

TITLE OF REPORT: Domestic Homicide Reviews – Covering Report

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Summary

The Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be presented with an overview of the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process along with some of the key findings and recommendations arising from previous DHRs that have occurred in Gateshead (since their inception in April 2014).

1 Introduction

1.1 As a reminder, DHRs were established on a statutory basis under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and require certain partner agencies to come together to review domestic-related homicides to help identify lessons to be learnt with the aim of minimizing the potential for future deaths.

1.2 The legal requirement to undertake a DHR came into effect in 2014/15 and was accompanied by statutory guidance, published by the Home Office, which sets out the mandatory requirements and processes Community Safety Partnerships are expected to adhere to when conducting a DHR. A copy of the guidance, which was last refreshed in December 2016, can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>

2 Domestic Homicide Reviews

2.1 The overall responsibility for establishing a DHR sits with the Community Safety Partnership and involves reviewing the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16yr+ has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom he was related, a person whom he was or had been in an intimate relationship, or a member of the same household. This definition was recently expanded to include suicides, where there are 'concerns around domestic abuse' in the lead up to the death.

3 Presentation

3.1 The Committee will receive a presentation outlining:

- overview of the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process in Gateshead;
- role of Community Safety Partnerships (and Gateshead Council) in a DHR;
- details of previous and current DHRs being carried out in Gateshead;
- the key findings and recommendations arising from the high-profile DHR in respect of Alice Ruggles, and
- the potential drawbacks/issues associated with undertaking DHRs.
