

Gateshead Community Safety Board

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW

FINAL OVERVIEW REPORT

Miss Alice RUGGLES

Independent Chair – Stuart Douglass

Independent Author(s) – Di Reed & Adam Lindridge

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FOREWORD – INDEPENDENT CHAIR

Gateshead Community Safety Board and Domestic Homicide Review Panel would like to express their condolences to Alice's family and friends for their sad loss. We sincerely hope the learning and recommendations gained from our enquiries and deliberations will help agencies to prevent similar incidents from happening again in the future.

As Independent Chair of the DHR Panel, I would like to thank all agencies involved, including Alice's family and friends, Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) and the many specialists that contributed to the process in an open and transparent manner. I would also like to formally acknowledge the support provided by Di Reed and Adam Lindridge for the authoring of this report.

I would also like to highlight that we have evidenced considerable advice, support and encouragement from Alice's family and friends to protect and give Alice the confidence to report to professionals despite the determined efforts of the perpetrator to persistently undermine and restrict her lines of communication.

This Review has demonstrated that more needs to be done to raise awareness and change attitudes towards stalking and that it is crucial to offer appropriate and timely help and advice to victims of stalking, to their families and friends, and to professionals. Technology can often play a fundamental role in stalking and, as this case demonstrates, its impact is underestimated and poorly understood.

I am confident the learning points and recommendations will provide a platform to help national, regional and local agencies to implement measures designed to prevent what happened to Alice from happening to others.

Following Alice's death, there is emerging evidence of positive change at a local level, where we have seen a marked increase in the volume of recorded stalking offences, and nationally, where there has been significant action at Parliamentary level. In addition, the Alice Ruggles Trust, set up to raise awareness of stalking, is already making a huge difference and I would encourage all agencies to engage the Trust in developing their response.

We know that anyone can be stalked and we collectively need to be better equipped and confident to recognise the signs to help put a stop to this debilitating, distressing and potentially life-threatening crime. We all must do our utmost to take immediate action both to protect the victim and to deal effectively with the perpetrator—and I would urge everyone to take note and act on the findings of this Review.

Together we must take the threat and harm posed by stalking seriously at a leadership, frontline and community level to help bring stalking to an end.

Stuart Douglass

Independent Chair – Alice Ruggles DHR Panel

FOREWORD – ALICE’S PARENTS

Alice’s family and friends will always remember her for her happy and outgoing personality. She had the ability to cheer anyone up when they were down; she was incredibly quick-witted, a brilliant listener, and genuinely empathetic. She quickly made friends wherever she went.

Alice came from a close-knit family and she always managed to make her presence known, whether by her jokes, her mischievous pranks, or by the endless banter on the family WhatsApp group. She was a natural entertainer, who often sang in school concerts, led the karaoke at friends’ parties from an early age, and was generally the life and soul of any party. Making friends was second nature to Alice and she was popular and successful throughout school. She was a great sportswoman and represented her county, the East Midlands region and her University at fencing. Alice stayed in Newcastle after graduation, having come to love the city. She secured a job at a media giant’s Newcastle hub, where she was quickly promoted to become site coordinator and PA to the head of sales.

Alice was strong, independent, caring and intelligent. She was full of self-confidence and well able to look after herself. In our eyes, she was not vulnerable. The controlling nature of her relationship with the perpetrator did not become apparent to us until after her murder. This was because the perpetrator was so good at covering it up.

Alice was introduced to the perpetrator by a mutual friend after he saw her in a picture posted on the friend’s Facebook. The initial three months of their “relationship” occurred online, as he was a soldier serving abroad. He and Alice eventually met in January 2016, when he returned to the UK for a short period of leave before returning to Afghanistan for a further two months. Alice was initially charmed by his attentive and caring behaviour. After he came back to the UK in April, their relationship deteriorated. Alice was clearly not happy; she became withdrawn and lonely and lost weight. She fell out with her best friend and then her housemates and moved to a flat in Gateshead, sharing with a work colleague.

Alice’s family noticed how withdrawn and unhappy Alice had become during a family holiday to Cornwall in July, although the perpetrator himself would later describe it as “perfect”.

Around this time, Alice was contacted by another woman whom the perpetrator had befriended on a dating website. This was the culmination of a series of events where the perpetrator had lied to Alice, and she was no longer able to trust him. Eventually, she ended the relationship. But he was not prepared to accept no for an answer. In the ensuing weeks he bombarded Alice with phone calls, voice messages, texts and emails. In some he professed his undying love; in others he used emotional blackmail, crying down the phone or threatening to kill himself. In one message he stated he was not used to being denied what belonged to him. He took control of her Facebook account and used veiled threats to release compromising photographs that he had of her.

At first Alice tried her best to be pleasant to him, as it was not in her nature to be horrid, but he simply abused that in his attempts to get her back. When she began to ignore his messages, he contacted some of her family members and friends, trying to get them to influence her. He had also hacked into her social media, and it became clear that he was reading all her messages so that he knew who she was speaking to and where she was. The psychological effect of this on Alice was profound.

At the beginning of September Alice began a new relationship, and the perpetrator set out to destroy it by contacting the new male friend directly, painting a false picture of her, and trying to deceive him into thinking that Alice was two-timing him.

Alice was particularly disturbed by an incident during the evening of 30 September 2016 when the perpetrator repeatedly rang the front doorbell but ran away each time she came to the door. Then, much later, he climbed into the back garden and knocked on her ground-floor window as she lay in bed. When she opened the curtains, she saw flowers and chocolates on the windowsill and the perpetrator backing off. As he drove back to Edinburgh he left a chilling phone message, where he kept repeating that he didn't want to kill her and wouldn't kill her.

That night Alice called 101. She had been very scared by the incident but was calm and polite, almost apologetic. She was told that the perpetrator could be issued with a Police Information Notice (PIN) 'which means if he ever comes near you again or contacts you again, he'll be arrested'. Alice received a home visit from a police officer who reassured her that she was not wasting police time, took her statement, and told her to contact him immediately if the perpetrator contacted her again. She was immensely relieved by this and really believed that the stalking would stop.

Seven days later, Alice contacted the police again to report that he was still contacting her, but the response was less sympathetic, and no action was taken. Alice was distraught, as she now believed that nothing could or would be done to stop this stalking. A further five days after this, the perpetrator broke into her flat and brutally murdered her.

Nothing can bring back our daughter Alice. Nothing can recreate her strength of character, her mischievous humour, her extraordinary sensitivity for the feelings of all those around her. We believe that her death was preventable. We find it difficult to comprehend that although Alice described in her first phone call to the police that she was being stalked and provided ample evidence, the police and the army were unable to support and protect her. Lessons need to be learned and procedures need to be changed, in order that there can be better outcomes for future victims of coercion and stalking.

We are heartened that this report contains a range of recommendations that could help to address some of the key issues that we feel would have made a difference in Alice's case. These are:

- The victim's safety has to be the prime consideration.
- Stalking behaviour must be recognised and crimed as such, not as harassment or a "one-off" crime.
- Nobody reporting a stalking crime should ever be asked, "What do you want us to do about it?"
- Breach of a restraining order should result in immediate arrest.
- There must be effective measures for managing convicted stalkers, which continue for life.

The relevant agencies need to listen to the lessons of this report. We are encouraged by the fact that so many of them—including British Forces Germany, the Home Office, police, CPS, judiciary and probation service—have already taken action and have involved us and our charity the Alice Ruggles Trust in their training and CPD programmes. We need improved procedures to recognise the various sequences of events that constitute stalking, to deal with them robustly through the criminal justice system, and to manage the risks as effectively as possible using multi-agency approaches.

Against this, we are really disappointed that—so far, at least—the army in the UK has not appeared willing to learn lessons nor, indeed, to acknowledge that mistakes were made, and improvements are needed.

Raising public awareness, especially among young people, is of key importance to us. We want to know that the next generation, that Alice should have been part of, will recognise stalking for the vile crime that it is—not as a bit of a joke, but as something that is highly distressing for the victim and potentially extremely dangerous.

We are very grateful to Stuart Douglass, Adam Lindridge and the DHR Panel for listening to our family and involving us at every stage in the DHR process; also, to Tricia Bernal, our AAFDA advocate, who has always been available to talk through problems and issues.

FOREWORD – ALICE’S SISTER

Alice was a strong, independent, intelligent woman with an amazing sense of humour and the ability to light up the room when she walked in. It is easy when reading documents such as this and looking at things in hindsight to imagine her as a timid, frightened character who was wholly submissive to her partner.

Alice and I were shockingly similar in our outlooks on life, our senses of humour and our personalities. We understood each other and, since she has gone, the feeling of loneliness and heartache is indescribable. Before she was taken from us, we would speak almost on a daily basis; I was at her side through the entire relationship, the breakup and the misery she was put through afterwards.

I think it is important that people understand that this is not something that only meek, timid, submissive women are at risk of. Alice was none of those things: the fear towards him developed only after they had broken up and we began to realise what he might be capable of. Alice did not believe me when I told her he might kill her but I think subconsciously she knew something bad was coming. This brought about the fear reactions described by her friends. My plea to any woman who is feeling intimidated by a partner or ex, is to take it seriously. Get away from him – if the police can't help you then ensure you are never on your own and don't set patterns so he knows where you will be and when. If he makes you feel uneasy then trust your instincts – good men make you feel safe when you're with them.

As a serving member of the British Army, I am frustrated at the way this situation has been dealt with. I have received no contact from the perpetrator's unit, no explanations in response to any of the questions I have put forward to the RMP, and no sense that any lessons-learnt activities have been conducted. Despite my having contacted his unit during their relationship, no attempts have been made by anyone investigating the incident on behalf of the Army for the DHR to contact me for a statement. My sister should have been considered part of the Army family, both as his partner and as part of my family; the duty of care that extends to all members of the armed forces and their families should have applied to her. This man had committed previous offences against ex-partners whilst serving. I find it hard to believe that nobody in the unit was aware of these offences, yet neither the Army nor the Police did anything to warn her or give her any indication of the danger she was in. When they became aware he had committed an offence against her, nothing was done to manage the risk to Alice. Similar situations need to be taken far more seriously in the future by both the Police and the Army. Failure to do so would show a blatant lack of regard for my sister, the nightmare she lived in her last few months and the sustained, painful, violent last few minutes of her life.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) examines the responses and support provided by partner agencies to Alice, a resident of Gateshead, prior to her death. Alice died on the 12th October 2016 and her ex-boyfriend, a soldier based in barracks in Edinburgh, was subsequently convicted of her murder on the 26th April 2017. Alice was found in the bathroom of her home by her flatmate with multiple stab wounds. The review considered agency contact and involvement from the start of Alice's relationship with the perpetrator in October 2015.
- 1.2 The key purpose for undertaking DHRs is to enable lessons to be learned from homicides where a person is killed because of domestic violence and abuse. For lessons to be learned as widely and thoroughly as possible, professionals need to be able to understand what happened in the lead up to the homicide to help identify what needs to change to help reduce the risk of similar tragedies occurring in the future. This DHR will highlight several key learning points and recommendations for agencies to consider and implement to help prevent what happened to Alice from happening to others.

2 TIMESCALES

- 2.1 Gateshead Community Safety Board received notification of Alice's death from Northumbria Police on the 13th October 2016, agreed that the circumstances reached the criteria to undertake a statutory Domestic Homicide Review, and subsequently informed the Home Office. An initial information-scoping exercise was carried out throughout November 2016 and the Independent Chair and Author were appointed soon after. The Independent Chair met with Alice's family prior to the criminal trial to outline the DHR process and requirements. Following consultation with Northumbria Police, the Chair agreed that the DHR process should be adjourned until the completion of criminal proceedings, which ended in April 2017.
- 2.2 It was not possible to complete the DHR within the six-month timescale, as set out within statutory guidance, as criminal proceedings did not conclude until April 2017. Significant additional information only came to light in the latter stages of the DHR, during the final drafting of the report, which led to a decision to review all aspects of the Individual Management Reviews that had previously been submitted by partners. In particular, there were a number of areas that the army was requested to review. In addition, the publication of the IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct) report on the 12th September 2018 raised additional issues for the Panel to consider.
- 2.3 The Final Overview Report was submitted to the Community Safety Board for approval in November 2018 and subsequently sent to the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel for endorsement.

3 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 3.1 It is standard practice to protect the identities of individuals involved in a DHR using pseudonyms within the Overview Report. However, Alice’s family have specifically requested that her real name is used throughout the document. Alice’s story will be used to actively promote and raise awareness of stalking and there is real value in identifying her within this review.
- 3.2 The Panel carefully deliberated whether to use Alice’s name and considered the following factors:
- The stipulations set out within national statutory guidelines for the conduct of DHRs (published by the Home Office in December 2016);
 - The impact on Alice’s family, friends and professionals who were involved with Alice in the lead up to her death;
 - The potential identification of the perpetrator;
 - The potential for Alice to be identified, regardless of whether the report was anonymised, because of the specific circumstances of her death;
 - Coincidentally, at the time of Alice’s death, a production company was filming Northumbria Police for a documentary into how the police conduct murder investigations. This documentary has been shown on TV several times from October 2017, and includes CCTV images of Alice as well as footage of the perpetrator being arrested and interviewed as part of the police investigation;
 - A further documentary was aired on TV in July 2018 – which focused on the stalking behaviour and accounts from Alice, family and friends;
 - The Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) report names Alice and received national press interest;
 - Advice was sought from the Public Protection Unit based at the Home Office as well as Gateshead Council’s Legal and Democratic Services;
 - Discussions took place with the Chair of the Community Safety Board and members of the Responsible Authorities to seek their views/thoughts; and
 - There had been a previous DHR published where the victim was named for valid reasons – and therefore a precedent had already been set.
- 3.3 Considering all factors, alongside the strong wishes of Alice’s family, the Panel **agreed to name Alice throughout the document but to anonymise all other people involved (including the perpetrator).**

Victim	Alice Ruggles	Age at the time of her death: 24	White British
Perpetrator	‘Perpetrator’	Age at the time of the homicide: 25	Sikh (of Indian origin)

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 4.1 The statutory guidance states that the purposes of a DHR are to:
- establish what lessons could be learnt from domestic homicides 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 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 coordinated multi-agency approach to ensure domestic abuse is identified and responded to effectively at the earliest opportunity; and
 - contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse and to highlight good practice.

Specific Terms of Reference

- 4.2 The finalised Terms of Reference for the DHR were:
- (a) To review the policies and practice of partners responding to domestic abuse in relation to stalking and harassment.
 - (b) To consider the range and impact of agency training in respect of stalking and harassment and coercive control.
 - (c) To consider agencies', communities' and individuals' understanding of:
 - the impact of social media and messaging via electronic media in relation to stalking, harassment and coercive control, and
 - security in relation to social media and how perpetrators access this.
 - (d) Where victims are classified as medium or standard risk, to review policy and practice and the impact of this.
 - (e) To review the effectiveness and use of Police Information Notices and their impact on the risk to victims.
 - (f) To review if any issues arose from the need to work across different legislation and geographical distances, given that Alice was based in Gateshead and the perpetrator in Edinburgh;
 - (g) To consider whether there are any cultural issues to be considered in relation to:
 - some of the social media messages the perpetrator sent to Alice;
 - agencies' response to the perpetrator, and
 - the policy and practice response and impact of this.

Family Questions:

- 4.3 The Terms of Reference were shared with Alice's family and they were invited to include any questions of their own. They subsequently asked the DHR Panel to consider the following:
- Is there a National Stalking Register? If not, why not – and how would this have impacted on the response to the perpetrator?
 - If the perpetrator had been successfully convicted for stalking, how would this have impacted on Alice?
 - After the PIN had been breached, why was Alice's conversation with Police Officer 2 not recorded?
 - Why was the PIN served to the perpetrator by the army and not by a Police Officer? Did this affect the legal status of the PIN or the requirement of the police and the army to react in certain ways when it was breached?
 - Why was no link made to the incident in the South of England and the police restraining order (1) when Alice first reported the perpetrator to the police and (2) when the level of risk was assessed?
 - How could an internal review carried out by Northumbria Police (which was subsequently passed to IOPC) reasonably conclude that 'all procedures and guidelines were correctly followed'?
 - Is there a rationale for why Alice's case was recorded by Northumbria Police as 'harassment without fear' – when the 'violence or further injury' section was ticked within the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist?

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 All agencies were contacted and asked to secure their respective files and to provide a chronology of their involvement with Alice and the perpetrator. These were subsequently combined into a single narrative chronology and shared with the DHR Panel.
- 5.2 Timescales used for the chronologies were:
- **For Alice:** a period running from May 2015 through to 12th October 2016 to consider any relevant history (covering a six-month period prior to Alice being contacted by the perpetrator).
 - **For the perpetrator:** a wider timescale was identified from 2010 through to 12th October 2016 (to include details of his enlistment into the British Army and to cover alleged incidents of domestic abuse with his previous partners). It must be noted that information sourced prior to May 2015 includes only noteworthy events linked to domestic abuse.
- 5.3 At the first Panel, the Terms of Reference were agreed and those agencies that were required to provide Individual Management Reviews (IMR) were identified. IMRs were requested from 3 agencies that had been in contact with either Alice or the perpetrator and, where appropriate, staff were interviewed. The Police Officers involved in Alice's case were both on long-term sick leave and therefore could not be contacted/interviewed as part of the process. Authors of the IMRs were independent of case management and not directly

involved with the case. Interviews also took place with Alice's family and work colleagues.

- 5.4 The Chair, Independent Author and Community Safety Manager had access to some of the criminal investigation witness statements provided by Northumbria Police and used these to help further strengthen chronologies. These proved useful, but one statement was not made available to the DHR Panel until March 2018: this detailed an incident in the South of England against an ex-partner and showed striking similarities to Alice's case. Similarly, statements pertaining to allegations made by another three victims (obtained as part of the homicide investigation) were only provided to the DHR Panel in October 2018; whilst they did not significantly change any of the findings or recommendations of the DHR, they demonstrated a clear pattern of behaviour and it would have been useful to have reviewed the documents earlier in the DHR process.
- 5.5 Specific information was also difficult to obtain from the army due to a lack of records and accessibility to personnel. The Chair escalated these issues to a senior ranking officer and made subsequent requests to supplement and further strengthen information within the army IMR. Responses were received to some, but not all, of the issues raised. The Chair felt that this was a missed opportunity from the army to be able to learn from Alice's case and implement improved practices in relation to their response to domestic abuse situations.
- 5.6 There were 12 DHR Panels held from April 2017 through to October 2018. Alice's parents attended one of these and were afforded an opportunity to meet and engage with the Panel members. In addition, a bespoke training session on stalking and harassment (including cyber-related stalking) was commissioned for Panel members to refresh their knowledge and understanding. The DHR Panel were responsible for reviewing IMRs and critiquing drafts of the Overview Report.
- 5.7 At the penultimate DHR Panel, a request was made for significant changes to the layout and structure of the report, which resulted in additional completion delays. Copies of the draft Overview Report were also submitted to recognised specialists on stalking and harassment and cultural awareness issues and their valuable insights have been incorporated into the final version. The Overview Report and associated documents were scrutinised and agreed by all members of the DHR Panel before being submitted to the Community Safety Board for approval in November 2018.

6 INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- 6.1 With the assistance of the Family Liaison Officer from Northumbria Police, Alice's family were initially contacted by the Independent Chair who arranged to meet her parents in March 2017 to outline the DHR process. An offer of advocacy was provided by the Independent Chair and was later arranged through AAFDA (Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse).

- 6.2 There was a regular dialogue between the Independent Chair, Alice's parents and the family advocate (by either telephone, email and/or text) throughout the entire DHR process to ensure that family members and interested parties were kept appropriately informed. The advocate complemented the high level of interaction and engagement undertaken with the family.
- 6.3 In April 2017, the family were provided with the proposed Terms of Reference and were invited to include any additional questions or concerns. At the request of the family, and to keep Alice at the forefront of the Panel's focus, photographs were shown at each Panel meeting. Members watched various documentaries about the police investigation into the circumstances surrounding her murder, which helped provide the Panel with an insight into Alice and the perpetrator, something that is not typically available to a DHR Panel.
- 6.4 The Chair, Author and Community Safety Manager met with Alice's family face-to-face at her parents' home in Leicestershire on two separate occasions and comprehensive notes were made and shared for agreement:
- September 2017: Alice's parents, elder brother and family advocate;
 - November 2017: Alice's parents, older sister and a mutual friend, along with the family advocate and, at the family's request, a domestic abuse specialist.
- 6.5 Five of Alice's closest friends from work met with the Independent Author and Community Safety Manager on the 5th December 2017 and provided a detailed overview of their interactions and involvement with Alice and the perpetrator. Their insights have been crucial to the review.
- 6.6 In March 2018, Alice's parents and family advocate took up an offer from the Independent Chair to attend a DHR Panel in Gateshead. At this meeting, they were provided with an update on the initial findings of the review and afforded an opportunity to meet and ask questions to Panel members directly.
- 6.7 The contributions provided by Alice's family and friends have been invaluable to informing this review and have allowed the DHR Panel to gain a tangible understanding and appreciation of Alice and her life. They have had a clear determination for lessons to be learnt from the outset of the review and we thank them for their time and for sharing their stories and anecdotes with the Panel.

Perpetrator

- 6.8 The Panel discussed on several occasions, and at considerable length, whether to contact the perpetrator to provide him with an opportunity to contribute to the review. The matter was carefully considered, and advice was sought from Legal Services in Gateshead Council. He continues to deny murdering Alice, despite his conviction, and the Panel felt that his attitude, sheer lack of remorse and negative comments directed towards Alice and her family at the trial would not necessarily have been conducive or beneficial to the DHR process.

- 6.9 Views were sought from Alice’s family, who were understandably concerned about the DHR Panel contacting the perpetrator, and they expressed a strong desire for him not to be involved in the process. In addition, at the time that the DHR process was being carried out, the perpetrator was also exploring options to appeal against his conviction.
- 6.10 Given all these factors, the Panel felt the perpetrator would have little to add to the learning and **agreed not to make contact**. The perpetrator’s family were also described as being uncooperative with Northumbria Police during the homicide investigation. For this reason, the Panel also decided no contact should be made with his family and information would instead be gleaned from records supplied by the army.
- 6.11 A letter was sent to the perpetrator’s ex-girlfriend (who came to light as part of the homicide investigation) asking if she would like to be involved and contribute to the Review, given the striking similarities to Alice’s case, but no response was received. Several follow-up letters and attempted contacts via Kent Police also generated no response to the request.

7 CONTRIBUTORS TO THE REVIEW

- 7.1 Only three organisations had been involved with and/or held information about Alice or perpetrator prior to the homicide. Detailed chronologies and Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) were subsequently requested from the following:
- **Ministry of Defence (‘the army’)**—the perpetrator was a serving soldier in the Army at the time of the incident.
 - **Northumbria Police**—the Police Force responsible for the geographic area covering Gateshead.
 - **VictimsFirst Northumbria**—a local independent charitable organisation, commissioned by the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, providing emotional and practical support to victims of crime.
- 7.2 Assurance was sought from organisations that IMR authors had no contact with Alice or the perpetrator and/or had no management responsibility for any officer directly involved with the case.
- 7.3 Information was requested from Kent Police to provide details of an offence that took place between the perpetrator and his ex-girlfriend prior to his relationship with Alice. Police Scotland also submitted details of their involvement along with the policies and procedures adhered to in Scotland in respect of domestic abuse.

8 REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

- 8.1 The core membership of the DHR Panel was as follows:

Panel Representative	Role and Agency
Helen Anderson	Detective Chief Inspector Northumbria Police
Mark Cheetham	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Manager Gateshead Domestic Abuse Service
Julie Crichton	Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub Manager Gateshead Council
Tom Crookes	Solicitor Gateshead Council
Judith Dickinson	Organisational Learning and Development Officer Gateshead Council
Stuart Douglass	Independent Chair
Jacqueline Fletcher*	Lieutenant Colonel SO1 Conduct – Army Personnel Services Group
Shelley Hudson	Detective Chief Inspector Northumbria Police
Adam Lindridge	Community Safety Business Manager
Dr Jane Monckton-Smith	Independent/Expert Adviser to DHR Panel
Ruth Parker	Chief Executive Officer Victims First Northumbria
Di Reed	Author
Alex Spanton*	Captain Military Police – British Army
Howard Stanley	Designated Nurse (Safeguarding Adults) NewcastleGateshead Clinical Commissioning Group
Giulia Swan	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Gateshead Council

* Jacqueline Fletcher replaced Alex Spanton.

- 8.2 Some agencies did not attend every Panel, as they were not directly involved with the case, but they were provided with copies of draft Overview Report and Panel minutes and submitted their comments via Community Safety. These agencies included: Gateshead Housing Company, the National Probation Service, Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.
- 8.3 In addition, specialist organisations and experts were also co-opted to support the Panel and Chair and contributed on an ad-hoc time-limited basis. These included: Karma Nirvana (specialists in Honour-based Violence and Forced Marriage), the Angelou Centre (a specialist BME organisation in Newcastle), some Domestic Abuse Leads covering Northumbria, Dr Jane Monckton-Smith (a nationally recognised expert on stalking and homicide) and a Training Officer from Safe Newcastle (who delivered a bespoke session to the Panel on domestic abuse, stalking and cyber-stalking).

Independent Chair – Stuart Douglass

- 8.4 **The Chair is independent of, and has no current connection with, any agencies in the Gateshead area.** Stuart is Lead Policy Officer for Community Safety and Safeguarding at Sunderland City Council. He has worked in the field of Community Safety for several Local Authorities for 25 years including a secondment as Senior Policy Officer to the Local Government Association in Westminster between 2004 and 2005. Stuart has been a national adviser for the LGA since 1998 and has chaired the National Community Safety Advisory Group since 2008. He has significant Child and Adult Safeguarding experience in relation to Learning Reviews—including Serious Case Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews—both as a Panel member and Chair since 2007. He has significant experience of working in the domestic abuse field strategically and has previously shadowed DHR Chairs to support his development and learning. He has undertaken Home Office online and face-to-face training in DHR chairing (2 days in 2015) and one-day Chair update training in relation to revised DHR guidance in 2017. Stuart is trained in systems methodology for Serious Case Reviews, having undertaken 5 days’ training in 2015 with the Social Care Institute of Excellence.
- 8.5 In the interests of disclosure, Stuart declares previous employment with Gateshead Council and Northumbria Police prior to his appointment:
- Northumbria Police, 1988–93: Civilian Research Officer (pilot GIS mapping in relation to vehicle crime and burglary).
 - Gateshead Council Community Education Service, 1987–96: employed 2.5 hours per week in detached and community-based youth work settings.

Independent Author – Di Reed

- 8.6 **The Author is independent of, and has no connection with, any agencies in the Gateshead area.** Di has been a qualified Social Worker since 1989 and is registered with the Health and Care Professions Council. She managed a regional multi-agency Community Forensic Mental Health Team, working with high-risk offenders who had mental health needs, and has knowledge of working in domestic abuse. Di has worked as a Strategic Delivery Manager, managing mental health services for a Local Authority in partnership with the local Mental Health NHS Trust, and she managed Adult Safeguarding and Mental Capacity Act at a senior level. In addition, Di was a Service Manager with responsibility for drug and alcohol rehabilitation services. The Independent Author currently works as an independent Social Worker, Consultant and Trainer. She completed Home Office e-learning and has previous experience of authoring DHRs.

Co-author – Adam Lindridge

- 8.7 At the penultimate DHR Panel, a request was made for significant changes to the layout and structure of the report. To ensure that the report was completed in a timely manner, the Independent Author received additional support from a co-author. Adam is Community Safety Business Manager for Gateshead Council and has been working in the field of Community Safety for

more than 10 years. He is responsible for strategy and policy development for a range of Community Safety themes. He has a good knowledge and understanding of the domestic abuse agenda and has previously managed an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Service. He has completed online training for DHRs, attended several conferences and events, and has shadowed DHRs in recent years to support his development and learning. In addition, he has been involved as Panel member and IMR author for previous DHRs. In the interests of disclosure, Adam has previously worked as an Intelligence Analyst for Northumbria Police (which included producing analytical work for several homicide investigations between 2006 and 2009). **Although not wholly independent, the Panel agreed that his skills and experience would be beneficial in supporting the Independent Author to complete the DHR in a timely manner and, following discussion, they were satisfied he had no direct involvement with the services linked with this DHR and was suitable to help co-author the report (under the direction of the Chair).**

9 PARALLEL REVIEWS

- 9.1 Per standard operating processes, Northumbria Police referred Alice's case to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) owing to their involvement with Alice leading up to her death, and a parallel review was carried out.
- 9.2 Information taken from the IOPC Report highlights that Northumbria Police referred Alice's death to the IOPC on the 13th October 2016 and were asked to conduct an internal investigation. This was completed, and a report was submitted to the IOPC on the 23 January 2017 identifying that 'all procedures and guidelines were correctly followed'. Upon reviewing the report, the IOPC requested a further investigation. This was undertaken by Northumbria Police and submitted to the IOPC on the 26th May 2017. Following Northumbria Police's involvement in the DHR, and as part of their Individual Management Review, further conduct issues were identified, and they subsequently made another referral to the IOPC on the 30th August 2017. The IOPC carried out a formal investigation and their final report was published on the 12th September 2018. The Independent Chair remained in contact with the IOPC representative throughout the DHR process, providing routine updates.
- 9.3 The Independent Chair contacted the local Coroner on several occasions to provide updates and maintained contact throughout the DHR process.

10 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. **The Panel considered each of the nine protected characteristics and found no evidence of Alice having been subject to discrimination.**

- 10.2 However, it should be noted that domestic-related homicide, especially intimate partner homicide, is a gendered crime, which means that the protected characteristic of 'sex' is directly relevant to this DHR. We know women are disproportionately affected and that men are disproportionately perpetrators of domestic homicide. The Global Study on Homicide carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2013 reported that women make up 70% of victims and men 95% of offenders. It is a global issue. It is mentioned within the Istanbul Convention, which has been ratified by most countries and is designed to reduce violence perpetrated against women and girls. The DHR is also part of the Government's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016–2020.
- 10.3 Alice's homicide follows a pattern of control, abuse and stalking that is known to be common in female intimate-partner homicide cases, and there is learning to be considered in the way agencies consider and respond to female victims. Women are significantly more likely to be seriously harmed or killed in these situations and this should inform risk assessment and safety planning. Apart from the increased likelihood of serious harm or homicide, there are also issues for women around their physical ability to defend themselves from violence; the specific responses of those who are physically afraid; and victims of control who may try to manage perpetrators in ways that may put them at increased risk (for example, complying with demands/threats rather than confronting/defying the perpetrator).
- 10.4 The Panel also agreed that there were some cultural issues that needed to be reviewed and these have been addressed in the Analysis section. The Panel sought specialist advice around cultural issues to help assess how these factors may have impacted on and influenced Alice's relationship with the perpetrator. The cultural aspects referred to include: the background of the perpetrator prior to meeting Alice; the cultural differences between Alice and the perpetrator; and potential 'cultural' differences linked to the Armed Forces. Please refer to Section 3, Key Finding 32 (Page 93) for further details on equality, diversity and cultural issues.

11 DISSEMINATION

- 11.1 The Overview Report, Action Plan and any other supporting documentation will be disseminated to the Chief Executive (or equivalent) for all partner agencies and services represented on the DHR Panel. In addition, copies will be shared with Gateshead Community Safety Board, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria and the local Coroner's Office.
- 11.2 A copy of the draft report was sent to Alice's family and their advocate to seek their views and comments prior to completion and, where relevant, was updated to reflect issues raised by the family. Finally, Alice's friends, and those who contributed to the Review, will also be signposted to the DHR.
- 11.3 Following satisfactory approval from the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel, the Overview Report will be published on Gateshead Council's website (in accordance with national Home Office Guidance).

SECTION TWO:

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12 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 12.1 Alice lived in central Gateshead in a two-bedroom flat that she shared with a close friend and work colleague. She resided at the address for around four months prior to her death, having left a shared student house in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in late June 2016.
- 12.2 Alice grew up in a small village in Leicestershire with her parents. She was their younger daughter and the third of their four children. Alice studied at university in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and remained in the NorthEast after graduating from a four-year degree. Alice was in regular contact with her family back home and worked for a multi-national telecommunications company based in Newcastle City Centre.
- 12.3 She first started a relationship with the perpetrator in October 2015; initially, this was an online relationship via social media (as he was serving in the army and was 'posted away' to Afghanistan). Alice first met the perpetrator face-to-face three-months after initial contact in January 2016. He resided at an army base in Edinburgh, which was approximately 130 miles from her Gateshead flat. At no point did the perpetrator live with Alice; however, he would regularly make a two-and-a-half-hour journey by car to visit her.
- 12.4 The relationship was ended by Alice in the first week of August 2016 after she had discovered that he had been lying to her and been active on dating sites. **He would go on to routinely stalk and harass Alice and contact her family and friends throughout the weeks leading up to her homicide.**
- 12.5 On the 12th October 2016, Alice left work and accepted a lift home from a male colleague. Her flatmate finished work and returned to their shared flat a short time later, but could not gain entry through the front door. She climbed into the flat via an open window at the rear of the property, where she subsequently found Alice in the bathroom, covered in blood and not breathing. Post Mortem revealed that Alice had 24 separate injuries, including defensive wounds, and several large wounds to her throat.
- 12.6 On the 26th April 2017, the perpetrator was found guilty of Alice's murder and sentenced to serve a minimum of 22 years in prison.

13 CHRONOLOGY OVERVIEW

- 13.1 This section summarises what information was known regarding Alice and the perpetrator prior to the homicide.
- Alice was originally from the Leicestershire area and had remained living in the North East after finishing university. She resided in Gateshead, almost 130 miles from the perpetrator. She was a normal, healthy and socially skilled young woman who had a wide network of friends, was successful in her career, and was genuinely kind and thoughtful.

- The perpetrator arrived in the UK from India in September 2010 to study in Edinburgh before joining the British Army. He was initially based at barracks in Canterbury before being transferred in August 2013 to Edinburgh. He was a young man who showed less ability in social situations: he was sometimes considered 'one of the boys' and at other times thought of as 'a bit odd'.
- The perpetrator contacted Alice for the first time on the 11th October 2015 via social media. This was exactly twelve months and one day prior to the homicide.
- The pair were in regular contact (via text, email and a range of different social media platforms) but did not actually meet face-to-face for over three months, until mid-January 2016.
- Alice's family, friends and work colleagues were aware that she was in a relationship from around December 2015 and report that she was happy. Alice referred to the perpetrator as her 'boyfriend' to others before the two had physically met. It is clear that the relationship started and developed very quickly and that they became committed at a very early stage.
- Between January and July 2016, the perpetrator was exhibiting significant, albeit subtle, controlling behaviour towards Alice. The tactics he used meant that it was often difficult both for Alice herself and for her family and friends to recognise or spot the signs of these behaviours. He would 'not leave her alone', would turn up uninvited, and was constantly telephoning, messaging and accessing her social media to the point where it was negatively impacting on her life and work.
- The pair argued a lot. Alice was isolated from her family (who were living in Leicestershire) and she had also fallen out with a lot of her friends. Her personality and demeanour changed significantly, and examples provided by Alice's family and friends demonstrate the perpetrator using possessive, controlling and manipulative tactics to control her.
- Alice ended the relationship with the perpetrator in early August 2016—less than six months after they had met face-to-face for the first time and about two months prior to the homicide. Alice decided to end the relationship after he had revealed himself to be untrustworthy and possibly unfaithful. It was at this point that Alice began to realise the problems that she was experiencing.
- We know that Alice slapped the perpetrator after discovering this information and that this was something that played heavily on her mind when deliberating whether to contact the police. In addition, the perpetrator had intimate photographs of Alice, of which she was ashamed, and she worried that he would potentially disclose these online (he had made veiled threats to do so).

- The perpetrator had the ability, and was routinely attempting, to access Alice's social media accounts and to change her passwords. Alice became convinced that he had access to, and was therefore reading, her messages. He contacted her immediate family, friends and work colleagues to try to influence Alice and help rekindle his relationship with her.
- He would routinely try and contact Alice, using a variety of platforms, despite being told that she 'wanted nothing more to do with him'. His contact with Alice would invariably switch between being nasty and threatening towards her to claiming that he loved her. Alice took proactive steps to safeguard her social media and attempted to block contact from the perpetrator.
- The stalking behaviour carried out by the perpetrator significantly increased in intensity and frequency from the end of the relationship in early August 2016 through to the homicide on the 12th October 2016.
- The perpetrator refused to accept the end of the relationship and persisted in contacting Alice, following her on social media, and hacking into her computer or phone. He called and texted her persistently and also turned up at her home. Much of his behaviour at this time replicated behaviours after separations in his previous relationships and mirrors the behaviours and characteristics of 'rejected' stalkers and rejected intimate partners.
- Following a significant incident in September 2016, where the perpetrator showed up unannounced at her flat late at night, he went on to leave a series of 'odd' voicemail messages where he referred to 'not wanting to kill Alice' at least five times and claimed to have been loitering in her garden since 5pm that evening.
- Alice had met a male friend when visiting her sister in Germany, and had started to form a new relationship. He and Alice were in regular contact and he confirmed with her that he was due to arrive in the UK to meet her on the 13th October 2016—the day after the homicide occurred.
- Throughout her relationship with the perpetrator, Alice had limited face-to-face contact with him (owing to the distance between them and/or his being deployed). This meant that a highly significant proportion of their relationship and interactions occurred via phone, text, email and social media.
- Alice became increasingly frightened of the perpetrator and thought he posed a threat to her physical safety. Like many stalking victims, Alice simply wanted it all to stop with a minimum of fuss and didn't want him to get into trouble. He had also told her that complaints by previous girlfriends had not been taken seriously, but she became so concerned that she did eventually call the police for advice. Very often, by the time victims of intimate partner stalking call the police, things have escalated beyond a point where they can be managed.

- From the initial contact on the 11th October 2015 through to the first meeting in mid-January 2016, there is a period of almost three months when they did not engage face-to-face. The perpetrator then returned to Afghanistan on the 4th February 2016 for approximately nine weeks, coming back to the UK on the 12th April 2016. The relationship ends in early August 2016. In total, it is estimated that there was direct face-to-face contact between Alice and the perpetrator for no more than 18 weeks.
- Friends, family and work colleagues were all deeply concerned about Alice's involvement with the perpetrator both during the relationship and after it ended. They recall that during the initial stages of the relationship Alice seemed happy and completely besotted with the perpetrator but that over time his behaviour and attitude towards her shifted significantly. They realise with hindsight that he steadily became a lot more controlling and exhibited a range of stalking behaviours towards Alice.
- By the time the perpetrator decided he was going to kill Alice and started to plan how and when he was going to do it, the escalation was very quick.

13.2 Three organisations were involved with Alice and/or the perpetrator prior to and/or following the homicide: Northumbria Police, the Armed Forces, and VictimsFirst Northumbria. Information was also requested from Kent Police and Police Scotland detailing offences that took place between the perpetrator and his ex-girlfriend prior to his relationship with Alice.

Northumbria Police

- The first interaction between Alice and Northumbria Police took place in the early hours of the morning of the 1st October 2016, 11 days prior to the homicide. Alice called the 101 non-emergency number to report unwanted contact from the perpetrator after he had turned up unannounced earlier that night at her flat.
- Call records show that Alice had abandoned a previous 101 call to Northumbria Police less than a week earlier, on the 24th September 2016, after being on hold for 6 minutes and 43 seconds and failing to get through to a call handler to raise concerns regarding the perpetrator's behaviour.
- Northumbria Police recorded the incident as 'harassment without fear' and suggested that one course of action for Alice could be for a PIN (Police Information Notice) to be issued to the perpetrator – 'which means if he ever comes near you again or contacts you again, he'll be arrested' – and it was subsequently agreed that a Police Officer would visit Alice at home to take a statement to progress this course of action.
- Police Officer 1 visited Alice the next day, on the 2nd October 2016, 10 days prior to the homicide. Police Officer 1 completed the SafeLives DASH Risk Indicator Checklist and Alice was recorded as being at 'Medium Risk'.

- Police Officer 1 told Alice the perpetrator would be given a PIN and warned not to contact her again. In her statement, Alice confirms that she is 'scared' and 'terrified' of the perpetrator's actions and that she is 'being stalked and wants it to stop'. She states that the perpetrator is 'completely obsessed with her' and 'trying to manipulate her using intimate photographs' as well as accessing her social media accounts. Alice told her family and friends she felt reassured after this initial visit from Police Officer 1.
- Given that the perpetrator was not based locally in Northumbria, Police Officer 1 contacted his army barracks in Scotland and requested that his superiors should speak to him about not contacting Alice. Police Officer 1 made an additional request for the intimate photographs to be deleted. The perpetrator was subsequently spoken to on 3 separate occasions by superior officers within his chain of command.
- Alice contacted Northumbria Police again on the 7th October 2016, 5 days prior to the homicide, after receiving a parcel and letter from the perpetrator. This was recorded as harassment 'without fear' and arrangements were made by the call handler for a Police Officer to contact Alice to discuss the next steps.
- Later that day, Police Officer 2 contacted Alice on three separate occasions by telephone and asked if she wanted the perpetrator to be arrested; she said not but she wanted him to stop contacting her. The SafeLives DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was not reviewed and her responses, provided 5 days prior by Police Officer 1, were used and Alice remained as 'Medium Risk'. Alice told her family and friends that she was disappointed in the response; she felt that Police Officer 2 had been dismissive and felt 'completely fobbed off'.
- We know that Alice possibly underplayed the stalking when talking to police but did disclose that she was frightened. The professionals did not treat it as a serious incident. This is probably because the threat to Alice was not recognised. That is not to say that the risk indicators were not present¹.
- As part of the homicide investigation, former partners provided witness statements that suggest that the perpetrator exhibited very controlling, manipulative and coercive behaviours within several of his past relationships. A lot of these bore similar, if not identical, hallmarks to issues experienced by Alice. He is revealed as a man who doesn't take rejection well and fails to accept the end of relationships. He had a history of resisting separation, becoming threatening and difficult, and engaging in stalking behaviours. He repeatedly demonstrates controlling and obsessive patterns of behaviour, characteristics that are commonly associated with men who resist separation, becoming threatening or even dangerous afterwards.

¹ The family would like to add: "In her dealings with Northumbria Police Alice stayed polite and calm, as is evident in both the recorded phone calls. We cannot help but feel that she was taken less seriously for not being hysterical, and indeed that she paid with her life as a result."

Ministry of Defence ('the army')

- The army became aware of Alice and the perpetrator in August 2016 after he had contacted Alice and threatened to kill himself. Alice's sister contacted Glencorse Barracks and asked for a welfare check to be carried out. He was subsequently located in his room, fine and well, and said that Alice had made it all up. There is nothing formally logged on the perpetrator's army records in relation to this incident or the actions taken.
- The army were contacted by Police Officer 1 on the 3rd October 2016 who requested they talk to the perpetrator following the incident with Alice on the 30th September 2016.
- Between the 3rd and 7th October 2016, the perpetrator was formally spoken to several times by his Platoon Commander (Regimental Signals Officer), Adjutant and HQ Company OC. He was warned to stay away from Alice and cease all further contact, and reminded of the potential repercussions his actions would have on his professional career. The perpetrator stated that he understood and agreed to stay away from Alice.
- On the 4th October 2016, the perpetrator met with the Unit Welfare Officer and explained that 'things were getting on top of him' adding that he had split up [from Alice] and that he was feeling 'very depressed' about it. The perpetrator requested to leave Edinburgh as he felt this might 'assist in him dealing with the breakdown of his relationship [with Alice]' and stated that he felt he had 'no one to talk to'.
- A further welfare meeting took place on the 6th October 2016, where the perpetrator reiterated the same points. He was advised to 'keep himself busy and delete all contact details [for Alice]'. The Chain of Command was informed of his desire to leave [Edinburgh].
- There is email contact between Police Officer 1 and the army on the 10th October 2016, two days prior to the homicide, to confirm that the army had spoken to the perpetrator and regarded the issue as a 'civil' matter. It was recorded that 'simply because he [the perpetrator] is a soldier does not necessarily mean we, as his employers, have any further role to play'.

VictimsFirst Northumbria

- Alice's first and only contact with VictimsFirst Northumbria took place on the 6th October 2016 (in response to the incident on the 30th September 2016). No calls are recorded by VictimsFirst Northumbria and so we can only rely on the account provided by the Case Co-ordinator to the IMR author.
- Alice provided an overview of the issues that she was experiencing with the perpetrator to her allocated Case Co-ordinator and was provided with advice around domestic abuse services. Alice said she had support from family, friends and work colleagues and declined any further support.

- Alice's case was closed (pending any further contact) and, as no further or additional risks were identified during her conversation with the allocated Case Co-ordinator, Alice's DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was not reviewed or updated.

14 DETAILED CHRONOLOGY

- 14.1 This is a combined narrative of events leading up to Alice's death and is based on the information provided from: Individual Management Reviews submitted as part of the DHR; interviews and testimonies from Alice's family and friends; witness statements from the investigation carried out by Northumbria Police; and information gleaned from the various media documentaries that have been aired. It is based on the timescales outlined in Section 5.

As part of the homicide investigation, several witness statements were taken from young women who had been involved in some form of 'relationship' with the perpetrator. Their statements contain allegations of incidents that are of a domestic and/or sexual violence-related nature and the timescales suggest he was in contact with these individuals prior to and during his relationship with Alice, as well as after it ended (starting from his initial entry into the UK in September 2010 through to October 2016). Except for one incident in June 2013, none of these allegations was reported to police at the time, and they only came to light after the perpetrator was arrested for homicide. Information from these statements has, where relevant, been interspersed throughout the Chronology. They have also been summarised at the end of the section to help demonstrate the similarities, consistency and long-standing pattern of behaviour and actions carried out by the perpetrator towards young women.

Sept 2010 Alice grew up with her parents and siblings in a small village in Leicestershire. In September 2010, Alice left Leicestershire to begin her studies in Newcastle. Her family said that Alice really enjoyed her time at university and loved Newcastle and decided to stay in the area after her graduation rather than returning home. She initially lived in a shared student house in Heaton, Newcastle. She worked in a busy and vibrant bar on Newcastle Quayside to support herself financially and had a good network of friends in the area. Alice's family describe her as being 'kind, clever and beautiful' and recall that she had an **'incredibly bubbly personality, a quick wit and great sense of humour: everybody loved her'**.

Information supplied by the army IMR provides a pen picture of the perpetrator. His application lists his initial entry into the UK as the 2nd September 2010. He applied to join the Regular army in December 2010 whilst studying at Queen Margaret's University near Edinburgh. In his application, he described both his and his parents' nationality as Indian and stated that he was a practising Sikh. He also stated that his father was serving as a Lieutenant Colonel, a senior position, in the Indian Army and

lists his own engagement in the Indian Army National Cadet Corps from April 2001 through to May 2006. His mother was a graduate of a top-ranking university in Amritsar, India.

He was successful in his application to the army and commenced Infantry Training at Vimy Barracks, Catterick, North Yorkshire on the 7th August 2011 passing out on the 25th May 2012. He was then assigned to Howe Barracks, Canterbury, Kent. Interviews undertaken as part of the army IMR highlight different perspectives of the perpetrator as an individual. Those in positions of relative authority regarded him as 'a bit odd' and state that he was quite 'outspoken and manipulative, playing one off against each another' and was seen to be someone who would 'regularly question orders and answer back'. Conversely, his peers considered him to be 'one of the guys' and said that he appeared to get on well with colleagues within his Platoon, although at weekends and in the evenings he would socialise with friends from university and outside of barracks. His colleagues described him as being 'quiet, polite and approachable' but also report 'trust and integrity issues' after he made an unfounded allegation against superiors, which he later dropped, as well as being regarded as 'oversensitive'.

May 2013 The perpetrator proposed to a girlfriend in early May 2013, after a 9-month relationship. She initially accepted, and he travelled to India the next day for up to 3–4 weeks. Towards the end of May 2013, the girlfriend decided that she 'no longer wanted to be with him any more' and subsequently ended the relationship, informing the perpetrator via Skype. She recalls that the 'whole thing got nasty [between us] and he ended up flying back to England early'.

June 2013 On the 4th June 2013, an incident took place in Faversham, Kent, where the perpetrator had a verbal argument with his ex-girlfriend that resulted in him assaulting her by **spitting in her face**. In her witness statement, the ex-girlfriend said she had left work and was walking down a busy high street, where she had arranged to meet her new partner, when the **perpetrator suddenly appeared** from nowhere and ran up to her in a rather aggressive manner. He blocked her from being able to walk away and would not let her leave. At this point her new partner arrived on the scene. The perpetrator was rather aggressive towards him and walked towards him with clenched fists. He told her new partner that he wanted to 'talk to him like a gentleman' and asked: 'why did you take my girlfriend away from me ... don't you think after a break up it can be solved?'. The woman tried to intervene and got between the two males; she refers to the perpetrator as '**squaring up to her face-to-face**'. She asked if he was going to hit her, at which point he moved his head towards her and spat directly in her face and ran off.

Almost immediately afterwards, the perpetrator sent derogatory and unpleasant texts to his ex-girlfriend telling her he was 'glad he was no longer with her because she was a complete pussy who was **scared of him**' and said he 'wanted to make her cry' and 'liked to [do so to] get a reaction [out of her]'.

Information obtained from Kent Police indicates that the ex-girlfriend reported the incident [with the perpetrator] to the Police with the support of her neighbour. It is stated within the police report that, prior to contacting Kent Police, the neighbour (who, coincidentally, was the perpetrator's sergeant) contacted Howe Barracks about the incident and informed the police that '**when he [the perpetrator] returns [to camp] they [the army] will not be letting him out**'. Kent Police contacted Howe Barracks and recorded that the army were holding the perpetrator in the Guard Room. A subsequent record from Kent Police confirms that the army brought the perpetrator from Howe Barracks to Canterbury Police Station to be interviewed in relation to the offence. As part of the interview process, it is recorded that the perpetrator 'accepts the evidence provided' but 'denies deliberately spitting' and stated that he 'was talking [to her] and some spittle [had] came out towards her'. He was placed on bail with conditions.

No records or information are contained within the army IMR in relation to this incident and the army were unable to trace the sergeant to seek further information.

Kent Police assessed the ex-partners as 'Standard Risk' (using the nationally accredited SafeLives DASH Risk Indicator Checklist). As part of the process, the ex-girlfriend provided answers to the following key questions, which are pertinent to Alice's case:

- *Is the abuse happening more often?* —There have been issues throughout the relationship.
- *Is the abuse getting worse?* —Yes, only verbal previously.
- *Does he try to control everything you do and/or is he excessively jealous?* —Yes, [he] does not want the relationship to be over.
- *Do you know if he has hurt anyone else?* —Yes, [he has] made threats to get acid thrown over [my] family.
- *Has he ever threatened suicide?* —Yes, threatened on Skype that he did not want to live anymore.
- *Has he been in trouble with Police or has a criminal history?* —Yes, [been in] trouble with the army.

July 2013

On the 9th July 2013, shortly after the incident with the ex-girlfriend, the perpetrator attended a pre-arranged course with the army. This course was located out of the area, in Blandford, Dorset, and upon completion of the course his battalion was disbanded. On the 23rd August 2013, he was deployed to

Glencorse Barracks, Edinburgh, Scotland. The army IMR indicates that the timing of the course and subsequent re-deployment was a coincidence (and was not related to the incident with his ex-girlfriend the previous month).

Jan 2014 On the 22nd January 2014, the perpetrator appeared before Kent Magistrates' Court (in relation to assault towards his ex-girlfriend in June 2013). The case records from Kent Police show that 'no evidence was offered' and he was subsequently given a Restraining Order (under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997). According to the initial army IMR, no details of the incident, arrest or outcome of the case (including details of the Restraining Order) were logged on any of the perpetrator's army records; however, we do know that he had anecdotally informed his peers (while continuing to deny that he had spat in her face).

We know from discussions with Alice's family, work colleagues and friends that the perpetrator had told Alice about this incident and she was aware of 'something taking place' with an ex-partner but we do not know what he told her or how truthful he was. Her family report that he told Alice about a '**crazy ex**' who had tried to get a Restraining Order on him, but the army had 'laughed it out of court'. He gave the impression to Alice that 'the army had protected him throughout and nothing was done about it'. Similarly, her friends at work said Alice knew about the incident from an early stage in their relationship and she had believed his comments that the army had 'dealt with it' and '**swept it under the carpet**'. He had also told Alice that he was involved in knife crime and gangs back in India and mentioned 'he knew people [in India] that would carry out acid attacks'.

Dec 2014 The army have provided details of the perpetrator's movements between December 2014 and August 2015. These include several exercises and training sessions carried out at various locations throughout the country.

Aug 2015 On the 3rd August 2015, the perpetrator was deployed to serve in Afghanistan but four days later, on the 7th August 2015, he was 'Returned to Unit' suffering from appendicitis.

Sept 2015 Alice started a new job at a multi-national telecommunication company based in Newcastle. Work friends described Alice as having an 'infectious personality and an incredible sense of humour' and seeing the fun side of everything. '**She loved life, loved her friends** and loved her job.' Alice had said she felt 'part of the team from day one' and she was 'certainly someone you would gravitate to when coming into the office on a morning, everyone loved her and everyone was comfortable around her ... [she had] **vibrant personality and was a warming person**'.

On the 21st September 2015, the perpetrator was deployed back to Afghanistan (following recovery from appendicitis) and re-joined his unit for approximately four months. According to the army IMR, throughout his tour of Afghanistan the perpetrator was employed within an Operations Room as a Signaller and was responsible for 'receiving and passing messages within the Battlegroup environment'.

Oct 2015

In early October 2015, Alice went on holiday to Sri Lanka with a female friend who knew the perpetrator and was mutual friends on Facebook. Alice's friend uploaded several photographs, which were subsequently seen by the perpetrator. He messaged her on the 11th October 2016 saying: 'your friend is one of the most naturally beautiful girls I've ever seen—can you set us up?' and this is the first recorded contact between the perpetrator and Alice. According to friends, Alice said she first thought it was **'a bit creepy'** for him to have contacted her via Facebook but she had started to chat with him and they had 'hit it off'.

Alice's family had set up a WhatsApp Group so as to be able to chat to each other all at the same time. Alice's mum recalls that around October 2015 (just after Alice and the perpetrator had become friends) there was an issue where Alice was sending messages to the Group but 'no one could see them' and Alice was shown as 'no longer being part of the Group'. They laughed about it at the time, referring to Alice as a 'ghost', but thought that it was 'odd' event.

Nov 2015

Alice first told her friends from work about her relationship with the perpetrator in November 2015. She had told them she 'really liked him' and would send regular 'care parcels' to him containing treats and toiletries. They recalled Alice taking her lunch breaks at times when he could phone her and they 'always seemed to be in contact either by text or phone'. They describe Alice as being 'really happy and loved up' at this point. Alice texted her older sister saying: 'he speaks [to me] every day ... and he gets really upset if we can't speak, it's so nice'.

Alice's family and friends recall that during the initial stages of the relationship, and at around this time, the perpetrator would **'shower her with many gifts and compliments'**, but then would **'act oddly'**. He would regularly 'go offline' and not be in contact with Alice and then would tell her that he was on the frontline in a war zone. This worried Alice greatly as she was concerned he might be injured; but her sister, who is an Officer serving in the army, told her that he was nowhere near to the frontline. Around this time, it is believed, based on interviews with work colleagues, that he asked Alice to change her

Instagram and other social media accounts to be 'private' so that 'no other man could see her...particularly other soldiers'.

The army IMR demonstrates that some of the perpetrator's peers and army personnel were aware he had a girlfriend, while others knew very little about this private life. Those who knew of the relationship did not know many details, and only found out it had ended in the days prior to the homicide taking place.

Dec 2015 Alice went to visit her parents at Christmas and this was the 'first time they had really become aware' of the perpetrator. He was posted abroad and was therefore not present but Alice would keep in touch via Skype. On Christmas Eve (Alice's birthday), there was an argument between Alice and perpetrator. He had heard about Alice being involved in an event, which he didn't want her to attend, and had sent her a text about another woman and this had upset Alice.

Alice's parents became aware that she was no longer as friendly with the friend she had holidayed to Sri Lanka with. Alice's sister said this friend had told Alice that she 'didn't completely trust [the perpetrator] because he would 'say and do weird stuff' and that Alice had fallen out with her because she thought her friend was being unpleasant to him. There had also been a potential dispute about paying for the holiday. Alice told her sister that the perpetrator told her that 'she should not be friends [with her friend] anymore'. Alice's parents felt it was a small argument that would be resolved but recall that the disagreement was 'odd behaviour' and out of character.

Jan 2016 Alice and the perpetrator met face-to-face for first time in January 2016 and spent two weeks together, one in Scotland and one in Newcastle. Alice seemed happy and was described by her work friends as being 'completely besotted' with him. Army records show that the perpetrator returned from duty in Afghanistan on the 19th January 2016 and was on 'Rest and Recuperation' until February 2016.

Feb 2016 The army IMR shows that on the 4th February 2016 the perpetrator was re-deployed to Afghanistan.

Mar 2016 Several witness statements suggest that by March 2016 the tone of the relationship had started to change. Friends from work report that the contact between Alice and the perpetrator seemed more intense and they would also argue about silly things. He would message her all the time—'the contact [from him] got more and more and it just never stopped'—and when she did not reply straight away he would start to question her. He would ask Alice where she was and would doubt her: for

example, he **would regularly make Alice send him photographs of herself from work to prove that she was there.**

Apr 2016

On the 12th April 2016, the perpetrator returned to the UK following a nine-week deployment to Afghanistan.

There was an incident, sometime in mid-April 2016, when Alice, as part of her job, went to Edinburgh for a meeting (which involved an overnight stay in a hotel). In the evening, Alice went out with work colleagues for a meal and drinks and the perpetrator was 'constantly contacting her and texting all night'. One of Alice's colleagues took her phone off her and told her to ignore him and to contact him the next day. Alice looked **'anxious and worried'**. Later that night, the perpetrator suddenly turned up unannounced at the hotel; he was unhappy, and he and Alice had argued. In the morning, Alice and the perpetrator came down for breakfast and sat at a separate table from her work colleagues. They recall that Alice looked quite sad, as if **'they'd been arguing all night'**.

Alice's family recall that in April 2016 she had a new mobile phone—but they didn't know where she had got it from.

Sometime in April 2016, the perpetrator contacted Sarah [a pseudonym] via an online dating site, and is purported to have exchanged texts for a couple of days before requesting to meet up in Edinburgh. Sarah contacted police following the perpetrator's arrest for Alice's homicide.

May 2016

At the beginning of May 2016, Alice and the perpetrator visited her parents' home for the bank holiday. This was the first time they had met him face to face. They report that he appeared 'nice and polite but quite immature' and would say things 'he believed that the family wanted to hear' possibly **'trying to impress'** and 'came across as rather insincere'.

On the 13th May 2016, the perpetrator met with Sarah face to face in Edinburgh. According to her statement, the perpetrator told her he felt awkward, hadn't been on many dates, and this was 'the first time he [had] met anyone online'. They had consensual sex and he left abruptly without giving any reason. After this, there was no further contact from the perpetrator for a month.

At end of May 2016, Alice and the perpetrator visited her parents' home for the second bank holiday weekend in May. During this time, Alice's parents recall the perpetrator being completely **'obsessed'** with buying a car so much so he seemed to ignore Alice and her parents and 'only focussed on the car'.

Alice was living in a shared house with four males and a female. Initially she had a good relationship with her housemates, but around May 2016, she said the men **suddenly stopped talking to her** and 'would even pass in the hallway and not speak'. It was not clear why the relationship changed, as she previously got on well with them. The perpetrator did not like the males' behaviour when they were around Alice (as they would drink and use drugs) and he would directly challenge them about it.

One night in May 2016, Alice heard one male housemate stomping about and shouting: 'she's a fucking bitch, I'll fucking kill her'. Alice initially thought he was talking about her. She subsequently called the perpetrator, who in turn sent a message to the housemate telling him not to threaten her. The following day, Alice was made aware the housemate was not referring to her but a woman at work. However, it was made clear to her that her housemates were **scared of the perpetrator** and they told her that if he ever threatened them again, they would go to the police.

Around this time, Alice told her work colleagues that the perpetrator would regularly go into her female housemate's room and that she would be 'flirty' with him. This would cause Alice and the perpetrator to argue; however, he would tell Alice she was **'being paranoid' and that she should trust him**.

Interviews with family and friends suggest that the behaviour and atmosphere in the shared house had left Alice **feeling miserable** and she could not wait to move out. She was actively looking for somewhere else to stay and would sleep over with friends to avoid going back to the house. They recall the perpetrator saying that he would 'sort out' the male housemates for Alice. He also talked a lot about buying a house for them both to live in together and said he would **'look after her'**. Alice said around this time: **'before I met him, I never fell out with anyone'** and she felt miserable because **'she felt like she was losing all her friends'**.

Jun 2016

At the beginning of June 2016, Alice suspected the perpetrator was 'cheating on her with other women'. She had been contacted by a young woman on Facebook who said that he had invited her to a Military Ball: he had invited Alice to the same event. Alice had told friends and family she was looking forward to attending the event and had already bought a dress; and she was said to have been devastated. The woman told Alice the perpetrator was also active on Tinder (an online dating site).

Alice confronted him about the woman and being active on Tinder and he denied it and said he had 'no idea what the woman was talking about'. He went on to tell Alice an army

friend must have created a **'fake Tinder account in his name'**. Alice told friends and family that she did not believe him and he kept telling her 'not to tell anyone' as 'he was terrified people would think bad things about him'. At this point, we are aware, from various accounts, that Alice had slapped him whilst upset and arguing about the Tinder incident. In addition, she had told her sister that, if she met the perpetrator, to go along with the ruse (i.e. that it was a fake profile and that one of his friends had it set up) to avoid any potential further conflict.

The couple were **arguing a lot** and he was maintaining that the Tinder account was fake. Although feeling hurt by the incident, Alice did not end the relationship at this time and had said that 'she did not want to be on her own'. Alice said she had 'no friends and no one seemed to like her anymore' and the perpetrator was the **'only person she had now'**.

Soon after the incident with the Tinder account, Alice received a Facebook message from a random male. The message said he had seen Alice around the army barracks and asked if she wanted to chat. Alice asked the perpetrator if he knew who the male was, and he replied a soldier at the barracks—but he did not seem concerned or do anything about it. Alice believed this was a **false account** and asked the perpetrator for the soldier's number, which he declined to send. She rang him and told him that someone at work had a programme that would link Facebook profiles to IP addresses, so she could find out who he was. Within minutes of this call, the profile and message vanished, and Alice was convinced that the perpetrator had created the account.

The perpetrator admitted to Alice to being on Tinder but continued to deny creating a fake Facebook profile. He said the only reason he was messaging other women was that he and Alice had been arguing a lot and he wanted to make himself feel better.

In June 2016, the perpetrator contacted Sarah again and said that he wanted to explain his reasons for not being in touch. He claimed to have 'felt a very strong connection with her and it had freaked him out'. He said it was 'difficult for him to get to into a relationship due to his job' and suggested they had a casual sex relationship. Sarah told him she was not interested in this suggestion, but despite the rebuttal the perpetrator continued to regularly contact her.

July 2016

In early July 2016, Alice moved out of the shared house in Newcastle into a flat in Gateshead with a female friend from work. Alice and the perpetrator met her family in Carlisle. Alice's mum said she **'seemed different and not her usual self'** and

she couldn't work out why but felt that Alice did not want to talk about it in front of the perpetrator. The perpetrator had said he had some savings and 'wanted to buy a house and Alice would live in it'. Her parents said Alice felt it was 'big commitment and wasn't happy about it'.

We know from interviews with Alice's work friends that, following the Tinder incident, and around July 2016, the perpetrator started to buy Alice lots of presents (for example, handbag, flowers) but recall he would '**routinely withdraw these gifts**' if they'd argued and then would give them back to Alice a short time later (for example, he gave her a handbag, took it back from her, and then returned it to her). The couple argued a lot about money; Alice appeared to pay for everything because the perpetrator claimed he had no money. Her friends said that he would also restrict her purchases: for example, Alice wanted to buy herself a wardrobe, but he '**would not let her**' and said she did not need it, while at the same time he would go out and purchase expensive items for himself. He even bought a 1-series BMW.

When Alice moved into the shared flat, her flatmate became more aware of the perpetrator using '**subtle behaviour and tactics to control Alice**', and her friends at work also noticed this. He would text Alice throughout the day and she would be distracted by her phone while at work. Around this time, work colleagues recall that Alice would have to send the perpetrator daily photographs of what she was wearing, and he said he particularly liked one dress that '**covered everything up so no one could see her**'. Her flatmate recalled how Alice liked to eat out, but the perpetrator stopped taking her out because '**he didn't want people looking at her**'.

In mid-July 2016, Alice was invited to a BBQ by work friends and the perpetrator 'texted her constantly, all night' and at one point he insisted she sent him a photo of the BBQ to prove that she was there. He had threatened to drive down [from Edinburgh] to check and meet her at the BBQ. He texted Alice saying, 'what have I got to do to prove I love you ... do I have to cut off both of my arms?' and that 'he would write her a letter in blood'. Friends recall Alice being very worried and anxious and '**looked sick of the constant contact**' with the perpetrator and was quiet throughout the night. A while later, Alice uncharacteristically left the BBQ early and quite abruptly, and it later transpired the perpetrator had turned up and was waiting outside to pick her up.

Alice's flatmate described feeling 'uneasy/uncomfortable' around the perpetrator and found his behaviour to be odd (for example, he would stand up whenever she entered the room). She was starting to be concerned about his behaviour and the way he was treating Alice. She would text Alice to see if he was at the

flat and Alice would say no—but she would find out later that he had been there. He didn't want Alice to tell people he was at the flat as he thought her friends were 'interfering in their relationship'. Alice told her friends at work she **was 'miserable with him and miserable without him, so she may as well be miserable with him'**. They also recall Alice saying that the perpetrator kept referring to her as 'being paranoid', saying 'she didn't have no-one' and **'he was the only person that she should trust'**.

Around this time, work colleagues recall that Alice seemed to drink a lot more alcohol and wasn't eating very well: she had changed her eating habits to 'deliberately lose weight [for the perpetrator]' as he kept referring to it.

On the 22nd July 2016, Alice went on a family holiday to Cornwall and took the perpetrator with her. Her parents reported that they had noticed a marked change in Alice at this time. She seemed **'uncharacteristically glum and unsmiling'** and they felt she was unhappy and had lost weight. Her parents said that, looking back, there was only one occasion during the whole holiday when Alice was on her own without the perpetrator. Alice's younger brother reported that the perpetrator made **'derogatory remarks'** to him about Alice and had been calling her names. Alice and the perpetrator left the holiday a day early. Returning home, he had made Alice travel the entire trip in one go and said that he had no money to contribute for petrol—yet he went on to buy takeaway food when he arrived home. He said that someone had just paid him money and Alice 'got the impression that this was yet another lie' [from the perpetrator]. Before returning home, Alice had to pick up the keys to her flat from her flatmate at a restaurant in town and was described as being **'really upset and in tears'**. Friends recall that Alice did not stay for too long as she kept saying that the perpetrator 'was waiting for her outside [the restaurant] and [she] had to go'.

The next day, on the way to work, Alice 'opened up' and told her flatmate about the issues she was having with the perpetrator—and they had both got really upset. Alice told her she thought he had **'gone too far'** and recalled an incident where she was in the shower and he had started banging repeatedly on the bathroom door. He demanded that Alice get out as he needed to use the toilet and when she got out of the shower, he made her stand in the kitchen until he had finished using the toilet. Alice had told her the perpetrator was being **'possessive, mind-controlling and manipulative'**.

Aug 2016

In the first week of August 2016, Alice **ended the relationship** with the perpetrator. She had told her mum that he had been lying to her and he had been on a dating site, Tinder. In a

witness statement made to the Police, Alice stated that she had told the perpetrator she **'wanted nothing more to do with him'** and went on to say he had 'taken the relationship ending badly'.

Alice believed he was hacking into her Facebook, email and other social media accounts. He would make comments like 'he could see who she was messaging' and he would 'regularly ask about things ... that he shouldn't have known anything about'.

On the 5th August 2016, Alice raised concerns with her sister via text about the perpetrator trying to access her social media and email accounts. Alice said that she 'had proof [that] he's hacking my stuff' and stated that the perpetrator's **behaviour was causing her to be 'tense and feel uneasy'**.

Her sister encouraged Alice to report him to the police, but Alice was wary to do so because she had slapped him when she found out about the Tinder account and was concerned the police would only deal with the slapping incident rather than the way in which the perpetrator was behaving towards her.

Alice texted the perpetrator (after he referred to an issue with one of her friends) saying 'I am sure you can find a way to hack into my Facebook to ask her why'. He replied, 'true'. Alice responded: **'once you realise I've done nothing to break your trust can you stop hacking into my stuff'** to which he replied 'no'. This started to scare Alice and she became convinced that **he was reading and accessing everything**. Alice said she was 'miserable because she couldn't use anything and couldn't message anyone'. Alice told her family that she thought the perpetrator was deleting her messages: **'she kept noticing messages in her inbox and then they were suddenly gone'**. She was worried he had the capability to hack into her messages owing to his background and was quite 'tech-savvy'.

On the same day (5th August 2016), the perpetrator made plans to meet with Sarah and travelled approximately 45 miles from his barracks in Edinburgh to Perth, arriving at 20:00hrs. Her witness statement discloses that whilst he 'wasn't necessarily aggressive or threatening' she was intimidated and felt pressured into having unprotected sex. He said he was due to move barracks and that he would be based in Ballater, Aberdeenshire—they discussed her visiting him there. Following this, the perpetrator did not contact Sarah again for almost six weeks. Around the same week, Alice reported to a friend at work that the perpetrator had some intimate personal photographs of her, which he had indirectly threatened to post on social media. Friends said this 'played heavily on Alice's mind' and she 'felt worried they might be shared'. She was ashamed and felt the perpetrator 'had a lot of hold over her with these photos [in his

possession]’. She told a work colleague that she ‘didn’t want to take/send them but that he had **pressured her to do it**, telling her that everyone in the barracks received similar messages from their girlfriends, and if she loved him, she would’.

He sent Alice a message stating that **he would never threaten her** and if he were a bad guy, he would send people pictures ‘like this one I have of you’ and sent her one of the pictures. Alice and her sister felt that this was an implied/indirect threat. Throughout the next week or so, he would regularly ring and text Alice and would alternate between being nasty, then sending her pleading messages or calling in tears saying that **he loved her and could not live without her**.

On the 10th August 2016, the perpetrator sent Alice pictures of a woman and said he had moved on but would continue to text and ring. On the 15th August 2016, Alice found out that her Facebook password did not work and that someone had changed the email address linked to the account. This was a fake email address using a work account, created so that it would look like Alice’s. She was unable to change the password or email and she could not delete the profile. Alice was **‘really freaking out’** about it, became paranoid and was in tears as ‘she genuinely thought he could get rid of all the evidence [that he’d been hacking her accounts]’. He admitted accessing the Facebook account on the 12th August 2016, saying that he did not want Alice to be on Tinder, which can be accessed through Facebook, and was trying to restrict her ability to start a relationship with anyone else.

On the 16th August 2016, Alice’s mum received a message ‘out of the blue’ from the perpetrator via Facebook. He referred to her as ‘mum’ and said he had fallen in love with ‘the one [Alice]’. He wrote that Alice would **‘get stressed and moody and treat him badly’** and his friends had told him to make a fake dating profile to make Alice jealous. He went onto say that Alice had hit him and blocked him from her Facebook. He said that he respected Alice’s parents and he was asking for her help. A second message followed immediately, telling Alice’s mum not to tell Alice he had contacted her. Alice’s mum said that she found the message ‘totally bizarre, inappropriate and very creepy’. In her statement to Police, Alice’s mum said that she ‘guessed it was a cultural thing that he spoke [to me] as an elder and believed I had influence over Alice’.

In mid-August 2016, Alice’s work colleagues recall that she was starting to ‘fall behind with everything at work and nothing seemed to be getting done’ as Alice ‘was constantly on her phone’ [to the perpetrator].

Around this time, we know from interviews with family and friends that Alice **'took protective steps to stop the perpetrator accessing her social media accounts'**. She sought help from a colleague's partner who made sure her phone was protected, and set up alerts so that she would be emailed if anyone tried to access any of her accounts. She did not receive any alerts but remained convinced that the perpetrator was still able to access her account and felt vulnerable. Alice decides to deactivate her Facebook account **'as it kept getting hacked'** but did not block her personal email account as she did not want him to start to email her at work.

Alice's sister states that on the 17th August 2016 the perpetrator sent a text to Alice stating he was going to **'kill himself'**. Alice was upset and panicked and told her sister, who in turn used her links in the army to contact the relevant Battalion Orderly Officer in Glencorse Barracks. During this conversation, she informed the Battalion Orderly Officer that the perpetrator was 'being abusive towards Alice' and 'looking for attention'. The army IMR states they are unable to 'confirm or establish any further details' of the suicide allegation—and there are no records of actions carried out to safeguard the perpetrator in relation to this potential threat.

However, Alice's sister states that she was informed that the necessary welfare checks had been made and the perpetrator was 'fine with no signs of stress'. He was confused as to why anyone had turned up to his room, denied saying that he was going to kill himself, and **blamed Alice for 'making things up'**. In addition, Alice's sister was told the perpetrator was 'going to be spoken to and informed that it wasn't acceptable behaviour'. Following this incident, according to Alice's sister, the perpetrator appeared to change his behaviour and was 'good to Alice for about a week' (probably as he thought she had influence due to her army connections).

On the 22 August 2016, Alice's mum got around to replying to the perpetrator (from the message received on the 16 August). She told him she wasn't sure what she could say or do to help and said that Alice did not feel she could trust him and had had her social media accounts hacked. She ended by telling him to take a step back [from the relationship with Alice]. He responded immediately saying that the message 'did help' and that he had told Alice that he had messaged her.

On the 26 August 2016, the perpetrator texted Alice that 'he was a changed man' and that **'he was never going to lie to her again'**. Alice did not believe him as 'he'd said this so many times before'.

Later that day, Alice contacted her mum via WhatsApp saying she **'felt depressed and was a bit lonely'**. She told her mum she was upset by the perpetrator's dishonesty, thought that he **'was a compulsive liar'**, and **'feared she wouldn't meet anyone else'**.

From the 28th August 2016 through to the 1st September 2016, the perpetrator attended an overview briefing course for 'Special Duties for a specialist military unit' which he failed.

Sept 2016

On the 2nd September 2016, Alice visited her sister in Germany for the weekend, where she met one of her sister's male friends for the first time. He and Alice became friends on Facebook and started messaging each other via WhatsApp when Alice returned. Throughout this time, the perpetrator was still in contact with Alice. He told her that he knew the male that she was messaging, and at this point Alice thought **the perpetrator was accessing her WhatsApp account**. Alice blocked him from everything but he would **still try to contact her 'in any way he could'**. Alice's sister noticed that she had lost a lot of weight and told her that **she'd been really stressed and was forgetting to eat**.

On the 20th September 2016, Alice messaged the perpetrator and said she wanted **'no further contact with him'**. On the 22nd September 2016, he sent several messages to the male friend Alice had met in Germany, saying she had been lying about not wanting to be with him, and sent screenshots of text messages (between the perpetrator and Alice) which he claimed confirmed this and said she was 'playing them both off against each other'. The male told Alice that he would not contact her for a while, so she could sort things out with the perpetrator, and had no contact with her for four days. Alice sent a message to her sister saying: **'he's stalking me, I want him to leave me alone, he has hacked my WhatsApp to find out who [the male] is'**. In her statement, Alice describes the perpetrator as **very manipulative** and she is **'scared and terrified of his actions ... I am being stalked and want it to stop'**.

Interviews with family members highlight that Alice was **terrified that the perpetrator had a key to her flat**, and Alice and her flatmate were concerned he had been in [to the flat] during the day, while Alice was at work. His behaviour continued, and he would send messages and leave various voicemails throughout the day and night. As he was blocked, he would use his friends' phones and Alice would receive calls and messages from several different numbers, telling her that he loved her. In one message, he said: **'I'm not used to losing something that belongs to me'**. During this time, Alice would regularly receive up to 5+ friend requests on Facebook per day from fake

accounts, which she believed were all from the perpetrator, attempting to make contact.

On the 22nd September 2016, Alice's sister received an email to inform her that someone was trying to gain access/hack into her Microsoft account. Alice was convinced it was the perpetrator.

On the 23rd September 2016, the perpetrator made contact with Sarah using a second mobile telephone number and 'started to message [her] more often and appeared to be very eager for them to meet up'.

On the 24th September 2016 at 13:58hrs, Alice called the 101 non-emergency number for Northumbria Police, and according to call records, was on hold for 00:06:43 before abandoning the call without having spoken to a call handler. She messaged her sister to say the 101 number was busy and that she would call back later.

On the 26th September 2016, Alice was contacted again by the male friend she met in Germany and they 'continued [where they left off] messaging daily and frequently being in touch'.

Also on 26th September 2016, Alice received a message from Apple saying: 'your request for your Apple ID has been sent to [an email address linked with the perpetrator]'. Alice said that at some point he had 'offered [her] the use of his iPad and had set up an Apple account for [her], linking [her] accounts, and this was potentially the reason why he had access'. Alice contacted Apple and told them to delete the account because '**it had been set up by a man who was stalking her**'. After her account was deleted, Alice was convinced that 'it was over' and she had managed to finally stop him accessing her accounts.

Between the 14th and 27th September 2016, the perpetrator was deployed to barracks in Aberdeenshire, approximately 3 hours' drive by car from Edinburgh, for a fortnight's deployment on Royal Guard. The perpetrator's immediate chain of command found out that he was not remaining in Aberdeenshire, as he was required to do, but had been regularly returning to Glencorse Barracks without permission. He was spotted by his Platoon Commander in Edinburgh, when he should have been in Aberdeenshire, and was challenged as to why. According to the army IMR, he 'immediately broke down in tears and appeared genuinely distressed about a separation with his girlfriend'. His Platoon Commander calmed him and gave words of advice and told him to return to Aberdeenshire to complete his duties.

On the 30th September 2016, the perpetrator made contact with Sarah using a third mobile telephone number and continued to be 'eager for them to meet up'.

On the 30th September 2016 at 21:57hrs, Alice was alone at home when she received a voicemail from the perpetrator expressing anger and saying he 'did not know what was going on'. At 22:15hrs she heard a knock on her front door. She went to the door and looked out of the spy-hole, but no-one was there. Alice phoned the perpetrator and he said he was in Princess Gardens, Edinburgh. He told Alice he was pleased to hear from her and said he missed her and was in tears. There was a second knock at the door and again, Alice looked through the spy hole, but no one was there.

Then came a third knock, this time on Alice's bedroom window. She opened the curtains and saw the perpetrator with flowers and chocolates, which he laid on the windowsill. He backed off '**raising his hands in an upright position**' and walked backwards towards the rear gate before leaving the vicinity.

At 22:35hrs he left a voicemail message on Alice's phone asking her to call him back. She also received a text from the perpetrator telling her that he had been in her garden since 5pm. Alice was **very frightened** and contacted a friend who came over to the flat and stayed with her that night. Alice's sister states that this was the first time Alice was truly scared of the perpetrator.

Oct 2016

On the 1st October 2016 at 00:24hrs, Alice received a further voicemail message from the perpetrator who referred to '**not wanting to kill her**' on five separate occasions. He says: '... You said, guys like me end up killing people. That's why I just left them there and walked straight out. To prove a point that killing you is something that I've never, ever, ever thought about, and I will never ever even think about that. If you want to go to the police, go to the police, but think about what we're talking about, I've literally done nothing, I've never hurt you, never done any physical hurt to you ... **no, I don't wanna kill you, I'm not intending to kill you.** That's all I wanted to say, that I didn't want to kill you, that's why I gave you chocolates and flowers and walked out straight away.' In her Police statement, Alice stated '**he [the perpetrator] sounds crazy...and completely obsessed**'.

At 00:40hrs, Northumbria Police received a call from Alice, via the 101 non-emergency number, who told the call handler that:

- she had split from her boyfriend 'about three months ago' and needed 'a bit of advice';

- he had texted her to tell her he had been **outside her address, in her garden, since 17:00hrs that evening**;
- he had been **accessing/hacking** her phone and Facebook;
- she had blocked his telephone numbers but he had been sending emails and created fake Snapchat accounts to try and contact her;
- he had continued to send her a lot of messages even though she asked him not to and he had been in contact with family and friends;
- he had knocked repeatedly at her door and then left flowers/chocolates on the windowsill along with voicemails;
- 'my friends have been telling me to call the Police, I've been putting it off'.
- She concluded by saying: **'I feel a bit shaken up tonight'**.

The call handler responded by saying the incident Alice described could be considered as **harassment** and offered her two choices: (1) for Alice to see a solicitor and seek an injunction herself and/or (2) for Alice to make a report to Northumbria Police and obtain a Police Information Notice (PIN), which would mean that **if the perpetrator contacted her or went near her again, he would be arrested**. Alice replied she would prefer the latter option.

The call handler discussed the perpetrator living out of the area and driving down from Scotland that evening and concluded by saying that the police in Edinburgh would have to **serve him with the PIN**. An appointment was subsequently made for Alice to be seen the following day on the 2nd October 2016.

Log 0059 on Northumbria Police Computer was created in response to the call from Alice, and was opened with classification codes CA (Violence) and CCC (Crime) with a qualifier of QV1 (Domestic Abuse). The incident was classified by the call handler as 'Grade 4', meaning it was suitable for a scheduled appointment.

On the 2nd October 2016 at 12:45hrs, Police Officer 1 attended the pre-arranged appointment with Alice in her flat in response to her complaint the previous morning about **unwanted contact from the perpetrator**. A witness statement was taken from Alice.

Information from the IOPC report shows that the appointment was scheduled for a one-hour slot. However, Police Officer 1 contacted Police Sergeant 1 (over a point-to-point radio, which is a private conversation, and isn't recorded) and requested additional time as he recognised there was **'a bit more to this than we first thought'**. The additional time was granted to Police Officer 1 who went on to spend more than two hours with Alice.

According to the Police IMR, in summary the main issues that were discussed between Alice and Police Officer 1 were:

- Details of the incident on the 30th September 2016, which included Police Officer 1 listening to the voicemail messages left by the perpetrator;
- The perpetrator had admitted to Alice that he changed her passwords and could access her accounts, and Alice believed that he was an IT expert and could easily do this;
- Alice talked about the perpetrator having intimate personal photos and saying that he could post them but wouldn't as he was a 'nice guy'. She felt this was an indirect threat and that he was using the photographs as a method of controlling her;
- Alice explained she had met a male [from Germany] and that the perpetrator had **tried to ruin this relationship**;
- Police Officer 1 provided Alice with advice regarding the incident and discussed various safeguarding options, which included seeking consent for a referral to VictimsFirst Northumbria;
- Police Officer 1 told Alice that the perpetrator would be dealt with by a PIN and he would contact Glencorse Barracks to try to retrieve the photos the perpetrator had of Alice.

Police Officer 1 completed the nationally accredited SafeLives Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Indicator Checklist, scoring a total of 9 out of 27 questions and hence **categorising Alice as 'Medium Risk'**. This means there were 'identifiable factors of risk of serious harm' and the perpetrator 'has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change of circumstances.'

- The risks identified by Police Officer 1 on the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist were:
 - Victim frightened
 - Afraid of further violence/Injury
 - Isolation from friend or family
 - Feelings of depression / suicidal thoughts
 - Stalking / harassment
 - Abuse getting worse
 - Jealous / controlling
 - Perpetrator threatened or attempted suicide
 - Perpetrator has previous criminal history

- The identification of a ‘stalking and harassment’ element in the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist automatically means that a further 11 specific questions in relation to this type of incident are asked—of which the following 6 risks were identified in respect of Alice:
 - Victim is frightened
 - Perpetrator has vandalised or destroyed property
 - Perpetrator turned up unannounced >3+ times a week
 - Perpetrator has followed victim or loitering near victim
 - Perpetrator has engaged others to help
 - Perpetrator has been violent in the past

According to the IOPC report, Alice informed Police Officer 1 that despite splitting from the perpetrator almost three months ago she had still been ‘willingly communicating with him on and off since’ and he had **‘pestered her so excessively, she was on the brink of getting back with him’** but resisted his advances; however, he had become more persistent recently’ in his efforts. In addition, Police Officer 1 recalled that Alice ‘categorically stated she did not want him to be arrested or get into trouble’ but acknowledged that ‘positive action’ needed to be taken to address the perpetrator’s behaviour.

Around 07:00hrs on the 3rd October 2016, Police Officer 1 held a conversation with Police Sergeant 1 to help determine ‘how best to progress’ Alice’s investigation. Following this discussion, at 08:45hrs, Police Officer 1 telephoned Glencorse Barracks and spoke with the Unit Welfare Officer and an Orderly Officer and provided an overview of the alleged circumstances surrounding the case. Police Officer 1 subsequently emailed the Adjutant at Glencorse Barracks at approximately 10:45hrs, attaching Alice’s witness statement and photographs of the flowers and chocolates. A request was made for the perpetrator be spoken to and warned not to contact Alice or any of her family, by any means, either directly or indirectly, including via social media. In the email, Police Officer 1 advised that should the perpetrator contact Alice again; then he would be prosecuted for an offence of harassment. The word PIN was not used but it was clear what the consequences would be if he did not comply with the warning. There was an additional request for the **‘destruction of the sensitive photos’** that the perpetrator had of Alice. The Adjutant forwarded the email to the Regimental Signals Officer for action as the perpetrator’s Platoon Commander.

The army IMR confirms that on the 3rd October 2016 the perpetrator was formally spoken to by both the Regimental Signals Officer and the Adjutant and was told to stay away from Alice and to cease any further contact with her. He denied the allegations, claiming that Alice **‘blows hot and cold’** and **‘physically abuses him’**. He was reminded of the potential

repercussions of his actions and the impact this would have on his career. He stated that he understood and agreed to stay away from Alice. The Adjutant arranged for liaison to take place between Unit Welfare and the perpetrator.

At 15:37hrs, Police Officer 1 telephoned Alice providing an update on actions taken and to let her know that the Adjutant at the Barracks would be conducting an interview with the perpetrator. The incident log was closed.

Later that evening, Alice told her sister she **felt more confident** after meeting Police Officer 1, who genuinely seemed to care and talked it through with her. Alice said that Police Officer 1 had pointed out things that she had not considered were relevant and she was starting to **feel like 'it was over'**. Alice was 'upbeat after the visit of Police Officer 1; she felt empowered and felt that the activities of the perpetrator would stop'.

On the 4th October 2016 at 10:00hrs, VictimsFirst Northumbria received automated Tandem Domestic Violence Incident referral for Alice and, by 13:39hrs, Alice's case was created on the internal Case Management System for allocation.

On the 4th October 2016, the Unit Welfare Officer met with the perpetrator. He explained that he felt 'things were getting on top of him' and that he had split up [from Alice] and that he was feeling 'very depressed' about it. It is logged within the army IMR that at this point the perpetrator **'requested to leave [Edinburgh] as he felt this may assist in him dealing with the breakdown of his relationship [with Alice]'** and stated he 'feels that he has no-one to talk to'.

On the 6th October 2016 at 07:55hrs, Alice's case was allocated by a Supervisor at VictimsFirst Northumbria to a Case Co-ordinator. At 15:45hrs, Alice was contacted via telephone by the allocated Case Co-ordinator and domestic abuse support was discussed. Alice told them she had received no further contact from the perpetrator and said he had been dealt with by the means of a PIN. She confirmed that any **'further contact [with perpetrator] would be reported to police with a view to criminal charges'**. The Case Co-ordinator outlined the specialist support that was available from Safer Families and a referral was offered but Alice declined. The reason given for this was that she had a support network of family, friends and work colleagues as well as her flatmate. Alice was provided with the contact details and direct line for the Case Co-ordinator in case she required further support or advice [later] and the call was ended. Notes made by the Case Co-ordinator on the VictimsFirst Case Management system highlight that Alice believed that 'the PIN served by the police had been effective

and Alice felt this was the reason why she had heard nothing further [from the perpetrator at] the time'. The case was closed (pending any further contact from Alice) and, as no further risks were identified during the conversation, the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was not reviewed or updated.

Later that day, Alice's male friend from Germany found out that he was coming to the UK on the 13th October 2016 for an army-related exercise. He messaged Alice to let her know and they arranged to meet. Both of them were excited and looking forward to it. Around this time, Alice told her flatmate that the perpetrator was **'becoming more persistent and so she had stopped talking to him'**. She was 'scared of him' but 'didn't want to get him into trouble because she was a good person'.

At 18:00hrs on the 6th October 2016, the Unit Welfare Officer met with the perpetrator, who raised similar issues to those he had raised two days earlier. He was advised to keep himself busy and delete all contact details [for Alice]. The army IMR details that the Chain of Command was informed of the perpetrator's desire to leave [Edinburgh] and that he was provided with contact details for Duty Welfare.

On the 7th October 2016 at 17:59hrs, Alice telephoned 101 after receiving a parcel, sent 4 days earlier by the perpetrator, which contained a letter, notebook and some photographs. These were not the intimate photos she wanted returned. In the letter, he initially apologised for everything that he had done, and then said he knew Alice had called the police on him and that he was in trouble because of it. He reaffirmed that he had come down to see her with the flowers and chocolates to reassure her that he would never hurt her and went on to talk about Alice **'belonging to another man'**. Several lines in the letter repeat how Alice is not as sad, is stronger, is feeling happy, has moved on and got a new guy, and has a better life, along with a caption that 'he will not contact her again'. It ends with **'I haven't been able to say bye'** followed by 'I love you' twice, both crossed out.

Alice was frightened and scared that he would continue to contact her, despite what he said. Her sister encouraged Alice to ring the Police again, which she did. The call handler took the relevant details, told Alice that the perpetrator was in breach of the PIN and arranged for a Police Officer to contact her to progress. During the call, Alice was asked if the letter was threatening and she said 'no'. Having described what was in the letter to the call handler, Alice said: **'he has said that [he won't contact me] a lot of times. He never seems to stop'**. Alice is logged as 'vulnerable' as she has been 'personally targeted' and

a note is added to the log by the call handler that she [Alice] requires a telephone call to discuss the 'breach of the PIN'².

Later that day, Alice and her sister exchanged several texts about an incident in Bournemouth where a serving soldier had killed his girlfriend. In one of the messages, Alice asked her sister: 'how did I get into this situation?'

According to the published IOPC Report, at 18:34hrs on the 7th October 2016, Police Officer 2 was allocated the case and called Alice on three separate occasions. In the first call, Alice provided details of the issues that she was facing involving the perpetrator, including how the perpetrator was a soldier in Edinburgh, how he had been texting her and hacking into her Facebook account, and that he had recently been warned by an officer at his barracks about making further contact with her. Alice went on to say that despite the warning, she had now received a letter and photographs. Police Officer 2 recalls that Alice spoke calmly and did not seem anxious or upset. Police Officer 2 asked Alice if she wanted to 'make a statement and have him arrested'. Interviews with family and friends said that this made Alice feel 'bad' and so she had replied that she **'did not want him arrested, but she wanted him to leave her alone'**. The first telephone call between Police Officer 2 and Alice is ended at this point³.

Police Officer 2 realised that further details were required before a crime report could be completed and subsequently called Alice for a second time. Police Officer 2 asked Alice to read the contents of the letter that she had received. After hearing the contents, Police Officer 2 recorded it as harassment and

² Alice's family would like to add the following statement: "When Alice made this call, she was expecting—because she had been explicitly told this by the first call handler a week earlier—that if the perpetrator contacted her again he would be arrested. She starts the call by saying 'Hi there, I've been in touch with the police. Someone has been issued with a PIN so that they can't contact me, however I've had a letter off them'. To this, the call handler replies 'OK, so you're reporting the breach of a PIN?', which she affirms. He goes on to ask her: 'Was it threatening? Was it harassment?' to which she responds 'No, not threatening; it's just saying that he knows I called the police on him ... explaining why he came down last Friday ... and then it says at the bottom this will be the last I'll hear from him. But he's said that a lot of times and he never does seem to stop.' The call handler then says: 'So do you want a call back to discuss this?' At this point there is a pause as Alice suddenly realises that she is not, after all, being protected. She asks hesitantly what normally happens and is told that someone will call her back to discuss what can be done."

³ Alice's family would like to add the following statement: "The family disputes that Alice did not want the perpetrator arrested. She had expected this to be automatic once the PIN was breached, and so the fact that she made the second call proves that she did want this to happen. However, she reported to both her mother and her sister that Police Officer 2 had stated: 'What do you want us to do about it? Arrest him?', or words to that effect, with an intonation that suggested this would be a ridiculous course of action. Alice felt that she was wasting their time. It is possible that Alice felt obliged to say 'no' to Police Officer 2."

because the content was not deemed to be threatening in nature, it was logged as 'harassment without fear'.

Police Officer 2 recalls telephoning Alice for a third time to tell her to retain the letter sent by the perpetrator in case she should decide to change her mind about progressing with the investigation. At 19:19hrs, Police Officer 2 updated the incident log to say record that Alice 'had been spoken to and that she did not want to make a statement or for the perpetrator to be arrested but wanted the incident to be noted by Police'. Police Officer 2 attached a DASH Risk Indicator Checklist, which was completed using the same responses that had been used to complete the previous DASH Risk Indicator Checklist by Police Officer 1. Alice was recorded as 'Medium Risk'. Police Officer 2 stated that the circumstances with Alice had not changed and therefore no additional referral was made to Victims First Northumbria.

Alice told her family that she was **disappointed** in the second contact and response from the police and felt that Police Officer 2 had been dismissive. She asked her parents 'what's the point?' and said that she **'felt completely fobbed off'**.

On the 7th October 2016, the perpetrator was spoken to by the HQ Company OC. He stated there was a 'misunderstanding' and that 'he was in a relationship with a girl ... who had gone off with another guy in Germany and that she was avoiding him'. He said **he was still in a relationship [with Alice] and he was 'trying to talk her around'**. The perpetrator was purportedly crying, depressed and stating that he loved her. He said that she was his first girlfriend and this was the 'first time he has been dumped'. The HQ Company OC reiterated the message from the Police and advised him to cease contact with Alice.

On the 8th October 2016, Alice's mum received two Facebook messages from the perpetrator at 03:39hrs and 04:38hrs. He addressed her again as mum and there were screenshots of him and Alice. He said he was upset and **'still wanted to be with her'**. He talked about lying, saying that Alice also lied but that she 'highlighted his lies more'. He referred to Alice's male friend from Germany and said that he had messaged him directly.

He confirmed that he had changed Alice's passwords to **'prevent her from getting with anyone else'** and begged for Alice's mum to take him as her son [so] she would feel his pain and loneliness. He referred to the incident on the 30th September 2016 and made out 'as if it was Alice's fault that he had turned up at her flat [unannounced]'. Within the message, he also said that he felt alone and anxious going into depression, and was 'losing the plot'. He went on: 'please don't ignore my message and listen to what I have to say ... I beg you' and said that his 'heart had been ripped out'. There were

also numerous missed calls to Alice from the perpetrator during the early hours of the morning.

In the afternoon of the 8th October 2016, Police Officer 1 contacted Alice and left a telephone message for her saying that the Adjutant had not contacted him yet.

On the 9th October 2016, Alice called her mum about the incident where he had knocked on her window, saying that she was scared. She talked about her contact with Northumbria Police and said that Police Officer 1 was concerned about how many times the perpetrator had said he wasn't going to kill her in the voicemails. Alice's mum told her to trust the Police advice, and that 'if she ignored him he [the perpetrator] would go away'. A short while later, Alice's sister spoke with her mum to say she was **'scared the perpetrator was going to kill Alice'** and suggested she spent time with Alice in the North East. She also referred to various stalking websites and considered whether Alice should move flats. However, as the matter was being dealt with by the Police, they reached the decision that this was not necessary.

Alice emailed Police Officer 1 on the 10th October 2016 to provide an update about the messages the perpetrator had sent to her family and friends earlier in the day. Within the email, Alice stated that 'when she phoned up, it **wasn't clear what the next steps were** that [she] should take but that [she] wanted to be sure [she] logged everything'. Police Officer 1 was not working when Alice sent the email (and only picked it up and read it on the 13th October 2016, after Alice's death).

On the 10th October 2016, the perpetrator contacted a Sergeant in the army, with whom he was friends, and said he needed to talk. He told him that things had gone wrong with Alice. He said they had been arguing a lot, she had got physical with him a few times and then he had been told to leave her alone. He believed Alice was **trying to deliberately set him up to be arrested**. His friend recognised that he was angry and showing signs of stress and advised him to stay away.

The perpetrator contacted Sarah and arranged for them to meet in Perth on 12th October 2016.

Later on the 10th October 2016, at 20:01hrs, Police Officer 1 received an email from the Adjutant at the Barracks advising that the perpetrator had been spoken to by his Chain of Command. He had been told that any further contact with Alice would be unadvisable and that if he was charged, he could also face administrative action. The Adjutant advised Police Officer 1 that this was a 'civil matter' and 'simply because he is a soldier

does not mean that we as his employers [the army] have any further role to play’.

Subsequent enquiries by the homicide investigation found that on the 10th October 2016:

- At 20:44hrs, the perpetrator’s vehicle was captured on CCTV entering the Gateshead area.
- At 20:54hrs, the perpetrator’s vehicle was captured on CCTV parked up outside Alice’s flat.
- At 21:14hrs, the perpetrator took a photograph of the rear of Alice’s flat, showing an open bathroom window.

According to the Police statement made by Alice’s sister, on the 11th October 2016 Alice texted her sister to say she called [the Police] but **‘they’re not helping me, they’ll fucking respond when he’s fucking stabbed me’**.

On the 12th October 2016, Alice left to go to work as usual, and throughout the day she was in regular contact with her friend from Germany, who was due to come to the North East to meet her the following day. She left work at around 17:15hrs and was given a lift home by a male colleague. Her flatmate finished work and returned to their shared flat a short time later, but could not gain entry to the front door as it was locked from the inside. She climbed into the flat via an open window at the back of the property, where she found Alice’s body in the bathroom at 18:34hrs. Post Mortem results revealed that Alice had suffered 24 separate injuries, including defensive wounds and a large fatal wound to her throat.

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As part of the homicide investigation, several witness statements were taken from young women who had been involved in some form of ‘relationship’ with the perpetrator. The statements include allegations of a domestic and/or sexual violence-related nature and timescales suggest he was in contact with these individuals prior to and during his relationship with Alice, as well as after it ended (starting from his initial entry into the UK in September 2010 through to October 2016). This shows controlling, manipulative and coercive behaviours being exhibited by the perpetrator in all relationships – many of which mirror Alice’s experiences and interactions. The key issues from the statements include:

- The use of social media and dating sites to initiate first contact.
- Mistruths at the beginning of a relationship (e.g. being on exercise with the army and that he was responsible for guarding high-profile Olympic sites and athletes).
- Initial generosity: would often take them out for dinner, away for weekends and buy clothes, but then would withdraw these gifts if they argued.

- Showed up at the first date with chocolates. In the case of one victim, he showed up at her workplace with flowers.
- Would regularly go 'offline' and not communicate with them for several days and weeks—often with no explanation.
- Repeated and constant texts, emails and messages via social media—often questioning their whereabouts and 'guilt-tripping' them.
- Several claimed that he made them feel as though the issues were their fault and made it seem as though they were overreacting.
- Physically violent on several occasions—forcefully strangled, punched, slapping, strongly grabbing wrists and whipping with wet towels causing bruising and swelling. This also included feeling pressured into engaging in sexual activity.
- Tried to cause jealousy by telling them he was meeting other women or that he'd had a one-night stand—and when challenged, saying, 'he was joking' and he'd 'only said it to get a reaction'.
- Proactive use of social media profiles throughout relationship as a primary means of communication—and the constant use of several telephone numbers to contact victims.
- Said he was part of gangs in India and knew people who carried out acid attacks and imprisoned females.
- Thought family and friends were interfering too much in their relationship.
- Use of technology during the relationship: the perpetrator had linked his iPhone with one victim's iPad.
- Several indicate seeing texts between the perpetrator and another girl. On all occasions, he seemed to deny being unfaithful and said it was a friend writing the messages pretending to be him.
- He would start arguments over nothing and would threaten to break up and end the relationship.
- He would meet one victim every morning so he could walk her to college before he started work.
- He proposed to one victim and wanted her to 'move to India with him so that he could look after her'.
- He threatened to 'beat up' any male who was looking at the victim during their first date.
- As the relationship progressed, he became controlling over what she ate and drank and made derogatory comments about her appearance and weight (e.g. if she wanted butter or sauce he would tell her she would get fatter; he set a timer on her phone so that she would 'remember' to drink every hour; and would ask why she wasn't as 'fit' as other girls).

SECTION THREE:

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15 KEY FINDINGS

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16 ANALYSIS

The Chronology provides an overview of Alice's life leading up to the homicide and, through interviews with her family and friends, tries to capture her thoughts, feelings and emotions. The Analysis section builds upon the Chronology and will highlight some of the key learning points and good practice identified as part of the DHR. It will also address the questions outlined within the DHR Terms of Reference.

Key Finding 1

Alice was subject to significant stalking behaviour.

- 1 The Panel concluded that Alice was subjected to significant stalking behaviour and coercive control by the perpetrator from a very early stage in their relationship—even before the couple met face-to-face. There are examples throughout the chronology where the perpetrator appeared fixated with Alice, was obsessive and persistent in his behaviour, tracked her movements and contacts and admitted accessing messages and social media accounts—all of which are risk indicators indicative of stalking and coercive controlling behaviour.
- 2 The intimate partner stalker is one of the more dangerous categories of stalker, especially where the victim is female and the perpetrator male. The perpetrator tried numerous tactics to manipulate and pressure Alice into re-kindling their relationship (and included the veiled threats to release intimate photographs). He would routinely attempt to influence and control Alice's daily activities and used a wide range of coercive tactics and behaviours to maintain an element of control over Alice. The tactics used by the perpetrator meant that it was often difficult for both Alice and her family and friends to recognise or spot the signs of these behaviours.
- 3 Isolating Alice from friends, giving and then withdrawing gifts, instilling paranoia and mistrust and threats of suicide (alongside the subsequent attempts to try and make Alice look untrustworthy) all give further weight to the conclusion that strong coercive tactics were used throughout the relationship. Despite the large geographical distance between himself and Alice, the perpetrator would show up unannounced, undertake covert surveillance at her flat and closely monitor and track Alice's social media presence.
- 4 Significant volumes of unwanted contact between the perpetrator and Alice and her friends and family (via telephone, text message, emails and social media) along with the creation of numerous false accounts to try and engage with Alice demonstrates fixation and obsessive behaviours associated with stalking. By doing this, the perpetrator was constantly trying to impose his presence and make sure Alice remained focused on him. The sheer volume of contact indicates how much Alice was in his thoughts.

- 5 The range of cyber-related stalking methods used by the perpetrator to monitor and track Alice only added to the intensity and persistence of the stalking that she experienced, and resulted in Alice restricting her communication methods; thus, potentially isolating her further. Throughout the relationship, there are clear signs that Alice is increasingly fearful and hyper-vigilant of the perpetrator's actions and behaviour.
- 6 An interesting exercise in risk assessment is to calculate how much time the stalker is dedicating to stalking. The constant texting, social-media tracking, driving to and from Alice's home address from his barracks in Edinburgh through to the purchasing of gifts (e.g. the flowers and chocolates left on 30 September), the regular attempts made to hack into Alice's and her sister's accounts and the messages sent to Alice's mum—none of these should be underestimated. Undertaking them involves a lot of time, planning and investment on behalf of the perpetrator, and reveals how fixated or obsessed he is with his stalking campaign and the high risk that he presented to Alice.

Key Finding 2

The risks to Alice escalated following her decision to end the relationship with the perpetrator.

- 7 The perpetrator's obsession with Alice and his persistent behaviour escalated in the weeks leading up to the homicide in October 2016. There were significant events that triggered an escalation in his behaviour and there is evidence that Alice, her family and her friends were beginning to feel concerned, scared and worried about the behaviour of the perpetrator.
- 8 The risk escalated when Alice ended the relationship with the perpetrator in August 2016. He would routinely try to contact Alice, using a variety of platforms, despite being told that she 'wanted nothing more to do with him' and evidence within the chronology demonstrates that his attempts to contact Alice increased in intensity and frequency during this time.
- 9 He led Alice to believe that he could access her social media, messages and email accounts and attempted to change her passwords to purposefully restrict her access and limit her potential to start another relationship—and was successful in doing so on at least one occasion. His contact switched between being nasty and threatening towards her to being pleasant and claiming that he loved her—and he stated on one occasion that he was not used to losing something that belonged to him. There is evidence that he went on to set up various fake social media accounts to try to engage Alice, and he contacted members of Alice's family on several occasions as well as making direct contact with Alice's new male friend.
- 10 The risk escalated further when Alice started to form the new relationship at the beginning of September 2016. The unwanted contact continued—culminating in the incident at Alice's flat on the evening of the 30th September

2016. The voicemail messages subsequently left by the perpetrator threatening not to kill Alice on five separate occasions coupled with the constant unwanted contact and harassment and loitering in her garden prior to the incident demonstrates increased escalation and potential changes in the perpetrator's emotional and psychological state.

- 11 Despite being warned about this incident, the perpetrator fails to stop contacting Alice, which is yet another indicator of increasing escalated risk, and shows a pattern of targeted fixated behaviour.

Key Finding 3

Risk increased further when the perpetrator's stalking activity led him to believe Alice was entering a new relationship.

- 12 We know the perpetrator accessed Alice's social media account and changed her passwords with a view to potentially controlling and restricting her ability to meet someone. He told her that he did not want her to be on Tinder—implying he did not want her to start another relationship.
- 13 Alice started to form a new relationship with a male she had met when visiting her sister in Germany in September 2016. The perpetrator is fully aware of the male and the start of a potential relationship between the couple and, although this could not be confirmed, it is likely that the perpetrator knew this because he had access to, and was subsequently reading, Alice's messages.
- 14 The perpetrator sent the male various messages via social media (including old screenshots of conversations between himself and Alice) suggesting they were still together. He stated Alice was trying to 'play one off against another' to try and ruin the relationship. During this time, he continued to try and repeatedly engage with Alice by phone, text message, email and social media, desperately wanting their relationship to continue.
- 15 On both the 4th and 6th October 2016, the perpetrator informed his Unit Welfare Officer that following his split with Alice everything was 'getting on top of him', he was feeling 'very depressed about it', and he was 'requesting to leave [Edinburgh] to assist in him dealing with the breakdown'. We know that on the 7th October 2016, Alice was informed that the male she met in Germany was due to visit the UK and that he had arranged to meet Alice the day after the homicide. His arrival, and potential start of a new relationship, may have reinforced to the perpetrator that his control over Alice had diminished. In the letter he sent to Alice, the perpetrator outlines how 'she now belongs to another man' which indicates a potential change in his mindset—and could be an important indicator that his emotional journey may have reached crisis point. From this point, he continues to make unwanted contact with Alice, sends Alice's mum several emotionally charged messages via social media and, over a course of several days in the lead-up to her

homicide, we know he travelled down from Glencorse Barracks, and sat in his vehicle outside Alice's flat without her knowledge.

Key Finding 4

There was previous history of stalking behaviour and coercive control.

- 16 As part of the investigation into Alice's murder, the perpetrator's former partners provided statements detailing their previous involvement. These provide details suggesting the perpetrator exhibited very controlling, manipulative and coercive behaviours within several of his past relationships, a lot of which bore similar, if not identical, hallmarks to the issues experienced by Alice.
- 17 Comparing the details of Alice's case against the statement obtained from his ex-partners, it becomes clear that the perpetrator utilised similar transferable tactics to maintain control within these relationships.
- 18 Whilst this evidence/information was not known to partner agencies prior to the homicide, and therefore could not have been used to inform Alice's case, it does illustrate how perpetrators repeat tested behaviours in successive relationships, and highlights the importance of recording as much information as possible about historical activities to help assess current and future risk.

Key Finding 5

There is no national definition of stalking.

- 19 Alice contacted Northumbria Police to report the incident on the 30th September 2016 and the perpetrator's behaviour and actions were not identified, recorded or investigated as stalking. This was significant in setting the course of events that followed; and it impacted on the decision-making, risk assessment and risk management of the situation.
- 20 Living in Fear⁴, the joint inspection carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, has evidenced a lack of clarity over the definitions of stalking and harassment—and is cited as the one of the main reason why police forces respond inconsistently and use varying interpretations of stalking. The Panel found a range of working definitions of stalking in use; however, agreed that there is no single universally adopted definition.

⁴ HMFICRRS - Living in fear - the police and CPS response to harassment and stalking

- 21 The absence of a consistent definition of stalking impacts significantly upon the understanding of what it is and how it should be addressed; this leads to incidents being treated in isolation, and a range of severity, continuity and escalation of stalking behaviours being overlooked.
- 22 This is demonstrated within the IOPC report, where Police Officer 1 states that he did consider the offence of stalking but deemed that harassment was the more appropriate offence based on the evidence presented to him. He also states there was no legal definition for the term stalking and instead, a list of behaviours which could amount to stalking. He did not believe there was a clear distinction or separation between stalking and the offence of harassment, and stated that the offences were very similar in wording.

Key Finding 6

The 101 non-emergency number was a barrier to reporting at an earlier opportunity.

- 23 Telephone records show that Alice abandoned a 101 non-emergency call to Northumbria Police on the 24th September 2016, 18 days prior to the homicide, after being on hold for 6 minutes and 43 seconds and failing to get through to a call handler to raise her concerns regarding the perpetrator's behaviour. **The Panel concluded that this was a missed opportunity to intervene and support Alice at an earlier stage in the relationship.**
- 24 The 101 number is a national system that should be used for situations that do not require an immediate police response—and is used to keep 999 available for when there is an emergency. Although it is a national initiative, Northumbria Police are responsible for monitoring performance standards for the force area. A report submitted to the Northumbria Police and Crime Panel in October 2016 provides details of 101 performance in the period leading up to Alice's homicide, and highlights that from April to September 2016 (compared to the previous year):
- The average time to answer 101 calls increased from 25 seconds in March 2016 to 1 minute 30 seconds in September 2016.
 - The percentage of 101 calls answered reduced over the same period, with 11,033 missed calls in September 2016.
 - The average time spent on a 101-call increased by 34% from 3 minutes 35 seconds in April 2016 to 4 minutes 47 seconds in September 2016.
- 25 We know from interviews with family and friends that Alice was encouraged to report the problems that she was experiencing to the Police but 'kept putting it off'. The length of time that she spent on hold was crucial and ultimately led to her abandoning the call and therefore unsuccessfully reporting to the police.
- 26 The Panel concluded there should be no barriers for potential victims contacting emergency services and timely access to the police through 101 is an issue. Research indicates that stalking victims suffer a significant number

of incidents before reporting their concerns to the police and the efficiency of 101 is crucial to facilitate first-time reporting.

Key Finding 7

Northumbria Police did not identify or record stalking behaviour despite evidence of a 'course of conduct'.

- 27 Throughout Alice's contacts with Northumbria Police, stalking was not correctly identified or recorded and **was a significant factor in the way in which Alice was subsequently dealt with.**
- 28 Although there is no legal definition of stalking, the Protection of Freedom Act 2012, Home Office Guidelines and Guide for Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on Stalking and Harassment all list several behaviours exhibited if stalking and is present. These include:
- Following a person;
 - Contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means;
 - Publishing any statement or other material relating or purporting to relate to a person, or purporting to originate from a person;
 - Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication;
 - Loitering in any place (whether public or private);
 - Interfering with any property in the possession of a person, and
 - Watching or spying on a person.

To evidence stalking, a 'course of conduct' must be present, which means that the behaviour must have occurred on 'at least two occasions'.

- 29 Based on the information provided during Alice's initial call to Police, the visit from Police Officer 1 and subsequent contact from Police Officer 2—as well as during the support call offered by VictimsFirst Northumbria—Alice presented agencies with information that demonstrated that she had experienced a range, or perhaps all, of the behaviours outlined within the guidance and that a 'course of conduct' for stalking was evident. This is demonstrated clearly within Alice's statement made to Police Officer 1, where she states '**I'm scared and terrified of his actions. I am being stalked and want it to stop**'.
- 30 Northumbria Police and VictimsFirst Northumbria underestimated the effect the perpetrator's behaviour was having on Alice when she spoke to officers—particularly as she appeared calm, controlled and was 'undemanding'. The way Alice presented may have masked to officers the level of risk—and potentially meant officers took a different course of action. We know that Alice told officers that she didn't want the perpetrator to get into trouble which also may have been used inappropriately by the police not to investigate the reported stalking further. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of agencies to

recognise these behaviours and officers dealing with reports of stalking need to understand that victims may not all present in the same way. **The failure of officers to recognise the signs and identify stalking was a missed opportunity.**

Key Finding 8

Northumbria Police did not follow the THRIVE model of risk assessment and this was not in line with their procedures.

- 31 Northumbria Police use a rigorous approach to the risk assessment of all 999 and 101 calls to ensure the most appropriate police response can be deployed. This approach is known locally as 'THRIVE' (and covers threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement). It aims to gather enough information to make a better-informed decision as to the best response in every case and, in turn, shifts the emphasis from a response based on the crime or incident type to a response that focuses on the victim and the risks posed.
- 32 On receiving the initial call from Alice on the 1st October 2016, the call handler was provided with basic information in relation to the incident that had occurred along with some background details on the problems that Alice has experienced from the perpetrator. The call handler gave no consideration to her immediate safety and failed to ask safeguarding questions designed to identify potential risks. For example, no questions were asked to ascertain if the perpetrator was still in the immediate area and posed a further risk to Alice; there was no indication of whether Alice was alone in the property at the time and/or if she had secured her windows and doors to restrict/prevent the perpetrator from entering; and no discussions took place relating to the perpetrator's vehicle. The call handler failed to establish if the perpetrator had previously threatened or acted violently towards Alice or ascertain the extent of the issues she was experiencing. As a result, the Panel concluded **the THRIVE approach was not followed in line with the policy and potentially exposed Alice to risk.**
- 33 At this stage, the call handler introduces the Police Information Notice as one of two potential options to help address the perpetrator's behaviour. This is **not in line with the local policy and was inappropriate at this stage.** This option should have been considered by a Police Officer at a later stage in the process, as a potential intervention, to help safeguard Alice from the perpetrator's behaviour.
- 34 The seriousness of Alice's stalking was not fully appreciated by the call handler and was assigned as a Grade 4 incident meaning a scheduled appointment was made. As it was a domestic abuse-related incident, a scheduled appointment was not an appropriate response and meant the police did not take any positive action to safeguard Alice for at least 36 hours. Northumbria Police's procedure states that scheduled appointments should

be made in circumstances where, for example, response time is not critical in apprehending the offender—and whilst there is nothing stating that a domestic abuse incident cannot be dealt with by appointment, the delay in attending increases the risk of victims changing their mind about reporting the abuse. On reflection, the Panel concluded that Alice should not have been dealt with by a scheduled appointment and a timelier response could have been provided.

- 35 A review of the information contained within the Police Log in respect of Alice’s call suggests that the call handler did not record pertinent information relating to the incident. For example, there is no record of the perpetrator being in her garden since 5pm or that he had been responsible for knocking on Alice’s door throughout the evening. The inclusion of this information on the Police Log could potentially have prompted a different course of action by police during future interactions with Alice.

Key Finding 9

The incident should not have been dealt with by a Police Information Notice

- 36 The purpose of a Police Information Notice (PIN) is to provide officers with a consistent approach to notifying a person when their behaviour is alarming or distressing and, if continued, constitutes an offence under The Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The use of a PIN negates a person using the defence that they were unaware that their conduct, if continued, constituted an offence—and acts as an ‘informal warning’. As it is an informal sanction, a PIN has no basis in law and therefore cannot technically be breached. However, if the behaviour continues, a course of conduct has been established: a crime should be recorded, and positive action should be taken against the perpetrator. A course of conduct under The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 is simply behaviour that causes alarm or distress on at least two occasions. A PIN is not a viable option once a course of conduct has been established.
- 37 We know from Alice’s first contact with the police that a PIN is identified as the only police option available. The term PIN is included within the incident log and appears to have permutated through all the subsequent contact with Alice – and has been at the forefront of the decision-making of officers involved.
- 38 The call handler appears to have made a quick decision, based on information provided by Alice, to introduce the option of a PIN. This is not in line with policy and was inappropriate at this stage. Following the scheduled appointment with Alice, Police Officer 1 and Police Sergeant 1 decided to progress the case by issuing a PIN, as they did not believe a course of conduct had been established. The issuing of a PIN is not a tailored response and was wholly inappropriate to the specific nature of this case, as Alice had experienced alarm or distress on at least two occasions. **The Panel concluded that the use of a PIN in this case was inappropriate because a**

course of conduct had been established, albeit that this was not recognised. If the incident had been correctly identified as stalking, in line with Northumbria Policy, the option of a PIN would have been inappropriate, and the case would have been investigated and resulted in the perpetrator being arrested.

Key Finding 10

Northumbria Police should have contacted Police Scotland to issue the Police Information Notice.

- 39 The perpetrator resided outside of the Northumbria Police boundaries and was based in Glencorse Barracks, Edinburgh. This posed a logistical problem in relation to issuing the PIN to the perpetrator. Police Officer 1 subsequently made the decision to contact Glencorse directly and speak with the Unit Welfare Officer and Orderly. He asks that the perpetrator be spoken to by his superiors and warned not to contact Alice or her family again – and that if he did he would be prosecuted for the offence of harassment. Whilst this action was carried out in its entirety by the Chain of Command, there was no contact between Northumbria Police and the Military Police regarding the incident; nor was there any discussion between Police Officer 1 and the perpetrator. Consequently, there was no record on the Royal Military Policing incident recording system.
- 40 The Panel concluded that it is the responsibility of Home Office Police Forces to inform the perpetrator that there were concerns about his behaviour and that he was being dealt with by means of a PIN notice. Police Officer 1 should have either: 1) issued the PIN in person or 2) approached Home Office Police within the locality, in this case Police Scotland, to issue the PIN on his behalf (rather than contacting Glencorse Barracks directly).
- 41 Northumbria Police contacted Glencorse Barracks to request that the Chain of Command speak to the perpetrator. This action was carried out and repeated by several different officers in the days leading up to Alice's homicide. However, the Panel found that it was not appropriate for the army, as the perpetrator's employers, to be responsible for warning him regarding his behaviour and this should have been undertaken by Northumbria Police.

Key Finding 11

Northumbria Police and VictimsFirst Northumbria did not accurately assess the risk posed by the perpetrator.

- 42 The nationally accredited SafeLives Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Indicator Checklist is a tool designed to provide a

consistent way for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse to help identify those who are at high risk of harm and manage their risk.

- 43 A DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was completed for Alice by Police Officer 1 following the incident at her flat on the 1st October 2016, and was undertaken as per the local policy and procedures.
- 44 Alice 'scored' 9 out of a possible 27 questions and was categorised as 'Medium Risk' meaning that there were 'identifiable factors of risk of serious harm' and that the perpetrator 'has the potential to cause serious harm but is unlikely to do so unless there is a change of circumstances'.
- 45 Having reviewed Alice's DASH Risk Indicator Checklist alongside the witness statement she provided to Police Officer 1, the following questions were not answered (when it could have been argued that they should have):
- * Have you separated [from the perpetrator] within the past year?
 - ✓ We know Alice and the perpetrator had recently separated in August 2016 and this is specifically stated within her witness statement.
 - * Is the abuse happening more often?
 - ✓ Despite Alice saying that she wanted no further contact, the witness statement demonstrates repeated stalking behaviour and increased contact from the perpetrator.
 - * Has [the perpetrator] ever threatened to kill you?
 - ✓ Within the witness statement there is wording around the threats 'not to kill' Alice made by the perpetrator. We know from the IOPC report that Police Officer 1 discussed these with Alice and referred to them as being 'odd behaviour'.
 - * Does [the perpetrator] do/say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad?
 - ✓ Alice states in the witness statement that the perpetrator has some personal intimate photographs of her, and that he had sent her a message alluding to the fact he could disclose these photographs, if needed. Alice felt this was a veiled threat and although debatable it could be argued this was of a sexual nature that made Alice feel bad.

In addition, if appropriate checks were made on the Police National Computer (PNC) and Police National Database (PND), a further additional question could have potentially been answered:

- * Do you know if [the perpetrator] has hurt anyone else before?
 - ✓ Although not in the witness statement, there was a Restraining Order recorded on PNC/PND against the perpetrator for the assault against his ex-girlfriend in Kent, which, although debatable,

indicates that domestic abuse had taken place within a previous relationship and therefore that he had hurt someone else.

- 46 Although stalking and harassment had been identified as part of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist and triggered the need for extra questions in respect of that type of risk, this did not affect the final risk assessment level. In addition, no additional information was recorded in the last section, including the question:
- ✗ Consider [the perpetrator's] occupation and interests—could this give them unique access to weapons?
 - ✓ Given the perpetrator's employment within the Armed Forces, the Panel felt additional information should have been recorded here. It might also have recorded Alice's perceived risk of the perpetrator's IT ability to hack into her email and social media accounts.
- 47 Based on the information provided at the time, Police Officer 1 did not use his professional opinion to raise the risk to high, which was an available option.
- 48 The Panel recognised that it is often difficult to complete and review a DASH Risk Indicator Checklist using witness statements and interviews only, particularly without the benefit of being able to explore and probe answers with the client. However, the paper exercise that has been carried out would indicate that some of the **DASH Risk Indicator Checklist questions had not been answered**.
- 49 Despite a potential failure to answer the questions, if the maximum 'score' based on our paper exercise was assigned to Alice; she would have hit 13 out of 27 questions. This would have meant that Alice would have remained at 'Medium Risk' – and would have been referred, as she was and per the local policy, to Victims First Northumbria for support. There are questions in relation to how effectively the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist is quality-assured.
- 50 In addition, Police Officer 1 and Police Sergeant 1 state within the IOPC Report that they did not believe there was a 'necessity to arrest the perpetrator' and the rationale for issuing a PIN, rather than arresting him, was based on the fact that:
- The perpetrator had made no direct threats towards Alice;
 - There was no previous reported violence between them;
 - The perpetrator lived a significant distance away from Alice; and
 - Interviewing the perpetrator under caution would have 'gained nothing'.

Although the perpetrator lived a significant distance from Alice, this had not prevented him from travelling to her flat on the 30 September 2016 or restricted his ability to contact Alice and/or her family. Distance was a potential protective factor and the risk posed by the perpetrator was not accurately assessed.

- 51 Alice was subsequently referred to VictimsFirst Northumbria, who made contact on the 6th October 2016, and provided Alice with routine advice and support relating to domestic abuse. During this conversation, Alice told the

Case Co-ordinator that she had received no further contact from the perpetrator since he had been dealt with by the means of a PIN and confirmed that further contact would be reported to the police. The Case Co-ordinator outlined in the VictimsFirst IMR that because no further risks were identified during the conversation, Alice's DASH Risk Indicator Checklist did not need to be reviewed. Although this is in line with VictimsFirst policy, this is a potential missed opportunity. The potential completion of a further DASH Risk Indicator Checklist at this point, by a Case Co-ordinator who had specialist knowledge of domestic abuse, might have elicited additional information from Alice and/or highlighted potential gaps in the initial assessment by Police Officer 1.

- 52 After Alice had contacted Northumbria Police on the 7th October 2016 to report the breach of PIN, Police Officer 2 appears to have used the responses Alice provided to Police Officer 1 to populate a further DASH Risk Indicator Checklist. This essentially means that **no formal risk assessment was conducted with Alice on her last contact with Northumbria Police.**

As the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was not completed correctly, this resulted in an additional question being missed, one that should have been answered:

- * Has [the perpetrator] ever broken bail, an injunction, or any other agreement for when they can see you?
 - ✓ The perpetrator's breach of the Police Information Notice could have been recorded at this point.

- 53 In hindsight, the ineffective completion of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklists across all contact with Alice was a significant failing. If the DASH Risk Indicator Checklists had been completed effectively, this might have subsequently meant that Alice may have reached 'High Risk' thresholds, meaning that an automated referral to the specialist Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Service would have been generated and specialist support would have been offered to Alice. In addition, the complete lack of professional curiosity to elicit further responses from Alice was problematic and contributed to ineffective DASH Risk Indicator Checklists being completed.

Clusters of Behaviour:

- 54 Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Homicide share histories, behavioural patterns and characteristics that can be used to consider earlier safety planning and offender management. Risk characteristics or markers appear on the DASH Risk Identification Checklists but there is no research to support the idea that sheer numbers of risk markers equate to imminence of homicide. Clusters of markers may be more effective in helping frontline professionals consider safety. For example, there is research to suggest that control, violence and separation after living together raises the risk of homicide by 900% (Stark 2009). Presence of control, abuse or stalking, coupled with a history of such behaviour and a separation, is more predictive of harm than counting numbers of markers. In addition, if the quasi-actuarial model relies on numbers of ticks at any level to designate high-risk status, it should be

considered that Alice had no children and was not pregnant so could not give ticks to several of the questions which may therefore reduce her potential to be assessed as high risk. **This should be recognised, and key markers—history, coercive control, stalking and separation—should be given due weight in future risk-based assessments. The current DASH Risk Indicator Checklist does not account for this, which may suggest that it, together with training, needs to be further developed.**

The important cluster behaviours to consider are:

- (i) History of stalking behaviour. The way people respond to rejection may not change and they will repeat their behaviours across all their relationships. Someone with a history, like the perpetrator's, where he stalks and threatens those who reject him, should automatically raise the concern of anyone performing a risk assessment interview.
- (ii) Stalking, control or abuse. These behaviours indicate a mindset that may suggest there will be difficulty accepting the breakdown of that control—and this often manifests in stalking. This too should raise concerns for victim safety. Alice had been subject to stalking and threats.
- (iii) Separation. This is known to be the single biggest risk marker for homicide (Brennan 2016) particularly when separation is preceded by control, and stalking follows.
- (iv) Escalation. Where there is escalation in concerning behaviours, either in their frequency or seriousness, then there is higher potential for that to escalate to assault.

55 It is also interesting to place risk markers in sequence: for example, a history will precede abuse, which will precede a trigger. The further along a timeline you get, the more likely a homicide will occur. Victims who call police for advice are often calling when the escalation period is in full swing—and this risk should be considered from the outset. This was a missed opportunity in Alice's case, and both Northumbria Police and VictimsFirst Northumbria should have been more attuned to the risks that Alice was experiencing.

56 The Community Safety Board should consider preparing a safety advice leaflet specific to intimate partner stalking to contain all helpline and specialist service numbers. This leaflet could be given to all victims, published on the police webpages, and carried by all officers. This may in turn help officers to recognise the dangers of intimate partner stalkers and to be equipped with the right information, so that they feel more confident in giving advice to stalking victims.

Key Finding 12

The decision-making process by Northumbria Police was too 'victim-led'.

57 The Northumbria Police IMR, and interviews undertaken with Police Officers by the IOPC, demonstrates that a strong emphasis was placed on the notion

of being 'victim-led' throughout all interactions with Alice. This led to decisions being made in contradiction to the national Authorised Professional Practice on Domestic Abuse (which sets the required standards expected of police officers in response to domestic abuse incidents).

- 58 There is no local policy or procedure in relation to 'victim-led policing'; nor, is it referred to within national guidance/documentation around domestic abuse – it is simply an ethos of involving victims within decision-making processes.
- 59 Whilst is it positive to involve victims, as far as reasonably possible, in decision-making processes, it is important their involvement does not ultimately dictate the approach that is taken to resolve their issues. From her first contact, Alice was offered two options by the call handler—and without the full possession of the facts, any discussion about the options available to her and/or before any police investigation was conducted, she was in effect required to choose, at a very early stage, how she wanted to proceed.
- 60 We know that Alice's contact with, and knowledge of, agencies involved within the criminal justice system was extremely limited. However, she did appear to clearly understand the concept of a PIN and what would constitute a breach (i.e. any further contact from the perpetrator) and correctly reports subsequent contact as soon as it occurs. The discussion with the call handler and Police Officer 2, subsequently contradicted what Alice thought would happen (i.e. that he would be automatically arrested). According to Alice's family, when asked by Police Officer 2 if she wanted the perpetrator to be arrested or words to that effect, with 'an intonation that suggested this would be a ridiculous course of action, she felt that she was wasting their time'. The Panel felt that this led to Alice responding 'no' to the Police Officer 2 at this point.
- 61 It would appear that Alice had been asked to make decisions on how she wanted the police to proceed. A victim who is not fully aware of the risks, the options available and the findings of a full investigation cannot, and should not, make this decision. It rests with the police to assess the evidence and risks, apply the relevant threshold tests and make the decision as to what action to take, but to involve the victim in this process. A review of the IOPC Report does indicate that victim-led policing played a significant role in the decisions that were undertaken throughout all contact with Northumbria Police, from the initial call handler through to the Police Officers' interactions with Alice. It appears that the notion of being victim-led meant Police effectively passed the decision-making process to Alice to be able to choose how she wanted to progress.
- 62 In conclusion, the Panel agreed that while whether someone is arrested is an operational matter for the police to decide, it is wholly inappropriate for officers to ask victims of stalking if they want the perpetrator to be arrested. These decisions should have been made by officers as part of their investigation plan, based on risk of threat or harm. Whilst considering the victim's wishes, decisions should ultimately be taken by Police Officers.

Key Finding 13

Northumbria Police failed to check the perpetrator's previous history on the Police National Computer.

- 63 Alice contacted Northumbria Police on two separate occasions, but neither of the Police Officers involved undertook a check on the Police National Computer to ascertain if the perpetrator had any form of previous offending history related to domestic abuse.
- 64 We know from Kent Police that there was a previous recorded incident on the Police National Computer involving the perpetrator following the assault in June 2013. The Panel concluded that knowledge of a previous incident, dealt with by means of a Restraining Order, would be unlikely to have changed the Police Officers' risk assessment of the situation; however, failure to check the available systems for information in relation to previous history is nonetheless a significant oversight. We know that perpetrators often repeat patterns of behaviour with future partners and therefore previous history should always be checked.

Key Finding 14

There was no contact between Home Office Police and the Military Police in relation to the perpetrator's behaviour.

- 65 The Panel debated at length the relationship between Home Office Police and Military Police. Although Military Police Officers are not constables under UK law and do not have any constabulary powers over the public, they do have many of the policing powers that constables possess when dealing with service personnel or civilians subject to service discipline. However, in the UK, where the victim is a civilian, the Home Office Police will always have jurisdiction. The Panel agreed that this is not clearly understood and needs to be improved.
- 66 The army IMR stated that the relationship between the Home Office and Military Police is generally very good; but in those areas where there is a low density of military personnel (including Northumbria), this liaison is perhaps not as well tested. As with Alice's case, this often leads to a lack of clear understanding in terms of how to contact the army from a Home Office Police perspective—and resulted in Northumbria Police having to contact several different officers within the barracks rather than going via a single point of access. It is unclear why the Northumbria Police did not use the single point of contact, the Service Police Crimes Bureau (SPCB), which should be listed in the national UK Police Directory as the single point of contact in this case.

- 67 The army IMR provides details of a Service Police Crimes Bureau Operations Room, which is available 24hrs a day to report any incident in which service personnel may have been involved. To ensure that a standardised approach to contact is adopted, it is suggested that a policy formalising this interaction on a national level may be of use to both Home Office and Military Police. This would also allow the potential for all domestic-related issues to be recorded in a standard, meaningful and accessible way.

Key Finding 15

The army failed to record concerns about the perpetrator's behaviour on several occasions.

- 68 The DHR has identified several examples where either no information or limited information has been 'formally' recorded by the army around the behaviour, conduct and interactions with personnel. Whilst there could be practical difficulties of recording such behaviour; given the diverse, dispersed and often transient nature of the workforce, the Chair still felt that was a significant missed opportunity for the army to collate information on the wider dynamics of its personnel to help inform how they could potentially be managed and supported.
- 69 We know that the perpetrator was previously involved with Home Office Police following complaints made by his ex-partner. The army IMR found no 'formal' records of the incident in Faversham in Kent, which resulted in the perpetrator being arrested and charged for assault and subject to a Restraining Order. The only information pertaining to this incident was obtained through interviews as part of this DHR. Evidence obtained from Kent Police clearly illustrated that the barracks were aware of the incident and had been informed by the perpetrator's sergeant (who was a neighbour of the victim) and confirmed 'when he returns [to camp] they will not be letting him out' so that Kent Police could attend and arrest him. The records also illustrate that the perpetrator was held in the Guard Room on his return to barracks and that the army brought the perpetrator to Canterbury police station for interview. The army were unable to find any record of this interaction with the police or to trace the sergeant for his account and gave the following response to the issue: "... however indicate that the formal process of informing the RMP SPCB was not correctly followed by the Home Office Police and therefore it is unclear who in the barracks was actually informed. It appears from the evidence that the Police passed the information to an individual who was not empowered to make decisions on the subject. Had the information been passed into the military in the correct manner this matter would have been formally recorded and resulted in formal notification to the CO from the Military Police. The Panel view was that the Kent evidence indicated several contacts with the barracks and as such they would have expected a record to have been made. Nonetheless this illustrates a key issue that the army should be formally notified of police contact via the Military Police contact to ensure records are gathered.

- 70 The Panel considered the sharing of information between the army and Home Office Police and whether this should have taken place following the incident in Kent. Until March 2015, employment within the Armed Forces was considered a 'Notifiable Occupation' by the Home Office, which meant that any police action relating to a serving soldier must be reported to the army, if there are any indicated risks to children or vulnerable adults. The Vetting Unit in Kent Police took the decision not to formally disclose to the army details of the perpetrator's offence on the basis that he was 'arrested for spitting at his ex-partner, there were no connections with children or vulnerable adults, and therefore no disclosure was made'. This was reported by Northumbria Police to be a correct decision from a Home Office Police perspective. However, the army have indicated that whilst the 'Notifiable Occupation' requirement has ceased to exist, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) agreed the police should, as best practice, continue to inform Military Police on all arrests of serving soldiers under common law disclosure to allow Commanding Officers to risk assess.
- 71 Under Queens Regulations 1975, all cases involving criminal prosecutions are to be reported to the Chain of Command. Ordinarily, requirements for soldiers to do so is included within Unit Orders and, although unlikely, it is unknown whether the perpetrator reported the Kent Police action to his Unit at the time; however, there is no formal record of it in this personnel files. The perpetrator was stated as later telling Alice that the army knew of the offence and 'protected him, swept it under the carpet and got him off [the offence]'. The perpetrator used this to maintain an element of control and coercion and, according to her friends and family, was a barrier to Alice reporting at an earlier stage.
- 72 However, regardless of whether a notification was made, the Panel concluded that if the perpetrator was arrested by Kent Police whilst at Howe Barracks, this should have potentially warranted a record being entered in the perpetrator's personnel file—**and was a potential missed opportunity from the army to record the initial domestic incident.**
- 73 It must be considered if knowledge of the perpetrator's previous Restraining Order would have changed how the army dealt with him following the request from Northumbria Police. This is unlikely to have had any direct influence other than his Chain of Command potentially referring to it when emphasising to the perpetrator the need for him to cease all contact with Alice. The Restraining Order had ceased in January 2015 with no reported breach, and whilst it shows prior conduct, the army would have had very few options in how they could deal with the perpetrator at that time.
- 74 The army IMR documents that the perpetrator was spoken to by several of his superiors following contact from Northumbria Police following Alice's reported concerns. What isn't clear is whether this information was recorded anywhere within his personnel files (which could be accessed for future reference) or if it was the result of interviews undertaken as part of the DHR. We know the best indicator of future risk behaviour is past behaviour and if this is not clearly recorded by agencies, then it cannot form part of future risk assessments;

this, in turn, may increase risk for future victims (as history and past behaviour is not logged). In addition, there is nothing recorded in relation to the allegation that the perpetrator made a suicide threat to Alice. This incident was not recorded because on investigation the army did not judge the individual to be a threat to himself at the time the report was made.

- 75 The Chair was not entirely satisfied with information contained within the army IMR—and some of the Panel had concerns, particularly as information failed to be recorded on several occasions in relation to other matters. The Chair subsequently made a further request to the army to clarify the rationale for not recording data/information regarding these incidents.

In relation to the suicide incident the response was as follows: *“Army General Administrative Instruction 110, detailing Army Policy on Suicide Vulnerability and Risk Management Policy, gives clear direction to the Chain of Command on factors leading to the identification of individuals considered to be at risk of suicide. In this case, the perpetrator did not show any risk factors; he denied any knowledge of sending a text message to his ex-girlfriend and when assessed by the Duty Officer was found to be happy and oblivious to the issue. Where an assessment concludes, in this case correctly, that the soldier was in no danger of being at risk of suicide, a decision will be taken that the action in AGAI 110 is not required.”*

The Panel felt that it would be prudent for the army to record information of this nature, regardless of whether it is found to be true or not, particularly as it relates to a serious allegation such as a potential suicide. We, and therefore the army, cannot be certain if this allegation is the first suicide threat the perpetrator made. Failure to log or capture this type of information could mean that repeated allegations are not identified or taken seriously. Routine recording of this information would have helped to build a holistic picture of the perpetrator’s wider behaviour and background, although we recognise that the recording of such allegations may have some practical difficulties.

- 76 In relation to the restraining order the army clarified the following: *“It is unclear why [the information] on restraining order was not recorded correctly on the perpetrator’s army records. The soldier has an obligation to inform the unit of any court appearances and any subsequent outcomes. Assuming the soldier informs the units, in accordance with AGAI 65, the unit will send an Attending Officer to court who will record the outcome and report back to the unit. If the soldier does not inform the unit then this does not happen. It appears in this case, this did not happen as the outcome was incorrectly recorded.”*

- 77 The Panel felt it was highly probable that someone within the army knew about the incident but did not record it anywhere in their records. Kent Police records show the army were contacted at the time of the perpetrator’s arrest and had ‘arranged to bring him to Canterbury custody [police station]’. The perpetrator’s arrest details should have therefore been logged. In response, the army provided the following clarification: *“A Service Person’s discipline record will record all civilian and military convictions and major administrative action—including those that do not result in a conviction. The caveat in civilian*

convictions is that it relies heavily on either the court reporting the offence to the Army, which is no longer a notifiable profession, or the soldier informing their Chain of Command. It is known this does not always happen. Minor Administrative Action is an employer activity, which is used to restore minor failings in the expected standards of behaviour or performance. Examples include: poor turn out, bad soldiering skills or answering back. Repeated failing can lead to Major Administrative Action which would be recorded on a soldier's discipline record. Records of Minor Administrative Action Sanctions should be held at sub-unit level for 2 years or until a soldier is re-assigned to another unit when they are destroyed. They do not follow a soldier to a new unit. In this case, this accounts for there being no record and is policy compliant".

- 78 It was not clear from the army response whether the contact from Northumbria Police regarding Alice's complaint of harassment against the perpetrator would constitute Minor or Major Administrative Action. If it is neither, this indicates that all current and future allegations of domestic abuse against army personnel are not necessarily recorded anywhere by the army. **This is of concern and needs to be addressed.**
- 79 In addition, what is also of concern is that army personnel records concerning minor administrative actions do not follow a soldier to a new unit, and effectively means historical patterns and behaviours cannot be considered. The Panel agreed that personnel records should follow a soldier from unit to unit and should not be erased or destroyed. This would help enable commanding officers to have a holistic understanding of personnel and to be able to refer to in future cases.

Key Finding 16

There is a lack of understanding about measures the army can take to manage the perpetrator's behaviours.

- 80 The Panel considered the role of the army and what measures they can take in relation to the management of serving soldiers' behaviours—and how this can be often misunderstood by non-military laypeople.
- 81 Serving soldiers are entitled to a private life within the barracks and are free to leave camp whenever they wish to during their time off providing they parade for work when required and in a fit state. There is no system in place for bed checks or formal lights-out timings; nor are there restrictions on whether soldiers stay in or out of camp overnight. At Glencorse Barracks, there is a booking-out system, which is not heavily enforced and is used for health and safety reasons rather than to monitor the movements of soldiers. Consequently, soldiers are permitted to move/travel freely.
- 82 According to the army IMR, Commanding Officers do not have the right to deprive soldiers of their liberty without exceptional circumstance—and despite

adhering to high standards of discipline and codes of conduct, there are still limitations and strict rules governing what actions can be taken by unit authorities to manage and curtail a soldier's behaviour (particularly if the conduct does not impact on operational issues).

- 83 Under the Army General and Administrative Instructions (AGAI), Vol 2 Chap 67, the unit Chain of Command can take administrative action where they believe the Service Test has been breached. Depending on the severity of the action, administrative sanctions ranging from extra duties through to Termination from the Service can be applied. However, any administrative sanctions that are applied must be proportionate to the offence. The army indicated that it is possible when considered in hindsight that the actions of the perpetrator in the run-up to Alice's murder may well have constituted a breach of the Service Test. But given how the escalation of events of early October 2016 unfolded it was indicated that this might have had little impact on the outcome.
- 84 The army indicated that consideration was given by OC HQ Company as to whether an administrative sanction was appropriate and concluded that it wasn't. The rationale was that Northumbria Police had requested the perpetrator to cease all forms of contact with Alice and to their knowledge he had complied; he had already been spoken to by both his Platoon Commander and the Adjutant in relation to the issue, and as far as the OC HQ Company was aware, he hadn't breached their direction, and had only spoken to him to re-emphasise the previous instruction. Likewise, it was felt if Northumbria Police had considered the matter sufficiently serious, they would have instigated a criminal investigation.
- 85 The Panel was informed that there are no legal mechanisms or army policies that would allow for a soldier to be restricted/confined to barracks, forced to sign-out when leaving barracks, re-deployed to another unit or area, have their behaviour watched more closely, or have their time and activities managed in such a way to minimise their activities outside [of the barracks] unless subject to Administrative Sanctions. This was challenged by Alice's sister who feels that several disruption tactics are being used by the army to restrict the movements of soldiers linked with domestic-related incidents.
- 86 Alice's sister, whilst based in Germany, met with the Domestic Abuse Champion (DAC) following a domestic awareness brief that was delivered to her unit. The DAC is employed by the Ministry of Defence for British Forces based within Germany. The role is unique: there is no other similar position within the MOD. The DAC is considered a subject matter expert in Domestic Abuse within the Military and sits at a strategic level within the Headquarters of British Forces Germany. At the request of the family, and with permission of the Commander of British Forces Germany, the DAC met with Alice's family and the Chair of this review, on one occasion purely to discuss the DAC role and responsibilities, and to explain the domestic abuse model that she has created, which rivals the systems that are in place in UK authorities. The role of the Domestic Abuse Champion is to co-ordinate the Army response to domestic abuse in Germany. This has resulted in clear referral pathways,

critical information sharing between agencies, police and army units, domestic abuse and stalking awareness briefs delivered annually to all units in Germany, the introduction of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, and comprehensive regular training to Commanding Officers, Military Police, German Police and supporting agencies. The result is that there is significant awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and stalking. The Chain of Command understand the dynamic risk of domestic abuse and their responsibilities within MoD policies to deal with it, and they can call upon the DAC for expert advice on cases of domestic abuse within their units. The DAC does not have the responsibility to deliver the same service to UK or other overseas units, Chain of Command or Police forces. It was felt that this level of expertise should be available to all areas of the Armed Forces, rather than exclusively to British Forces and Families based in Germany.

- 87 The army IMR states that to place a soldier in custody and restrict his movements a Commanding Officer would have to be satisfied that a 'Service Offence' had been committed. The maximum time that can be authorised for custody before charge is 48 hours; and thereafter the case must appear before a Judge Advocate. This course of action was not appropriate for the perpetrator. Northumbria Police who had received the complaint were not pursuing an investigation and the matter hadn't been passed to Service Police and he was not under service custody. The only other times a Commanding Officer can impose a 'curfew' is for specific instances and it is not appropriate to do so for a criminal matter in which the Home Office Police would have no powers to restrict the liberty of a civilian served with a PIN.
- 88 Under the Armed Forces Act 2006, Commanding Officers have a mandatory requirement to refer certain offences to the Service Police if they are reported. Such offences are considered serious enough to warrant a police investigation rather than being dealt with by the unit authorities. It is reasonable that, as the offence was reported to a recognised policing agency, it could be assumed by the Commanding Officer that there was no necessity to report the matter to the Service Police. Even if it had been referred, there is little action the Service Police could have taken as jurisdiction already sat with Northumbria Police.
- 89 Whilst the army disputed that they are different from other large employers, the Panel concluded that the army are unlike any other big civilian organisation or private sector employer. For example, the army has its own standalone medical and welfare services, its own standalone police service that investigates and reports on some criminal offences, and an ability to sanction/discipline its staff differently from other organisations. Its employees are 'transient' and can regularly move location (a critical factor in not recording previous risk behaviours). In addition, soldiers are trained in combat and have the capability and potential means to harm others. It is believed therefore, from a layperson's perspective, that the army has certain systems in place to strictly manage the perpetrator's behaviour both in and outside of army barracks. Army representatives interviewed as part of the IOPC investigation indicate that it is 'not unreasonable' for Home Office Police to assume that the army had certain powers, but that these assumptions are 'ill

informed'. Greater clarity is needed to ensure that Home Office Police understand that there are no additional control measures available when dealing army personnel. The email response from the Adjutant to Northumbria Police on the 10th October 2016 saying it was a 'civil matter' and 'because the perpetrator is a soldier doesn't mean we as his employer have any role to play' strengthens the assumption that there is a lack of understanding about measures the army can take.

- 90 In terms of the support provided by the army, there were two disclosures made by the perpetrator to the Unit Welfare Officer—where he explains he felt 'things were getting on top of him' and that he had split up [from Alice] and that he was feeling 'very depressed' about it. It is logged within the army IMR that he 'requested to leave [Edinburgh] as he felt this may assist in him dealing with the breakdown of his relationship [with Alice]' and states he 'feels that he has no one to talk to'.
- 91 The army IMR states that the perpetrator 'presented no risk' regarding his welfare and stated that '*soldiers request moves between units all the time and routinely use welfare services and medical service to achieve the outcome they desire. Transfers are given in exceptional circumstances where the welfare of the soldier or the soldier's family is of concern. This is particularly so if there are concerns regarding dependants' welfare. However, such moves are not routine and careful consideration of the circumstances would be required before a move was authorised. A single soldier who was distressed at the deterioration of his relationship with his girlfriend is unlikely to meet the criteria for a unit move*'. Although unlikely to be granted, this was a potential missed opportunity from the army to relocate the perpetrator and/or to put measures in place to help minimise the risk to Alice.

Key Finding 17

VictimsFirst Northumbria were not aware of the correct domestic abuse support services available in Gateshead.

- 92 VictimsFirst Northumbria contacted Alice on the 6th October 2016 and discussed the domestic abuse support that was available to her within Gateshead. The Case Co-ordinator outlined the specialist service from Safer Families and offered Alice a referral, which was subsequently declined.
- 93 Safer Families was the domestic abuse service operating in Gateshead in 2016. It offered tailored one-to-one support, advice and guidance victims of domestic abuse—but the service was only available to those victims classified as being 'High Risk' (with a score of 14+ on the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist).
- 94 At the time, a voluntary sector organisation, based within the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), was the commissioned service responsible for providing support for all non-high-risk domestic abuse cases.

As Alice was ‘Medium Risk’ (with a score of 9) a referral was not appropriate for Safer Families and a referral for support should have been made, subject to Alice’s consent, to the Adult MASH. The Adult MASH is a multi-agency co-located service that brings key professionals together to facilitate timely, better quality information sharing, analysis and decision-making to help safeguard vulnerable adults more effectively. The Panel concluded that **VictimsFirst require additional clarity on the services available within local area for victims of domestic abuse.**

- 95 For reassurance purposes, if an inappropriate referral had been made to Safer Families, it would have been automatically re-referred through to the MASH, as the most appropriate service. Evidence demonstrates that timely contact and interactions with victims significantly increases their likelihood of engaging with support services, and therefore any unnecessary delay has the potential to be a missed opportunity.

Key Finding 18

It is a challenge for support agencies to convey to victims the breadth of advice, guidance and support they can receive.

- 96 Following a DHR Panel that involved members of Alice’s family, it was noted that support organisations need to consider how their services are publicised, promoted and branded. We recognise that it can be difficult to convey the breadth of advice, guidance and support that is available; however, the public may not necessarily understand and be aware of what agencies can offer in terms of support, and organisations need to be look at how their messages are conveyed in order to secure improved engagement from potential clients.

A powerful comment was made by the family: ‘although agencies work really hard to support victims, do victims actually understand and recognise what they do ... these agencies may be the right ones, but Alice would never have thought about contacting these services’. For example, Alice did not perceive herself to be a victim or identify that she was in a domestic abuse relationship. As a result, contact with VictimsFirst Northumbria, Safer Families, Domestic Abuse and/or Safeguarding Teams may not have necessarily resonated with her, and possibly reduced the likelihood of her engaging with these services.

Key Finding 19

Professional curiosity is critical to eliciting a better understanding risk.

- 97 There were missed opportunities from those officers involved with Alice to use professional curiosity. Professional curiosity is the ability to explore and understand what is happening rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value. It is acknowledged this can often be difficult, particularly

when faced with complex domestic abuse situations, and with what is often a first point of contact between a professional and a victim; however, the Panel felt there was a clear lack of professional curiosity evident in Alice's contact with Northumbria Police and VictimsFirst Northumbria.

- 98 Alice clearly articulates fear, impact of stalking and high levels of concern within her witness statement and during her initial call made to Northumbria Police—and yet there is a lack of professional curiosity to explore these issues further during subsequent contacts with Alice. Her response to the initial DASH Risk Indicator Checklist appears to have been repeatedly taken at face value by professionals and was a missed opportunity to continue to engage with her, re-assess these responses and explore the extent of the stalking further which, if disclosed, may have translated into a different type of response for Alice.
- 99 An investigative mindset and professional curiosity are important traits a police officer must possess; however, in this case, this appears to have been superseded by the mindset that there is a generic standardised response to stalking and harassment. Following both of Alice's contacts with Northumbria Police, there is no investigation into the reported events and a limited understanding of Alice's background situation. By exploring these details with Alice further, it would have become clear that this wasn't necessarily an isolated incident involving the perpetrator and was one of many that Alice had to endure over the previous months.
- 100 The initial DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was not completed as thoroughly as it should have been and, if more professional curiosity had been shown, this may have resulted in disclosures of additional information that may have led to Alice being elevated to 'high risk' (generating an automatic referral to specialist support services).
- 101 In addition, Police Officer 2 failed to re-assess Alice's DASH Risk Indicator Checklist, as did VictimsFirst Northumbria (despite opportunities to review her responses and to be fully assured her risk level was correct and appropriate). Each contact with an agency should be an opportunity to re-assess risk and confirm or change the level the victim is identified as being at. There is little evidence of this taking place with Alice. Alice claimed to have support in place from friends and family, but this was not explored, particularly as her family did not reside within the area. When an officer contacts a victim for safety planning they should be routinely, as a matter of course, applying professional curiosity, risk assessment tools and professional judgement to help understand the risk level the victims is 'currently' at. In Alice's case this seems to have been taken at face value without further detailed exploration.
- 102 Regardless of how many policies, procedures and system controls are in place to safeguard and standardise decision-making around domestic abuse, it is important to recognise that human-related factors can directly influence the course of action undertaken. Sometimes these human-related factors can lead to professionals subconsciously discounting contradictory information or 'seeking out' supporting information in order to justify their assessment of a

situation. It is often seen when quick snap judgements are made of a situation without considering all available factors and can lead to inappropriate decisions being taken by professionals (for example, the incorrect decision to issue a PIN at an early stage of this case subsequently clouded all future contact and interactions, and lead to human-related factors creeping in, meaning all options were not appropriately considered). Despite agencies having robust policies in place, human-related factors are not easily identified; for this reason it is important for police and other agencies to have a leadership culture, training and supervision that reinforces critical appraisal of situation and provides a regular challenge.

Key Finding 20

The public are generally unaware of stalking behaviours and the associated risks.

- 103 **Stalking is not easily identified by the public (including victims and their families and friends).** Taken at face value some of the behaviours of a stalker may not appear threatening: for example, leaving flowers and chocolates, contacting family to say they love the person, and returning personal items. However, it is the persistent, repetitive and obsessive nature of this behaviour that is giving the victim a message that they can always be contacted, the stalker always knows where they are and that they can be reached, and it needs to be taken in context of other behaviour.
- 104 Given the lack of understanding, victims, families and other bystanders may often feel that they are overreacting to minor incidents. It is within this context that greater public awareness of the risk posed by stalking needs to take place to empower both victims and bystanders to have the confidence and awareness to report risk to relevant authorities if they have concerns. Dissemination of stalking risks, advice and safety planning may raise awareness so that victims and their families feel confident calling for help at the earliest stage. This could take the form of a campaign with media support, support of businesses, and social media campaigning.
- 105 Cyber-stalking is not fully recognised. The increasing prevalence of the use of digital media gave the perpetrator another easily accessible method by which to torment Alice. We know Alice was provided with some form of safety advice by Police Officer 1, but we are unable to ascertain the extent or contents of the advice. There is little practice guidance available for police to give to victims about online offending. National research suggests that on occasion victims are advised to change their phone and to delete their social media accounts to limit contact from the perpetrator. Such advice not only fails to recognise that this may cause the perpetrator to find other ways of offending, but it also does not allow the victim to monitor and understand the nature of the risks that they face and report them to the necessary authorities. Moreover, the increased use of social media as a means of direct contact

means that its complete withdrawal has the potential to further alienate and isolate victims.

- 106 We know that Alice did take steps to safeguard herself against any online threat from the perpetrator and took advice from ‘tech-savvy’ friends to try and limited his access; and yet he was still able to continue. There is nothing to suggest within the IMRs that the perpetrator had specialist skills, from the army, to be able to do this; however, he clearly must have understood the mechanisms of how this could be done. We know he encouraged Alice and his previous partner to use his iPad, and potentially used this as a way of accessing their accounts; similarly, Alice’s phone was never recovered and there is a high likelihood that he had installed specialist spyware on the device to allow him to track and monitor Alice’s movements and interactions. We know from deliberations, that professionals are often ‘behind the curve’ and the Panel concluded that **urgent action is needed to increase awareness of cyber-related stalking both for the wider public and those involved in criminal justice.**

Key Finding 21

The review has demonstrated the critical importance of the workplace in supporting and encouraging victims to report abuse.

- 107 We know from interviews that Alice’s work colleagues and friends were deeply concerned about her involvement with the perpetrator both during the relationship and after it ended. They recall that during the initial stages of the relationship Alice seemed happy and completely besotted with the perpetrator but that over time his behaviour and attitude towards her shifted and he became a lot more controlling and insidious.
- 108 Her work colleagues did not like the perpetrator’s behaviour towards Alice as they could clearly see the negative effect that he was having on her—both personally and whilst at work. They were aware from an early point in the relationship about the perpetrator’s previous incident involving his ex-girlfriend, his attempts to limit Alice’s social media access, his attempts to access her messages and emails, and the incidents in Edinburgh and at the BBQ where he showed up unannounced, and the veiled threats to release intimate personal photographs, as well as the constant barrage of unwanted texts. In retrospect, her friends said they all knew different things about the relationship and the perpetrator’s behaviour, but they did not know the whole situation. They all recall talking to Alice about it and trying to encourage her to contact the police to report his behaviour but said Alice was reluctant to do so and so they would handle it by distracting her and making her laugh. They all recall Alice breaking down/crying at work on several occasions and she confided in some colleagues that it was getting on top of her and causing her to be distracted in the office and that her work was being affected by it. Her colleagues also recall some physical and emotional changes in Alice.

- 109 We know that Alice spoke to several people at work about her relationship problems, some in line-management positions, but no-one appeared to realise the level of seriousness. Alice did not make use of the Employees' Assistance Programme that is made available online or by telephone to all employees and provides support and advice to staff (including on a range of areas and themes that are relevant to domestic abuse). Although it is an available asset, it is unknown how widely promoted the service is to employees—or if colleagues would have known. The organisation has a Domestic Abuse Policy, but Alice made no formal disclosure to her direct line management.
- 110 The Panel concluded that it is difficult for work colleagues to (a) understand stalking behaviour and risk and (b) overrule and contact police, their employer or any support agencies when the victim is reluctant to make the contact for themselves. There was evidence that Alice's family and friends knew some of the information but not it all, they were potentially seeing isolated incidents. In addition, the lack of general awareness around stalking and the associated risks will have compounded and reinforced inaction.
- 111 All workplaces should be safe environments and it is recognised that for some people, the work place is their only 'safe-haven'. In Alice's case, the perpetrator continued to phone, text, message and even turned up unannounced at a work-related event in Scotland. Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Dame Vera Baird QC, has successfully introduced a Workplace Domestic Abuse Strategy and Workplace Champions Scheme to support victims both practically and emotionally. This project has been advertised and rolled out to private and public-sector employers across Northumbria. The Panel concluded that there should be greater awareness of this network as despite its size and standing within Newcastle Alice's employer, a large telecommunications company, was not part of this positive initiative. The initiative is seen as best practice and should be disseminated and supported at a senior management level. If stalking is recognised, at a supervisory and management level, as a priority business area, then stalking policy and practice may maintain a high profile.
- 112 The Ministry of Defence should consider employing a Domestic Abuse Champion to co-ordinate the response to domestic abuse within the armed forces, with responsibilities like that of the Domestic Abuse Champion in Germany, but to cover all areas within the UK and overseas where the Military are based. The Domestic Abuse Champion roles would help to proactively drive improvements, increase accountability and transparency, and ensure that the Ministry of Defence have subject matter experts to call upon for advice and delivery.

Addressing Terms of Reference – Family Questions

The DHR Panel hopes to have answered Terms of Reference throughout the Overview Report. However, for clarity, an additional section has been included to summarise the findings linked with each of the questions:

(a) **Is there a National Stalking Register? If not, why not? How would this have impacted on the response to perpetrator?**

Key Finding 22

There is no National Stalking Register and therefore there is no way to track perpetrators of stalking.

- 113 There is no National Stalking Register in operation – and as such, there is no consistent way of tracking and monitoring perpetrators of stalking behaviour.
- 114 We know that national charities and organisations are calling on the Government to create a register for repeat/serial stalkers and domestic violence perpetrators (and incorporate it into the existing framework for sex offenders) so that they can be managed more robustly and effectively.
- 115 Based on the findings of this review, the Panel concluded that the presence of a National Stalking Register would not have made a difference to the agencies' response to either Alice or the perpetrator in this case. The perpetrator was not convicted and/or suspected of committing any previous stalking behaviour and therefore would not have been logged/recorded on a National Stalking Register, should one have existed⁵.
- 116 The Panel concluded that the principle of a National Stalking Register is relevant. We know people move areas and the information should follow the perpetrator, be readily available and highlight the risk. Whether this is better achieved through a National Stalking Register or improved recording of police intelligence is debatable. There are also operational problems and issues administering such a register; however, similar systems do exist and therefore these are not insurmountable.
- 117 The Panel discussed other legal options including the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law), which enables a person to ask the police to disclose certain information about previous offending history where there have been concerns about domestic abuse or violent acts. This may not have helped Alice because the first reported offence in the South of England did not reflect the true nature of the perpetrator's behaviour towards his ex-girlfriend or its full extent, however it has the potential to help other future victims. It also highlights fundamental problems of agencies not appropriately recognising and recording offences of stalking.

⁵ The family remarks that he would have been if the previous offences had been recognized as a course of conduct and hence recorded as stalking. The National Stalking Register would operate in the context of improved recording and conviction practices, as recommended in the new Force Crime Registrar guidelines issued in March 2018 and the CPS/NPCC protocol on the appropriate handling of stalking or harassment offences (https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/Stalking-and-Harassment-Protocol-2018_1.docx), released in May 2018.

(b) If the perpetrator had been successfully convicted for stalking, how would this have impacted on Alice?

- 118 If the perpetrator had previously been convicted of stalking offences, then this information would be available for Police Officers to view on the Police National Computer. If these systems were checked, and this information was present, then this would be factored into the risk assessment and safety planning elements for the victim and subsequent investigations undertaken by the police.
- 119 In relation to the stalking reported by Alice to Northumbria Police, there are two things to consider: firstly, the timescales involved around potential conviction of the perpetrator and secondly, what would have been the result of the conviction.
- 120 According to Northumbria Police IMR, if the perpetrator had been arrested, charged and remanded following the incident on the 30th September 2016, he could have potentially appeared at Gateshead Magistrates Court on the 3rd October 2016. With no previous convictions and no violence used, it is more than likely he would have received a non-custodial sentence and been given a Restraining Order. Conviction with a non-custodial sanction would have left the perpetrator free to potentially commit additional stalking-related offences against Alice, albeit with stricter penalties if breached. The second contact with Northumbria Police on the 7th October 2016 could have resulted in the same scenario as described above, with the addition of the perpetrator having been warned after the first reported incident. This would however not affect the court's sanctions from the first scenario in that he would not have received a custodial sentence⁶.

Key Finding 23

Victims need as much protection as possible when reporting stalking.

- 121 The Stalking Protection Bill, a Private Member's Bill sponsored by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, is currently before Parliament. The Bill aims to introduce measures called Stalking Protection Orders to protect victims when they report a stalking crime to the police, without putting the onus on the victim to apply for them. Importantly, breaching such an order would be a serious criminal offence that should result in immediate action by the police. The existence of such measures could have made a critical difference in Alice's case, as in many others.

⁶ The family comment: "This appears to be suggesting that there is no point in arresting anybody for stalking. We strongly disagree with this. Stalking is a criminal offence under the 2012 law. A restraining order (or better a Stalking Protection Order, if the Bill currently passing through parliament becomes law) is an acceptable response, as it may in some cases jolt a perpetrator into stopping their stalking behaviour, but it must be followed by immediate arrest and conviction for stalking once it is breached. Breaching a Stalking Protection Order would itself be a criminal offence.

122 The Panel concluded that providing greater protection for victims and a greater deterrent for perpetrators is crucial. It is important that introduction of this new legislation must be supported by appropriate training for Police Officers so that criminal justice professionals are able to recognise concerning patterns of behaviours and the malicious intent that accompanies stalking and take the most appropriate course of action.

(c) **After the PIN had been breached, why was Alice's telephone call to Police Officer 2 not recorded?**

123 Northumbria Police record all calls made to its control rooms from outside lines and, as such, the initial call made by Alice to Northumbria Police was recorded. However, all subsequent interactions were not. The Panel were informed that Alice was contacted from an internal office telephone line within Forth Banks Police Station and therefore was not recorded.

(d) **Why was the PIN served to the perpetrator by the army and not a Police Officer? Did this affect the legal status of the PIN or the requirement of the Police and the army to react in certain ways when it was breached?**

124 This has been addressed previously in the report: the Panel concluded that the PIN should not have been served by the army. The PIN had no legal powers, rather a tool to warn the perpetrator about his behaviour and the consequences of continuing. The perpetrator should not have been issued with a PIN and there should have been a proper police investigation. The perpetrator implied he did not know the PIN was binding but he was made aware by Alice and the army that his behaviour was wrong and his contact with her was unwelcome, he chose to ignore this because of his obsession with her.

(e) **Why was there no link made to the incident in South of England and the Restraining Order when: the victim first reported perpetrator to the police and when the level of risk was assessed?**

125 We know Alice reported the perpetrator twice to Northumbria Police and neither of the Police Officers checked the PND/PNC databases and were not therefore aware of the previous Restraining Order in relation to the incident in Kent in 2013. To access PND/PNC, officers must be trained and authorised in its use and, if the system has not been used within a six-month period this authority relapses, which requires the officer to re-attend another course. At the time of the reports to Northumbria Police by Alice, neither Police Officer was authorised in the use of the PNC. Throughout Panel discussions, Northumbria Police have confirmed the training and authorisation to check PNC/PND is not a significant issue as Police Officers can ask other approved officers and/or contact Force Control Room to undertake these checks on their behalf.

126 The Panel concluded PND/PNC should always be checked when a complaint is received. Previous offending and risk should inform current risk

assessments and management plans. The Police IMR states the limited information logged on PND/PNC (i.e. discontinued offence of a domestic-related battery and a Restraining Order that was in effect complied with) would not have generated any increased concern for the Police Officers dealing with Alice's case. The Panel were unable to conclude if this previous knowledge would have protected Alice; however, this remains a significant missed opportunity to potentially see a pattern of behaviour and therefore to see a heightened risk, or to be a driver for increased professional curiosity.

(f) **How could the internal review by Northumbria Police (which was subsequently passed to IOPC) reasonably conclude 'all procedures and guidelines were correctly followed'?**

127 Details of the processes involved the IOPC referral made by Northumbria Police have been set out in §9.2 (Page 17). The IOPC subsequently published their findings on the 12th September 2018—providing details of Northumbria Police's interactions with Alice.

A copy of the final IOPC report can be found at:

www.policeconduct.gov.uk/investigations/alice-ruggles-northumbria-police

128 It was felt by the DHR Panel that this question was beyond the remit of the DHR review and could not be answered. However, it was acknowledged that evidence ascertained as part of the DHR led to Northumbria Police reassessing their position in relation to their initial findings and referring themselves back to the IOPC who then carried out their own investigation.

129 We hope the DHR Panel, combined with the other parallel reviews that have been undertaken (including the IOPC report) provide reassurance of the steps that have been taken and details how partner agencies are improving their practices as a direct result of Alice's homicide.

Addressing Terms of Reference – Panel Questions

(a) **Review of policy and practice of partners responding to domestic abuse in relation to stalking and harassment.**

Key Finding 24

All agencies covered by the Community Safety Board should routinely review their policies and procedures in relation to stalking and harassment.

130 The IMRs provided details of the policies and procedures that are followed in relation to domestic abuse for Northumbria Police, VictimsFirst Northumbria, and the Ministry of Defence, as well as Alice's employers:

- It was concluded that Northumbria Police's Policy on Domestic Abuse was fit for purpose; however, the Panel identified that significant areas of poor

practice had developed over time and had become engrained in daily activity. This includes the overuse of Police Information Notices, which have resulted in a standardised response for victims (when these should be tailored based on risk and circumstances). In addition, recognition of stalking and harassment needed to be strengthened within this document. Police Officers received training in many areas, including safeguarding and domestic abuse.

- The Ministry of Defence has a comprehensive policy in relation to dealing with victims of domestic abuse and it covers relevant Home Office directives and identifies resources available. There is limited information available in relation to support and action that can be taken around non-service personnel (outside of barracks) and provides little direction on how to effectively deal with perpetrators other than police involvement. Similarly, there is limited information relating to stalking, and this needs to be improved. The Panel felt that additional work needed to be undertaken by the army to better protect non-service personnel and this should be more appropriately reflected within the recently published Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- The VictimsFirst IMR confirmed that a review of the policies and procedures had been concluded and that they are accepted, clear and accessible for staff. There is a detailed Operating Model with clear staff guidance and all employees working with victims received mandatory training in many areas, including safeguarding and domestic abuse.
- Alice's employers have policies on domestic abuse and offer an Employees' Assistance Programme that is available online or by phone to all employees 24/7 and covers a range of areas and themes that are relevant to domestic abuse. It was not possible to ascertain the extent to which stalking is included within these policies/service.

131 In addition, the Panel requested information on policies and procedures from those agencies not involved with Alice or the perpetrator to provide reassurance that organisations were responding to domestic abuse incidents appropriately. All agencies had long-standing domestic abuse policies in place – but similarly needed to re-consider the stalking element.

132 Consequently, the Panel concluded that there was a lack of robust operational practice in relation to stalking and harassment. It acknowledged, from this DHR, that some policies and procedures have been updated by agencies; however, Gateshead Community Safety Board need regularly be assured policies remain fit for purpose.

- (b) **Consider the range and impact of training available in respect of stalking, harassment and coercive control in relation to victims and perpetrators.**

Key Finding 25

There was a clear lack of stalking training being delivered locally.

- 133 The IMRs provide details of the training offered by: Northumbria Police, Victims First Northumbria and the army in respect of domestic abuse and stalking. The Community Safety Board also provided details of the partnership-wide training that was available in the leading up to Alice's homicide.
- 134 All agencies confirmed they had some form of basic domestic abuse awareness training available for their staff to attend—however, the extent to which stalking is referenced or embedded within these training packages appeared to be quite limited. The Police IMR states that a Force-wide standardised domestic abuse training package is delivered to all frontline staff and that additional training and events have been ran Force-wide in relation to stalking, harassment, coercive control and Police Information Notices. The army have confirmed that there are presentations on domestic abuse as part of the courses for: Commanding Officers, Unit Welfare Officers, Adjutants, and Padres. In addition, Service Police receive full training in relation to domestic abuse investigations. The Case Co-ordinators working for Victims First Northumbria receive a training to ensure they are fully equipped to carry out their role and this includes training on domestic abuse and safeguarding. From a partnership perspective, there were four different elements of domestic abuse training available, of which only a small section is included on stalking and harassment. Across all of training provided, there appears to be limited information around cyber-stalking and the use of social media.
- 135 The DHR has highlighted a **significant shortfall in agencies' understanding and awareness of stalking**. The Panel are assured that enhanced domestic abuse training has been commissioned by the Community Safety Board to help assist and bridge this gap, which has included specific standalone training for frontline practitioners in relation to stalking and cyber-stalking. In addition, the current domestic abuse training packages that are being used by Northumbria Police, Victims First Northumbria and the Community Safety Board are being reviewed and improved in light of these findings. Partners should be regularly scrutinising the content of their training to ensure it is appropriate and reflecting current and emerging trends in domestic abuse practice. It would be prudent for standalone stalking training to be rolled out to ensure that it receives a greater prominence and awareness amongst frontline staff—and should directly address the issues raised by Alice's murder.
- 136 Specialist stalking services and stalking advocates are emerging nationwide to support both stalking victims and those responding to disclosures. Gateshead Community Safety Board may wish to commission specialist training to upskill specific frontline practitioners so that they can be an expert point of contact for colleagues responding to stalking calls and so that they

become champions or advocates to improve future practice. In other parts of the country, stalking advocates work with the police or other victim support services and are a very cost-effective way of upscaling the stalking response model and provide support to multi-agency areas including MARAC, MASH and even MAPPA.

- (c-i) **Consider agencies, communities and individuals understanding of:**
- **the impact of social media and messaging via electronic media in relation to stalking, harassment and coercive control**

Key Finding 26

Digital stalking is often a significant factor in abusive relationships and needs to be robustly reflected within future risk assessments.

- 137 From their initial contact, which was facilitated through social media, to the daily exchanges of text messages, emails and WhatsApp to contact one another, it remains clear that technology played a significant role in their interactions with one another and was an essential ingredient throughout the entire lifespan of Alice and the perpetrator's relationship. This is not necessarily unusual to a lot of relationships, particularly in long-distance relationships like Alice's, and with younger people.
- 138 Latterly, there is evidence of the perpetrator using social media and messaging to control Alice. He would use it to find out where Alice was, control what she was wearing and whom she was with, and he knew the content of her messages. His use of electronic devices to control and stalk Alice increased when she ended the relationship and he admitted to having password and login details for Alice's accounts.
- 139 The impact on Alice was significant. She felt further isolated because she felt that she could no longer message her family or friends without the perpetrator's knowledge; and most importantly, the perpetrator knew that Alice was starting to form a new relationship, and this caused his behaviour, and the risk to her, to potentially escalate. From an individual perspective, it was clear Alice was experiencing digital stalking; however, despite efforts to try and restrict the perpetrator's behaviour, this continued. Her work colleagues also state that they are aware of the potential for digital stalking but, similar to Alice, were unclear, firstly, on the steps to take to identify/confirm if this was the case; secondly, what measures to implement to protect themselves; and, thirdly, who to contact for advice or to seek help.
- 140 Within Alice's witness statements and the IMRs, it is clear that Northumbria Police and VictimsFirst Northumbria had some awareness of social media accounts, emails and messages being accessed by the perpetrator and despite the admissions, it would appear the cyber-related stalking wasn't considered as part of any risk assessment or risk management plan. Distance was seen a potential protective factor by agencies, but this does not apply in

relation to digital-stalking. The Panel concluded that digital stalking was not fully understood by the agencies involved with Alice.

Key Finding 27

The threat of disclosing intimate images is not an offence but equally distressing and potentially humiliating for the victim.

- 141 We know the perpetrator threatened to post the intimate pictures he had of Alice on social media and to disclose these to her family and work colleagues. In relation to Alice, the perpetrator had pressured her early in their relationship to send him intimate photos of herself saying ‘everyone in the barracks received similar messages from their girlfriends and if she loved him she would’.
- 142 Although the perpetrator repeatedly remonstrated that he wouldn’t share these photographs, the impact on Alice remained profound. We know through her friends that this ‘played heavily on Alice’s mind’ and she felt the perpetrator ‘had a lot of hold over her with these photos [in his possession]’. The Panel were of the view this implied ‘non-threat’ was equal to the perpetrator directly threatening to share them. The veiled threats made Alice reluctant to contact the police and to block all contact with the perpetrator. We know that this was one of the main reasons she kept her personal email address open, so the perpetrator would not start to contact via on her work email.
- 143 Northumbria Police were aware of the existence of the photographs and Police Officer 1 asked the army to request the perpetrator to delete them. Posting intimate photos without the person’s consent is a criminal offence; however, the threat to post them is not, therefore the police may not have been able to take criminal action. **Although the threat of posting intimate images is not an offence it is equally distressing and potentially humiliating for the victim.** There is no record of any discussion having taken place between the army and the perpetrator in relation to the intimate photographs. It may be that this was not considered significant and demonstrates a requirement for agencies to better understand the impact of digital stalking and unauthorised sharing of private images.
- 144 The Sentencing Council for England and Wales have introduced new guidelines on the sentencing of perpetrators who disclose unauthorised private sexual images to be implemented in October 2018. Although the offence of disclosing images was introduced in 2015, these guidelines seek to provide consistency in sentencing, recognise the harm and distress on the victim, and seek harsher punishments for those who continue to post the images. Although the Panel supports the introduction of these guidelines and hope it results in a greater level of protection for victims, more could be done to tackle the threat of posting such images.

- (c-ii) **Consider agencies, communities and individuals understanding of:**
- **security in relation to social media and how perpetrators can access**

Key Finding 28

There was a lack of support and advice provided by agencies to limit the perpetrator's access to Alice's social media and messaging accounts.

- 145 The Panel concluded that it is not difficult for perpetrators to gain access to a victim's social media and messaging accounts and what presents a greater challenge is (a) how to identify it has happened, (b) what to do about it, and (c) how to help prevent it happening. It is not the purpose of this review to fully document the technology around digital assisted stalking, but to describe the impact on Alice, and what agencies could have done to protect her.
- 146 We know that the perpetrator had access to Alice's messages and social media: he admitted having her Facebook and Apple passwords and log in, after Alice was alerted to attempts made to change her details. The perpetrator boasted that he was an IT expert in the army and this made Alice fearful. Evidence indicated that he had no special IT training or speciality and means this was more likely a tactic to control and disempower Alice and make her fearful that he had the potential to access her accounts.
- 147 As previously identified, the perpetrator could have gained access to Alice's social media and messaging through her logging onto his iPad; it is not unusual for people in personal relationships to disclose login details and passwords. In addition, spyware can be readily bought on the internet to access electronic devices for as little as fifty pounds. This is often sold as legitimate employee- or child-monitoring software, but it would also allow perpetrators to gain access to emails, messaging, social media accounts and stored information. Some claim to be able to remotely record from the target phone and to take photos, without the user knowing, from front and rear cameras on phones. The software can be downloaded onto a target phone from an email or come pre-loaded on branded phones for sale by UK suppliers.
- 148 At Easter 2016, Alice's family stated she had access to a new mobile telephone, but they were not aware of where she received it from. The device was never recovered, though telecommunications evidence indicated that the perpetrator took it and disposed of it; therefore, the Panel could not confirm if Alice was subject to spyware surveillance software although there is a strong possibility. There are signs to look for to identify if your accounts have been accessed such as messages appearing and disappearing, receiving an email request to confirm or change a password and the perpetrator knowing information they did not necessarily have access to. All of this applied to Alice.

- 149 Alice was fearful that the perpetrator was accessing her messages and she tried to protect herself. Neither Northumbria Police nor VictimsFirst Northumbria considered the cyber-stalking or perpetrator’s access to Alice’s social media and messaging accounts as part of their risk assessments or risk management plan—and from the evidence provided, Alice was not provided with sufficient advice and guidance about how to remain safe online. There is no indication of this being logged within the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist as a potential risk; and the IOPC Report indicates how Police Officer 1 felt there was ‘no evidence to substantiate the allegation the perpetrator had hacked into Alice’s accounts’.

Key Finding 29

Agencies need to be aware of the potential use of spyware and advise victims and potential victims accordingly.

- 150 The Panel was concerned about the easy availability of ‘spyware’ that can be downloaded on electronic devices and the lack of regulation about the sale of these products. It concluded that partner agencies need to be much more aware of the potential use of spyware and be in a position to be able to advise victims and potential victims accordingly of how to remain safe online.

(d) Where victims are classified as medium or standard risk, to review the policy and practice response and impact of this.

- 151 As previously indicated, a DASH Risk Indicator Checklist was completed, which is a nationally recognised tool developed by SafeLives based on information from domestic abuse homicides and near misses. Depending upon the number (of ‘ticks’) and type of responses provided, victims are categorised based on their risk into one of three thresholds (being high, medium and standard) that subsequently dictates the support available. There is also the option to ‘raise’ the risk level based on professional judgement.
- 152 Northumbria Police has one of the highest numbers of high-risk domestic abuse victims throughout the whole of England and Wales per head of population (with almost 3,000 victims reporting in 2017/18). This impacts on police and partner agencies in terms of their response. Specialist teams are in place to safeguard those victims deemed at the highest risk and to appropriately manage the demand on resources. There are robust processes in place to support high-risk victims of domestic abuse which include referrals to the local Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Service and development of a risk-management plan (as part of the local Multi-Agency Referral and Assessment Conference arrangements). All medium- and standard-risk victims (which included Alice) are allocated to the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) for the local management. Regardless of the risk level, each victim should have their own tailored response which will be proportionate to the risk level the victim sits within. Medium- and standard-risk victims will be

offered specialist support, although (unlike high risk clients) a victim is required to consent to an onward referral.

- 153 The Panel concluded that there are suitable referral mechanisms in place for victims regardless of risk; however, an issue remains with the effective completion of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist. The risk assessment is a fluid and ongoing process, and each contact the victim has with police or partner should be an opportunity to re-assess risk and confirm or change the risk level the victim is identified as being at. There is little evidence of this having taken place with Alice—with several missed opportunities to apply professional curiosity, review the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist tool or use professional judgement to assess the risk-level that Alice was ‘currently’ at during their interactions.

(e) **Review of the effectiveness of use of Police Information Notices (PIN) and impact on risk to victims.**

- 154 At the start of the Review, the Panel considered the effective use of PINs and the impact on victims. The Independent Chair arranged to meet senior officers from Northumbria Police in July 2017 to request they review the use of PINs (given the concerns from the early evidence shared with the Panel). However, the publication of the HMIC ‘Living in Fear’ report on the 5th July 2017 negated the need for this meeting as all the police forces in England and Wales were recommended to immediately stop using PINs.

- 155 Northumbria Police stopped using PINs by the 31st July 2017 and introduced a system of reviewing all stalking or harassment cases as part of the daily senior management meeting, to ensure that relevant risk assessments are undertaken and protection plans are proportionate. This is seen as a positive step by the Panel and will further strengthen the protection and support offered to victims.

- 156 This report has considered the inappropriate use of PIN as a response to Alice’s complaint against the perpetrator. The Panel supports the HMIC findings that PINs should not be used by the police to deal with incidents of domestic abuse – particularly stalking.

(f) **With the victim based in Gateshead and the perpetrator in Scotland, there may be issues of working across different legislation and geographical distances.**

Key Finding 30

Professionals should consider the perpetrator’s behaviour when deciding if distance is either a protective factor or evidence of increased risk.

- 157 There is no doubt that the geographical distance and boundaries created difficulties in the management of Alice’s case in several areas:

- The distance between the victim and perpetrator directly influenced Alice's risk assessment and safety planning arrangements and was, in hindsight, incorrectly viewed by the police as a potential protective factor. We know the perpetrator would routinely travel the round trip of 260+ miles and the willingness to travel distance, after work on many occasions, demonstrated obsession and persistence and should have been an increased risk factor. Even after Alice reported the perpetrator for unwanted contact and showing up unannounced outside her flat, there was still a presumption that she was not at immediate risk because he lived away.
- There was no understanding or recognition of the impact of cyber-stalking and how this still posed a threat to Alice. The tactics used by the perpetrator transcended geographical boundaries and this risk was not explored: it meant that, regardless of the distance between them, he was still able to stalk Alice and generate fear, alarm and distress.
- There is a possibility that Alice's distance from the perpetrator may have impacted on the army's response to the situation. Similarly to the way in which the police viewed distance as a protective factor for Alice, the army may have also indirectly have felt that the distance between them would limit the level of contact and therefore did not feel it necessary to restrict/monitor movements to and from the barracks.

Key Finding 31

The different localities of the victim and the perpetrator complicated the information sharing but this should not be a barrier.

- The distance created an added complication around issuing and explaining the basis of the PIN to the perpetrator that would not necessarily have existed had Alice and the perpetrator resided near to one another. We know from the IOPC that Police Officer 1 and Police Sergeant 1 held discussions on an appropriate way to manage the investigation and, had the perpetrator lived locally, Police Officer 1 would have made direct contact and dealt with the matter without the complication of different geographical boundaries.
- The failure to contact Police Scotland to deliver the PIN precluded the ability of Police Scotland to prosecute the perpetrator under Scottish law (given his offences in some instances were being perpetrated from Scotland). There is a specific criminal offence in relation to stalking under Section 39 Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act, which contains elements that would have allowed prosecution by Police Scotland for offences of digital stalking. This was a missed opportunity.

- (g) **Are there any cultural issues to be considered, in relation to:**
- **the social media messages the perpetrator sent to Alice?**
 - **agencies response to the perpetrator, and**
 - **policy and practice response and impact of this.**

Key Finding 32

The potential impact of the perpetrators ethnicity and culture was not considered as a factor by any partner agency that dealt with Alice.

- 158 Accounts given during the trial indicated that the perpetrator was brought up in India within a Sikh family. In 2010, when applying to the army, he annotates his religion as a 'practising Sikh' and the army IMR describes the perpetrator as presenting a 'westernised outlook, drinking alcohol and socialising'. Interviews with Alice's family and friends did not highlight any specific cultural issues with the perpetrator throughout their relationship.
- 159 None of the IMRs provided as part of the DHR identified any concerns regarding the perpetrator's ethnicity. The author of the Northumbria Police IMR did not feel as though cultural issues were present in the perpetrator's social media messages and text messages sent to Alice – instead, they show a typical coercive control perpetrator using several tactics to affect an element of control. There is a comment made in one message around 'white people' but it is felt this is more in the context of the perpetrator's controlling behaviour than a general underlying cultural issue. In addition, Alice received a message sent from one of the fake Facebook accounts created by the perpetrator asking why Alice 'didn't want to go out with a British man' which could be perceived as the perpetrator trying to weave in cultural differences.
- 160 The DHR has identified some characteristics and behaviour that perhaps can give some indication of some underlying cultural aspects:
- The perpetrator expressing a keen desire to 'marry' and to be able to 'look after' [his partner] soon after the beginning of a relationship, which occurred both with Alice and his previous partner in Kent;
 - Describing marriage as important aspect in the relationship and indicating that his father married his first partner;
 - Leaving for India the day after his previous partner had accepted a marriage proposal to discuss with his father;
 - The importance of honour within the perpetrator's culture could have led to a heightened reaction to rejection and/or ending of the relationship.
 - Threatening to throw acid at his previous partner's family;
 - Threatening that he knew 'gangs' in India that had kidnapped women;
 - Spitting in his previous partner's face;
 - Reinforcing and encouraging Alice to wear clothes that covered her;
 - Admitting that he did not like Alice being looked at by other men;
 - Standing up whenever Alice's female housemate entered the room; and
 - The nature of knife wounds to Alice's neck area when he murdered her.

- 161 These examples were described to 2 specialist Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations who have extensive experience and understanding of honour-based violence, one local based in Newcastle and the other a national charity, and whilst understandably both could not make a clear determination on such limited evidence, both agreed separately that they could potentially be regarded as cultural indicators and closely correlate to behaviours often found in cases of honour-based violence.
- 162 The Panel also considered any potential influence of an army ‘male’ culture in terms of treatment of partners; however, they could draw little evidence other than the perpetrator’s claim to Alice that all soldiers asked their girlfriends for intimate photographs. Interviews with Alice’s sister suggest an awareness that soldiers are often renowned for their mis-treatment of partners—but this is a widespread statement and is something the Panel could not necessarily evidence and was therefore unable to draw any conclusions between an army culture and the perpetrator’s mistreatment of Alice.
- 163 It was also evident that Alice was from an educated, polite, close-knit family and had very limited or no experience of contacting any public agency for any type of assistance. Some evidence from family indicated that this would have led to her possible reluctance to report her experiences to Northumbria Police at an earlier stage. Insights were also given from those that knew Alice that her politeness and consideration may have also led her to be reluctant to report the perpetrator as she understood the potential negative impact this might have on his army career and, indeed, her response to not having him arrested when she first contacted the Police also supports this argument.
- 164 Turning to the wider question of whether agencies considered cultural issues from the evidence available, it is apparent that neither the interview in her home with Police Officer 1 nor the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist explored or recorded any potential ethnicity or cultural issues that may have placed Alice at risk. The DASH Risk Indicator Checklist contains no questions in relation to this and any recording or consideration would be left to the officer completing its judgement and placing it in under additional information and scoring against any risk in this regard using the professional judgement section.
- 165 Honour-based violence focuses very much on abuse and violence towards female members of the respective community affected; however, there are now isolated cases that are indicating that honour-based violence could be perpetrated against women and girls who are not part of that cultural group (i.e. White British) and whilst it cannot be directly linked with Alice’s case, agencies need to understand that honour-based violence needs to be considered.

17 CONCLUSIONS AND KEY LESSONS

- 17.1 The main conclusion and key lessons arising from Alice’s case and agreed by the DHR Panel are:

- Alice was subject to significant stalking and controlling behaviour from a very early stage in her relationship and there were several missed opportunities for partner agencies to better protect and safeguard her.
- Alice, her family and her friends all appeared to be aware of the impact that the perpetrator was having on her life and took a range of proactive steps to be able to support and encourage her to report her experiences; however, her issues were not recognised as being stalking, controlling and coercion.
- The evidence provided shows that the perpetrator exerted a significant degree of coercion and control over Alice, influencing her lifestyle, behaviour and communication methods, and emotionally pressured her to send intimate photographs, which were then used as a further tool to elicit control. Significant volumes of unwanted contact, establishing several false social accounts to engage with her and the differing uses of cyber-related methods to monitor and track Alice's movements and communication, demonstrate fixated and obsessive behaviour of behalf of the perpetrator.
- Throughout the relationship, there are clear signs that Alice is increasingly fearful and hypervigilant of the perpetrator's actions and behaviour. The intensity and persistence of the issues she experienced certainly increased in the weeks and days leading up to her homicide—and had left her feeling scared, anxious and paranoid. Events, which may have triggered an increase in risk, also did not appear to have been picked up as accurately as they should have been by professionals.
- The use of technology and social media to facilitate intimate relationships and facilitate abuse was a critical factor in this case. Alice had limited face-to-face contact with the perpetrator (approximately 18 weeks), which meant that a highly significant proportion of their relationship and interactions occurred via telephone, text message, email and social media. The abuse by digital means further isolated Alice from support and limited her ability to prevent unwanted contact with the perpetrator (despite the geographical distance between them).
- There are barriers to reporting incidents (for both victims and bystanders) and a lack of knowledge and awareness around how to report or where to seek advice, guidance and support on stalking behaviour.
- It is clear that Alice feared that the perpetrator would release intimate photographs, didn't want to jeopardize his career, and held a genuine belief that the army would be able to quash any concerns she raised. Whether these fears were justified or not, the evidence indicates that to Alice they were very real and a barrier to reporting incidents at an earlier stage. The abandoned 101 call also delays reporting until a further significant incident 6 days later.
- There was insufficient understanding and recognition of stalking by the partner agencies involved—and the lack of a national stalking definition

compounds and leads to confusion. This led to an incorrect decision from the outset to issue a PIN, which in turn had a significant influence over the decisions and actions subsequently undertaken. Northumbria Police did not follow the THRIVE risk assessment and investigation, as per local Domestic Abuse Policy, which led to some investigative, disruptive and safeguarding opportunities to be missed.

- Risks were not properly assessed or managed and professional curiosity to support safety planning was lacking throughout. Incidents that might have been crucial in risk escalation were missed or not considered within the risk assessment process. The DASH Risk Indicator Checklist did not capture all the associated risks and issues experienced by Alice. Opportunities to correct, reassess and engage with Alice, to glean a better understanding of the risks she faced, were missed by subsequent contacts with Northumbria Police and Victims First Northumbria.
- The perpetrator utilised similar transferrable tactics to maintain control within at least two significant relationships. Although these allegations were only identified as part of the wider homicide investigation, the failure to check relevant police records and databases missed the historic Restraining Order and should have increased professional curiosity and engendered additional questions from those who engaged with Alice. This meant that a historical pattern of behaviour was not considered and did not form part of a risk assessment or risk management plan for Alice.
- A strong emphasis was placed on the notion of being ‘victim-led’ throughout all interactions with Alice. This is in contradiction to the national Authorised Professional Practice on Domestic Abuse. There is no policy or procedure in relation to victim-led policing and whilst it is positive to involve victims, as far as reasonably possible, in the decision-making process, it is important that their involvement does not dictate the approach that is taken by police to resolve their issues. Alice should never have been put in a position to decide whether the perpetrator should be arrested.
- Stalking is a crime and perpetrators need to be arrested and charged. Alice and her family expected an automatic response from the police, following the perpetrator’s breach of the PIN, and had rightly assumed the perpetrator would be arrested. The failure to do so meant that Alice lost all faith in the police’s ability to support and protect her from the perpetrator and was a missed opportunity to take effective action to minimise the risk to her. Failure to arrest also sends a signal to the perpetrator that the police will not take any action against continued stalking.
- There is a clear gap in the level of information that is recorded by the army, not only in relation to domestic abuse but also in relation to other records that would have been useful in order to generate a detailed overview of the perpetrator’s history and background.
- No information was formally recorded by the army in relation to several areas and this was of concern to the Panel. As his employer, additional

steps should have been to be able to safeguard the perpetrator and in turn reduce the risk he posed to Alice. The suicide threat should have been taken more seriously and led to protective factors being implemented; his period of absence without leave from Aberdeenshire did not appear to be recorded; nor were several emotionally-charged discussions held with officers in relation to the breakdown of his relationship with Alice and his plea to be re-located from Edinburgh to another barracks to assist in dealing with the breakdown of his relationship. In addition, no records existed in terms of the several contacts from the police about his behaviour and actions towards Alice and his former partner. All information was obtained from interviews as part of the IMR process. The Panel felt it was important to record information of this nature, particularly due to the transient nature of the army workforce.

- The Review found that support agencies need to regularly update their systems and processes to account for any changes in local services so that victims are signposted or referred to the right service first time. In addition, efforts need to be made to ensure the services in place are promoted and explained to increase victim awareness and understanding of the support offered and to maximise potential engagement.
- There was limited training available that focused specifically on stalking and harassment. Stalking is a significant subject and agencies should not rely on the information incorporated into broader domestic abuse training. This was rectified quickly, and Gateshead Community Safety Board commissioned specialist stalking training to upskill frontline staff. In addition, further training was made available in relation to cyber-related stalking and the practical steps that can be taken to increase personal safety. Further training and development is required to improve effectiveness and quality of DASH Risk Indicator Checklists as a tool to recognise risk and that its use is consistent.
- The perpetrator's occupation had the potential to increase Alice's risk—and there was limited consideration of this issue by all agencies involved. His military training and background may have increased his predilection to, and capability of, committing violence and may have led to increased awareness of the methods used to track Alice's movements and communication devices. Although the army IMR confirms that the perpetrator received no specialist training to warrant these concerns, this was not known by police or support agencies at the time and was therefore overlooked as a potential risk factor.
- The fact the perpetrator was a serving soldier and was based in barracks away from Alice was viewed incorrectly by Northumbria Police as a potential protective factor and added to the lack of clarity about risk and appropriate police response. The perpetrator's willingness to travel provided an indication of the level of his obsessive behaviour that was overlooked. In addition, there was a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the Home Office Police and Armed Forces, which led to some confusion about how best to deal with the perpetrator.

- Although all agencies had Domestic Abuse Policies and Procedures, they need to be reviewed so that they robustly identify, assess and protect victims from stalking. The issue of stalking needs to be more prominent within these documents and further work needs to be undertaken to ensure frontline staff have an awareness of what legislation is available to protect victims from stalking.

18 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 Based on the chronology, analysis and conclusions of the Overview Report, the DHR Panel agreed a series of recommendations for national, regional and local bodies to help prevent similar incidents from happening again in the future. Alice's family have indicated strong support for these recommendations.

(1) Home Office to consider the introduction of a national stalking definition to ensure consistent understanding and practice;

(2) Ministry of Defence and Home Office to agree a national policy to formalise future interactions between Home Office and Military Police in relation to domestic abuse;

(3) Ministry of Defence to implement routine, meaningful and accessible recording of all domestic abuse allegations that are made against service personnel;

(4) Home Office to consider the creation of a specific criminal offence in relation to threat of posting intimate images without consent;

(5) Home Office to review the effectiveness of 101 single non-emergency contact number and implement measures to reduce call waiting times and abandoned calls;

(6) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to carry out future inspection activity to review the effectiveness of the practices adopted in relation to stalking following the cessation of Police Information Notices;

(7) Ministry of Defence to review its Domestic Abuse Policy with specific reference to domestic abuse in a non-service relationship context;

(8) Home Office to consider the legal and social impact of the non-regulation of spyware in respect of domestic abuse and stalking victims;

(9) Home Office to work with telecommunication providers and national stalking abuse experts to review measures and advice to reduce harm from digitally-assisted stalking;

(10) Gateshead Community Safety Board to implement a local stalking awareness campaign with a focus on raising victim and bystander awareness and reporting (including development of a safety advice leaflet specific to intimate partner stalking).

(11) Gateshead Community Safety Board to seek assurances that training is in place for partners to develop local awareness and understanding in respect of:

- (a) stalking (including digitally-assisted stalking)
- (b) improve practice and professional curiosity around assessing risk in domestic abuse situations
- (c) effective completion of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklist

(12) Gateshead Community Safety Board to lobby Government for the introduction of stronger protection for victims of stalking – as outlined within the Stalking Protection Bill;

(13) Gateshead Community Safety Board to receive audit and assurance that the introduction of measures by Northumbria Police in relation to stalking is improving the response to victims;

(14) Northumbria Police to ensure Police National Computer (PNC) checks are carried out routinely in respect of all future domestic abuse cases – and provide assurance to Gateshead Community Safety Board;

(15) Gateshead Community Safety Board to seek assurance all relevant local agencies and partners understand the risk of perpetrators accessing electronic devices in respect of domestic abuse.

(16) Office of the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner to further publicise the local Domestic Abuse Workplace Champions initiative to maximise membership – and to refresh the training provided to encompass greater focus on stalking and learning from this review.

(17) Gateshead Community Safety Board to seek assurance from Northumbria Police that whilst having victim-focused approach officers make decisions based on threat, risk and harm and progress all appropriate investigative opportunities.

(18) Home Office to consider initiating a review into the effectiveness of the DASH Risk Indicator Checklists in relation to stalking.

(19) Ministry of Defence to identify Domestic Abuse Champions, at a senior leadership level, to proactively drive improvements and increase accountability and transparency in relation to domestic abuse.

(20) Gateshead Community Safety Board to develop and promote a single point of contact for practitioners to be able to seek specialist advice / guidance in relation to stalking.

GLOSSARY

CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSB	Community Safety Board
DA	Domestic Abuse
DASH RIC	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment Risk Indicator Checklist
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
DHR Panel	Domestic Homicide Review Panel
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Adviser
IMR	Individual Management Review
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Conduct
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MoD	Ministry of Defence
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PIN	Police Information Notice
PNC	Police National Computer
PND	Police National Database
THRIVE	Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VFN	VictimsFirst Northumbria

Domestic Homicide Review – Alice Ruggles

Gateshead Community Safety Board

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/safergateshead>