sentenced to an 18 months Supervision Order for a Domestic Violence Offence and in 2001 he was given a 12-month custodial sentence.
- 10.4 Between 2005 and 2008 two previous female intimate partners became victims of his Harassment and Stalking.
- 10.5 In 2006 K was given a two-year suspended prison sentence which was conditional on him attending an Enhanced Thinking Skills Programme for 3 months. The National Probation Service advised the Review Panel that at that time he did not qualify for a Domestic Abuse Programme.
- 10.6 In July 2008 K was given a further two-year suspended prison sentence and made the subject of a Protection from Harassment Order with an unlimited end date unless discharged by the Court. K completed unpaid work as part of his sentence but missed appointments for an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme. He was twice returned to the Crown Court.
- 10.7 K got a job that took him all over the country and in 2009, with 10 months of the sentence remaining, the case was transferred to the Slough area. However, K then moved to work in Aberdeen. This was legitimately sanctioned by the Probation Service, but as a consequence allowed K to avoid completion of an Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme.
- 10.8 Probation Service information indicates that K had a history of Domestic Abuse. There was potential steroid abuse and he was involved in Martial Arts where he changed clubs regularly so he could fight people less skilled than himself.
- 10.9 In 2014 K registered with a Stoke-on-Trent GP practice. There was no contact between K and the practice during the period under review and only one earlier contact, for travel vaccinations.

11 RELATIONSHIP OF B WITH K

- 11.1 F2 advised the Review that B described K as initially making her feel safe and think she could be happy with him.
- 11.2 About two weeks after moving in with K, B is however reported to have told F2 that she was living with a Psychopath. B moved in with F2 for about two weeks during which time she was bombarded by K with phone calls and text messages which eventually persuaded her to return to live with him. This pattern was repeated over the following months during which B told her friend not to let her go back to K, although attempts to persuade B not to do so were unsuccessful.
- 11.3 On one occasion B is reported to have travelled to Brighton to get away from K, only for him to trace and follow her there, persuading her to return.
- 11.4 F2 informed the Review that to her knowledge K never beat B but he had threatened her and her dog, thrown things at her and physically prevented her from leaving the house. He is also reported to have made B get out of his car and abandoned her on the hard shoulder of a motorway.
- 11.5 During this period K is reported to have told B that he had been in the army and that he knew people who would kidnap the rapists if B named them. F2 does not know if K did know such people but describes him as being convincing and the thought of this subsequently making B fearful about what might happen to her and her family.

12 SUMMARY OF EVENTS

- 12.1 A fuller account of events during the period examined by this Review is provided than would normally be the case owing to the nature of the abuse to which B was subjected; being an ongoing course of conduct that impacted upon the mental and physical wellbeing of B rather than one or more discrete index events.
- 12.2 **6 September 2016**
- 12.2.1 In the early hours of 6 September 2016 F1 rang 999 to request assistance at his home, reporting that K was threatening to "*put a bullet through someone*" and was described as becoming more and more agitated. F1 had gone outside his home address to speak with K and made the call from there. He said he did not believe that K was armed. B was inside the home of F1 and F2 and was reported to be safe from harm.
- 12.2.2 K then came on the line and alleged that his partner, B, had been raped a couple of years previously. K said he had known about this for around 9 months and it was causing tension in the relationship between him and B.
- 12.2.3 A risk assessment was undertaken by a Police Inspector, with input from the Real Time Intelligence (RTI) Unit. There was information held of a conviction for threats to kill from 2006 and regarding domestic violence and threat of weapons from 2008/2009. K was recorded on Police systems as a dangerous offender and a high-risk domestic violence perpetrator who had threatened the use of weapons in the past. There was however no intelligence to suggest K had access to any firearms.
- 12.2.4 Officers attended and found B displaying high anxiety levels, shaking uncontrollably and not communicating with them. It was recorded by the Officers in attendance that information from F1 indicated there was significant coercive and controlling behaviour from K toward B. The attendance of an ambulance (West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust - WMAS) was requested.
- 12.2.5 B informed the WMAS staff that she was being emotionally abused by her partner but would not give any further details. She stated she did not want to be referred to her GP for counselling services but did accept telephone numbers for the Samaritans and local mental health services. B was left at the incident address.

- 12.2.6 The WMAS staff considered that B was vulnerable owing to her mental health needs and at risk of further abuse. They therefore made a safeguarding referral in respect of B to Staffordshire Adult Social Services. The referral was judged by Adult Social Care as not meeting the criteria for engagement of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Enquiry Procedures and the Police were noted to be involved. No further action was therefore taken in respect of the referral.
- 12.2.7 K was advised by the Police to leave the area and to leave B alone.
- 12.2.8 A senior Police Officer reviewed the incident and concluded that it was being dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the principles of the Police National Decision Model (NDM) and the Staffordshire Police policy around Threats to Kill. The Police incident record was to be kept 'open' for Officers to make follow up contact with B in relation to the allegations of rape and coercive control by K.
- 12.3 **7 September 2016**
- 12.3.1 On 7 September 2016 a Police Officer visited B, liaised with a Police Vulnerability Unit⁸ Officer and then visited B again with a Police Sergeant. The Incident Log was comprehensively updated, referring to the previously reported rape and the controlling behaviour of K, which included him taking away the purse and keys from B so that she could not leave their house. B was not willing to disclose anything about the rape and stated that she did not feel strong enough. B would not make a statement and was very reluctant to discuss her relationship with K other than stating "*it was not right.*" She did not want the attending Officers to engage with K and expressed a wish to have time to think and remain at the home of her friends where she was being supported.
- 12.3.2 A Domestic Incident Assessment Log (DIAL)⁹ was completed with B. She stated that K had never physically hurt her but went very quiet when further prompted and disclosed that K had put his hands around her neck on 2 occasions but "*not for long though and he did not squeeze my throat.*"
- 12.3.3 The DIAL risk score was 6. It was however recorded that B "*intimated that her partner K had been coercive and controlling.*" and "*this does not reflect the current seriousness or risk of the situation. [B] was clearly in trauma.*"
- 12.3.4 F2 informed the Review Panel that B regarded these two officers to be the only ones throughout the whole of her subsequent contact with the Police, to show any sort of compassion for her.
- 12.3.5 The Police also recorded that it was unknown whether the relationship between B and K would continue, although they rented a property together and she would have to return at some point which would escalate risk.
- 12.3.6 Research was conducted by the Vulnerability Unit and the incident was escalated to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH¹⁰) on the basis of risk posed by K. This led to B being referred to Women's Aid, which she had agreed to.

⁸ This refers to a team of Officers who have specialist training and responsibility for dealing with crime against vulnerable victims, including Domestic Abuse. The arrangement is referred to within Staffordshire Police and by some partner agencies as a "Vulnerability Hub"; The term Police Vulnerability Unit is used within this report to avoid confusion with the Stafford multi-agency "Vulnerabilities Hub" arrangements (see footnote 14).

⁹ DIAL is the risk assessment model for domestic abuse incidents which was in use by Staffordshire Police throughout the period under review. The relationship between this and the DASH risk assessment model used by other Police forces and agencies is discussed in section 13 of this report.

¹⁰ The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is well established in Staffordshire and provides a facility for partner agencies to share information, identify persons at risk of harm and to develop safeguarding strategies. The Review Panel was further advised that lack of willingness of a victim to support investigation and prosecution is also now explicitly recognised within training provided by Staffordshire Police as not being a bar to a robust response. It

- 12.3.7 A crime report was recorded in respect of Coercion and Control. This was filed as undetected owing to a lack of evidence on 29 September 2016. No crime report was recorded in respect of the physical assaults referred to by B or the alleged rape. A crime report was later recorded in respect of the rape on 8 December 2016 following a review of the incident log for 6 September 2016 and the linked crime reports (see 12.33.4), although B did not provide any information to support investigative action in relation to this.
- 12.3.8 On receiving the referral Women's Aid attempted to contact B on the 7, 8, 12 and 14 September 2016 but without success.
- 12.3.9 The incident was also referred to the Victim Gateway¹¹ but in accordance with their procedures the case was closed because both parties lived at one address and a safe method of contacting B was not identified in the referral.
- 12.4 16 September 2016**
- 12.4.1 On 16 September 2016 Women Aid established contact with B. It was agreed by B that she would like a support worker but did not wish any further contact or information sharing with the Police. The case was allocated to a support worker.
- 12.5 21 September 2016**
- 12.5.1 On 21 September 2016 B contacted Staffordshire Women's Aid and said that she had left K after he had gone to work and needed somewhere to go. She was very distressed and reported that K controlled everything she did and isolated her from friends and family. She said that at times he barricaded her in the house so that she could not get out. He had threatened to kill himself if she left him and had on occasions put his hands around her throat. He was also reported to have screamed and spat at her. An offer was made to find B Refuge accommodation and although she was concerned about leaving her dogs, she felt her parents might take care of them. A referral for Refuge was made to the Pathway Project in Lichfield and B was offered a place.
- 12.5.2 Staffordshire Police were contacted and informed of the contact from B. They were also informed that K was bombarding B with telephone calls trying to find her.

is emphasised that all other available investigative avenues should be pursued. A lack of engagement by a victim also now automatically generates a risk assessment in which decisions are taken on what further action may be required, including engagement of support services and referral to a MARAC.

¹¹ Victim Gateway has an agreed set of operational processes/guidelines in relation to the triage of victims of crime with a specific process for victims of domestic abuse. These guidelines were approved by the Police, the Service Commissioner, and with the Domestic Abuse Specialist Support Services. The service operates on the agreed assumption that the Police complete a DIAL on every domestic abuse incident and, along with an Early Intervention Worker from the Local Domestic Abuse support service, will make/take any necessary safeguarding measures.

The role of the Victim Gateway when they contact victims of domestic abuse is to ensure:

- That they have appropriate support in place,
- Whether they have had any follow up contact from the Police or Specialist service
- Whether the victim has any additional support needs that are not being met and make necessary referrals or allocate a support worker
- Whether they are happy with that support they were currently receiving

As appropriate, the Victim Gateway team would make referrals to specialist services or allocate one of its own Support workers. The decision to allocate a Gateway Support worker would be made on an individual case taking into account the need to not to duplicate support when a Specialist service is already involved.

- 12.5.3 It was reported to the Police that the DASH¹² risk level score had been assessed by Women's Aid as 13, just below the threshold for referral to MARAC (14).
- 12.5.4 A Police Officer visited B and completed a DIAL form, recording a score of 10. As B had been offered a Refuge placement out of the Stafford area it was concluded that the immediate safeguarding risks had been addressed. Following review by supervisory Police Officer it was decided that the situation would be shared with the MASH although it was noted that the threshold for a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) had not been met at that time¹³.
- 12.5.5 B re-contacted Staffordshire Women's Aid later on 21 September 2016 to say she had changed her mind as she felt unable to leave her dogs. She said she was going to an empty property which belonged to her family and that K did not know about this. B was advised that Staffordshire Women's Aid would contact her to arrange an outreach appointment shortly. Staffordshire Police were also updated.
- 12.5.6 The Women's Aid report for this Review includes a recommendation on addressing issues with pets when offering Refuge accommodation.
- 12.5.7 Also, on 21 September 2016, K visited a Police station claiming to have new information regarding his report on 6 September 2016 of B having been raped. No new information was however provided. A Police Officer recorded K as "*quite difficult to communicate with*" and "*was cryptic with the choice of words he used*". It was recorded that K would not provide anything in writing and that B did not know K had attended the Police station. The incident log from 6 September 2016 was updated and closed with the comment '*No further action needed at this point*'.

12.6 **23 September 2016**

- 12.6.1 On 23 September 2016 a Staffordshire Women's Aid domestic abuse practitioner made contact and then met with B. Practical and emotional one to one support was provided, including in relation to the historical rape but mostly focused upon recent abuse from K. B re-contacted Staffordshire Women's Aid and asked to see someone straight away. This was arranged and further support was subsequently provided.

12.7 **6 October 2016**

- 12.7.1 On 6 October 2016 B met with her Women's Aid support worker. It was recorded that she had returned to live with K but wished to leave. B stated that since her disclosure to K of having been raped he had been highly possessive, controlling and constantly asked her to tell him who raped her. She had lied to him regarding a name and did not want to report it to the Police. K was reported to have stated that he would do 'very serious damage' to whoever committed it. B was noted to be minimising the violence in her relationship with K. She reported that she kept trying to leave K but he found her wherever she went and coerced her back in to a relationship. B was advised that Women's Aid could search for a Refuge if she wished to leave. B said that she was planning to leave the next week but didn't know where to go and would think

¹²A risk assessment checklist for Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence: <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Dash%20risk%20checklist%20quick%20start%20guidance%20FINAL.pdf>. This is the risk assessment model advocated by the College of Policing for use by Police Forces. It is also used by a number of other agencies providing domestic abuse services. There is a version of DASH specifically intended to assess risk in Stalking cases which is referred to as S-DASH. The relationship between this and the DIAL risk assessment model used by Staffordshire Police is discussed in section 13 of this report.

¹³ The MASH makes the decision on whether a case meets the MARAC threshold, including whether a discretionary referral on the basis of professional judgement is appropriate.

about a Refuge. Safety measures (including bank information and mobile phone blocks) were discussed and B was advised that risks would be heightened once she left and that she had more chance of safety if agencies were involved. A DASH risk assessment was completed with a risk score of 13.

12.7.2 A further appointment was offered, and B was logged with the Stafford Vulnerabilities Hub database¹⁴ for discussion at the next meeting, on 20 October 2016.

12.8 10 October 2016

12.8.1 On 10 October 2016 B again met with the Women's Aid support worker and said that she would like to leave her partner on Friday (14 October 2016) and go into Refuge accommodation. On 13 October 2016 a referral in respect of B was made to a domestic violence support service with Refuge provision which accepts pets with their owners. The offered placement was accepted by B and Staffordshire Women's Aid arranged for her to travel to the Refuge.

12.9 14 October 2016

12.9.1 On 14 October 2016 B is reported by F2 to have packed and left as soon as K went to work. She then left her mobile phone with F1 so that she would not be tempted to answer it; although she wanted to be informed by F1 of what K was doing as she was afraid that he would tell Q and her son about her having been raped.

12.9.2 On B's arrival, the Refuge completed an initial risk assessment and gave safety advice to B.

12.9.3 On that date B contacted Staffordshire Police and reported that K had threatened to visit anyone who may know her in an attempt to discover her whereabouts and also threatened to harm himself. B would not divulge her current whereabouts other than to advise that she was "several hundred" miles away.

12.9.4 It was reported that K had sent a large number of text messages and made numerous calls to her mobile, which she had left with a friend (F1), had visited her husband, Q, and had said that he "would be happy to cause people harm in order to find B". She reiterated that K had not assaulted her but had been mentally abusing her with controlling behaviour.

12.9.5 Unsuccessful attempts were made by the Police to contact Q that evening.

12.10 15 October 2016

12.10.1 On 15 October 2016 Staffordshire Police contacted B. She advised that she had a new mobile telephone number and was confident the situation had been resolved by her fleeing her former address. She said she did not wish the Police to talk to K under any circumstances.

12.10.2 B also advised that she had spoken with Q and made him aware of the situation. She asked that his home address be flagged on Police systems.

12.10.3 A crime report for Malicious Communication was recorded, cross referenced to earlier records and subsequently closed on 17 October 2016 due to B not wishing to proceed with an investigation. A DIAL risk assessment was completed on the telephone with score of 8.

12.10.4 Later that day B informed Refuge staff that she had been informed by F1 that K had contacted him and said he knew B was in Cleveland as he had traced her through her

¹⁴ The vulnerabilities hub was a multi-agency arrangement where partner agencies including statutory and voluntary organisations met weekly. Agencies brought their own cases to the hub and responsibility for cases, updates and information logged sat with the agency providing it. Revised "Partnership Hub" arrangements which involve daily discussion of cases, with a weekly meeting to discuss those of greater complexity, are currently being piloted in two areas of Staffordshire with a view to wider roll out.

Internet Provider (IP) address to her current location. She said that she felt safe but wished the Refuge to be aware of the situation. B was re-advised on safe practice.

12.11 20 October 2016

- 12.11.1 On 20 October 2016 B was discussed at the Stafford Vulnerabilities Hub meeting. No further action to be taken by agencies in Staffordshire was identified.
- 12.11.2 Also, on 20 October 2016, B rang Staffordshire Police and requested a 'Clare's Law' (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme¹⁵) disclosure in respect of K. B said she wished to commence this process as she had become aware that K was trying to locate her. B wished to return to Staffordshire where her friends and family were living but was fearful of what K may do.
- 12.11.3 A Police Inspector in the force control room recorded that in B's circumstances 'Clare's Law' did not apply. The recorded rationale for this included that B was a victim of abuse by K, was aware of his violent past and had fled from him. It was considered that a Protection from Harassment Order or Non-molestation Order would be more suitable unless clear offences were disclosed, and that she should contact the Police force where she was resident. This would enable a review of her circumstances and facilitate engagement of the National Centre for Domestic Violence in providing support to obtain an Order.
- 12.11.4 A Staffordshire Police staff manager contacted B and related the above advice, but also recorded concern that B was reporting domestic abuse and that there may be evidence of this on her telephone which she had left in Stafford. Details were passed to Cleveland Police who agreed to make contact with B.
- 12.11.5 Cleveland Police recorded the contact from Staffordshire Police as a request to engage the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme for B who was in their area. B was contacted for further details and the disclosure request was processed and researched before details were passed to the Domestic Abuse Unit for authorisation. The disclosure was subsequently made to B on 27 October 2017 at the Refuge.

12.12 21 October 2016

- 12.12.1 On 21 October 2016 the Refuge submitted a MARAC referral in respect of B. The referral was accompanied by a DASH form which had been completed with B the previous day and assessed the risk score as 15.
- 12.12.2 The document set out the circumstances reported by B as reasons she had left her home and sought help from Women's Aid and included numerous attempts to leave K and his Controlling and Coercive Behaviour. The member of the Refuge staff commented that B was "*minimising*" physical abuse as K was reported to have "*dragged her into the house....pushed her around....had his hands around her throat.*" She had attempted to leave about 12 times but had always gone back because he had found her. When answering the telephone to him he had manipulated and coerced her into returning. On this occasion B had left her telephone with F1 and F2 in Stafford and she had been alerted to K leaving 50 to 100 missed telephone calls and text messages every day. B was stated to be very frightened, scared and afraid of further violence in case K found her, as he had always found her previously. She thought that if he found her this time he would make her return and be very angry she had left him. K would isolate her from her family and friends. He would say she could go out and then when she was ready, would tell her she was not leaving. She was suffering from depression and taking medication, but not having suicidal thoughts. B had stated that when she had left before, K had tracked her down and found her. She fled to another town on one occasion and when K telephoned, she answered, and he heard background noise that helped him locate her. He would harass and stalk her until she returned home. The physical abuse was not frequent;

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-pilot-guidance>

however, the Harassment, Stalking and threatening behaviour would be almost daily. The most recent incident had been the worst physical abuse. Threatening behaviour was worse, and she felt it would continue to be the longer he could not find her.

12.12.3 The Refuge also referred B to a Freedom Programme¹⁶. A waiting list for this was in operation and B had returned to Staffordshire before the start of the next 12-week programme in January 2017.

12.13 24 October 2016

12.13.1 On the evening of 24 October 2016 Q arrived home from work and a car stopped along the bottom of his driveway. K got out, introduced himself and handed Q a piece of paper that contained a phone number. He said, *"You need to talk to me, but you have just got home from work so ... give me a ring"*. Q replied that he did not wish to speak with K who then said, *"You need to talk to me, people are going to get hurt, you're going to get hurt, [B] is going to get hurt, [B's son] is going to get hurt, but if you speak to me I can contain the situation."* K then drove off. Q did not inform anyone about this at the time but did report it to the Police when they visited him on 27 October 2016.

12.14 25 October 2016

12.14.1 On 25 October 2016 B went to the Refuge office presenting as very upset. She stated that she was worried and felt she should call the Police as K was contacting her husband and son making threats and was sending lots of messages to her old mobile number (which was still being held by F1). She was advised to inform her family to report issues to their local Police.

12.14.2 The Refuge also arranged for B to be seen that day by a Solicitor. B informed the Solicitor that two and a half years previously she was raped. She continued that 16 months previously she began a relationship with K and after 3 months she moved in with him, with his abuse of her starting 2 weeks after moving in together. She stated that K was now contacting her husband and son, making threats to tell them about the alleged rape, being verbally abusive and harassing B via social media. B was advised of her options regarding a Non-molestation Order.

12.15 26 October 2016

12.15.1 On 26 October 2016 Staffordshire Women's Aid rang the Refuge to confirm whether B had settled in at the Refuge. Subsequent consultation between Staffordshire Women's Aid and Staffordshire Police led to B's case being closed on the Stafford Vulnerabilities Hub database.

12.16 27 October 2016

12.16.1 On 27 October 2016 an Officer from Cleveland Police Domestic Violence Unit visited B at the Refuge and made a Clare's Law disclosure. A member of Refuge staff was also present to provide support and advice to her after the Officer had left. B informed the Officer that K was trying to find her and sending her threatening text messages which stated he would be visiting her husband to cause him some harm. The Officer contacted Staffordshire Police,

¹⁶ The Freedom Programme is a 12-week support group for women. It aims to:

- help women to understand the beliefs held by abusive men and in so doing recognise which of these beliefs they have shared
- help women to gain self-esteem and the confidence to improve the quality of their lives
- look at the effects of domestic abuse on children
- help women to recognise potential future abusers
- introduce women to community resources such as the Police Domestic Abuse Unit and Rape Crisis.

related the information from B and requested that Q be visited to establish that he was safe and well and to make him aware of K's intentions.

12.16.2 Staffordshire Police Officers visited Q and were informed that K had been to his home on 24 October 2016. He stated no direct threats had been made but recounted what K had said to him. He advised that he had not heard any more since. Q was advised to use the 999 system if needed. Cleveland Police were then updated, and the incident closed.

12.17 1 November 2016

12.17.1 On 1 November 2016 B informed staff at the Refuge that K had 'hacked her Facebook' and that his harassment was getting worse. Refuge staff advised her to close all accounts on social media and change her telephone numbers. B was however noted to be terrified that if she did this, she would not know what he was up to and be even more fearful for the safety of her son and husband. This was noted to be exhausting B as she got no respite from the harassment.

12.18 4 November 2016

12.18.1 On 4 November 2016 Q reported to Staffordshire Police that K had again been to his home and had been making threats to him and his son.

12.18.2 Q informed the Review that K had knocked on his door and shouted that Q was supposed to have called him, to which Q responded that he would call the Police if K did not leave. K had then left as Q called the Police.

12.18.3 This incident was cross referenced to that on 27 October 2016, but no resource was deployed as K had left the vicinity. This call was classified and closed as involving anti-social behaviour. Accordingly, no DIAL was required or recorded and cross referencing with other relevant records was limited.

12.19 8 November 2016

12.19.1 On 8 November 2016 B, with representation of the Solicitor arranged through the Refuge, was granted a Non-molestation Order at a Family Court in the following terms:

- *"The respondent (K) is forbidden to use or threaten violence against the applicant (B) whether by himself or jointly and must not instruct, encourage or in any way suggest that any other person should do so.*
- *The respondent is forbidden to intimidate, harass or pester the applicant whether by himself or jointly with any other person and must not instruct, encourage or in any way suggest that any other person should do so.*
- *The respondent is forbidden to intimidate, harass or pester the applicant whether by himself or jointly with any other person by entering or attempting to enter the applicants home or any other property in which the applicant may from time to time reside or by going within 100 metres of the applicants home or any property in which the applicant may from time to time reside.*
- *The respondent is forbidden to intimidate, harass or pester the applicant whether by himself or jointly with any other person and must not instruct, encourage or in any way suggest that any other person should do so by communicating or attempting to communicate with the applicant by any means whatsoever, other than through a solicitor, to include phone calls, text messages, letters, email and by naming the applicant or referring to her directly or indirectly by commenting on social media including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or any other form of electronic communication".*

12.19.2 Neither Cleveland nor Staffordshire Police were directly made aware of the Order and it was not logged on local systems until they were informed of it by B on 11 and 17 November 2016 respectively. Information about such Orders is logged from the Courts on the Police National Computer (PNC) and accessible there by Police forces.

12.20 **9 November 2016**

12.20.1 On 9 November 2016 B advised a Refuge support worker that she had to return to Court on 21 November 2016 for a hearing in relation to the Non-molestation Order. She also advised that harassment from K was continuing with up to 300 messages received per day, escalating over the day to threats towards B's family. She also reported that K was posting entries about her on social media. She was advised to report these to the Police.

12.20.2 The support worker also discussed with B her outstanding rent for the Refuge, which B advised she could not pay. B stated that her financial affairs were complicated by her having money in her bank account which belonged to her husband. B was advised that she must consider her own position and that if she did not pay her rent, she may have to leave the Refuge.

12.20.3 Also, on 9 November 2016, F1 advised the Staffordshire control room that K was due to be served with the Non-molestation Order in the near future. F1 continued that K had threatened that he would visit F1's home and 'bang on the door' until he was given a mobile number for B. It was requested that this be logged in case K did visit the address of F1 and F2.

12.20.4 This alert was recorded on Police systems as a precaution.

12.21 **10 November 2016**

12.21.1 On 10 November 2016 B advised a Refuge support worker that the Non-molestation Order obtained earlier that week had not yet been served on K and that this was causing her to feel anxious. B stated that K had had similar Orders served on him in the past and he may try to evade receiving it. She said that K had also been threatening her and her son with physical violence and that she had "*geared up*" for service of the Order the previous day by trying to get her family out of the way. B also stated that K was putting things on Facebook such as "*who did the rape in 2014 then?*" which was causing her to panic. B was advised to have her family contact the Police if anything happened.

12.22 **11 November 2016**

12.22.1 On 11 November 2016 B advised a Refuge support worker that she had received an email from K at 0730 that day saying he had been served with the Non-molestation Order. She was advised to report this as a breach of the Order and the support worker agreed to assist B with accessing and providing email evidence to the Police.

12.22.2 B contacted Cleveland Police and advised that K had been served with a Non-molestation Order the previous night and that he had sent her an email stating that he loved her, with a photograph of them both together, that morning. She could not access the full email as she had left her phone in Staffordshire but F1 and F2 were accessing it for her and had sent a screen shot of this to her. She reported that K was therefore in breach of the Non-molestation Order.

12.22.3 A Cleveland Police call taker tried to make an appointment for an Officer to visit B that day but all appointments were full and the report was left on the incident queue for the rest of that day. On the morning of 12 November 2016, a Cleveland Police Officer called B, obtained sufficient details to submit a crime report and gave advice including keeping a diary of incidents. An appointment was then booked for a written statement to be obtained on 14 November 2016.

12.22.4 During her conversation with the Refuge support worker B was asked if she had decided what she would do about her rent and replied that she would have to leave as she could not afford to stay in the Refuge. The support worker advised that she would discuss this with her team leader.

12.23 14 November 2016

12.23.1 On 14 November 2016 a Cleveland Police Officer obtained a statement and other evidence from B regarding breach of the Non-molestation Order by K. A DASH risk assessment was completed by the Officer with B and risk was identified as medium¹⁷, with a risk score of 7.

12.23.2 The Cleveland Police risk assessment was not reviewed by a risk assessment Officer until 5 January 2017, although the incident had been taken into account by a risk assessment Officer reviewing a subsequent incident on 20 November 2016. It was noted that B was at the Refuge and being supported by them.

12.23.3 Details of the complaint from B were forwarded by email to Staffordshire Police on 16 November 2016 with a request for them to take on the investigation as K resided in their area. This was categorised as information 'received from other force'. It was marked for response within 24 hours, but this was subsequently overtaken by a visit by B to Stafford Police station on 17 November 2016.

12.24 15 November 2016

12.24.1 On 15 November 2016 B informed a Refuge support worker that she had received a social media message, purportedly from the wife of a man known to B. The message said that K had been accusing her husband of raping B and asked why B had accused him of being a rapist. B stated that she had replied that she had not made these claims and that the person who posted the message then wrote that K must love B very much and she should talk to him. B said she thought that K had manufactured the social media profile and was behind the communication.

12.24.2 The Refuge support worker informed Cleveland Police of this development and an appointment was made for a Police Officer to meet B on 16 November 2016. This appointment was deferred by B and Cleveland Police were subsequently advised by the Refuge that the matter had been reported to Staffordshire Police (see below). Notwithstanding this a Cleveland Police Officer visited B on 18 November 2016 and confirmed with her that the matter was being dealt with by Staffordshire Police.

12.25 16 November 2016

12.25.1 On 16 November 2016 B informed Refuge staff that she was going to meet Q and would inform him that she had been raped. She stated that she worried about the impact it would have on him if he was told about it by K. She was advised against visiting Stafford but stated that she would be safe and would only stay one night in a pub near to Stafford.

12.25.2 Whilst in the Refuge office, B was reminded that she owed rent to the Refuge. B stated that she would speak with Q about settling this.

12.26 17 November 2016

12.26.1 On 17 November 2016 B visited Stafford Police station, provided a copy of the Non-molestation Order and made a witness statement in respect of the contact from K on 11 November 2016 (which had been subject of an email from Cleveland Police on 16 November 2016) and 15 November 2016. A crime report was recorded in respect of breach of the Non-

¹⁷ Medium Risk being "There are identifiable indicators or risk of serious harm. Offender has potential to cause serious harm but unlikely unless change in circumstances"

molestation Order. No DIAL was however completed, and the matter was not cross referenced to other relevant records as it should have been. It was noted that B was returning to the Refuge outside of Staffordshire.

- 12.26.2 No investigative action was taken by Staffordshire Police beyond obtaining B's witness statement. Review by a Police Inspector on 20 November 2016 led to confirmation that the investigation had been allocated to a named Officer. Any potential action by Staffordshire Police was then superseded by Cleveland Police arresting K on 21 November 2016 and a consequent Court appearance on 23 November 2016 (see 12.30). The crime report was closed on 30 November 2016 on the basis that the matter had been dealt with by Cleveland Police.
- 12.26.3 Consequent to the crime being recorded a notification was sent to the Victim Gateway. This was returned to Staffordshire Police for validation on 2 December 2016 as it apparently did not have the correct telephone number for B. Staffordshire Police responded on 5 December 2016 that the number was that provided by B, but that Cleveland Police were dealing with the case, safeguarding arrangements were in place and no further action was required. Victim Gateway closed the case on 6 December 2016.
- 12.26.4 When B returned to the Refuge, she advised a support worker that she had reported all ongoing incidents to Staffordshire Police. B also said that she had brought back her old mobile which she had left in Stafford and on which there was lots of evidence. The support worker placed this in the Refuge safe for safekeeping.
- 12.26.5 B told the support worker that she had told Q about having been raped and explained the whole situation so that he was aware of the "*potential risk*".
- 12.27 18 November 2016**
- 12.27.1 On 18 November 2016 B's Solicitor confirmed to the Refuge that B should attend court on Monday 21 November 2016 and advised that arrangements had been made for her to enter the Court building through a rear entrance; from where she would be taken to the witness suite.
- 12.27.2 On the evening of 18 November 2016 an on-call member of Refuge staff received a telephone call from F1 who expressed concern for B as he had not been able to contact her all day. The on-call worker attempted to contact B by phone, text, through the Refuge payphone and via the on-site security firm; all without success. The worker was also unsuccessful in contacting the on-call manager. The worker decided that as there was security on site and there was no information recorded to suggest that B had any additional vulnerability this would be passed onto the Saturday morning Refuge staff.
- 12.27.3 Cleveland Police also received a call from F1 on 18 November 2017 expressing similar concerns for B. A Cleveland Police Officer visited the Refuge to see B, who was noted to present as unwell, exhausted and not entirely steady on her feet. B advised the Officer that she would contact F1 to let him know she was alright.
- 12.27.4 F1 informed the Review that when B was back in Staffordshire the following week, she confided to him that on 18 November 2016 she had taken an overdose of prescribed medication in an attempt on her life. B said that she had not told any professional about this and it remained unreported. B also said to F2 and F1 that the Refuge had provided a room but nothing else and the Police were not geared up to deal with what K was doing; being only used to dealing with people who had been beaten up by their partners.
- 12.28 20 November 2016**
- 12.28.1 At 21:24 on the evening of 20 November 2016 B contacted Staffordshire Police and stated that K had again breached the Non-molestation Order by using 'WhatsApp' and fake profiles on 'Facebook' to contact her. B stated that she had also received 25 text messages, but she did not want to open and read them as she was "*a bag of nerves as it is*". She also stated

that K had made a number of threats toward her son. B advised the Police that she was due in court the following day in relation to the Non-molestation Order.

- 12.28.2 Whilst on the phone to the Police B received 2 telephone calls from a number linked to the fake Facebook profile. She arranged for the Police call taker to overhear the male caller who said "*hello (B first name)*". B did not reply but told the Police call-taker that the voice was that of K. B advised that K would be using two mobile phones, one on a contract and the other a 'pay as you go' one.
- 12.28.3 Database research was conducted by the Police and information identified included:
- Details of a Protection from Harassment Order issued by Stafford Crown Court regarding a previous female partner of K,
 - The Non-molestation Order regarding B,
 - That K had previously been the subject of Level 2 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA),
 - 17 Guardian Database referrals,
 - Copy text from records "*In 2007 [K] was on a suspended sentence order with probation supervision for a DV related conviction against a former partner and her new partner. He concealed his relationship with (then new female partner named) for 12 months.*" and "*[K] is a very controlled and intelligent perpetrator who can come across as extremely plausible and polite but has previously assaulted Police Officers and is capable of extreme violence. He has previously stalked and traced ex-partners around the U.K. and is very persistent and organised in his approach and has made his current partner very aware of what he is capable of to trace them and seek revenge. [K] previously locked his partner in her flat and removed any means of contacting help.*"
- 12.28.4 The complaint was recorded as a domestic incident and a crime report recorded for breach of the Non-molestation Order. This was subsequently cancelled on the basis that the alleged offence took place in another force area.
- 12.28.5 A decision to downgrade the incident was then made by the Police control room because B was residing in another Police area and "*this would also not be a domestic on Staffordshire*". B was advised by the control room operator that the information would be passed on to Cleveland Police with a request for them to make contact with her and obtain a statement. It was recorded that B understood this and would await contact from them, but also recorded that B was not happy with this, stating that K would get rid of the phone he had used and that she had had to flee Staffordshire because of him.
- 12.28.6 At 22:07 an email was sent to Cleveland Police requesting that they obtain a statement from B.
- 12.28.7 At 22:12 on 20 November 2016 B contacted Cleveland Police and reported first-hand the issues that she had reported to Staffordshire Police.
- 12.28.8 B again rang Staffordshire Police at 00:31 on 21 November 2016 and asked to speak to a supervisor, advising that K had been contacting her on 'WhatsApp'. In response, at 00:36, a Staffordshire Police supervisor requested an update from Cleveland Police. This was provided at 00:50; that it was a priority response for them and would be addressed. The response was further followed up at 01:40 on 21 November 2016 in a call from a Staffordshire Police supervisor to a supervisor in Cleveland Police.
- 12.28.9 At 01:51 B contacted Cleveland Police and advised that she was still happy to see someone at that time.
- 12.28.10 At 02:42 on 21 November 2016 B again called Staffordshire Police, stating she had not heard from anyone and was thinking of pulling out of the court case as nothing seemed to get done. This was relayed to Cleveland Police who called B at 02:56 and informed her that

all of their resources were busy with emergencies, but they would attend as soon as possible.

12.28.11 At 03:26 on 21 November 2016 B made further contact with Staffordshire Police and said that she was still awaiting contact from Cleveland Police. She stated she wanted to return to her family in Stafford, alleged that K had been threatening her son and complained about the service which she was receiving from the Police. B was recorded as stating "*According to Clare's Law he (K) was at high risk of domestic violence, threats to kill and GBH*" and that if nothing was done, she would go back to K "*...to be done with the whole thing*".

12.28.12 At 03:34 on 21 November 2016 Staffordshire Police again contacted Cleveland Police to advise them of B's most recent contact. B was called by Cleveland Police and advised that she would not be seen as a priority as she was safe and there were still emergencies coming in.

12.29 **21 November 2016**

12.29.1 Around 07:15 on the morning of 21 November 2016 a Cleveland Police Officer visited the Refuge and obtained a statement from B prior to her leaving for Court. B's phone was returned to her from the Refuge safe.

12.29.2 B informed a Refuge senior support worker that K had been calling and texting her all night and asked the support worker to look for a Refuge place in Staffordshire as she wished to return there. She was advised to defer any decision until after the court case. B was then taken to the Family Court by a Cleveland Police Officer and Q.

12.29.3 Q informed the Review Panel that whilst with B in the Court waiting room there were two telephone calls from K to her mobile. Also, that the case was adjourned to the afternoon because K informed the Court that he was stuck in traffic on the motorway and unable to reach Cleveland. Q believes that K was already in Cleveland when these calls were made

12.29.4 K was arrested by Cleveland Police Officers at the Court on 21 November 2016 and detained for offences of breaching the Non-molestation Order.

12.29.5 When B returned to the Refuge, she advised that K had been arrested at Court. She went on to say that she was returning to Stafford with Q, was going to stay with a friend that night and consider a Refuge place the next day. The Refuge senior support worker checked availability in the Stafford area of Refuge spaces and confirmed with Cleveland Police that K was in custody.

12.29.6 Q informed the Refuge support worker that they would make arrangements to pay the outstanding rent owed.

12.29.7 Q informed the Review Panel that whilst K was in custody B took the opportunity, with his assistance, to remove her possessions from the rented house that she had shared with K.

12.29.8 At 17:08 on 21 November 2016 Cleveland Police notified Staffordshire Police that K was in custody for alleged breaches of the Non-molestation Order which were stated to have taken place on 11 and 20 of November 2016. At 2222 on 21 November 2016 Cleveland Police again contacted Staffordshire Police and requested that Officers meet with B, who was in Stafford, at the address which she had formerly shared with K, to recover a mobile phone which should be seized as evidence. Officers met with B, but the phone was unable to be located.

12.29.9 Staffordshire Police also contacted F1 and confirmed that he had sent to Cleveland Police an updated statement and screenshots of messages which had been received from K.

12.29.10 At 03:26 on 22 November 2016 Cleveland Police advised Staffordshire Police that there was sufficient evidence to take the case against K to the Crown Prosecution Service. At 12:01 that date a Detective Inspector in Cleveland Police authorised emergency charges due to PACE time limitations. The Crown Prosecution Service subsequently endorsed this and

authorised charges against K for two breaches of the Non-molestation Order (involving WhatsApp messages). K was detained to attend court on 23 November 2016.

12.29.11 In respect of an additional alleged breach of the Non-molestation Order using Facebook K was bailed by the Police until 28 December 2016 as the Facebook account used could not be evidentially attributed to him. This bail was subsequently cancelled by Cleveland Police as there was insufficient evidence to link K with the fake profile. B was advised on 8 January 2017 that this was to happen.

12.30 23 November 2016

12.30.1 On 23 November 2016 K pleaded guilty at Court in Cleveland to two breaches of the Non-molestation Order and he was fined £400 plus costs.

12.31 24 November 2016

12.31.1 On 24 November 2016 a secondary review of the Staffordshire Police incident log from 20 November 2016 was conducted. The reviewer recorded that the Non-molestation Order breaches were continuations of incidents being dealt with by Cleveland Police, in respect of which K was on Police bail until 28 December 2016 and that therefore no further action was required from Staffordshire Police.

12.32 28 November 2016

12.32.1 At 02:29 on 28 November 2016 B rang Staffordshire Police and reported that K had continued to try and get messages to her via a third party and was posting lies about her on Facebook. She said this felt relentless despite orders and injunctions and his arrest for breaching them. B gave an address in Stafford but stated that she did not know whether K was aware that she was back in Staffordshire.

12.32.2 B was visited by a Police Officer who completed a DIAL with a score of 16 although B was judged to be safe at that time as K did not know where she was residing. The Officer recorded evidential difficulties in proving what B was alleging. A supervisory Officer review concluded that as the third party would not provide evidence and had deleted the relevant material there was no evidence of a breach of the Non-molestation Order and that any action which could be taken had been considered.

12.32.3 On receipt of the DIAL at the MASH a referral was made for B's situation to be discussed at MARAC in Staffordshire.

12.32.4 Later, on 28 November 2016 B telephoned the Refuge and requested details of the Police Officers in Cleveland and Staffordshire who were dealing with her case as she wanted to obtain a crime reference number. She also requested that she be sent the notes from the Non-molestation Order hearing on 21 November 2016 as she could not get in touch with her Solicitor. B said she was in Stafford "*hiding out*" but wanted to collate information about her case. B was called back, advised to contact Staffordshire Police for the Officers' details and informed that the Court notes were being sent to her by the Solicitor.

12.33 30 November 2016

12.33.1 On 30 November 2016 Cleveland Police Domestic Abuse Unit reviewed the MARAC referral in respect of B which had been completed by Refuge staff on 21 October 2016 (see 12.12) and which had been received by Cleveland Police on 9 November 2016. Arrangements were made for B's circumstances to be discussed at a MARAC on 7 December 2016.

12.33.2 Cleveland Police identified that the referral contained a disclosure of an assault in Staffordshire (that K had held B up by the neck and strangled her on 6 September 2016) and referred this, by email with the source document attached, to Staffordshire Police for investigation. Staffordshire Police viewed this as an historic matter referred by a third party

without a formal complaint from the victim. This was not cross referenced to any earlier records and was recorded as a non-crime domestic incident with no further action required.

- 12.33.3 Staffordshire Police contacted Cleveland Police and it was advised that there was a Non-molestation Order in place, that K had breached it and been arrested. Staffordshire Police was informed that K was on Police Bail until the 28 December 2016, but not that he had already pleaded guilty to two breaches of the Non-molestation Order. The information was reviewed by a supervisory Police Officer and the associated incident log was concluded as 'Resolved'.
- 12.33.4 Subsequent research by the Staffordshire Police Crime Administration Unit led to this incident being linked to B's contact with Staffordshire Police on 7 September 2016. A crime report was recorded on 8 December 2016 in respect of the rape alleged by B but there is no indication of this leading to any investigative action. The communication from Cleveland Police did not lead to the non-recording in September 2016 of the alleged physical assaults being addressed.

12.34 1 December 2016

- 12.34.1 On 1 December 2016 the Refuge received a call from a Staffordshire Police Officer who asked if B wanted to press charges for the latest breach of the Non-molestation Order. Refuge staff advised that B had returned to Staffordshire.
- 12.34.2 A Refuge support worker then contacted B who advised that she was currently staying with Q as she had no current address of her own. She stated that she was very frightened to go out and that she could not leave the house to walk her dog for the fear of what K was going to do next. B stated that K had put a "bounty on her head for £1000" and she believed that he would carry this through.
- 12.34.3 The Refuge support worker contacted Staffordshire Women's Aid, informed them of what B had said and asked that B be offered support. Staffordshire Women's Aid were also contacted by Staffordshire Police who advised that B had reported a breach of the Non-molestation Order to Police.
- 12.34.4 Unsuccessful attempts to contact B were made by Staffordshire Women's Aid on 1 and 2 December 2016.

12.35 5 December 2016

- 12.35.1 On 5 December 2016 B telephoned the Refuge and enquired when her case would be discussed at MARAC their area. She was advised that it would be on 7 December 2016 and that she would be updated with the outcome. B provided a telephone number and address where she could be contacted safely.
- 12.35.2 Also, on 5 December 2016, B telephoned Staffordshire Police and reiterated that she had previously fled to a Refuge in Cleveland but that she was now back in Staffordshire. She provided details of Q's home as her current address. B asked for advice about panic alarms and the tenancy situation for the address she used to share with K. She stated she had been sneaking around, wearing wigs and not really leaving the house. B also referred to K having set up a fake Facebook profile recently which had been reported to the Police at Stafford.
- 12.35.3 Staffordshire Police control room contacted the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit and were advised that they were aware of the situation and the case was being heard at MARAC in Staffordshire on 10 January 2017. The contact was recorded on the Guardian database and the incident log was cross referenced to the incident log for 17 November 2016, and then closed.
- 12.35.4 The Stafford Vulnerabilities Hub case in respect of B was re-opened on this date for discussion at the meeting on 8 December 2016. B was thereafter discussed at the Vulnerabilities Hub meeting each week until 22 December 2016.

- 12.35.5 Staffordshire Police also contacted Staffordshire Women's Aid to update them on B's new address and that B would be discussed at the January 2017 MARAC.
- 12.35.6 Staffordshire Women's Aid thereafter contacted B who advised that she was moving into a privately rented house and requested 'Skyguard'¹⁸ to help increase her sense of safety. Staffordshire Women's Aid contacted the Police about Skyguard and were informed that there were none available. B was advised of the Police response. B subsequently enquired about obtaining Skyguard equipment privately but was advised that Skyguard would only provide this equipment to an agency, not an individual.
- 12.35.7 Staffordshire Women's Aid are recorded as agreeing to try to take out a private Skyguard contract on behalf of B but feeling that this was highly unlikely because although B felt unsafe, objectively there was no evidence that she was unsafe.
- 12.35.8 Women's Aid records also make reference to B asking for Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support at this time, but only wanting home visits and being advised that Women's Aid were unable to facilitate this but could offer telephone support.
- 12.35.9 At 23:03 on 5 December 2016 B rang Staffordshire Police to report that K had been to Q's address, where she was staying, and had been banging on the window. B advised that there was a Non-molestation Order in place and stated that she had spoken to K and warned him that he was going to get arrested if he did not leave. He had been begging her to speak to him and to calm him down she went to a nearby pub to speak with him. B alleged that K had told her he knew she was back and had been having the house watched. She alleged that K had threatened that if Q came home and rang the Police, he would stab him, stating that K was a violent man and he may do this.
- 12.35.10 B stated that she was a nervous wreck and was on medication because of everything that was going on with K. B further stated she could not leave the house and always had the curtains closed because she was so scared and worried.
- 12.35.11 Q informed the Review Panel that B had called him to say that she was going to the pub with K as she thought she could talk him round and as it was a public place, she thought it would be safe. B had told Q not to go to the pub but agreed to text Q every ten minutes, which she did.
- 12.35.12 A crime report was recorded in respect of a breach of the Non-molestation Order. This included that B had gone to a pub with K "*to placate him.*"
- 12.35.13 Police Officers were directed to attend but then diverted to another incident. Patrols became free in the early hours of 6 December 2016 but noted the address was all in darkness and left the incident to be responded to later that day.
- 12.35.14 A Police Officer later visited B, obtained a statement from her and completed a DIAL with a score of 16. The attending officer added that "*...[B] disclosed she went for a drink with the suspect, I have viewed the CCTV there is no force shown, there is no way he would know where she was without her complicity and she did spend some hours with the suspect.*"
- 12.35.15 The Officer thereafter liaised with a Senior Police Officer who advised that K was not to be arrested because, on the basis of the factors recorded by the attending Officer on the DIAL form (see above) it was concluded that B had voluntarily engaged with K and gone to a pub with him. K was visited by the Police Officer and warned about having contact with B. During this visit, K showed the Officer messages on his phone, purporting to be from B and inviting him to meet her. The Police investigation following the death of B identified that K had used a second mobile phone to send messages, purporting to be from B, to himself.

¹⁸ 'Skyguard' is a telephone based system offering direct connection to lines monitored by staff who can then alert the necessary emergency services. In Staffordshire it has been superseded by 'TecSOS', with provision of enhanced facilities and greater capacity.

12.35.16 A crime report for breach of the Non-molestation Order was recorded by the Officer. This was filed citing evidential difficulties because B had willingly gone with K to the pub.

12.36 7 December 2016

12.36.1 On 7 December 2016 B's circumstances were discussed at a MARAC in Cleveland. It was noted that B had moved back to Staffordshire and that the Refuge had referred B to Staffordshire Women's Aid. It was agreed that Cleveland Police would confirm with Staffordshire Police that they were fully aware of the circumstances and transfer the case to Staffordshire MARAC.

12.36.2 Also, on 7 December 2016, the Victim Gateway were advised of the incident on 5 December 2016. B was contacted and advised that she had moved home that day and had someone visiting to check that it was safe. B was invited to contact the Victim Gateway if she needed any additional support and the case was then closed.

12.37 8 December 2016

12.37.1 On 8 December 2016 Staffordshire Police advised Staffordshire Women's Aid that there had been a further breach of the Non-molestation Order and that K had claimed that he had been contacted by B (see 12.35.9). When Staffordshire Women's Aid contacted B, she said that she had agreed to speak with K because she felt Q might be at risk if she did not. B stated that she had moved into a new rented property and asked about the Sanctuary scheme¹⁹. Staffordshire Women's Aid consequently referred B to that scheme. The following day Stafford Borough Council informed Staffordshire Women's Aid that B did not qualify for the Sanctuary scheme. B was notified of this by Staffordshire Women's Aid on 12 December 2016.

12.37.2 The Review Panel was informed that Sanctuary works were not agreed by the Council because the circumstances did not meet the criteria laid out by Government. In this respect Sanctuary is intended to allow victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes and is not for additional security measures when victims have left Refuge accommodation.

12.38 16 December 2016

12.38.1 At 18:27 on 16 December 2016 B rang Staffordshire Police to complain that K had been posting comments on Facebook. The comments didn't refer to B directly but allegedly alluded to her "*through her interests*". She stated she was not on Facebook, but people were letting her know and it was "*freaking me out*". One of the posts on Facebook was reported to be of K visiting Stafford Crematorium. B stated that K had no relatives there, but her mother was buried there. B stated that previously, before there was a Non-molestation Order in place, she had received hundreds of messages including messages about how K had gone to the crematorium and told her mum what "*an effing bitch*" she was and "*vile stuff*" and "*how she must be really proud*" of her.

12.38.2 B referred to a further Facebook message about a stolen £4000 engine being located and him going to retrieve it. She said it related to an engine in her scooter that K "*did up*" for her when they were together and that since the end of their relationship, he had demanded return of the engine or payment for it.

12.38.3 B also reported that she suspected K had caused damage at their former shared address which she had visited with estate agents on 13 December 2016.

¹⁹ A Sanctuary Scheme is a multi-agency victim centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing a 'Sanctuary' in the home and through the provision of support to the household. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanctuary-schemes-for-households-at-risk-of-domestic-violence-guide-for-agencies>

- 12.38.4 A Police Officer visited B on 17 December 2016 and recorded that since K had been served with the Non-molestation Order there been no breaches of the Order. The Officer observed that while B believed the Facebook postings by K were referring to her they did not have any obvious relevance to her. A DIAL was also completed with a risk score of 13. A crime report was also recorded in respect of criminal damage to the former shared address. This was subsequently filed on 12 January 2017, because the owner of the property did not want further action taken after B arranged to have the damage repaired.
- 12.38.5 A Police Sergeant reviewed the response to the contact from B and was satisfied with the action taken, adding to the record that K had not brought the comments to the attention of B or asked that this should be done.

12.39 20 December 2016

- 12.39.1 On 20 December 2016 the Victim Gateway received details from Staffordshire Police of B's contact on 16 December 2016, including details of damage reported to her previous address. A Victim Gateway worker telephoned B who requested some advice about the legal system and her options. The Victim Gateway worker agreed to refer B to a Victim Gateway support worker. It was however identified that B was already engaged with Women's Aid and that they were providing her with advice. After discussing this with B the Victim Gateway case was closed.
- 12.39.2 Also, on 20 December 2016, B telephoned Staffordshire Women's Aid and stated that she felt safer at home as K did not know where she was. She was concerned that K had moved from their former home and that if she did not know K's location it would put her at more risk. It was explained that information about his new address was confidential and could not be disclosed. B mentioned Skyguard again and said that she was concerned that K would kidnap her and she would not be able to call 999. It was explained that a Skyguard was not available and other safety plans were discussed.
- 12.39.3 B requested a referral for counselling. It was explained to B that counselling is something that would normally come later, during the process of longer-term recovery, and when a person felt ready to face the psychological impact of their abuse. B maintained that she would still like to take up counselling and a referral was agreed. B was advised however that there was a waiting list and that the service would not be available before the MARAC (on 10 January 2017)²⁰.

12.40 21 December 2016

- 12.40.1 On 21 December 2016 B visited Stafford Police Station to speak with a Vulnerability Unit Police Officers regarding concerns that nothing was being done to address K's behaviour. She was accompanied by F2 and both had a meeting with the Senior Police Officer who had advised that K was not to be arrested.
- 12.40.2 F2 informed the Review Panel that, during the meeting, the Senior Police Officer informed B that K was not to be prosecuted because B had willingly gone to the pub with him and that K had shown messages to the Police in which B had invited him to meet her (see 12.35.15).
- 12.40.3 F2 further stated that the Senior Police Officer advised B to get rid of her social media and mobile telephone accounts as these were enabling harassment to continue. When the need to retain evidence was raised by B, she was incorrectly informed that all of the evidence had been documented by Cleveland Police. The advice given to B was subsequently followed by her.

²⁰ Staffordshire Women's Aid has a team of qualified volunteer counsellors but with limited resource availability. Further explanation of the service is provided at footnote 34.

12.40.4 After the meeting B telephoned her sister and related an account of it similar to that provided by F2. B's sister informed the Review Panel that the meeting caused B to be "*in a bad way*" and to feel that she was not going to get any support. B was also reported to have said that the Non-molestation Order was not worth the paper it was written on.

12.41 22 December 2016

12.41.1 On 22 December 2016 B's case on the Vulnerabilities Hub was closed on the basis that B was engaged with all relevant agencies and there was nothing further that the Vulnerabilities Hub could add to the case at that time.

12.42 23 December 2016

12.42.1 On 23 December 2016 B telephoned Staffordshire Women's Aid and stated that she had accidentally called K when trying to delete his number and had received an abusive text. She said she had reported this to Police but had been told that as she called him first they could not take action and had warned her that she was making the Non-molestation Order unenforceable by contacting K.

12.42.2 B said that K was in Court in Cleveland on 28 December 2016 and asked for an update on this. After checking with Staffordshire Police, B was advised that 28 December 2016 was the date when K had to answer bail at the Police Station, not a Court appearance.

12.43 25 December 2016

12.43.1 On 25 December 2016 K called Staffordshire Police and referred to the alleged rape of B two years previously. He stated he was not able to cope with what had happened to her, and therefore drove her away.

12.43.2 K stated that he had information about a male whom he had contacted whilst pretending to be B, telling this male "*I've still got the video*" and "*Rape catches up with someone, did you think you'd get away with it?*" and this male had denied any involvement. K gave a name for this male and said he felt the need to let someone know what he had found out but could not tell B as he was not allowed to contact her.

12.43.3 The Call Taker sent an e-mail containing the information to the Police Sergeant who had spoken with B in September 2016, when she first disclosed to the Police that she had been raped. The incident log was cross referenced to some other records but not all.

12.44 26 December 2016

12.44.1 On 26 December 2016 a man reported to Staffordshire Police that he had received text messages, starting on the evening of 24 December 2016 that called him a rapist. He had then also received telephone calls. He said that he had answered a call on that date and a male had talked about a rape and made threats to extort money. The caller also reported that his 16-year-old daughter had received a text message from the same number, which was provided to the Police, stating that her father was a rapist.

12.44.2 A Police Officer attended the following day (27 December 2016), obtained a witness statement and images of the communications and recorded a crime report for Malicious Communication. It was recorded that one call answered by the complainant "*asked for money instead of going to the Police*" although the majority represented a course of conduct exhibiting Harassment and Stalking behaviour.

12.44.3 Overall a total of 136 contacts were made from the phone number between 24 and 31 December 2016. The phone number was identified on 27 January 2017 as an unregistered pre-paid phone and the crime report was filed as having no further lines of enquiry.

12.44.4 The investigating Officer for this crime was advised on 10 January 2017 that the same phone number had been used on 31 December 2016 to contact F1, with the threatening and

abusive contact alleged to have been made by K. It has not been established why this did not lead to K being investigated as a suspect for this crime.

12.44.5 The sim card/telephone number was subsequently linked to K following his arrest in February 2017 and associated seizure of electronic equipment. This crime, charged as Harassment and Stalking, was one for which K was convicted.

12.45 28 December 2016

12.45.1 On 28 December 2016 the same complainant as on 26 December 2016 reported to Staffordshire Police that he had received more threatening calls from a withheld telephone number. The person calling him had said they were going to come around and break his legs and accurately described things that the complainant had in his garage. Complainant was concerned as the matter seemed to be escalating. The complainant was offered a Police Officer visit but was content that the Officer investigating his previous report be informed of the new development. Details were emailed to that Officer and the incident was closed with a classification of Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour. The rationale for this classification has not been established.

12.45.2 Also, on 28 December 2016, B saw a GP at a Staffordshire surgery where she registered following her return from Cleveland. She explained her situation and advised that she had obtained an injunction. She declined offers of primary care counselling and referral by the GP to Women's Aid.

12.46 30 December 2016

12.46.1 On 30 December 2016 B called Staffordshire Women's Aid following up her request for counselling. She said she was struggling with anxiety and would like to access counselling as soon as possible. B also stated that K had recently sent emails to Q's work, falsely claiming that he had a history of child abuse²¹. She was advised to inform the Police of latest incident.

12.47 31 December 2016

12.47.1 On 31 December 2016 F1 received a threatening and abusive text message on his mobile phone. A further text message indicated that the caller was outside F1's address. F1 and F2 were not at their home address at the time of the message but their adult children were. No-one was seen outside the house.

12.47.2 This incident was reported to the Police, classified as malicious communication and a crime report for that offence was recorded. The Police call handler identified that the originating number was the same as that used in the calls to the complainant on 26 and 28 December 2016 (see 12.44 & 12.45) and cross referenced the incidents.

12.47.3 A Police sergeant recorded that they would be the investigating Officer for this crime and on 9 January 2017 documented an investigation plan. It noted that subscriber information for the phone number used had already been applied for by the officer investigating the calls reported on 26 and 28 December 2016. That officer was informed about the complaint from F1 on 10 January 2017. Identification of the phone number used as relating to an unregistered pre-paid mobile was recorded on the crime report for this incident on 28 January 2017.

12.47.4 The investigation was re-allocated to a Vulnerability Unit Officer and subsequently incorporated within the investigation plan developed by a Supervisory Detective Officer from

²¹ This had occurred on 29 December 2016 but was not reported to the Police until 7 January 2017.

the Staffordshire Police Force Safeguarding Investigation Unit on 8 February 2017 (see 12.74).

12.48 4 January 2017

- 12.48.1 On 4 January 2017 B called Staffordshire Women's Aid and referred to ways that K had been contacting her indirectly, including sending messages through Facebook using different names. She also stated that he was demanding money from her for a scooter engine and felt she may need the help of a Solicitor for this. It was explained to B that a counselling appointment was not yet available, but she would be advised as soon as one became available.
- 12.48.2 F1 advised the Review Panel that K had initiated Court proceedings against B in relation to the scooter engine. He is of the view that this was intended as a means of harassing and getting to see B. He said that he had told the Police of this and his perspective on it but that they could not recognise it as part of K's scheme; stating that "...*they never linked the things together*". No record of this information being passed to the Police has been found.
- 12.48.3 The call was followed up by Staffordshire Women's Aid contacting Staffordshire Police to establish if K had been charged with breach of the Non-molestation Order when he answered his bail (on 28 December 2016). Staffordshire Police agreed to follow this up with Cleveland Police. On 5 January 2017 Staffordshire Women's Aid were advised that a decision had not yet been made on this issue.

12.49 7 January 2017

- 12.49.1 Around midday on 7 January 2017 B's son contacted Staffordshire Police and referred to problems his mother and Q had been having with K. He was recorded as stating he had luckily escaped any issues with K until then but had received an 'In Sympathy' card, inside of which was written "*did you know your mum was raped [Redacted] ask your mum if she denies it make her do a polygraph test*". He stated that Q had also received an 'In Sympathy' card.
- 12.49.2 B's son advised that he had been told by his mother that an Order was in place with conditions that K was not to contact him or his address.
- 12.49.3 Lateral research was conducted which identified the terms of a Protection from Harassment Order made in 2008 relating to a previous partner of K as well as that in respect of K. Details of the earlier Order were copied to the current incident record in error.
- 12.49.4 An appointment was made for B's son to attend Stafford Police station to speak directly with a Police Officer. When he did so, on 8 January 2017, a statement was obtained, and the card and envelope were taken for forensic examination. The record of this incident was not cross referenced with any others relating to the actions of K. A crime report in respect of Malicious Communication was recorded. The investigation of this was part of the plan initiated on 8 February 2017. The crime report was still open when B died in February 2017.
- 12.49.5 Later on 7 January 2017 Q visited Stafford Police station to complain about the behaviour of K. He reiterated his report in November 2016 that K had visited his home in early November 2016 and left him a piece of paper with his phone number on. Then, on 29 December 2016 an e-mail purporting to be from the mother of a 15-year-old girl was sent to his place of employment. It falsely alleged that he had had some sort of sexual relationship with the girl. Q said that fortunately his Managing Director had been able to stop the e-mail from reaching all but about 6 of his fellow employees. There is absolutely no basis to the allegation made in the email.
- 12.49.6 Q continued that on 7 January 2017 he had received an 'In Sympathy' card, hand delivered through his letter box. The card had written inside it "*did u know (B) was raped [Redacted] ask her to take a polygraph if she denies!! As she lies well*". He believed the card had come from K.

12.49.7 A crime report in respect of Malicious Communication was recorded on 12 January 2017 and statements were obtained from Q on 15 and 20 January 2017. Investigation of this was part of the plan initiated on 8 February 2017, but the crime report was still open when B died.

12.50 9 January 2017

12.50.1 On 9 January 2017 B called the Refuge, informed them about the 'In Sympathy' cards received by her son and husband and stated that she thought these meant that K intended to kill her. She said this had been reported to the Police and she had been advised to delete 'WhatsApp' from her phone. B stated that she did not feel safe at home alone and was advised that a Refuge near her may be her best option²².

12.51 10 January 2017

12.51.1 On 10 January 2017 a MARAC in Staffordshire considered B's situation. DIAL risk scores referred to at the meeting were 16, 16 & 13. Owing to operational circumstances there was no representation at the MARAC from the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit. The meeting agreed that agencies were to "flag and tag" case files to ensure that victims of K were monitored and repeat incidents investigated. A named support worker was to provide feedback to B and a named Police Vulnerability Unit Officer was to "monitor the case".

12.51.2 On the evening of 10 January 2017 Q reported to Staffordshire Police that earlier that day an e-mail had been received by at least 26 of his work colleagues containing the same content as the e-mail which he had reported to the Police on 7 January 2017, although the sender's name was different. He said this was causing problems at his work and that he strongly suspected the e-mail had been sent by K. Q visited Stafford Police Station by arrangement and a crime report for malicious communication was recorded. The emails were viewed and the 'In Sympathy' card and envelope received by Q were taken for examination. This incident log was cross referenced with the one from 7 January 2017 and statements were obtained from Q on 15 and 20 January 2017 in relation to both events. Investigation of this was part of the plan initiated on 8 February 2017. The crime report was still open when B died in February 2017.

12.52 11 January 2017

12.52.1 On 11 January 2017 Staffordshire Women's Aid provided feedback to B from the MARAC. B referred to the incidents involving her son and Q, consequent to which she had been advised by the Police to amend the Non-molestation Order to include these individuals. An appointment was made for B to see a Solicitor on 18 January 2017 to discuss if this was possible. B said that she had been updated by Cleveland Police that no further action would be taken in respect of the outstanding alleged breach of the Non-molestation Order due to insufficient evidence (see 12.29.11).

12.52.2 Also, on 11 January 2017, B visited her GP²³, whom she informed that an injunction was in place and that she had contacted the Police as K had been driving around looking for her. B said she was being supported by friends and was waiting for Women's Aid counselling. She said she had explored suicidal ideation. The GP noted Underlying Post Traumatic Stress. and recalls B saying, "*I'm not the one with the mental health condition he is*".

²² The Refuge provider advised the Review Panel that B choosing to contact them at this time was not significant. The door had been left open for B to do so and it was observed that some women develop a close relationship with their Refuge and feel comfortable talking to staff there.

²³ This was a different GP to the one seen by B in December 2016. This GP was however seen by B on all subsequent visits to the GP practice.

12.53 13 January 2017

- 12.53.1 On the morning of 13 January 2017 B rang Staffordshire Police and related a history of events involving K since their relationship started, as previously reported to the Police. This included the matters also reported to the Police by her son and husband. B reported that she had received a Facebook 'friend' request from a fake profile in her own name and that this profile was connected to a Facebook open site which was abusive to B and mentioned the alleged rape. B reported that Q had also received e-mails pretending to be from her. K was further alleged to have driven past her husband's address that day and the previous evening.
- 12.53.2 This was recorded as a domestic incident, but the record was not cross referenced with any other relevant records.
- 12.53.3 With B's agreement an appointment was made for later in the day for a Police Officer to speak with her. When the Officer did so a crime report was recorded for breach of the Non-molestation Order and an incident recorded on the Guardian database. The Officer visited B on 14 January 2017 and obtained a statement from her. A DIAL was also completed which had a risk score of 18.
- 12.53.4 In parallel with this a Police Vulnerability Unit Officer advised Staffordshire Women's Aid that B had reported breaches of the Non-molestation Order but, inaccurately, that there was no new information that the Police had not already dealt with.
- 12.53.5 The crime report was filed on 20 February 2017, with K named as the suspect but not interviewed owing to evidential difficulties.

12.54 15 January 2017

- 12.54.1 On 15 January 2017, as a result of the high DIAL score from B's contact with the Police on 13 January 2017, a supervisory review was undertaken and recorded on the incident log from that date. The messages were acknowledged as abusive but not threatening, it was noted that B and K did not live together, that K did not know where B was residing, and that Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit Officers had been involved in relation to safeguarding. The incident log was closed.
- 12.54.2 On the afternoon of 15 January 2017 B called Staffordshire Police and complained about a further alleged breach of the Non-molestation Order by K sending emails to her husband which had been made to appear as if she had sent them. She also reported that K had been driving in the street where her husband lived, which had been captured on a video recording, and that there had been posts on a fake Facebook profile, naming her and stating "*horrible things*". The call taker asked if B was blocking them and she advised that she did not have a Facebook profile but that friends were letting her know.
- 12.54.3 B stated that she was staying with her husband in Stafford at this time because she could not cope any more. An appointment was made for a Police Officer to see B and Q later that evening. It was recorded that B was under the impression that Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit Officers were taking ownership of her situation and that statements were to be forwarded to that team. The call taker noted that B stated she "*felt very low over all this and this is really getting her down.*"
- 12.54.4 B and Q were visited by a Police Officer and witness statements were taken.
- 12.54.5 Q stated to the Police that on 12 January 2017 he was returning home and saw K driving along the road where he lived. Q later went out and walked to a local public house returning some 2 hours later. On his return he discovered the garden chairs in his back garden had been moved and a water butt had been emptied and left upside down on a path next to his garage. Q further stated that on 13 January 2017 he was leaving his home and saw K in his car in the road where he lives. He recorded this on his mobile telephone. He sent the video to the Police Officer along with several e-mails he had received. Q believed K was targeting

him to try and get at B as he did not know where she was residing. These matters had not been reported on the days that they had occurred.

- 12.54.6 A crime report for malicious communication was recorded.
- 12.54.7 The investigation of these matters was allocated to a Police Vulnerability Unit Officer. It was still open when B died in February 2017.
- 12.54.8 Details of complaints from B about fake Facebook profiles were received by the Victim Gateway on 17 January 2017 and they established telephone contact with B on 22 January 2017. B stated that the issues had been ongoing for a while and that K was still posting horrible things about her online and continuing to make fake profiles. B said she believed that K might also be making counter allegations to the Police, but she had not heard from the Police since making the report and would like an update. Victim Gateway agreed to ask the Police to update B.

12.55 16 January 2017

- 12.55.1 On 16 January 2017 Staffordshire Police advised Staffordshire Women's Aid of the matters reported by B the previous day and that the evidence concerning these was to be reviewed.

12.56 17 January 2017

- 12.56.1 On the morning of 17 January 2017, a person purporting to be a neighbour of Q rang Staffordshire Police by mobile phone and reported seeing two males jump over a wall into Q's garden. Officers attended and no men or anything else untoward was found. It was later confirmed that there was nothing amiss at the property and CCTV there (installed because of problems with K) did not show anyone entering the garden. Neighbours were spoken to and none had called the Police or recognised the mobile phone number used. It was assessed to be a fictitious call.
- 12.56.2 In the early evening of 17 January 2017 Q called the Police and reported concerns for B's safety. He stated that due to the ongoing problems she had been contacting him every night, but he hadn't heard from her that evening, and neither had her friends. He said that when he had spoken with her the previous night, she was very upset and kept saying she could not take any more. He was worried whether she may have attempted suicide. He had visited her address but got no reply although B's dog was in the house. Enquires were made with hospitals and the ambulance service, which confirmed that B was being taken to Hospital (see below).
- 12.56.3 F1 and F2 visited B's address and managed to rouse B, who told them that she had taken an overdose. B then called for an ambulance, stating that she had taken an overdose of Paracetamol and Diazepam and had drunk 2 bottles of wine the previous night (16 January 2017) and that she wanted to die. B told the attending WMAS staff that she had an injunction against K who kept breaking it and causing her to have panic attacks.
- 12.56.4 B was taken to County Hospital, Stafford (UHM) where she reported having taken an overdose of prescribed and over the counter medication with wine. She said that she had taken the overdose the previous evening and then passed out, waking up on the evening of 17 January feeling nauseous and low in mood.
- 12.56.5 Blood tests did not reveal anything of significance. B was stable and said to hospital staff that she would be staying with friends who had contacted MIND (mental health charity) and were awaiting an appointment. She stated that she had issues in her personal relationships and no thoughts of self-harm. It was noted that she had no dependents at home.
- 12.56.6 F1 and F2 informed the Review Panel that neither of them had contacted MIND regarding B or had any plans to do so. The basis for B's reference to MIND, has not been established.

- 12.56.7 There is no indication in the hospital records of B being asked if she had previously attempted suicide, of the reference to “*issues in her personal relationships*” being explored, or of a risk assessment being completed. F2 informed the Review that the only risk assessment undertaken was a doctor asking B “*Are you going to do it again?*”
- 12.56.8 Further, there is no indication that the quantity of prescription drugs which B might still have at home was explored with her as it should have been. Hospital staff did, appropriately, establish that B had no dependents at her home.
- 12.56.9 B was discharged after 3 hours in the Emergency Department and a discharge summary was sent to B’s GP. This identified a moderate risk of further harm.
- 12.56.10 Later that evening Q reported to the Police that while he had been looking for B and with her at the hospital someone had delivered a takeaway meal to his home that he had not ordered. Q also said that he had seen K driving past his house. The incident was recorded for information and cross referenced to the earlier incident reporting someone jumping over a wall.

12.57 18 January 2017

- 12.57.1 On 18 January 2017 Staffordshire Women’s Aid received a number of calls regarding B.
- From Staffordshire Police, advising that B had been admitted to hospital, having taken an overdose the previous day. Further, that the Police were going through all of B’s complaints to see if they could put together evidence for a Stalking offence or breach of the Non-molestation Order. Women’s Aid offered to support B at a meeting to discuss evidence gathering for future incidents.
 - From F2, who expressed concern about B’s mental health and was advised to ring the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT).
 - Finally, notification that B had not attended an appointment with her Solicitor.
- 12.57.2 Attempts by Staffordshire Women’s Aid to contact B by telephone were unsuccessful.
- 12.57.3 B’s GP did however speak with her. B advised that she was waiting for Women’s Aid and staying at a friend’s house. The GP concluded that an urgent referral to mental health services was required and sent a referral by FAX to the South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT) access point. The access point FAX was not working on 18 January 2017 and the FAX was not therefore received on that date (see 12.59.1).
- 12.57.4 On the afternoon of 18 January 2017 Q called SSSFT and asked to talk about B, saying that she had been mentally abused. The call taker then spoke directly with B, who stated that she had been mentally abused by her ex-partner and had contacted Women’s Aid but that had been weeks ago and there had been no interaction from them, and was being dragged through the court by her ex-partner.
- 12.57.5 B said that her GP was willing to refer her into mental health services and asked whether, if she was to engage with them, her mental health would have to be shared with the Court. The call taker advised that this was not something that they could answer but that if she had a referral into the team and an assessment this was something she could ask the Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN). B said she would think about a referral.
- 12.57.6 B’s sister informed the Review panel that the potential impact of accessing mental health services on her credibility as a witness was a major concern for B around this time. She continued that B had wanted to be admitted to St Georges Hospital (Stafford) but had said that she could not pursue this because K would use it against her.

12.58 19 January 2017

- 12.58.1 On 19 January 2017 B contacted her GP complaining of severe abdominal pain, suspected to be the result of having overdosed on Ibuprofen. She was seen on a home visit by her GP, who provided advice and reduced her prescribed medication.
- 12.58.2 At 21:00 on 19 January 2017 a takeaway meal which had not been ordered was delivered to the home address of Q. This was not reported at the time. Subsequent to the death of B it was confirmed by the Police that the mobile phone number used to order this meal was the same as that used to report males jumping over a wall at the address on 17 January 2017 and attributed to K.

12.59 20 January 2017

- 12.59.1 In the early afternoon of 20 January 2017 B called SSSFT. She said her GP had sent a referral and wanted to know when she would be seen. The SSSFT worker called the GP and was informed that an urgent referral had been FAXed on 18 January 2017. It was established that the SSSFT FAX machine was not working on that date so the referral was not received. The SSSFT worker thereafter re-contacted the GP and provided an email address for the referral to be re-sent. SSSFT also called B, apologised, let her know what had happened, and advised that the referral was being resent urgently.
- 12.59.2 SSSFT advised the Review that all GP surgeries had been contacted and told that the access point FAX was not working on 18 January 2017 and that to make any referrals by phone until further notice. It is clear that the GP who made the referral in respect of B was not aware of this.
- 12.59.3 The re-sent GP referral was received by SSSFT on the afternoon of 20 January 2017 and B was contacted by telephone. She reported mostly sleeping since taking an overdose on 16 January 2017 of prescribed and over the counter medication with alcohol. B stated that she was experiencing pain in her ribs and could not walk easily, having to go up and downstairs on her bottom. She said that she did not have any medical treatment in hospital. Also, that she had been staying with her friend but would be going home later and would then be on her own. The trigger for the overdose was identified by B as constant harassment from her abusive ex- partner. B denied current suicidal ideation, with her main concern being her physical health.
- 12.59.4 Following consultation with B's GP, who advised that she should return to the hospital, and telephone contact with F2 who advised that B was again sleeping, SSSFT called an ambulance. B was conveyed to County Hospital, Stafford where she reported having abdominal pain and black coloured urine following an overdose. B said that she felt low and would like to speak with the mental health crisis team. B was prescribed medication for a urinary tract infection and arrangements were made for the CRHT team to see her at the hospital.
- 12.59.5 B was assessed by a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) and an Occupational Therapist from the CRHT team. B spoke at length about being harassed by K. She stated that when she met him he was charming, charismatic and paid her a lot of attention which she liked. As a result, she left her husband and went to live with K.
- 12.59.6 B stated that within two weeks of being with K she realised that he was a "*psychopath*", that he had spoken about how he could cable tie her up and drag her out of bed and take her up 'the chase', he pushed and threw her about and put his hands around her throat. She stated that she left him twelve times but kept going back because he would charm her again, expressing his love for her.
- 12.59.7 B said she had informed K that she had been raped and not told anyone, and that he had since threatened to tell her husband and her adult son about this. She further stated that he

had threatened to harm her son and husband and that she had been told that K was mixing with some nasty people and had put £1000 on her head or that of her dog.

- 12.59.8 B stated that she was involved with Women's Aid and they had got her into a Refuge in Cleveland, where the Police were supportive and a MARAC had been held. Also, that after moving back to Stafford she found that Staffordshire Police were not being as helpful. She said she had been questioned by them and they had accused her of playing games with them as she had been seen on CCTV with K and she did not appear scared. B reported that she went to meet K as she was scared about what he would do to her son and that when she met him she was under the influence of alcohol and had taken Diazepam.
- 12.59.9 B explained that a MARAC had been held in Staffordshire, but she was not aware of the details. She has an injunction in place for K not to come near her but he was still getting to her by setting up fake Facebook accounts in her name and using her profile picture. She had accessed information by using Clare's Law and found out that he had previous convictions for GBH and had had injunctions put in place in the past.
- 12.59.10 B stated that she had not been able to walk her dog for a few days due to anxiety and panic attacks. She was struggling to eat and drink and had gone from a size 14 to a size 8 in the last year whilst it had been going on. She was aware of the strain it is having on everyone and had lost several jobs due to his constant harassment. Financially she was currently okay, but she feared that her money was going fast and it would not last. She had been smoking excessively, up to 60 cigarettes a day, but she stated that more recently she could not smoke.
- 12.59.11 B stated that she was aware that she was not looking after herself and was mostly living off milkshakes and yoghurt drinks. She said she was prescribed Diazepam and an antidepressant. She reported that she had stopped taking the antidepressant recently but was unable to say why, reporting that her anxiety was the biggest problem. During the discussion B was tearful and very drowsy.
- 12.59.12 B disclosed having previously taken an overdose but did not provide any details. She denied any current suicidal thoughts and stated that she needed help.
- 12.59.13 The CRHT professionals found it difficult to complete a full assessment owing to B's physical ill health and it was agreed to complete it the next day (21 January 2017) at 13:00 as part of a 72-hour assessment with daily visits at the address of F2 where B intended to stay. B was discharged from the hospital and provided with transport home by the CRHT staff.

12.60 21 January 2017

- 12.60.1 At 13:30 on 21 January 2017 a CRHT CPN visited B at F2's address to complete the assessment. B was dressed and spent large periods of the visit discussing K and abuse by him.
- 12.60.2 B reported that she felt physically and mentally exhausted and due to this was finding it difficult to walk. She reported ongoing stomach pain as a result of the overdose and said that she was spending long periods in bed, including during the day, and also reported broken sleep where she was tossing, turning and ruminating over the current situation. B also reported having a poor appetite, drinking milkshakes, having some yoghurts and a couple of pieces of toast daily.
- 12.60.3 B stated that she was not taking her prescribed anti-depressants due to the recent overdose.
- 12.60.4 B said she was not aware of the outcome from the recent MARAC and was keen for the CRHT team to discuss this with Police. She was advised that the CRHT team are unable to comment on Police matters but could provide her with short term emotional support, which she acknowledged.

- 12.60.5 B expressed unhappiness with not seeing Women's Aid face to face, with being on a waiting list for counselling for over four months, and stated that she felt that if the abuse was physical she would be seen sooner.
- 12.60.6 A further appointment to see B was booked for 22 January 2017 in accordance with the care plan which stated:
- CRHT to provide a period of assessment and support.
 - CRHT to discuss concerns raised with Staffordshire Police
 - B to take antibiotics as prescribed.
 - B to abstain from drinking alcohol.
 - B and friends to utilise 24-hour number (provided).
- 12.60.7 Later that afternoon of 21 January 2017 the CPN asked a colleague in the Police Community Triage Team²⁴ to get an update on the situation of B and K. It was confirmed that a Non-molestation Order was in place, that B had reported breaches of the Order which had been investigated by Cleveland Police, and that the Staffordshire Police records appeared to show that K had been charged.
- 12.61 22 January 2017**
- 12.61.1 On 22 January 2017 the CRHT team called B and confirmed that they would visit at 14:30. Two staff attempted the visit at B's home address but got no reply. Around 14:30 B contacted the CRHT team and advised that the CRHT staff should have gone to the address, where B was currently staying. Apologies were given for the mistake and arrangements agreed for a visit later that afternoon.
- 12.61.2 When CRHT staff visited B she explained the emotional abuse and threats that she, her friends, and her family had been receiving from K. B said that she preferred it at her friend's address as she was in the company of somebody and felt protected, but that she was aware of the effect this was having on her friend, and would be returning to her own home address on 24 January 2017.
- 12.61.3 B said she had noted a benefit from Diazepam and while aware of the risk of addiction felt that she would rather be addicted and come off it once her circumstances changed
- 12.61.4 B discussed the various services with which she was involved and asked if CRHT staff could advocate for her to Women's Aid and the Police. It was agreed that the CRHT staff would liaise with these services and inform them of the impact the abuse was having on her mental health. B was advised that her situation would also be discussed with the SSSFT Adult Safeguarding lead to identify any further support available.
- 12.62 23 January 2017**
- 12.62.1 On 23 January 2017 a CRHT CPN had discussions with a number of other professionals about B.
- 12.62.2 A Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit Officer advised that there had been a MARAC, but she agreed to update the MARAC staff to consider whether a further meeting was indicated. The Officer stated that they had problems accessing hard evidence to link the threats and intimidation with K but were continuing this search for this. The CPN advised that B was

²⁴ The Police Community Triage Team works with front line Police to support them in the management of people with mental health problems. Mental Health professionals use them as a real time source of information held by the Police which along with information held by other agencies, may assist them to assess and manage a presenting mental health crisis.

feeling helpless and would benefit from regular updates. The Officer agreed to contact B that day to provide reassurance that the Police were still pursuing lines of investigation.

- 12.62.3 The CPN asked Women's Aid when they would be able to engage with B and was advised that a worker was allocated and had had contact with her. The CPN later spoke to the allocated worker at Women's Aid and asked when they would be able to start offering counselling. The CPN was informed that B was on the waiting list and that it shouldn't be too long. The Woman's Aid worker stated that they were offering fairly regular telephone support and agreed to attempt to contact B that day. When they did so B said the Stalking was really getting to her and confirmed that the mental health crisis team was coming to see her that day.
- 12.62.4 The SSSFT Adult Safeguarding Lead advised the CPN that as the Police were already involved, B had sought the help of agencies to protect her and she did not have any clear social care needs an Adult Safeguarding referral was not indicated. It was noted that from a health perspective B's crisis related to the ongoing abuse/threats and her need was for counselling via Women's Aid rather than secondary mental health service.
- 12.62.5 The CPN thereafter visited B at F2's address. B was noted to have engaged easily and appeared relaxed throughout the visit. The liaison with other agencies was outlined and B indicated that she had already spoken with Women's Aid who had said that they would offer regular phone support until counselling was available, especially when she returned home. B stated that she wished to arrange an extended injunction to ensure it included her son's and husband's addresses and planned to contact a Solicitor in Stafford to discuss this. The option of utilising the Solicitor to whom Women's Aid had access was discussed²⁵.
- 12.62.6 The option of a referral for IAPT²⁶ counselling was discussed but B stated that she preferred to wait for Women's Aid counselling. B informed the CPN that she was not taking any medication but felt that she may require some further Diazepam to help her cope at times. Dependence on this given was discussed in relation to the ongoing nature of the stressors and B said she would contact her GP to discuss this further if required.
- 12.62.7 B was advised by the CPN that she was not suffering with a mental illness but rather periods of acute anxiety, related to the ongoing situation. An offer of further crisis support when B returned to her own home was discussed but B did not feel this was necessary and declined it. B denied any current suicidal ideation and stated that she would contact and access support if she felt that way again. It was agreed that B would be discharged from the CRHT team and she was advised on how to access self -help information via a 'Get Self Help CBT' website link. A discharge letter was sent to B's GP the following day.
- 12.62.8 The CPN subsequently advised Staffordshire Women's Aid that B's overdose was not significant, and they were not concerned that there would be a future one. B was suffering a high level of anxiety which was situational and as soon as the Police could arrest K then the anxiety would reduce. Women's Aid was asked if the counselling provision could be speeded up and explained that B would get an appointment as soon as one became available. Women's Aid suggested that she may get one faster through mental health services.
- 12.62.9 Later on 23 January 2017 Staffordshire Women's Aid telephoned B and discussed her current situation. B was asked if she would like a place at a Refuge to be arranged and replied that she could not cope with it at that time.
- 12.62.10 Also, on 23 January 2017, two emails were sent to work colleagues of Q, both purporting to be from B. These were not reported to the Police at the time but were detailed in a statement provided by Q on 31 January 2017.

²⁵ Although B had not attended an appointment with the Solicitor on 18 January 2017 this facility was still available to her.

²⁶ IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) is a primary health care service.

12.63 24 January 2017

12.63.1 On 24 January 2017 a Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit Officer and Women's Aid support worker met with B and F2 to discuss evidence gathering. The Police Officer explained the process of investigation to B and what she could expect from the criminal justice system. B discussed a number of incidents that had occurred with K contacting friends and relatives and advised that she was going to be staying with F2. B was urged to call Women's Aid at any time if she needed support.

12.64 25 January 2017

12.64.1 On 25 January 2017 B's GP contacted her by telephone and organised a follow up appointment, intended to provide an opportunity for face to face assessment of B and her situation. B was recorded as being back on her medication, after a period of not taking them in order to let the overdose taken on 16 January 2017 clear her system.

12.65 26 January 2017

12.65.1 On 26 January 2017 F1 telephoned the Police to report that K had been making threats of Rape towards his wife, F2. F1 visited Stafford Police Station with F2 and they provided statements. It was recorded on the Incident Log to be an ongoing matter with significant involvement from the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit Officers in relation to previously reported offences.

12.66 27 January 2017

12.66.1 On 27 January 2017 F1 reported to the Police that F2 had received further threatening messages which he believed were from K. He intended to provide a statement and advised that he had installed a camera on the front of his property. A supervisory Police Officer contacted F1, offered reassurance and sent an e-mail to the investigating Police Officer requesting that a statement was obtained from F2 as she was reporting further offences. A Senior Police Officer and the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit were updated. Arrangements were made to obtain witness statements at a later date and advice was given regarding collecting screen shots of any messages received and general safety on Facebook. There is no indication that this was formally recorded or responded to at the time; it appears to have been rolled up into the incident on 29 January 2017 below.

12.67 29 January 2017

12.67.1 In the early hours of 29 January F1 reported to the Police that after arriving home at 02:20 hours he and F2 had started to receive harassing text messages which they believed were from K. One message contained an image personally significant to F1 and an indecent text message

12.67.2 Another message implied the sender could see him and was outside his home address. The Police Officer dealing with the complaint on 26 January 2017 visited F1, obtained statements and seized screen shots of the messages. These were then forwarded to the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit.

12.67.3 The Incident Log was cross referenced with earlier incidents. Crime reports were recorded for Malicious Communication. These were allocated to a Vulnerability Unit Officer for investigation. They were still open when B died in February 2017.

12.67.4 F1 advised the Review Panel that he went on sick leave at this point, stating that he could not cope with what was happening to B and his family whilst continuing to work.

12.67.5 At 0345 on 29 January 2017 B called the Police to report a breach of the Non-Molestation Order. She stated that she had received a message from a fake Facebook profile about an

hour and a half before she called; that she had been told to call in straight away with anything on Facebook and not to open the message. An Officer attended and obtained a statement from B together with copies of the Facebook posts.

12.67.6 A crime report was recorded for Breach of the Non-molestation Order and this was allocated to a Vulnerability Unit Officer. It was still open when B died in February 2017. A DIAL was not recorded, with a documented rationale that the incident was part of a series which were being dealt with by the Vulnerability Unit, the Officers of which were fully aware of B's situation and were being passed all details of the most recent incidents.

12.68 31 January 2017

12.68.1 On 31 January 2017 Women's Aid called B who reported still feeling low. She said the Police had told her that they were going to look to arrest K on Thursday of that week (2 February 2017) but they were unable to locate him. B also said she felt that K would never stop harassing her. She was asked to consider Refuge accommodation but said she felt she could not cope with a Refuge due to her mental health.

12.69 1 February 2017

12.69.1 On 1 February 2017 Victim Gateway received details of B's report to the Police on 29 January 2017 and contacted her. B was noted to be distressed and waiting counselling through Staffordshire Women's Aid. It was also noted that the mental health crisis team were involved. B was signposted to a financial advice line and the case was closed.

12.69.2 Also, on 1 February 2017, B visited her GP for blood tests. She informed the GP that K was making death threats and that she was still awaiting support from Women's Aid. The GP prescribed her medication to reduce her anxiety and booked a telephone follow up for the following week.

12.69.3 At 23:05 on 1 February 2017 B rang Staffordshire Police and alleged that K had reactivated her Facebook account, which she had previously deactivated. On this she had received a message, from a name unknown to her, containing a photo of her mother's grave with footprints on it, a winking face and a photo of B and her son on his graduation day. She reported that Q and F1 had also received e-mails containing a photo of B's mother's grave which said "*there's room for all of them*". It was recorded that B did not wish to be seen that evening as she had had a drink.

12.70 2 February 2017

12.70.1 On the morning of 2 February 2017 Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit decided that they would deal with the new incident as part of their ongoing investigation, with a statement to be obtained at a later date. B was informed of this and it was recorded that she had been updated with regard to the full investigation.

12.70.2 A Crime Report for Breach of Non-molestation Order was recorded. This was still open when B died in February 2017.

12.71 3 February 2017

On 3 February 2017 Victim Gateway received details of B's report to the Police on the evening of 1 February. B was contacted and stated that she was mentally exhausted, having panic attacks, felt unable to go out, on medication and sleeping a lot. B said that Police were taking it seriously and she was waiting for Women's Aid counselling. B further stated that she had taken an overdose "*last week*" and this was with mental health services but no CPN had been allocated. B said she was receiving telephone support from Women's Aid and making statements to the Police nearly every day regarding threatening incidents, B said K had gone into hiding so the Police had not been able to find him. The case was closed as no additional support was identified as being required.

12.72 4 February 2017

- 12.72.1 On the morning of 4 February 2017 B's son called the Police to report Harassment. He stated that after receiving a card which was very disturbing, he had installed CCTV at his door and that this showed K hand delivering a further card through his letterbox. He said he had not opened the latest envelope to preserve evidence. The envelope was handed to a Police Officer later that day and found to be a "*Thinking of You*" card containing the writing "*did mummy admit to rape? Would you like proof? Or was she a slag?*"
- 12.72.2 A crime report was recorded in respect of malicious communication. The evidence provided to the Police B's son provided a clear basis for the arrest of K on suspicion of malicious communication, but this was not pursued.
- 12.72.3 The crime report was still open when B died in February 2017.

12.73 6 February 2017

- 12.73.1 On 6 February 2017 a Refuge support worker contacted B to check that she had received an invoice for her outstanding rent. B was noted to sound very low and to have stated that K was continuing to make her life hell and she was struggling to cope. She said that she was drinking wine daily to help her through the day.
- 12.73.2 B said she had not been to her own property as she was too scared to leave the house. B stated that K had been to her mother's grave and had sent 'In Sympathy' cards to her husband and son. She said that she feared for her own life and that of her husband and son as she knew he would kill one of them. B stated she felt Stafford Police were not taking her seriously.
- 12.73.3 B was advised to continue to contact the Police and report these ongoing concerns as well as to contact her GP. She was asked if she would like a Refuge space in the Tees Valley area but declined, stating that wherever she was he would find her so there was no point. The support worker provided in depth safety advice and reassured B that she could access the Refuge service 24 hours daily.
- 12.73.4 On 6 February 2017 Staffordshire Women's Aid also contacted B, who stated that things were terrible, and she could not go on much longer. B advised that she was back living with her husband as she felt too unsafe to return to her home, although she also felt she had overstayed her welcome. B stated that the Refuge in Cleveland had contacted her and asked if she would like to go back there but she had declined this. B advised Women's Aid that there had been a further incident where K was caught on CCTV delivering another card to her son. He had not opened this, but she said Police had advised that the contents of the letter were very disturbing.

12.74 8 February 2017

On 8 February 2017 a Supervisory Detective Officer from the Force Safeguarding Investigation Unit (FSI) met with Officers from the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit and an Investigation Plan was agreed. This addressed Lines of Enquiry that had been completed and those that were still outstanding, with return dates for completion. The FSI were unable to take on the investigation and an investigating Police Officer from the Stafford Neighbourhood Team was identified to lead it. K was clearly identified in that review as a suspect. The Supervisory Detective Officer also addressed risk management and safeguarding issues. The Investigation Plan was recorded on the Staffordshire Police Crime Management System and linked to relevant crime reports.

12.75 9 February 2017

- 12.75.1 On 9 February 2017 B had a telephone consultation with her GP. She said she was struggling to sleep and was prescribed medication for this. B informed the GP that she

wanted to go to her own home as she felt she was imposing on her husband and also needed to get back to normal.

12.76 14 February 2017

- 12.76.1 Q informed the Review Panel that at 09:01 on 14 February 2017 an email purporting to be sent to him from B was also copied to all of his work colleagues. This accused him of grooming underage girls and asked whether his colleagues knew that he had been investigated by the Police for images on his computer. There is absolutely no basis to the allegations made in the email. At 09:20 that date a call purporting to be from the Police was received at Q's workplace, the caller hanging up when the call was put through to Q. Both of these events were reported to the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit at 09:30 hours. This report was added to the previously recorded crime report as part of an ongoing course of conduct.
- 12.76.2 At 10:00 on 14 February 2017 K was arrested by the Police on suspicion of Stalking and Harassment. Electronic communication devices were seized following his arrest. He was interviewed and then released at 17:51, with bail to return to the Police station on 10 May 2017. A condition was attached to the bail not to contact or communicate in any way with B, her son, Q, F1 or F2.
- 12.76.3 Also, on 14 February 2017, Staffordshire Women's Aid advised B that an appointment had been made for her to commence counselling on 7 March 2017. Consequent to being informed by the Police that K was in custody Women's Aid again contacted B and relayed this to her. She is recorded as being very happy and hopeful that bail conditions would be in place.
- 12.76.4 B's sister informed the Review Panel that she was with B when a call was received from the Police to inform her that K had been released on bail. She overheard the caller inform B that one condition of the bail was that K was not allowed to be in Stafford. She continued that B seemed elated at hearing this and took her dog out for a walk saying that she felt safe enough to go out and get some fresh air.
- 12.76.5 F2 informed the Review Panel that she also received a telephone call from a Police Officer who informed her that K had been released on bail with a condition that he had to stay out of Stafford. F1 and F2 described being relieved and comfortable that things were moving and that the Police would intervene to address any action by K.
- 12.76.6 At 2232 on 14 February 2017 B reported to Staffordshire Police that K had just spoken to her from his car. She stated she was with Q and was walking to the home address of her friends F1 and F2 when this happened and that K had then driven past her again. The incident record included that Q had a video recording of the incident.
- 12.76.7 A short time later F1 also contacted the Police Control Room and stressed that an urgent response was needed to B's call, stating that K had been conditionally bailed that day to stay out of Stafford. The Police checked the conditions of K's bail, identified that there was no requirement for K not to be in Stafford and concluded that there had not been a breach of the bail conditions. B was informed of this, disputed what she was being told, and requested to speak with the Police Officer investigating the actions of K. This request was recorded, and the incident log deferred for the following day. There was Supervisory Police Officer Review of the incident.
- 12.76.8 At 23:36 on 14 February 2017 the incident log was updated to the effect that K was at Stafford Police station. He had not been contacted or asked to go there by the Police. He spoke with a Police Sergeant, related that he had earlier been released on bail and complained that he had been photographed by B and Q whilst in his car which was stationary in traffic.

12.77 15 February 2017

- 12.77.1 At 08:39 on 15 February 2017 Q sent an email to a Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit Officer²⁷. In this email Q confirmed that he had been with B the previous evening when they saw K in his car at traffic lights, that K had threatened him with prosecution if he took a picture of K and the car. Q continued that after driving off, K returned along the same road and sounded his horn as he passed Q and B. Q requested clarification of K's situation as he understood that there were bail conditions in place to prevent K from contacting him or B and to exclude him from Stafford, but that when the Police were contacted the previous evening they had said this was not the case. Q also offered to provide a statement of evidence and to forward the photographs which he had taken.
- 12.77.2 On 15 February 2017 the Police investigation regarding the events reported on 14 February was continued. At 12:40 Officers arrested K, at the hotel where he was staying, on suspicion of having breached the Non-molestation Order. He was detained and interviewed. K maintained that he had been driving through Stafford and was stationary in traffic when there was a chance encounter with B and Q who proceeded to photograph him.
- 12.77.3 Following a Police Inspector assessment of the evidence, K was later released on the basis that there was insufficient evidence to disprove Ks account of his encounter with B and establish that he had breached the Non-molestation Order.

12.78 16 February 2017

- 12.78.1 On 16 February 2017 B had a telephone consultation with her GP. She informed the GP that the Police had arrested K, but he had been bailed and was threatening to rape and kill her. She said she had contacted 999, frustrated because they did not know about K's injunctions. She stated that she had chest pains and was asked to attend for a face to face consultation. The GP records attribute B's chest pains to manifestation of her anxiety. B called back later in the day and stated that she was worried about leaving home. The GP consequently arranged an appointment for B to visit the surgery on 22 February 2017.
- 12.78.2 Also, on 16 February 2017, Staffordshire Women's Aid contacted B who said she was very unhappy as K had been released and the Police had done nothing with him.

12.79 17 February 2017

- 12.79.1 On 17 February 2017 Women's Aid contacted Staffordshire Police. They were updated that following his arrest on 14 February K had been bailed with conditions until 10 May 2017 and the Police were hopeful that they would be in a position to charge K prior to the bail date. K's phone was reported to show a large number of calls to B's number which was a breach of the Non-molestation Order.
- 12.79.2 The Police advised that K had been re-arrested following the further incident on 14 February 2017, but a decision had been taken to take no further action as it could not be proved that the meeting was not a chance encounter.
- 12.79.3 Also, on 17 February 2017, B's GP called her to advise that her medication was at the Pharmacy. The GP recorded that he wanted to keep regular contact due to concerns over B's welfare and this call was part of doing so.
- 12.79.4 At 1635 on 17 February 2017 B rang Staffordshire Police to report she had been sent a Facebook screenshot from a friend which she alleged K had posted online. The post was said to be "*He had come across a pack of dogs on the roadside one of them looks like it was on his last legs*". B felt this posting was referring to her. She was recorded as advising that she was going to be staying with friends in Stafford.

²⁷ Q provided the Review Panel with a copy of this email.

12.79.5 The incident log recorded that F1 had spoken to a Police Sergeant about this report and had e-mailed the screenshot to the Officer investigating the Harassment and Stalking. The Police Sergeant recorded that there was no immediacy to the current report, there were no threats and the meaning could be different to the interpretation placed upon it by B and F1. An Officer visited B on 20 February 2017, obtained a statement and viewed the screen shots. No crime was recorded on the basis that it could not be established that the material was directed at B.

12.80 18 to 21 February 2017 – K engagement with mental health services

12.80.1 On 18 February 2017 an anonymous call was made to Staffordshire Police expressing concern for the safety of K, as he had sent a message saying “*It’s been nice knowing you goodbye.*” The caller stated that the message had been received over an hour previously and that K was not answering his phone or Facebook.

12.80.2 Police Officers involved in the investigation of K visited him at the hotel where he had previously been arrested and he stated that that he had no thoughts of harming himself. Notwithstanding this the Officers arranged for a Police Community Triage CPN to speak with K on the telephone. K informed the CPN that he was unwell and did feel suicidal. He was accordingly referred to the Stafford CRHT team for short term support. The CPN advised that K had a history of domestic violence against multiple partners and to safeguard staff it was decided that he should only be seen at St Georges Hospital, Stafford. An appointment was arranged for the following morning.

12.80.3 On 19 February 2017 K was assessed at St Georges Hospital by a SSSFT Senior Crisis Nurse and a Social Worker.

12.80.4 The history provided by K and observation of the assessing professionals, redacted to preserve the anonymity of third parties, included the following:

“K began a relationship with B in 2015 who he had known since school after meeting up with her on and off for one year previously. She was married at the time. B and K moved in together in August 2015 and in July 2016 they moved to Stafford. They were in a relationship for approximately one year. The relationship came to an end in Sept/Oct 2016.

Early on during the relationship B confided in K about a historical rape that she had been a victim of. She wouldn’t share the details of who [had raped her] and this began to pre-occupy him. K explained that he ‘went on a mission’ to find out who they were. He blamed himself for not being able to protect her as it was reported to have happened during the time that they first began to meet up. He also blames himself for her possibly having put ‘wool over his eyes’ and didn’t take warnings from several acquaintances.

B eventually [named who had raped her] and friends of K’s explored this and found it not to have been possible and she later admitted to having given the wrong [information]. This happened on two occasions. K’s friends questioned B’s credibility at the time and K was not accepting of this. He physically assaulted a friend quite badly who suggested this and felt awful afterwards for having done so.

He described B’s behaviour towards him as ‘mental torture’ and he stopped eating, washing and generally looking after himself at this time. K confronted B and made her call the Police. She confirmed the rape but did not wish to take things further, so the Police didn’t pursue it.

One afternoon in October 2016 K returned home from work to find all of B’s belongings had gone from their home and he received an anti-molestation order against him from Cleveland Police that lasted 7 days. K travelled to Cleveland to contest this but sent a photograph to B saying ‘I love you’ and was subsequently arrested for this. K was in custody for 3 days and fined £400 and when he returned home B had cleared out their house. He then also lost his job due to recurrent time off over previous months in relation

to these events. At this time B had told K that his actions had been worse than the actual rape which he described as a really difficult thing to hear given the nature of such a sexual crime.

K reported at this point B asked a violent man from Stafford to 'silence' K and he confronted this man who he reports had axes and pit bulls and was into drugs. This man and K became acquainted and no further action was taken but K now feels angry that B and her friends had attempted to put him at risk²⁸.

The tenancy on the house came to an end Oct/Nov 2016 and was not renewed. K put his belongings in storage and since this time he has been sleeping in his car between Stoke-On-Trent and Stafford and staying in hotels. He has funded this from savings and selling scooter parts that he has.

In December he had thoughts of driving his scooter into another vehicle and reported he had thought about driving it off a cliff like in the film Quadrophenia to end things on his scooter as it had been a huge part of his life. He explained that he had never seen himself as a quitter until this point. He went on to say he has been trying to 'dig down to find some strength' but describes having nothing left. He described feeling mixed emotions including anger and also feeling calculated and vengeful currently, toward self or others. He currently felt too at risk to accomplish any of these things with support and he is scared of how he is feeling currently and wishes for it to stop he became tearful whilst discussing this. He described only feeling afraid two times in his life – currently and during the time he spent in a correctional facility when he was a youngster.

No previous psychiatric history prior to this episode. K has seen a psychologist via a private service recently who he was referred to via his employers following recent events. He did not feel this was helpful.

K hasn't been to his GP in 4-5 years. Unable to establish any current/historical conditions/diagnoses at time of assessment.

K was brought up by Mum and Stepdad from the age of 2. Stepdad was successful and at a young age the family moved to a cottage in He reports that he was well looked after as a child and has happy memories of growing up but was unruly as a child, getting into lots of fights and causing trouble. He repeatedly went missing and skipped school, going to rallies on scooters aged approximately 14 and becoming involved in football hooliganism. One night he describes being snatched from his bed in the middle of the night by social services and carted into a transit van where he was then taken to a children's home in ... at the same age and reports he also had to go to another facility in ...where they attached equipment to his head to test for mental health problems. He continued to be unruly at this time and was then sent to a borstal/correctional type facility in It was in the middle of nowhere and had its own army camp. During his time here he reports he was beaten up by staff. He said he quickly learned what he needed to do to get on in this establishment. He denies that any sexual abuse took place during this time or at any point in his life.

K was made to punish other young people by beating them up for misbehaving or attacking staff under orders by the staff as he and some of the other boys were larger framed and could 'hold their own'. At age 15 he was allowed to start using a local pub in ...and was also allowed to go home at weekends – sometimes for longer periods from Thurs-Mon. Just before he turned 16, he was allowed to leave but it was too late to return to school. He found it difficult to leave when the opportunity arose and felt he had become institutionalized. He was offered an apprenticeship as a carpenter and he worked in joinery shops.

In the 80's/90's he met ... and had two children ... These children are now 24/25 and K still has a good relationship with them and their mother. He reports his morals and views

²⁸ The Police investigation following the death of B found no evidence of her having done what K alleged.

changed after having children. As an adult he began to commit to further education for himself and gained many qualifications in Logistics and management. Despite this he continued to spend the weekends engaging in violent activities relating to football hooliganism in ... and scooter associated activity. He describes fights that took place between ... biker groups of Stafford at the time and local scooter groups. He denied ever having consumed alcohol or taken illicit substances and states he is very anti-drug taking. He states his behaviour was part of a particular culture at this time and that violence and racism etc. was drummed into him from a young age as a part of this. During his young years he looked for any reason to fight.

Later in his life he reports he stopped these anti-social activities and began to channel his energy into martial arts, taking part in Kick boxing and ju-jitsu and teaching MAPA to professionals. He attended Scooter clubs still as he continued to be passionate about this.

Currently NFA living between his car and a hotel. Poor relationships – recent breakdown of relationship and minimal contact with parents and siblings, still maintains a relationship with children and their mother. Recent termination of employment – lack of meaningful activity.

Reported that in 2002 and 2006 K went to prison for intimidation/harassment relating to ex partners. He denies any other forensic history and describes the reason for this despite his history was due to the culture of the groups he was involved with was not to report anything to the Police. He explained that he was very careful and calculated at the time and everything was planned out beforehand.

Subjectively very low mood with suicidal ideations at the moment and has been a gradual decline due to identified stressors. Currently denies any plans and identified sons as protective factors. Objectively appeared low in mood, facially flat and tearful during consultation.

No thought disorder noted but appears pre-occupied with issues with his ex. describes negative thoughts and thoughts of self-harm. Denies any abnormal perceptions/hallucinations. Had episodes of dissociation.

- 12.80.5 It was then identified that K was registered with a GP in Stoke-on-Trent, where the commissioned provider of mental health services is North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust (NSCHT). K was accordingly referred to NSCHT and was further assessed by the NSCHT Acute Home Treatment Team (AHTT) later on 19 February 2017.
- 12.80.6 This assessment was informed by the information gathered at St Georges Hospital, Stafford. The risk assessment identified that K was a risk to himself but also to specific but unidentified individuals (those he believed to be responsible for the alleged rape of B). He was offered treatment either as an inpatient or in the community from the AHTT and opted for the latter.
- 12.80.7 On 20 February 2017 K requested that NSCHT admit him to hospital as he did not feel he could keep himself safe any longer. This was agreed and he was admitted to Harplands Hospital as an informal patient (not detained under the Mental Health Act, 1983).
- 12.80.8 On 21 January 2017 K was reviewed by a NSCHT Doctor and a possible diagnosis of adjustment disorder was recorded. K reported feeling preoccupied with the thoughts of B's rape and of having strong suicidal thoughts. He reported he wanted to kill the person involved and then take his own life, but he was still unaware of who it was. K reported feeling scared of these thoughts and agreed to take part in 'talking therapies'. He was referred to Psychology services.
- 12.81 **19 February 2017**
- 12.81.1 B's sister informed the Review that on Sunday 19 February 2017 B called her and asked her to visit. When she did so B told her that she did not know if she could go on any longer. B's

sister then took B's dog for a walk to give her an excuse to go back to see B. When she returned B told her that she was going for a sleep and promised that she would be OK.

12.82 **20 February 2017**

- 12.82.1 On 20 February 2017 B sent a 'Victims' Right to Review²⁹ request to Staffordshire Police by email. B asked for a review of the decision by the Staffordshire Police Inspector to take no further action against K following the encounter reported on 14 February 2017. The Senior Police Officer who had advised that K should not be arrested and then met with B in December 2016, conducted a review of the decision made and replied to B by e-mail later that day, upholding the decision made by the Police at the time.
- 12.82.2 F1 informed the Review Panel that he helped B with the application and that she received a call from the Senior Police Officer to her inform her that the original decision was upheld. F1 stated that B did not receive any confirmation email of this. The Review Panel received confirmation that the result of the Senior Police Officer Review was emailed on 20 February 2017 to the address from which the review request was made.
- 12.82.3 Q and B's sister informed the Review Panel that B did not know that K had been admitted to hospital on 20 February 2017. Neither was able to give a view on whether this would have made any difference to B's subsequent actions.
- 12.82.4 Both F1 and F2 also believe that B remained unaware of K's admission to hospital. F1 informed the Review Panel that he was aware of K's admission to Harplands Hospital but is unclear on when he learned of this.

12.83 **21 February 2017**

- 12.83.1 B's sister informed the Review that she attempted to contact B on 21 February but was unable to do so.
- 12.83.2 F1 and F2 informed the Review that they had planned with B to go to the seaside on 21 February 2017, but that B had decided not to go. They visited B who is reported to have been quite calm that day. B was noticed to have a cut on her elbow and there was blood on the floor of the downstairs bathroom. The significance of the injury and blood has not been established.

12.84 **22 February 2017**

- 12.84.1 On the morning of 22 February 2017 F1 and F2 visited B's address following contact from B's sister, who was concerned that she had not heard from B.
- 12.84.2 B was found hanging at her home address. She was confirmed dead by WMAS staff and her body left with the Police.
- 12.84.3 The investigation into B's death was identified as a Critical Incident and a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) of the Major and Organised Crime Department was appointed to lead the investigation.
- 12.84.4 On the evening of 22 February 2017 Staffordshire Police informed K and staff at Harplands hospital that B was deceased. K informed hospital staff that he felt guilty as his response to her rape and the preoccupation of getting revenge may have caused B to take her own life.

²⁹ The Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme was launched on the 5 June 2013. The VRR Scheme gives victims the right to request a review of a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decision not to prosecute or to terminate criminal proceedings. From April 2015 the scheme was extended to include cases where the Police have taken the decision not to prosecute an alleged offender.

12.85 23 February 2017

12.85.1 On 23 February 2017 Staffordshire Police obtained a statement from K on behalf of HM Coroner regarding B's life, work, family background and their relationship. In the statement K set out how he and B came to be in a relationship. He mentioned the existence of the Non-molestation Order without detail or context and stated that the last time he saw B was on 5 December 2016 when they went to a public house in Stafford after she called him. K stated that he had had no contact with B since then, either by text or social media. He did refer to having seen B on 14 February 2017 when he was driving through Stafford to go to his children's house and had asked the Police to record this because of the Non-molestation Order. This was not the reason he gave for that journey at the time. His statement is demonstrably untruthful.

12.86 1 March 2017

- 12.86.1 On 1 March 2017 K reported feeling better, having had some time in the ward and reconnected with friends and family. He stated that although B's death was a shock, he realised he would not be getting the answers he wanted, and he needed to focus on himself. Staff recorded in the notes that he was objectively dismissive of his emotions around this.
- 12.86.2 K requested discharge from the hospital and as he was not presenting as meeting the criteria to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, this was agreed.
- 12.86.3 On discharge K went to stay with an ex-partner and arrangements were made for him to be followed up by community based mental health professionals. The discharge was assessed for risk to K himself or others and these were felt to be low. This was however a generic assessment rather than one which specifically focussed on domestic abuse. This was not used as hospital staff were not aware of any concerns later than 2006 and while the Non-molestation Order was documented, its significance was not recognised.

ANALYSIS

13 INTRODUCTION

- 13.1 Agencies' contemporaneous records of involvement with B give only a limited insight into the level of continual Stalking and threat that she was subjected to by K. For example, in the six months prior to her death the Police recorded 14 incidents following reports from B about K's behaviour; but during the same period she had around 3500³⁰ phone calls, texts and social media messages sent to her from K. It is unsurprising that this level of abuse created for B a world of constant fear and anxiety.
- 13.2 During the period under review B had involvement with domestic abuse support services and Police in Staffordshire and in Cleveland; as well as health services, mainly in relation to her mental health. This analysis will examine the effectiveness of the response from these agencies, individually and as part of a multi-agency framework. Issues related to the significance of mental health service provision to K in February will also be considered.
- 13.3 A final section will consider responses to Stalking; and service developments within Staffordshire since 2017, consequent to a joint thematic inspection³¹ by HMIC³² and HMCPSP³³ and learning from the events detailed in this report.

14 EFFECTIVENESS OF VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

14.1 Staffordshire Women's Aid

- 14.1.1 Staffordshire Women's Aid identified that their staff, in trying to support B, heard her views, represented these to other agencies and that risk management was addressed appropriately. The transient, sometimes chaotic, nature of the life B was experiencing sometimes made it difficult to maintain contact with her and to engage her in one to one support. Staffordshire Women's Aid identified that this is not however unusual with victims who are living through the type of abuse to which B was subjected.
- 14.1.2 Staffordshire Women's Aid identified that there were occasions when their staff could have challenged the decisions of other agencies, particularly around the provision of physical security measures to B, more effectively, and that action would be appropriate to increase staff confidence in challenging other professionals.
- 14.1.3 On 5 December 2016 Women's Aid records refer to B asking for IDVA support but wanting home visits and being advised that Women's Aid could only offer telephone support. This was the service provided throughout the remainder of the period under review, with only one face to face contact recorded (on 24 January 2017 when a support worker accompanied B to meet with the Police). This level of service was not consistent with the commissioned service specification for Staffordshire Women's Aid, which included provision of periodic support visits to service users.
- 14.1.4 Staffordshire Women's Aid advised the Review Panel that the organisation normally provided telephone support, which could sometimes mean being in contact 2 or 3 times a day for

³⁰ The exact number has not been established as some social media messages were deleted intentionally by K or automatically by the social media platform. Analysis of this by the Police was discontinued following K's guilty plea.

³¹ Living in Fear – the Police and CPS Response to Harassment and Stalking.
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/living-in-fear-the-police-and-cps-response-to-harassment-and-stalking.pdf>

³² HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

³³ HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

extended conversations, or a mixture of face to face and telephone support. Concern was however expressed that B had only been offered telephone support and that there should have been a trigger to offer support in person.

- 14.1.5 B was not happy with this telephone only support, explicitly expressing that view to a CRHT CPN in January 2017. Q informed the Review that B particularly wanted personal support from someone who had “been there” and understood the affect that K’s actions were having on her.
- 14.1.6 It seems probable that a desire for face to face support was behind B’s persistence in seeking counselling from Women’s Aid, despite it being explained at the end of December 2016 that the service was not intended for women in B’s situation³⁴.
- 14.1.7 Notwithstanding the inapplicability of the Women’s Aid counselling service to B’s situation she was placed on the waiting list and after six weeks, on 14 February 2017, offered an appointment for 7 March 2017. Women’s Aid identified that there was a need for greater clarity for other agencies and service users on the benefits and limitations of their counselling service, including likely waiting times, and recommended action to address this.

14.2 **Current domestic abuse support provision**

- 14.2.1 Since 1 October 2018, a new holistic domestic abuse service has been operating across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, jointly commissioned by the Staffordshire Police Commissioner’s Office, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Services for victims are provided by Victim Support and support for perpetrators is provided by the Reducing Re-offending Partnership; both are based in Staffordshire and operate under the name of “New Era”³⁵.
- 14.2.2 The New Era service specification for supporting victims continues to state that the nature and level of support provided will be led by risk and needs assessment, and may vary over time, but that periodic support visits will be made to service users at their home or at other venues chosen by the service user. The service specification is considerably more specific about the nature of the services to be provided and expected outcomes than previously.
- 14.2.3 During the period under review there were no local services in Staffordshire for victims of Stalking behaviour, such as that to which B was subjected. There were and continue to be, Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC) services provided nationally by Paladin and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. These were not however engaged by, or on behalf of, B. The Review panel concluded that this was attributable to a lack of awareness regarding Stalking and the specialist services available. The development of services for victims of Stalking behaviour are addressed at section 17 below.

³⁴ Staffordshire Women’s Aid has a team of qualified volunteer counsellors but with limited resource availability. Counsellors usually come via university placements, and counselling, while focussing on domestic or sexual violence, uses a generic model. Staffordshire Women’s Aid emphasised that their provision is not a specialist mental health service and would not be able to provide any form of clinical support to victims who are experiencing high levels of anxiety or mental health problems. Counselling is viewed as a key service for long term recovery from the emotional impact of former domestic or sexual abuse but as more appropriate after a crisis, whether practical or emotional, is dealt with and the victim’s situation is stable. Counselling would not normally be offered to women in a Refuge, or at high risk; with the organisation’s IDVAs and Support Practitioners able to provide the practical and emotional support needed by such women.

³⁵ New Era offers help to all those affected by domestic abuse in Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent, New Era provides free and confidential support for victims, perpetrators and their families, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. The service also provides a webchat facility. The Victims Gateway contact all victims of a domestic abuse crime, offer partnership support and complete referrals to New Era. For non-crime domestic incidents, the attending Police Officer arranges the referral unless this is declined by the victim.

14.3 **Refuge Provider**

- 14.3.1 The Refuge provider advised the Review Panel that the staff of their Cleveland Refuge acted in accordance with all of their policies and procedures, with a particular focus on risk management and safety planning; information sharing and confidentiality.
- 14.3.2 On the evening of 18 November 2016 an on-call member of Refuge staff received a telephone call from F1 who expressed concern for B as he had not been able to contact her all day. B had taken an overdose of prescribed medication although this was not known to anyone at the time. The Refuge provider informed the Review Panel that, when unsuccessful in contacting B, the on-call staff member's decision to pass F1's concerns on to day shift staff was one of reasonable professional judgement. The recorded rationale was that there was security on site and there was no information recorded to suggest that B had any additional vulnerability. The Refuge provider additionally advised the Review Panel that it is not unusual for residents to not respond to contact from unknown numbers and that staff are alert to attempts by perpetrators to elicit information about residents or initiate action which may harass them. The Refuge provider was unable to establish why no response was obtained from the duty manager.
- 14.3.3 The Refuge provider suggested that their staff could have been more proactive in attempting to persuade B to stay when she decided to return to Stafford. They identified however that a wish to return to her home area was not considered unusual, observing that a victim will often wish to do so when there is a threat, as in B's case, to their family.
- 14.3.4 On three occasions (on 9, 11 and 16 November 2016) the issue of rental payments for her accommodation at the Refuge was raised by staff with B, who was not in receipt of state benefits. The Review Panel considered whether the need to make substantial payments for her accommodation may have contributed to B's decision to return to Staffordshire in November 2016 but found no evidence of this.
- 14.3.5 The Panel did however note that Refuges are classed as supported housing, with rents set to reflect this and to cover a substantial shortfall in covering costs from local authority grants and charitable donations. This will inevitably be problematic for abuse victims who are, for whatever reason, not receiving state benefits, and in many cases deter them from accessing the protection they need. The Panel noted that arrangements for provision of Refuge accommodation are likely to be included when a Domestic Abuse Bill is considered by Parliament, anticipated to be in 2020.

14.4 **Victim Gateway**

- 14.4.1 On 20 December 2016 B was contacted by Victim Gateway and during the call requested some advice about the legal system and her options. The Victim Gateway worker agreed to refer B to a support worker. Owing to staffing pressures a request for this was diverted to Women's Aid, who were, it was then identified, already supporting B. Victim Gateway advised the Review Panel that their guidelines for the triage of domestic abuse cases, which include a management decision, based on resource availability and service efficiency considerations, not to joint work domestic abuse cases where specialist services are involved, were followed.
- 14.4.2 Victim Gateway did however identify that, given the persistence of abuse in B's case, an exception could have been made, with a support worker allocated, or follow up welfare calls made to offer more emotional support whilst B was waiting for counselling to start with Staffordshire Women's Aid. Victim Gateway made two recommendations to improve service provision in this area.
- 14.4.3 F2 informed the review that B had asked for a number of practical things when contacted by Victim Gateway including access to a Solicitor, increased security measures at her home and assistance to sort out her finances. Victim Gateway could not however assist with these as they do not provide access to or recommend solicitors and are primarily a gateway to other

publicly available services. B is reported as commenting that “they only wanted to help you come to terms with being a victim”.

15 POLICE EFFECTIVENESS

- 15.1 The events, between September 2016 and the death of B in February 2017, which are described in this report led to 34³⁶ incident records being created by Staffordshire Police, of which 14 were initiated by B.
- 15.2 The incidents led to 12 crimes being recorded in relation to offences against B and a further 8 in relation to her family and friends.
- 15.3 Seven witness statements were taken from B and a DIAL assessment³⁷ was conducted on 7 occasions.
- 15.4 Staffordshire Police, in their contribution to this Review, and the IOPC conducted a detailed analysis of the responses to these incidents.
- 15.5 **Categorisation and cross referencing of incidents**
 - 15.5.1 None of the incidents were classified as involving Stalking (or Harassment). Thirteen incidents were classified as domestic incidents and 6 as involving malicious communication. Eight other incident categories were used for the remainder of the incident records. The use of these other categories was generally applicable to the circumstances and not inherently wrong. Their use did not however reflect the course of conduct nature of the abuse to which B was subjected and undermined the development of a holistic appreciation of this.
 - 15.5.2 Police APP³⁸ Guidance on the management of police information, requires checks of Police systems to be completed and that records reflect the links where people or information are connected to other people or information already held. The recording and linking of incidents in respect of B and her friends and family was not consistent with these principles.
 - 15.5.3 Sixteen of the incidents were not cross referenced with other incidents and in the remaining 18 cases cross referencing was minimal, mostly linking only one other incident, and without any consistent basis. There was a slight improvement in cross referencing after 17 January 2017 (when B was admitted to hospital having taken an overdose) but this was still sporadic and inconsistent.
 - 15.5.4 The absence of effective cross referencing was closely linked with an evident lack of database research by the staff recording the incidents. In respect of only 18 incidents is there record of database and intelligence checks having been completed and in 14 of these it was confined to only antecedent information relating to K.
 - 15.5.5 Taken together, these factors contributed to incidents being dealt with in isolation and a lack of recognition that they represented a course of conduct by K which should have been identified as Stalking. Such recognition may in turn have led to greater coherence in the responses given to both the incidents themselves and investigation of the crimes reported.
 - 15.5.6 Given the prevalence of these issues across all incidents this was considered by the IOPC to be indicative of an organisational concern requiring training for all staff in the contact centre, rather than a series of unrelated individual failings. The IOPC accordingly made a

³⁶ A further incident on 18 February 2017, which led to the engagement of mental health services with K, is not included in this figure.

³⁷ DIAL is the risk assessment model for domestic abuse incidents which was in use by Staffordshire Police throughout the period under review.

³⁸ APP - Authorised Professional Practice

recommendation that this should be addressed by Staffordshire Police and this was accepted by the force.

15.5.7 The Review Panel was advised that a new “NicheRMS” information management system is due to go live in Staffordshire in April 2020³⁹. This will automatically link input information with matching entries across other incidents and make the person inputting the information aware of the link.

15.5.8 In the case of threatening text messages received by F1 on 31 December 2016, the link between this and the phone used to make threats to a third party, reported on 26 and 28 December 2016, was made manually without this system. Nevertheless, this represents a positive development in the efficiency and effectiveness of identifying and managing linked information.

15.6 Risk Assessment

15.6.1 Staffordshire Police procedure requires the completion of a DIAL assessment in respect of all domestic incidents reported.

15.6.2 Of the 13 domestic incidents recorded by Staffordshire Police, six did not lead to completion of a DIAL.

- One of these incidents related to malicious communication from K to Q and should not have been classified as a domestic incident.
- Three cases involved Officers inappropriately deciding to not complete a DIAL because they were aware that the Vulnerability Unit (where two of the Officers worked) had ongoing oversight of the risks posed to B.
- In the other two cases, both involving breaches of the Non-molestation Order by K communicating with B, a decision not to complete a DIAL was taken on the basis that B was staying in Cleveland when the incidents occurred and would be returning there. These decisions were apparently made with agreement of a Vulnerability Unit Officer. There is no indication that confirmation of Cleveland Police having conducted their own risk assessment was obtained in either of these cases.

15.6.3 Staffordshire Police procedures require referral of any incident with a DIAL score over 10 to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for consideration of any further action required, which may include discussion of the case at a MARAC. All four of the DIALs completed after B's return to Staffordshire in November 2016 exceeded that threshold and were appropriately referred. In addition, the incident on 6 September 2016, whilst scoring below the threshold, was appropriately referred to the MASH using the discretion available to an Officer who does not believe the score adequately represents the level of risk present. It is positive that DIAL forms prompt Officers to focus on the individual and understand their situation rather than ticking procedural boxes.

15.6.4 On 14 November 2016 a Cleveland Police Officer obtained details from B regarding a breach of the Non-molestation Order by K. A DASH⁴⁰ risk assessment was appropriately completed by the Officer, with a risk score of 7. The risk assessment was not reviewed until 5 January 2017. The incident had, however, been taken into account earlier by a risk assessment officer reviewing a further incident on 20 November 2016, when it was noted that B was at the Refuge and being supported by them. Cleveland Police informed the Review Panel that

³⁹ Originally November 2019 but delayed owing to technology issues.

⁴⁰ A risk assessment checklist for Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence: <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Dash%20risk%20checklist%20quick%20start%20guidance%20FINAL.pdf>. This is the risk assessment model advocated by the College of Policing for use by Police Forces. It is also used by a number of other agencies providing domestic abuse services. There is a version of DASH specifically intended to assess risk in Stalking cases which is referred to as S-DASH.

at that time there was a backlog of standard and medium risk cases due to a shortage of support officers through sickness and other abstractions, with no triage system in place. A triage system has since been put in place in which all standard, medium and high-risk cases are reviewed within 24 hours, support measures put in place and referrals made to children's / adult services, and to domestic abuse services as required.

- 15.6.5 The Review Panel considered whether the use by Women's Aid and Cleveland Police of the DASH risk assessment, whilst Staffordshire Police use the DIAL form, may have led to inconsistency in identified levels of risk and a lack of shared understanding. There was no evidence of this.
- 15.6.6 The Review Panel did note that risk assessments only related to a specific point in time and there were inconsistencies in B's responses to successive assessments. In this regard the Review Panel concluded that over the numerous contacts which B had with Police Officers and other professionals there would inevitably have been changes in the focus of accounts given by B, reflecting both the nature of the index event but also conscious or unconscious assumptions that professionals would already be aware of previously imparted information.
- 15.6.7 DIAL assessments include questions about behaviours which are considered as significant indicators of risk. One such question relates to incidents of choking, strangulation or drowning as one issue, as well as specifically asking whether the suspect had ever put their hands around the neck of a victim. This Review Panel noted that different answers to those questions were recorded on the DIAL forms relating to B and that this may be the result of asking a multi part question. It was also noted that although the level of risk indicated by positive answers varies between questions, the answers are not differentially weighted. The Review Panel was advised that following recognition of these issues, work to reassess the wording of DIAL questions and the weighting attached to their answers had been commenced. A decision had however been taken to move to use of the DASH risk assessment model from November 2019 and use of the DIAL form would cease at that time. Training of Staffordshire Police staff in use of the DASH⁴¹ model was carried out in conjunction with training for implementation of the "NicheRMS" system.
- 15.7 Working across two geographic areas**
- 15.7.1 Overall co-ordination between services in Cleveland and those in Staffordshire was generally effective. There was direct conversation between the two Police forces and good communication between Staffordshire Women's Aid and the Refuge.
- 15.7.2 In relation to Police responses this was however marred by some deficits in Staffordshire Police practice, in particular in relation to the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (see 15.9).
- 15.7.3 More systemically the Review Panel was informed that ownership of criminal offences, including those committed whilst B was in Cleveland, rested with Staffordshire Police⁴² and that B was advised to report any communication from K to that force. This worked effectively other than in relation to B's reports on 20 November 2016 that K had breached the Non-molestation Order, which were referred to Cleveland Police on the basis that B was staying in their area. It is unclear why this response diverged from the agreed principle on ownership.

⁴¹ In 2014 a comprehensive analysis of DASH use by the Police and its effectiveness was commissioned by the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (funded by the ESRC and College of Policing). The report of this is at: https://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Documents/Risk-led_policing_of_domestic_abuse_and_the_DASH_risk_model.pdf.

⁴² The government National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) specify that ownership of Stalking, malicious communication and similar offences remains in the area from where the threat was made.

Fortuitously it did however lead to positive action being taken to arrest and prosecute K the next day.

15.8 Crime Recording

- 15.8.1 The Home Office National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) stipulates that a crime should be recorded by Police forces following reports where, on the balance of probability, the circumstances amount to a crime defined by law and there is no credible evidence to the contrary.
- 15.8.2 A total of 21 crimes were recorded by Staffordshire Police in respect of the events described in this report. Of these 9 were for malicious communication and 7 were for breach of the Non-molestation Order. It could be argued that recording offences of Stalking in respect of these crimes, as an alternative to or in addition to these categories, as well as for two incidents recorded as non-crime domestic incidents, would have promoted consideration of K's actions as a course of conduct requiring a holistic coordinated response and a greater emphasis on effective cross referencing. The NCRS at the time stipulated, however, that offences under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 were designed to be used where no other notifiable offence existed. The NCRS was amended in July 2018 to make Harassment and Stalking offences an exception to the principle crime rule (that where more than one crime type is involved the most serious should be recorded). This introduced an expectation that Stalking or Harassment should be recorded in addition to any other notifiable offences, which is a positive development.

15.9 Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)

- 15.9.1 On 20 October 2016 B rang Staffordshire Police and requested a 'Clare's Law' (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme⁴³) disclosure in respect of K.
- 15.9.2 A Police Inspector in the force control room recorded that in B's circumstances 'Clare's Law' did not apply. The recorded rationale for this included that B was a victim of abuse by K, was aware of his violent past and had fled from him. The Review Panel was informed that the Police Inspector made the decision on the basis that B's primary need was to be safeguarded which was best addressed where she was living rather than engaging a process which might take up to 35 days and would in any event require face to face contact in Cleveland.
- 15.9.3 DVDS guidance states a direct request for a disclosure engages the scheme and should be formally processed. Such a request was made by B and the decision taken by the Police Inspector was inappropriate, having the effect of preventing a disclosure which should have been made. B may not have known the full extent of K's offending history and had a need to know this.
- 15.9.4 The Review Panel was advised that the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme process has since been more embedded in Staffordshire Police, with formal arrangements for recording and decision making now used in all cases; and that this is supported by staff training.
- 15.9.5 A Police staff manager related this decision to B with advice that she contact Cleveland Police to obtain assistance from the National Centre for Domestic Violence to apply for a protective Court Order.
- 15.9.6 Details of the contact were also passed to Cleveland Police, where it was interpreted as a request from B, who was in their area, to engage the DVDS. This was responded to properly within the DVDS and a disclosure was made to B on 27 October 2016.

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-pilot-guidance>

15.10 Investigation

- 15.10.1 In addition to the offences recorded by Staffordshire Police, three allegations that B had breached the Non-molestation Order were recorded by Cleveland Police. The response to these was somewhat compromised by resource availability in Cleveland. Robust action was however taken to arrest K when he visited the Family Proceedings Court on 21 November 2016 and to successfully prosecute him for the two breaches where there was evidence available. This was the only occasion during the period under review where K was subject to criminal court sanction.
- 15.10.2 Of the 21 crimes recorded by Staffordshire Police, ten were filed prior to the death of B without prosecution of K being pursued:
- Three were not investigated in accordance with the expressed wishes of B
 - One related to criminal damage at the address previously shared by B and K, which was withdrawn by the property owner after repair of the damage was arranged by B
 - Two related to crimes which duplicated reports recorded and dealt with in Cleveland
 - Two were filed citing evidential difficulties associated with attributing social media posts to K
- 15.10.3 Closure of the other two crime reports is attributable to the approach to them taken by Staffordshire Police Officers.
- 15.10.4 First, the decision of the attending Police Officer, as advised by a senior Officer, that K should not be arrested for a breach of the Non-molestation Order on 5 December 2016 (see 12.35.15). The recorded rationale for this was that B had spent some time at a pub with K, with no use of force visible on CCTV, that K would not have known where B was without her sharing this with him and that B was therefore complicit in the breach. That K showed the Police messages on his phone which purported to be from B was accepted as supporting this position.
- 15.10.5 Notwithstanding what was visible on the pub CCTV, there is no evidence to discount that any apparent complicity by B in meeting K was the result of fear or coercion, which had been referred to by B when she reported the incident. Further, it is the responsibility of the respondent and not the applicant to ensure compliance with a Non-molestation Order and any apparent complicity should not be a factor in considering a breach of the Order.
- 15.10.6 Further, the phone messages produced by K were accepted at face value without further investigation and it was not until after the death of B that K's use of a second phone to send messages purporting to be from B to himself was identified.
- 15.10.7 The approach taken to this incident represents a missed opportunity to conduct an effective investigation and utilise criminal sanctions to curtail the offending of K.
- 15.10.8 Second, a decision that malicious communications reported on 26 and 28 December 2016 (see 12.44 and 12.45), by a man who received telephone calls accusing him of being a rapist, demands for money and threats of violence, had no lines of enquiry. This was recorded as undetected because the originating phone was an unregistered mobile.
- 15.10.9 This same number was however used to contact F1 on 31 December 2016, the incidents were identified as linked by the Police call handler and details of F1's complaint were passed to the investigating Officer on 10 January 2017. The sim card/telephone number was subsequently linked to K following his arrest in February 2017 and associated seizure of electronic equipment. This crime, charged as Harassment and Stalking, was one for which K was convicted following the death of B. It has not been established why investigation of these linked offences was not pursued at the time. This represents a further missed opportunity to seize evidence in the possession of K and utilise criminal sanctions to curtail the offending of K.

- 15.10.10 The other 11 recorded crimes remained unresolved prior to the death of B. Vulnerability Unit Officers were aware of at least those incidents for which a DIAL was completed and the associated crime reports, supplemented by events which were shared by Staffordshire Women's Aid. Until January 2017, however, the investigation of reported crimes remained with the recording Police Officers, with minimal and sporadic cross references mirroring the situation with the associated incident records, and with no indication of any effective coordination. A consequence of this was that in providing the background to reported offences, B and others had to repeat themselves on numerous occasions; an unsatisfactory approach to care for victims but also potentially undermining their evidence through inevitable discrepancies in successive accounts.
- 15.10.11 In respect of this Q commented to the Review Panel that there was no join up between what was happening to B and the issues reported by himself and others; they could not get the point across that it was all one big issue.
- 15.10.12 In January 2017 the Stafford Vulnerability Unit assumed responsibility for investigation of incidents connected with B, in addition to their day to day role, owing to recognition of the number of incidents which were being reported and the increasing number of individuals who were being victimised. The decision to do this was taken by a Senior Police Officer and although outside of the Vulnerability Unit's remit⁴⁴ and posing capacity difficulties for the Officers concerned, was seen as a pragmatic approach in the absence of any other available investigative resources.
- 15.10.13 There is however no indication that the Officers, although having a number of years Police service, had the capacity or investigative experience to undertake a Stalking investigation involving multiple victims and large quantities of data held electronically by both individuals and service providers. Accordingly, while allocation of responsibility to the Vulnerability Unit centralised collation of cases there is little indication of active and effective investigation taking place.
- 15.10.14 It was not until February 2017 that a new line manager for the Vulnerability Unit brought in a supervisory rank investigator from the Force Safeguarding Investigation Unit to review the situation and prepare an investigation plan. Even then an absence of specialist investigative capacity led to the investigation being allocated to a Neighbourhood Team Officer.
- 15.10.15 The Review Panel was advised that the allocation process for such investigations has since changed. These are now owned by the Criminal Investigation Department and reallocation only takes place following consideration of risk and the proposed investigator's skill set.
- 15.10.16 As part of the investigation plan K was arrested on 14 February 2017 on suspicion of Stalking and Harassment. This provided an important opportunity to seize electronic communication equipment belonging to K. It is understandable that the analysis of this material would take time and would be unlikely to provide the basis for a charging decision on that date.
- 15.10.17 The Police were however already in possession of evidence which could have supported such a decision, including, and linked to earlier malicious communication offences, the card and CCTV evidence of it being delivered which had been provided by B's son on 4 February 2017. The opportunity to arrest K immediately following the report of that incident, to gather evidence in possession of K and use custody or conditional bail to curtail further offending had been missed. With a full review of the outstanding crime investigations having taken place this could however have been pursued on 14 February 2017 as a means of curtailing further offending by K.

⁴⁴ The current Staffordshire Police Domestic Abuse Procedures were formally adopted in September 2017 but had been used operationally from March 2015 onwards. These include an outline of the responsibilities of Vulnerability Unit Officers, which does not include the investigation of crimes.

- 15.10.18 In the event K was released on bail to return to the Police station on 10 May 2017, with a condition attached not to contact or communicate in any way with B, her son, Q, F1 or F2.
- 15.10.19 The decision to Bail K was communicated to B and F2. Both B's sister, who overheard the conversation with B, and F2 are clear that they and B were told that K had a condition attached to his bail which excluded him from Stafford. It is reported that this had a very positive effect on B's mental state, making her feel able to leave the house for the first time in over a week. The bail conditions did not however include such a provision.
- 15.10.20 The Officer who informed B and F2 of K's release states that he does not recall telling them that such a condition was in place. There is no recording of the telephone conversations. There is a contemporaneous Police handover document which includes an action to include an exclusion condition to K's bail; the relationship of this to the condition actually applied has not however been established.
- 15.10.21 On the basis of her understanding of the provisions surrounding K's bail it was appropriate for B to report an alleged breach of this on the evening of 14 February 2017. It was also appropriate that, in light of the actual conditions attached to the bail, Officers took positive action in arresting K on 15 February 2017 for breaching the Non-molestation Order rather than bail conditions. It appears that such action was not taken when K visited Stafford Police Station the previous evening because the Officers involved focussed on K's bail conditions rather than considering the situation holistically.
- 15.10.22 After being interviewed K was released without charge. The decision to do this was taken by a Police Inspector. On the information provided to him, including the account of K, the rationale of this decision was not inappropriate. There were however opportunities for further investigation of the incident, particularly in respect of the credibility of K's account of his actions, and these should have been pursued.
- 15.10.23 It is clear from B's contact with her GP on 16 February 2017 and accounts from her family that B's mental state deteriorated significantly after learning that K was not after all excluded from Stafford and that he was not to be prosecuted for breaching the Non-molestation Order on 14 February 2017.
- 15.10.24 The decision to release K without charge was challenged by B on 20 February 2017 under the Victims' Right to Review⁴⁵ scheme and a review was undertaken that day by the Senior Police Officer who had met with B on 21 December 2016 (see 12.40) at Stafford. The decision was to uphold the Police Inspector's decision. B was informed of this by telephone and a confirmation email was sent to the address from which the review request was made, albeit it seems that B did not receive the email.
- 15.10.25 The Review Panel queried the appropriateness of this Senior Officer conducting the Review, given the previous direct involvement of the Officer with B. The Panel was advised that there was nothing in the review scheme procedures to say this should not happen. The Police acknowledge however that in the spirit of independence and openness it would have been better to have passed the review request to another Officer.
- 15.10.26 The Review Panel recommend:

That Staffordshire Police should remind all Senior Officers and staff with responsibility for determining Right to Review applications of the importance of independence and transparency, and to consider the impact on this of any previous involvement with the individuals or case concerned when deciding who should undertake the review.

⁴⁵ The Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme was launched on the 5 June 2013. The VRR Scheme gives victims the right to request a review of a Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decision not to prosecute or to terminate criminal proceedings. From April 2015 the scheme was extended to include cases where the Police have taken the decision not to prosecute an alleged offender.

15.11 Supervision

- 15.11.1 Staffordshire Police's force procedure on domestic abuse during the period under review stipulated that a review of all domestic incidents should be carried out by the supervisor of the Officer attending, and that the Vulnerability Unit should also conduct a secondary review. The response to all applicable incidents was compliant with these requirements with one exception. In that case the incident record had been endorsed with a supervisory decision that that no further review was required.
- 15.11.2 Notwithstanding a high level of compliance with the review requirements it is questionable how effective the processes were, given the identified deficiencies in researching relevant information and cross-referencing records.
- 15.11.3 Supervisory Officers at Stafford were aware of, and intervened in the response to, individual incidents involving B, her family and friends from September 2016 onwards. There is however little sense of a coherent and proactive approach to directing the overall investigation of offences until February 2017, when a newly appointed line manager for the Vulnerability Unit arranged for the Force Safeguarding Investigation Unit to agree an overall investigation plan.
- 15.11.4 The Review Panel was advised that the Staffordshire Police policy and approach to Stalking has changed since 2017. Police Sergeants must complete a supervisor review for all Stalking incidents, with incidents assessed and allocated by the Criminal Investigation Department on the basis of risk and complexity. High risk cases are escalated to the neighbourhood command meeting and, if appropriate, the force Demand Management Meeting. The development of services for victims of Stalking behaviour are further addressed at section 17 below.

16 MULTI AGENCY WORKING

16.1 MARAC

- 16.1.1 B was the subject of discussion at two MARACs. The first, on 7 December 2016 in Cleveland, was the result of a referral from the Refuge on 21 October 2016. A 19-day delay in the referral reaching the Police from the Refuge led to the case missing the deadline for it being discussed at the November 2016 MARAC. By the time of the December meeting B had returned to Staffordshire and no action in Cleveland was required.
- 16.1.2 The second MARAC, in Staffordshire, was the result of a DIAL assessment completed on 28 November 2016 and a consequent referral from the Staffordshire MASH. It was held on 10 January 2017.
- 16.1.3 The meeting agreed that agencies were to "flag and tag" case files to ensure that victims of K were monitored and repeat incidents investigated. A named support worker was to provide feedback to B and a named Police Vulnerability Unit Officer was to "monitor the case". It is unclear what the expectation was in practice of this last phrase.
- 16.1.4 Owing to operational circumstances there was no representation at the MARAC from the Stafford Police Vulnerability Unit. The Review Panel considered whether the MARAC team, employed by Staffordshire Police to manage the process and chair meetings, were able to provide the appropriate information to the partners to inform any decisions made. The Panel concluded that in the case of a victim such as B, where there has been extensive Police involvement in a series of incidents, it would be unrealistic to expect that a MARAC Chair could properly represent the complexity of this or the nuances of its impact on B.
- 16.1.5 Further, neither services in Cleveland nor B's GP were engaged by the MARAC process or invited to contribute. It is unclear whether, in the absence of these parties, how effectively information was shared regarding breaches of the Non-molestation Order and criminal proceedings against K, or the impact of K's abuse on B.

16.1.6 The CCG identified that GP practices often hold significant relevant information but are not routinely engaged by lead agencies in domestic abuse cases discussed at MARAC. The CCG made a recommendation for development of a pathway for GP engagement by the wider multi agency response to domestic abuse cases. The Review Panel support this and recommend:

That the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board should consider current arrangements for engaging GPs in the multi-agency response to domestic abuse and what developments may optimise the benefit of such engagement.

16.1.7 Given the absence of input to the MARAC from key agencies there is unsurprisingly no indication that the MARAC recognised the extent of the abuse being perpetrated against B or developed a plan which would address this. The plan from the meeting contained only actions which were already part of professionals' core roles. Overall, there is no indication that the MARAC made any contribution to reducing risk to B.

16.1.8 In 2015 a Peer Review by Safelives⁴⁶ of MARAC arrangements in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent identified strengths, but also a number of deficits, in those arrangements.

16.1.9 The areas for development from the Peer Review included a number of issues which were evident in the MARAC held on 10 January 2017 in relation to B:

- MARAC being seen as an end in itself rather than as part of a process, with an absence of agreed actions being monitored and their impact evaluated.
- Cases presented by the Police chair of the MARAC from a pre-prepared list of risk and trigger factors, reducing the likelihood of comprehensive and up to date information being provided by the referring agency and others.
- Delay from the index incident to the MARAC, with an absence of information sharing in the interim, and with actions to address risk being delayed on the basis of a MARAC having been planned.

16.1.10 The issues identified by the Peer Review, in conjunction with significant increases in the number of cases referred to MARAC, which could not be met within the existing organisational framework and resource capacity, led to consideration of alternative provision models. In 2017 implementation commenced, using pilot localities and then wider roll out, of a devolved MARAC model across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. It was intended that these arrangements would lead to more timely and effective intervention, with greater engagement of relevant partner agencies. The Review Panel were advised that indications from the pilot sites are positive and that by the end of 2019 a "Harm Reduction Hub" model will be implemented in Stafford. This will involve real time operational partnership support and management of risk, together with a locality based weekly MARAC process focussed on victim, family and offender interventions. Stalking cases identified for MARAC will be presented as Stalking and not domestic abuse so that the risk behaviours are clear to all attendees.

16.2 Vulnerabilities Hub

16.2.1 The Stafford Vulnerabilities Hub was a multi-agency arrangement where statutory and voluntary organisations met weekly. In relation to domestic abuse, the Hub meetings considered cases that did not meet the threshold for referral for a MARAC. Agencies brought their own cases to the hub and responsibility for cases, updates and information logged remained with the agency providing it. The arrangement was supported by a community safety database, 'ECINS'.

⁴⁶ Previously "Coordinated action against domestic abuse" (CAADA).

- 16.2.2 B was discussed at five Stafford Vulnerability Hub meetings, in October and December 2016, before her case being closed on the basis that B was already engaged with all relevant agencies. It was suggested to the Review Panel that the Vulnerability Hub added value by allowing a watching brief to be kept on B's situation and that this may have partially mitigated the time lag between identification of risk and holding a MARAC. As with the MARAC in January 2017 however there is no indication that discussion at the Vulnerability Hub led to any action being taken which might have addressed K's abuse of B.
- 16.2.3 The devolved MARAC model being implemented across Staffordshire (see 16.1.10 above) includes revised "Harm Reduction Hub" arrangements, involving real time operational partnership support and management of risk, and a weekly meeting to discuss in depth those of greater complexity.

17 MENTAL HEALTH OF B

- 17.1 It is clear that throughout the period under review B's mental health was impacted by stress and anxiety attributable to the actions of K. Further, that at times there were crises in this which seriously affected B's physical health and her ability to function socially.
- 17.2 WMAS staff who saw B on 6 September 2016 recognised her fragile mental health and vulnerability to abuse and responded appropriately to this. WMAS advised the Review Panel that local domestic abuse services, as well as adult safeguarding services are included in the directory of services held by their clinical support desk, through which ambulance crews make referrals for follow up services. It is unclear why the decision was taken to refer B to Adult Social Care services rather than those which support victims of domestic abuse. It has also not been established why Adult Social Care did not pass on the referral to Staffordshire Women's Aid when they correctly identified that B's situation did not meet the criteria for engagement of Staffordshire Adult Safeguarding services⁴⁷.
- 17.3 B had previously been prescribed anti-depressant medication by her GP. During the period under review she sought no medical treatment before her return from Cleveland in November 2016.
- 17.4 Following her return to Staffordshire, B confided in F1 that on 18 November 2016 she had taken an overdose of prescribed medication in an attempt on her life. B told F1 that she had not informed any professional about this; and she did not do so subsequently. B alluded to a previous overdose when assessed by CRHT staff on 20 January 2017 but did not provide any details. The Review Panel noted that staff at County Hospital, Stafford would not have had access to the information on 17 January 2017 even if it had been shared with B's GP. The Panel considered, however, whether knowledge of this may have altered the approach taken to B by other medical professionals in January 2017 (see below). The Panel concluded that it would not have done so, as both B's GP and CRHT staff took B's situation seriously and treated her actions as a serious attempt to take her life.
- 17.5 B registered with a new GP practice at the end of December 2016, at which point a comprehensive and effective assessment was undertaken. B was offered a referral for counselling and to Women's Aid but declined both.
- 17.6 On 11 January 2017 B informed her GP that she had explored suicidal ideation and the GP took the view that B had underlying post-traumatic stress. From then onwards B had seven further contacts with the same GP prior to her death. The CCG report concluded that the GP engagement with B from December 2016 until her death went beyond expected standards and showed exemplary practice by the GP involved. The GP had made appropriate referrals, had contacted mental health services directly and regularly followed up her welfare. At each contact he confirmed the support systems which were in place, assessed her level of anxiety

⁴⁷ <https://www.ssaspb.org.uk/Guidance/Section-42-Adult-Safeguarding-Enquiry-Procedures>

and ensured a further follow up was planned and agreed. The Review Panel concurred with this view.

- 17.7 On the evening of 17 January 2017 B was admitted by ambulance to County Hospital, Stafford, having reported that she had taken an overdose of prescribed and over the counter medication.
- 17.8 A formal complaint was made after the death of B that Paramedics did not appear to be in any urgency to get B into the ambulance and did not assist her to the vehicle. In response, West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) advised that their staff arrived 13 minutes after B's call and conducted appropriate primary and secondary surveys which identified that B's attendance at hospital was not time critical. The WMAS staff reported that B refused to go to hospital until she had finished her drink and had a cigarette, walked unaided into the kitchen to get a cigarette then returned to the lounge and sat down. Once B had finished her drink and cigarette she walked to the front door with a little assistance from her friend and that her male friend took it upon himself to carry her a few metres across the pavement to the ambulance. The WMAS investigation concluded that the ambulance crew acted appropriately.
- 17.9 There is no indication in the County Hospital records of B being asked if she had previously attempted suicide, of a reference by B to "issues in her personal relationships" being explored, or of a risk assessment being completed. F2 informed the Review that the only risk assessment undertaken was a doctor asking B "Are you going to do it again?" Further, there is no indication that the quantity of prescription drugs which B might still have at home was explored with her as it should have been. Hospital staff did, appropriately, establish that B had no dependents at her home.
- 17.10 B was discharged after 3 hours in the Emergency Department and a discharge summary was sent to B's GP. This identified a moderate risk of further harm.
- 17.11 In relation to risk assessment, UHNM informed the Review Panel that these are only a guide for clinicians and documenting them was not essential; although a record would act as evidence of the rationale for a clinician's decision making, which in this case was lacking. In the absence of a documented risk assessment, UHNM was unable to determine whether or not B should have warranted an out of hour's referral to the mental health crisis team⁴⁸.
- 17.12 The Review Panel was advised that this case was discussed with the UHNM Emergency Department Consultant who observed that reference in the hospital records to B having no current feelings of self-harm, that she had an appointment arranged with MIND⁴⁹ and that she would be staying with friends suggested that B had been assessed as not requiring an urgent review by the mental health crisis team. Further, that if patients are not at immediate risk then assessment at another time, rather than in the Emergency Department, may be more appropriate.
- 17.13 UHNM informed the Review Panel that in 2017 the Emergency Department introduced a Mental Health Assessment Tool which is to be completed by clinicians to determine patients' self-harm risk and help them decide whether further assessment is needed.

⁴⁸ Liaison Psychiatry for Emergency Department patients at County Hospital operates between the hours of 0800 – 1500 Monday-Fridays. If a patient requires urgent mental health support outside of these hours then staff can contact the SSSFT Crisis Resolution & Home Treatment (CRHT) team.

⁴⁹ B did not have an appointment arranged with MIND. The basis for her informing hospital staff that she did has not been established.

- 17.14 The Review Panel concluded that in the absence of an urgent referral to the CRHT team, the most expeditious means to securing access to mental health services for B was through her GP⁵⁰.
- 17.15 The GP's response to learning of B's overdose on 17 January 2017 was entirely appropriate but marred by communication problems associated with the use of FAX to refer individuals to mental health services.
- 17.16 South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT) advised the Review Panel that the access point FAX was not working on 18 January 2017 and that all GP surgeries had been told to make any referrals by phone until further notice. It is clear that B's GP was not aware of this.
- 17.17 The Review Panel was advised by SSSFT that although the preferred method of receiving referrals from GPs was by email⁵¹ (or using Goldfax⁵²) some GP practices continue to only send paper faxes. In July 2017 the health agencies represented on the Review Panel agreed to progress a position where all referrals from GPs would be made electronically, and that the use of hard copy fax machines should cease. The Review Panel was advised in November 2017 that progress had been made with this but that not all FAX machines had been removed. There were concerns that some GP practices would continue to use FAX.
- 17.18 The potential for such difficulties will be remedied by March 2020 at the latest, consequent to a direction in December 2018 from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that all NHS use of FAX will cease by then.
- 17.19 In addition to the issue with the FAX referral there were inappropriate delays in B's journey through the referral process to receiving a service, which was disjointed and marked by B herself having to chase up the referral. SSSFT advised the Review Panel that the Trust has since re-designed services, with new referral pathways through a single access point⁵³ and active promotion of these with all other agencies.
- 17.20 On 20 January 2017 SSSFT contacted B after receiving a re-sent referral from her GP and she advised that she was physically unwell. It was arranged that B be re-admitted to County Hospital, Stafford. At the hospital B asked to speak with the mental health crisis team. In a formal complaint following the death of B, F2 questioned why hospital staff had to be prompted to refer B to the crisis team. UHNM advised the Review Panel that as B as had attended the Emergency Department with symptoms of a physical health condition this would be the primary concern and that a referral to the mental health crisis team would not be made unless this was prompted by B or she was assessed as requiring Mental Health service involvement.
- 17.21 The Review Panel considered that this suggested a less than holistic approach to assessment of B when she was admitted. They were advised by UHNM that, since 2017, increased mental health training within the Emergency Department has been put in place.
- 17.22 B was seen at the hospital Emergency Department by SSSFT CRHT staff. The arrangements made for assessment and monitoring of her over the following days were appropriate.
- 17.23 Emergency Department staff were aware that B informed the CRHT staff that she was a victim of domestic abuse. UHNM advised the Review Panel that although this disclosure was

⁵⁰ The pathway for securing non-urgent access to mental health services required Emergency Department staff ask the patient to see their GP or make a self-referral.

⁵¹ All GPs have NHS.net secure email.

⁵² An application which allows FAX messages to be received on desktop computers.

⁵³ <https://www.teldoc.org/access-service-for-adult-mental-health>

made to CRHT staff who were to remain in contact with B, the hospital staff should have followed this up to ensure that appropriate referrals had been made. UHNM identified a need for Emergency Department staff to be provided with additional training on Domestic Abuse and its links with mental health and have put this in place.

17.24 The Review Panel recommend:

That the Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership seek assurance from UHNM on the uptake and effectiveness of Emergency Department training in recognition of and response to patients with mental health problems, and that their arrangements for risk assessment and provision of access to mental health services are robust and being applied consistently.

17.25 On 22 January 2017 CRHT staff attending an appointment with B went to B's home address rather than the one at which she was staying. SSSFT advised the Review Panel that the CRHT team offer a 24/7 service and it is difficult to provide ongoing continuity of care from the same professionals. The visit on 22 January 2017 was carried out by different staff who (wrongly) assumed they were to visit B's home address, rather than her friend's house which had been recorded in a different part of the case notes. SSSFT advised the Review Panel that this was attributable to error by a staff member and highlighted that their staff would have contacted B to arrange another appointment had B not contacted the team first.

17.26 SSSFT advised the Review Panel that having reviewed their involvement with B, taking into account relevant NICE⁵⁴ guidelines⁵⁵, it was evident that B was not mentally ill but suffered from long term stress relating to her situation. The decision to discharge B on 23 January 2017 was appropriate given that B was making plans for the future and denying intent to end her life. Women's Aid had assured the CRHT team, just prior to B's discharge, that counselling sessions would commence in the near future and until then they would provide B with ongoing support.

17.27 In her complaint following the death of B, F2 questioned why it was never suggested that B be sectioned (under the Mental Health Act, 1983) for her own safety or advice given to B that she could request this herself. SSSFT advised the Review Panel that B was not exhibiting a serious immediate risk of self-harm and thus was not detainable under the Mental Health Act. They also commented that B's heightened anxiety was directly related to her situation in relation to K and expressed the view that an inpatient stay would have limited her ability to address these issues, delaying the potential for their resolution.

17.28 F2 also queried why CRHT staff referred to her as B's carer. SSSFT advised the Review Panel that they use the term "carer" for someone who provides ongoing social and emotional support to a service user. In this case B was staying with F2 who was identified by B as giving her the most social and emotional support as well as being a source of information regarding relevant history and risks. The term is recognised as not fully reflecting the significant value and support that family, friends and others give to a service user but is universally used and understood across services.

17.29 The Review Panel discussed the use of medication to control situational stress and was advised that medication alone would not have resolved B's problems. It was important, as B's GP did, to recognise underlying abuse when considering prescription of medication for situational stress. It was however an appropriate means of assisting with the cognitive rationalisation of stressful situations by bringing an individual down from a peak of stress. It

⁵⁴ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

⁵⁵ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90/chapter/1-Guidance#step-3-persistent-subthreshold-depressive-symptoms-or-mild-to-moderate-depression>

was also noted that controlled medication was a favourable alternative to sustained alcohol use which was often a resort for those suffering from high levels of stress.

- 17.30 When interviewed for this Review B's GP expressed concern that his attempts to contact B outside of the pre-arranged appointments may have added to her anxiety as the surgery telephone system withheld the caller's contact number. The GP strongly felt that in instances such as these, it is vital to not add to already heightened anxiety and on reflection believes he should have made B aware of his intention to call more frequently. The Practice staff now have access to a telephone which will reveal the number to the receiving individual if this is deemed appropriate.
- 17.31 On 18 January 2017 B queried with a SSSFT call taker whether, if she was to engage with their services, her mental health would have to be shared with the Court. In relation to this B's sister informed the Review Panel that the potential impact of accessing mental health services on her credibility as a witness was a major concern for B around this time. She continued that B had wanted to be admitted to St Georges Hospital, Stafford but had said that she could not pursue this because K would use it against her. The call taker correctly advised that she not able to provide any guidance regarding this and suggested that she discuss it with a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) if she decided to go ahead with an assessment.
- 17.32 The Review Panel took the view that this is an issue on which victims of abuse may have legitimate concerns, noting that offenders have used this to undermine victim's credibility, as well as using the threat of being undermined as a means of control. Conversely the Panel noted that a victim who does not seek mental health support when appropriate may be viewed by a court as having contributed to detriment in their welfare. Overall, the Review Panel concluded that a blanket approach to this could not be taken and that any situation had to be considered individually.
- 17.33 Finally, Staffordshire Police were aware on 17 January 2017 of B's admission to hospital that day having attempted to take her life through a medication overdose. There was also further contact with Women's Aid on 18 January 2017 and with an SSSFT CPN on 21 and 23 January 2017 during which this was discussed. There is however no indication that this was explicitly considered in relation to the likely impact of subsequent Police contact with B (on 9 January, 1 February and 14 – 17 February 2017), in formulation of the investigation plan agreed on 8 February 2017, or when the Senior Police Officer contacted B on 20 February to inform her that the decision on 15 February 2017 not to prosecute K was upheld.
- 17.34 Staffordshire Police advised the Review Panel that, as a result of changes to the force response to Stalking, B would now be classed as a high-risk victim. The development of services for victims of Stalking behaviour are further addressed at Section 19 below.

18 MENTAL HEALTH OF K

- 18.1 Following a report to Police on 18 February 2017 of concern that K may harm himself the officers investigating him visited the hotel where he was staying and then arranged for him to be assessed by a SSSFT Police Liaison CPN. The CPN concluded that K required further assessment and arranged for this to take place the following morning. As a risk of violence was identified that assessment took place at St. Georges Hospital, Stafford.
- 18.2 On 19 February 2017 it was identified that K was registered with a GP in Stoke-on-Trent where the commissioned provider of mental health services is North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust (NSCHT). K was accordingly referred to the NSCHT Acute Home Treatment Team (AHTT).
- 18.3 Following assessment by the AHTT, K was offered treatment either as an inpatient or in the community and he opted for the latter in agreement with the AHTT professionals. On 20

February 2017 however K requested inpatient treatment and he was admitted to the Harplands Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent, as an informal patient.

- 18.4 The Review Panel was advised that offering K a choice of inpatient or community-based treatment was based on risk assessment and a management plan that demonstrated person centred thinking; offering the least restrictive option whilst balancing choice and safety.
- 18.5 K was discharged from Harplands Hospital, again at his own request, on 1 March 2017. The Review Panel was advised that there were no grounds upon which K could have been detained under the Mental Health Act, 1998 and that the treatment provided to K by mental health services was appropriate to his presenting condition.
- 18.6 In the assessments documented by both SSSFT and NSCHT it was recorded that K was the subject of a Non-molestation Order and that K had disclosed his arrest and conviction in November 2016. The circumstances of this were however minimised by K and overall he portrayed himself as a traumatised victim of B's behaviour (see 12.80.4). In this regard the significance of the Non molestation Order, and K having breached it, as indicators of K's culpability were not recognised by staff at Harplands Hospital. Consequently, only a generic risk assessment was carried out, without completing the additional tool available for assessment of domestic abuse risk.
- 18.7 The Review Panel was advised that by NSCHT that recognition of the Non molestation Order's significance would have led to greater consideration of risk to K's ex-partner, with whom he went to stay following his discharge, and multi-agency ways in which this might be addressed.
- 18.8 The NSCHT report includes a recommendation for action to ensure that their staff are aware of the significance of protective Orders. The Review Panel concluded that this issue has a wider applicability than to NSCHT alone and recommend:
- That the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board should promote professional awareness of available protective orders and the significance of these as indicators of risk.***
- 18.9 The Review Panel considered whether the Police might have shared the fact of K's admission to hospital with B. Whilst it cannot be concluded that knowledge of this would have prevented the death of B on 21/22 February 2017, B's response to previous occasions where she believed that K's ability to stalk her had been curtailed suggests that it may have. The Panel concluded, however, that there was no lawful basis on which that information could have been shared with B.
- 18.10 Finally, the Review Panel considered whether the health professionals assessing K might have accessed records of B's recent involvement with SSSFT and whether this may have added value to their assessments. The Review Panel concluded that even if the connection between B and K had been made, cross referencing between B and K's contact with mental health services would have been outside of Caldicott principles and could have had a significant negative impact on effective personalised care delivery

19 STALKING

- 19.1 The Review Panel noted that in considering risk to victims of Stalking it is particularly important to recognise that the victim's subjective feeling of safety/risk is as significant as their objective safety. In respect of B there were many occasions when this did not happen, with decisions about risk being focussed on issues such as the physical location of B, whether K knew where she was and whether measures to increase her physical security were objectively required. The Review Panel considered whether the risk assessment tools used adequately promoted consideration of whether and why a victim may feel unsafe. In this regard the Review Panel saw the move to use of the DASH model, including the availability of the S-DASH (stalking) variant, as a positive development.

- 19.2 B was advised on a number of occasions, by Police and Refuge staff, to close her social media accounts and change her telephone number in order to thwart K's ability to communicate with her. B did make some moves to limiting her direct exposure to social media and left her mobile phone with F1 when she travelled to the Refuge. In addition to receiving direct communication from K, B was also however informed by her friends of social media posts and of calls made to the phone which she left with F1.
- 19.3 The Review Panel noted that B reported being terrified of going offline because she would not know what K was doing and thought that this would increase the risk to her son and Q. The Review Panel concluded that for B to hold and be guided by this view was understandable. Further, that although sharing K's communications with B might be viewed as being complicit in the abuse of her, it was fully understandable that B's friends would support her position.
- 19.4 The Review Panel noted that this is reflected in the current position of Staffordshire Police, highlighted in their Vulnerability Toolkit, that blocking may lead to isolation of the victim and increase the risk of contact offending but the decision on whether to block devices is the victim's choice.
- 19.5 Most importantly the Review Panel took the view that the primary focus of responses to Stalking should be to recognise the serial nature of the offending and to stop the offender's behaviour, thereby removing the victim's need for protection, support and to change their behaviour. The framework for this does exist, through effective use of criminal investigation, bail conditions and Court sanctions, the use of protective orders (including Stalking Protection Orders and to be further enhanced within the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill), and robust management through local multi-agency partnerships, including MAPPA. This mindset was not however evident in the response provided by agencies in contact with B, and in some instances the view that B had taken action to protect herself worked to undermine it. For example, the Review Panel considered that B should not have had to go to a Refuge; intervention with K should have provided her with protection without doing so. That B had sought Refuge away from Stafford however led to Police inaction on the basis of there being no immediate risk of physical harm. It is positive that an underlying ethos of the training and procedural developments in Staffordshire outlined below is to address this issue.
- 19.6 In September 2014 a Joint Protocol was published for the Appropriate Handling of Stalking Offences between the CPS and National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). It sets out the principles governing the investigation and Prosecution of Stalking offences under Sections 2A and 4A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and covers all forms of Stalking. It is available for Police Officers and Police Staff through online links from the College of Policing. It emphasises that the Police are to focus on building strong cases for prosecution from the outset and an evidence checklist is made available to assist this process.
- 19.7 Subsequent to this, in 2016/17 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) jointly inspected the approach to offences of Stalking and Harassment across a number of Police forces. The report of this inspection, "Living in Fear – the Police and CPS Response to Harassment and Stalking"⁵⁶ identified a number of deficits in the application of the joint protocol and otherwise in responses to Stalking. These included features evident in the response provided to B, in summary:
- That, with no single accepted definition, Stalking was misunderstood and often went unrecognised, with incidents being mis-recorded and Stalking specific powers (e.g. the power to search premises and seize evidence⁵⁷) not being properly utilised.

⁵⁶ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/living-in-fear-the-police-and-cps-response-to-harassment-and-stalking.pdf>

⁵⁷ Under section 2B of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012).

- Recording of Stalking was inconsistent
- There was a failure to see Stalking holistically, with incidents treated as a single event rather than in context.
- Risk assessment was less likely to take place where incidents were not classified as domestic abuse, and even in those cases questions relating to Stalking were sometimes overlooked.
- There was often no structured plan developed to manage risk to the victim
- Positive action only taking place after numerous reports by the victim.

19.8 The “Living in Fear” Report made a number of recommendations to Police forces, the CPS, the Home Office and the College of Policing, which were intended to address these issues.

19.9 Since 2017, consequent to the joint thematic inspection by and learning from the events detailed in this report, Staffordshire Police and its partner agencies have made significant investment in the development of specialist training for staff and officers together with changes to operating policies and procedures. These changes have seen a rise of 174% (832 crimes) in recorded Stalking offences between 2018 and 2019, suggesting a significant improvement in the recognition of this insidious crime. Action taken to increase recognition and to ensure that once identified both victims and perpetrators are responded to effectively is outlined below.

19.10 **Training, Learning and Support**

- Specialist training on Stalking has been provided to all current Police Officers and staff, and forms part of the newly recruited Officer training provision. The training covers how to recognise and respond to Stalking, Stalking referral pathways and safeguarding Stalking victims. Training has included promotion of the HollieGuard⁵⁸ mobile device application.
- The specialist training has also been provided to staff of partner agencies including Victim Support, social care and health service providers.
- Refresher training has been delivered in 2018/19 to control room and criminal justice support unit staff, as well as to the staff of statutory partners working in the MASH and domestic abuse advocacy services.
- Stalking awareness sessions have been delivered by Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service during Public Protection Development Days and more are planned. These aimed to assist identification of Stalking (behaviours, offences & powers) and provision of appropriate safety advice, improve investigation standards and highlight victim support services available.
- 30 Stalking Ambassadors have been appointed across all directorates of Staffordshire Police and given enhanced training to influence investigative and safeguarding practice.
- A Domestic Abuse & Stalking Working Group, which includes the Stalking Ambassadors and “New Era” support services, has been implemented to support organisational development, focussing upon identification, risk assessment, investigation and safeguarding.
- Staffordshire Police has introduced a vulnerability toolkit, available to staff and Officers on their mobile devices, which includes advice and support on recognition of Stalking, offender management, investigation and Police powers, safeguarding pathways and provision of advice.

⁵⁸ <https://hollieguard.com/>

- Staffordshire Police has internal & external communication strategies to highlight Stalking safeguarding and investigative requirements.

19.11 Investigation

- The use of Harassment Notices was discontinued in January 2018 as recommended in the “Living in Fear” report.
- The implementation of NicheDMS in April 2020 (see 15.5.7) will provide officers with the full course of events on one system. This will aid the investigation process and evidential collection.
- Completion of the NPCC/CPS evidence checklist is required for all Stalking and Harassment cases
- Staffordshire Police now mandate that Police Sergeants must complete a supervisor review for all Stalking incidents, with incidents assessed and allocated by the Criminal Investigation Department on the basis of risk and complexity. High risk cases are escalated to the neighbourhood command meeting and, if appropriate, the force Demand Management Meeting.

19.12 Safeguarding

- For victims of Stalking behaviour, such as that to which B was subjected, there are Independent Stalking Advocacy caseworkers provided nationally by Paladin and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Staffordshire Police training and communication strategy highlights the referral pathways to these services. There is, however, currently no local provision in Staffordshire, the only service in the West Midlands being the Black Country Stalking Service, launched by Women’s Aid in 2018 to provide a service within Sandwell, Walsall, Dudley and Wolverhampton. The Black Country Stalking Service have provided advice on development of Stalking advocacy in Staffordshire and New Era have funded training for two specialist Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISAC).
- Stalking Protection Orders were introduced in March 2019 by the Stalking Protection Act 2019 as an addition to the existing range of protective Court Orders and arrangements are in place to apply for these where appropriate.
- The S-DASH Stalking risk assessment is now utilised by investigating officers to inform safeguarding requirements for victims of Stalking. The S-DASH was automated on 1st March 2018 in the Staffordshire Police control room to assess the risk, and thereby inform incident grading and the actions of deployed Officers. The introduction of NicheDMS will standardise and automate the risk assessment process across the whole force.
- A daily Stalking report is produced, which supports triage processes owned by the CID and Vulnerability Units / Harm Reduction Hubs; with an escalation pathway to the force Demand Management Meeting.
- Staffordshire Police processes and systems now capture Stalking within the vulnerability systems as a standalone category. This now informs the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) safeguarding processes ensuring a multi-agency response for Stalking incidents. Stalking Ambassadors within the MASH ensure that Stalking cases are identified and progressed in a multi- agency environment. They provide feedback and advice to Officers dealing with Stalking
- Staffordshire Police staff and Officers have the National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) referral app on their tablets and enabling automatic referral of Stalking victims for non-molestation orders.

19.13 Offender Management

- Staffordshire Police Intelligence systems have been amended to capture Stalking offenders as a standalone category. This then populates relevant briefing boards and feeds into the Police National Database (PND) for National Tracking alerts when required.
- Stalking offenders are specifically assessed by prisoner handling teams and custody staff whilst they are in custody to inform risk management and safeguarding plans.
- Criminal Justice Support Unit staff have had recent training to assist in capturing Stalking behaviours through the criminal justice process. A particular focus has been on the significance of repeated breaches of Non-molestation and other protective Orders.

19.14 Governance

- Staffordshire Police have in place a quarterly internal audit programme, examining 100 cases per annum to establish current compliance with force policy and the NPCC/CPS protocol.
- Developments in the Staffordshire Police response to Stalking are overseen by a Staffordshire Police Detective Chief Inspector who is the regional representative at the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) forum for Stalking. The DCI chairs the regional working group to standardise the Police approach to Stalking and Harassment. Staffordshire Police initiatives have been supported and informed by regional collaboration through meetings with regional Police and CPS leads for Stalking

19.15 Future Developments

- Staffordshire Police are aware of Stalking Clinics⁵⁹ being piloted in three Police areas, and which include access to Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists. The effectiveness of the clinics is still being examined although they have been found to provide a more robust intervention and management plan by understanding the behaviour traits of the offender. Pending any wider roll out of such clinics the potential to develop mental health services in the MASH to assist with risk management of offenders is being explored.

⁵⁹ <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/news/pushing-boundaries-on-the-fifth-anniversary-of-the-stalking-laws>

LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

19.16 The following were identified as the main learning points from this Review:

- All professionals who have contact with vulnerable people should be aware of Stalking and the services available for victims of it.
- The primary focus of responses to Stalking should be to recognise the serial nature of the offending and to stop the offender's behaviour, thereby removing the victim's need for protection, support or to change their behaviour.
- Reports of Stalking should be recorded as such to reflect and promote recognition of an ongoing course of conduct by the offender, its impact and the associated risks to the victim, their family and friends.
- The funding model for refugees, classed as supported housing and with a shortfall in grant and charitable donation funding, is likely to deter victims who are not in receipt of state benefits from accessing the protection they need.
- Where a victim reports a succession of incidents there are likely to be inconsistencies in the accounts given and the responses to risk assessment questions, reflecting both the nature of the index event but also conscious or unconscious assumptions that professionals would be aware of previously imparted information.
- The use of telephone systems which withhold the caller's number to contact victims of Stalking and other abuse, may be both ineffective and cause the victim anxiety. Making available a telephone number which is not withheld to relevant professionals should be considered.
- Professionals working with adults who may be victims of abuse should be fully aware of protective Court Orders which are available and the significance of these as indicators that an individual may be at risk or pose a risk to others.

19.17 Taking into account the significant developments in services since the events examined by this Review the Review Panel made the following recommendations:

- 1. That Staffordshire Police should remind all Senior Officers and staff with responsibility for determining Right to Review applications of the importance of independence and transparency, and to consider the impact on this of any previous involvement with the individuals or case concerned when deciding who should undertake the review.**
- 2. That the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board should consider current arrangements for engaging GPs in the multi-agency response to domestic abuse and what developments may optimise the benefit of such engagement.**
- 3. That the Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership seek assurance from UHNM on the uptake and effectiveness of Emergency Department training in recognition of and response to patients with mental health problems, and that their arrangements for risk assessment and provision of access to mental health services are robust and being applied consistently.**
- 4. That the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board should promote professional awareness of available protective orders and the significance of these as indicators of risk.**

19.18 Recommendations for action to improve services were also made by agencies which contributed to this Review and the Independent Office for Police Conduct. These are provided at [Appendix B](#).

19.19 Implementation of action plans arising from recommendations of the Review Panel and the contributing agencies will be monitored under arrangements agreed by the Stafford Community Wellbeing Partnership.

APPENDIX A

Terms of Reference

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Terms of Reference for this Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) have been drafted in accordance with the Staffordshire and Stoke Multi-agency Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews, hereafter referred to as “the Guidance”.
- 1.2 The relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP) must always conduct a DHR when a death meets the following criterion under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) section 9, which states that a domestic homicide review is:
A review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:
- a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
 - a member of the same household as himself,
- held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.
- 1.3 An ‘intimate personal relationship’ includes relationships between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
- 1.4 A member of the same household is defined in section 5(4) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act [2004] as:
- a person is to be regarded as a “member” of a particular household, even if he does not live in that household, if he visits it so often and for such periods of time that it is reasonable to regard him as a member of it;
 - where a victim (V) lived in different households at different times, “the same household as V” refers to the household in which V was living at the time of the act that caused V’s death.
- 1.5 The purpose of a DHR is to:
- **Establish** what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims;
 - **Identify** clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result;
 - **Apply** these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate;
 - **Prevent** domestic violence homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working 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; and
 - **Highlight** good practice.

2 Background:

- 2.1 The victim and perpetrator had been in relationship for 10 months. In September 2016 the victim ended the relationship. She was thereafter subjected by the perpetrator to a campaign of harassment and intimidation constituting Coercive Behaviour. In February 2017 the body of the victim was found hanging by a belt from a radiator at her home. She had left notes suggesting attribution of her death to the actions of the perpetrator. The perpetrator was subsequently arrested and has been charged with Coercive Behaviour and Manslaughter as well as harassment of a number of other persons linked to the victim.

3 Grounds for Commissioning a DHR:

- 3.1 A DHR Scoping Panel met on 25 April 2017 to consider the circumstances. The Panel agreed that the following criteria for commissioning a Domestic Homicide Review had been met:

CRITERIA:	
There is a death of a person aged 16 or over which has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect.	X
The perpetrator was related to the victim or was, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship with the victim.	X
The perpetrator is a member of the same household as the victim	

- 3.2 The recommendation to commission this Review was endorsed by the Chair of the Stafford Community Safety Partnership who was present at the meeting.

4 Scope of the DHR

- 4.1 The Review should consider in detail the period from September 2016, when the relationship of the victim and perpetrator first came to the attention of agencies, until the date of the victim's death, extended to 1 March 2017 (when the perpetrator was discharged from Harplands Hospital) for North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust.
- 4.2 The review will also consider summary information regarding the victim and perpetrator outside of this period.
- 4.3 The focus of the DHR should be maintained on the following subjects:

Name	B	K
Relationship	Victim	Perpetrator
Age	46	46
Ethnicity	White British	White British

4.4 A review of agency files should be completed (both paper and electronic records); and a detailed chronology of events that fall within the scope of the Domestic Homicide Review should be produced.

4.5 An Overview Report will be prepared in accordance with the Guidance.

5 Individual Management Reviews (IMR)

5.1 Key issues to be addressed within this Domestic Homicide Review are outlined below as agreed by the Scoping Meeting. These issues should be considered in the context of the general areas for consideration listed at Appendix 10 of the Guidance.

- Coercive Behaviour directed at the victim, its impact upon her and the response of services to this.

5.2 Individual Management Reviews are required from the following agencies:

- Staffordshire Police
- Cleveland Constabulary
- Refuge Provider
- Stafford Borough Council
- Staffordshire Women's Aid
- NHS England and Staffordshire CCGs (in respect of primary care services)
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
- South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust
- Staffordshire Victims Gateway.

5.3 IMR Authors should have no line management responsibility for either the service or the staff who had immediate contact with either the subject of the DHR or their family members. IMRs and Summary Reports should confirm the independence of the author, along with their experience and qualifications.

5.4 Where an agency has had involvement with the victim and perpetrator and/ or other subject of this Review, a single Individual Management Report should be produced.

5.5 In the event an agency identifies another organisation that had involvement with either the victim or perpetrator, during the scope of the Review; this should be notified immediately to Julie Long, Staffordshire County Council, to facilitate the prompt commissioning of an IMR.

5.6 Third Party information: Information held in relation to members of the victim's immediate family, should be disclosed where this is in the public interest, and record keepers should ensure that any information disclosed is both necessary and proportionate. All disclosures of information about third parties need to be considered on a case by case basis, and the reasoning for either disclosure or non-disclosure should be fully documented. This applies to all records of NHS-commissioned care, whether provided under the NHS or in the independent or voluntary sector.

- 5.7 **Staff Interviews:** All staff who have had direct involvement with the subjects within the scope of this Review, should be interviewed for the purposes of the DHR. Interviews should not take place until the agency Commissioning Manager has received written consent from the Police Senior Investigating Officer. This is to prevent compromise of evidence for any criminal proceedings. Participating agencies are asked to provide the names of staff who should be interviewed to Julie Long, Staffordshire County Council, who will facilitate this process. Interviews with staff should be conducted in accordance with the Guidance.
- 5.8 Where staff are the subject of other parallel investigations (Disciplinary, SUI, etc) consideration should be given as to how interviews with staff should be managed. This will be agreed on a case by case basis with the Independent Review Panel Chair, supported by Julie Long, Staffordshire County Council.
- 5.9 Individual Management Review reports should be quality assured and authorised by the agency commissioning manager.

6 Summary Reports

- 6.1 Where an agency or independent professional has had no direct contact with the identified subjects within the period under review, but has had historic involvement with them, involvement with their extended family or is able to provide information regarding the provision of local services, a Summary Report should be prepared.
- 6.2 Summary Reports are required from the following agencies:
- National Probation Service.
- 6.3 Summary Report Authors should have no line management responsibility for either the service or the staff who had immediate contact with either the subject of the DHR or their family members. Summary Reports should confirm the independence of the author, along with their experience and qualifications.
- 6.4 The Summary Report should commence from the point at which the agency first became involved with the subjects until that involvement ceased. A chronology of **significant** events relating to family members should be attached to the report.
- 6.5 The purpose of the Summary Report is to provide the Independent Overview Report Author with relevant information which places each subject and the events leading to this review into context.
- 6.6 Summary Reports should be quality assured and authorised prior to submission.
- 6.7 In the event an agency identifies another organisation that had involvement with either the victim or perpetrator, during the scope of the Review; this should be notified immediately to Julie Long, Staffordshire County Council, to facilitate the prompt commissioning of an IMR.

7 Parallel Investigations:

- 7.1 Where it is identified during the course of the Review that policies and procedures have not been complied with agencies agency should consider whether they should initiate an internal disciplinary processes. Should they do so this should be included in the agency's Individual Management Review.
- 7.2 The IMR report need only identify that consideration has been given to disciplinary issues and if identified have been acted upon accordingly. IMR reports should not include details which would breach the confidentiality of staff.

7.3 The Police Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) should attend all Review Panel meetings during the course of the Review.

7.4 The SIO will act in the capacity of a professional advisor to the Panel, and ensure effective liaison is maintained with both the Coroner and Crown Prosecution Service.

8 Independent Chair and Overview Report Author

8.1 The Review Panel was chaired and the Review was written by Chris Few, an Independent Consultant. Mr Few has had a career in law enforcement and undertaken responsibility in senior leadership roles. He has completed the Home Office online DHR learning provision in 2013, attended a Home Office sponsored AAFDA/STADV facilitated training workshop for DHR chairs in 2017. Since 2008 he has worked as an Independent Consultant in Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City, Derbyshire, South Yorkshire, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire. Since that time, he has chaired Review Panels and written overview reports on behalf of numerous Community Safety Partnerships, Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Local Authorities in connection with Domestic Homicide and Serious Case Reviews as outlined. He has no current or historic personal or professional connection with any of the agencies and professionals involved in the events considered by this Review.

9 Domestic Homicide Review Panel

9.1 The Review Panel will comprise senior representatives of the following organisations:

- Staffordshire Police
- Cleveland Constabulary
- Refuge Provider
- Stafford Borough Council
- Staffordshire Women's Aid
- NHS England and Staffordshire CCGs (in respect of primary care services)
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
- South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust
- Staffordshire Victims Gateway.
- National Probation Service

10 Communication

10.1 All communication between meetings will be confirmed in writing and copied to Julie Long, Staffordshire County Council, to maintain a clear audit trail and accuracy of information shared. Email communication will utilise the dedicated Staffordshire County Council DHR email account.

11 Legal and/or Expert Advice

11.1 The Independent Review Panel Chair, in consultation with Julie Long, Staffordshire County Council, will identify a suitable expert on Coercive Control to assist the Panel.

11.2 However, the Individual Management Review Authors should ensure appropriate research relevant to their agency and the circumstances of the case is included within their report.

- 11.3 The Overview Author will include relevant lessons learnt from research, including making reference to any relevant learning from any previous DHRs and Learning Reviews conducted locally and nationally.

12 Family Engagement

- 12.1 The ex-partner, son and sister of the victim will be advised that a Domestic Homicide Review is being undertaken, as will the perpetrator.
- 12.2 The Review Panel will keep under consideration arrangements for involving family and social network members in the review process in accordance with the Guidance. Any such engagement will be arranged in consultation with the Police Senior Investigating Officer and, where relevant, Family Liaison Officer.
- 12.3 The Review Panel will ensure that at the conclusion of the review the victim's family will be informed of the findings of the review and have sight of the Overview Report. The Review Panel will also give consideration to the support needs of family members in connection with publication of the Overview Report.

13 Media Issues

- 13.1 Whilst the Review is ongoing the Police Media Department will coordinate all requests for information/comment from the media in respect to this case. Press enquiries to partner agencies should be referred to the Police Media Department for comment.

14 Timescales

- 14.1 The review commenced with effect from the date of the decision of the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, 25 April 2017. Completion of the Review will not be possible until conclusion of the criminal proceedings, anticipated to be in January 2018.
- 14.2 Agency Management Review and Summary reports should be submitted by 30 June 2017. Chronologies should also be submitted by this date at the latest and earlier if feasible.
- 14.3 The first Review Panel meeting will be on 19 July 2017 at 1300. Further meetings will be agreed at that time.

APPENDIX B

Recommendations for action to improve services

20 Staffordshire Women's Aid

- 20.1 To work with partners and access funding to help find support for pets where women need to leave their homes to go into Refuge.
- 20.2 For Staffordshire Women's Aid to feel more confident in challenging decisions made by agencies – this will be addressed internally, and a new escalation policy will be developed.
- 20.3 For Staffordshire Women's Aid to increase its capacity to support victims through mental health problems via the one-year secondment with a mental health practitioner and an increasing partnership relationship with the mental health trust.
- 20.4 For Staffordshire Women's Aid to work with partners in exploring ways of better identifying signs of suicide and working together to respond to these risks.
- 20.5 For Staffordshire Women's Aid to clarify with other agencies the limits, as well as the benefits, of our counselling service.
- 20.6 For partners to work together to better understand the continual abuse, such as that experienced by B, that can be perpetrated through social media and other such channels.
- 20.7 For partners to work together to more quickly identify the continual presence and patterns of coercive control and to avoid seeing incidents as isolated.

21 Staffordshire Police

- 21.1 Staffordshire Police Operating Model to include Local Policing Team Vulnerability Hub Roles and Responsibilities for the identification and management of risk with specific regard to existing Domestic Abuse Force Policy and Procedures.
- 21.2 Staffordshire Police to continue delivering Domestic Abuse training developed in Partnership with the University of Gloucester ensuring continued emphasis on the identification and investigation of Harassment and Stalking.
- 21.3 Staffordshire Police to continue their drive for improvement with the Standards and Quality of Investigation with specific regard to: - Reporting, Responding & Resolving.
- 21.4 The Independent Office for Police Conduct also made a recommendation which has been accepted by the organisation that: Staffordshire Police should deliver training as soon as is reasonably practicable to all call centre staff, staff who may from time to time handle calls and all staff who use CMS2⁶⁰ on effective cross-referencing of incidents and crimes and the importance of this and effective lateral research and systems checks.

⁶⁰ CMS2 - crime management system, being replaced by NicheRMS.

22 University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust

- 22.1 Provide emergency portals at UHNM with training in Domestic Abuse and its links with Mental Health.
- 22.2 UHNM is currently undertaking a self – harm audit of which any lessons to be learnt will be addressed.

23 Stafford Borough Council

- 23.1 The quality of the recording of information onto ECINs has been highlighted during the process of writing the IMR document. As such, Stafford Borough Council will be revising and reviewing the Terms of Reference for the Partnership Hub.

24 Stafford and Surrounds CCG

- 24.1 Develop pathway for GP engagement by the wider Multi-Disciplinary Team for instances of domestic abuse.
- 24.2 Standardise practice for each DHR that the perpetrator records are sought using the Independent Chair to request access on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership.
- 24.3 GP training on control and coercion in terms of Domestic Violence and in its wider context to ensure they are aware of their duties to share concerns and understand the changes within the legislation.

25 South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation Trust (Now Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)

- 25.1 Ensure new referral pathways are actively promoted with all agencies. [Done](#)
- 25.2 Reminder to be sent to all community staff to ensure they visit the “correspondence address” as noted on Rio.

26 Victim Gateway

- 26.1 A further review of the services Domestic Abuse processes takes place and make any identified amendments to ensure that there is flexibility in decision making in relation to cases where there is a specialist provider involved.
- 26.2 Revisit the referral pathways with all specialist domestic abuse services and come to an agreement on joint working cases.

27 North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust

- 27.1 NSCHT Staff to continue to have access to Domestic Abuse awareness training to strengthen knowledge relating to non-molestation orders.