

Investigation into police contact with Caroline and Christopher Parry prior to Caroline's death on 8 August 2013

Independent Investigation
Final Report

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Introduction

1. At 8.43am on Thursday 8 August 2013, Mrs Caroline Parry, aged 46 years, sustained fatal gunshot wounds in an incident that occurred on Seabreeze Avenue, Newport. Mrs Parry's estranged husband, Mr Christopher Parry, then aged 49 years, sustained serious facial injuries in the same incident; following a period of hospital treatment he was arrested in early November 2013 and was subsequently charged with his wife's murder and with carrying a firearm with criminal intent, contrary to Section 18 of the Firearms Act 1968.
2. Prior to this incident Mr Parry had lawfully held shotguns since 1986. A number of incidents involving Mr and Mrs Parry were reported to Gwent Police in 2013; there were no reported incidents prior to 2013.
3. At 1.13pm on Thursday 8 August 2013, Gwent Police referred Mrs Parry's death to the IPCC as a Death or Serious Injury referral on the basis of police contact prior to her death. The circumstances of each of the police contacts were considered by the IPCC's Investigations National Office; an independent investigation was deemed appropriate.

Terms of reference

4. The terms of reference for the investigation were:
 1. To investigate Gwent Police's contact with Mr and Mrs Parry as follows
 - a) *To review action taken by Gwent Police in respect of incidents that took place between Mr and Mrs Parry in 2013 to establish how they were risk assessed, resourced, progressed and linked;*
 - b) *To establish what police action was taken in relation to Mr Parry's shotgun certificate following the incidents reported to*

police on 1st May 2013 and 20th May 2013; and

c) To determine whether police action was in accordance with officer training and local and national policy.

2. To assist in fulfilling the state's investigative obligation arising under the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) by ensuring as far as possible that:
 - a) the investigation is independent on a practical as well as an institutional level; and
 - b) the full facts are brought to light and any lessons are learned.
3. To identify whether any subject of the investigation may have committed a criminal offence and, if appropriate, send a copy of the investigation report to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for him to decide whether criminal proceedings are to be brought.
4. To identify whether any subject of the investigation may have breached their standards of professional behaviour. If such a breach may have occurred, to determine whether that breach amounts to misconduct or gross misconduct and whether there is a case to answer.
5. To consider and report on whether there is organisational learning, including:
 - whether any change in policy or practice would help to prevent a recurrence of the event, incident or conduct investigated;
 - whether the incident highlights any good practice that should be disseminated.

Complaints against police

5. On 18 October 2013 a number of complaints about the manner in which Gwent Police dealt with reported incidents involving Mr and Mrs Parry were made to the IPCC. The terms of reference drafted in respect of the

initial referral were deemed sufficiently broad to incorporate these complaints without further amendment. The complaints were:

Complaint 1

That on the morning of 2 May 2013, a female officer attended at the ex-marital address in Croesyceiliog to deal with a report made by Mrs Parry about the conduct of Mr Parry. That Mr Parry admitted to the officer that he had followed Mrs Parry; that the officer should have done something about this. It was further alleged that the officer spoke to Mr Parry about her own personal life, which was deemed inappropriate; that the officer was not forceful enough in dealing with the matter and did not tell Mr Parry that what he had done was wrong.

Complaint 2

That on 20 May 2013, two officers attended at the ex-marital address in response to an alleged altercation between Mrs Parry and Christopher Parry's mother. That Christopher Parry was being aggressive in the officers' presence, but that they did not take any action in relation to his shotguns. That the officers did not take Christopher Parry's weapons away or check his shotgun certificate and that this should have been done because he was being aggressive. That the officers were rushing to deal with the matter.

Complaint 3

That Mrs Parry was concerned about her passport and other personal documents which she believed were in the possession of her estranged husband. That Gwent Police told Mrs Parry it was a civil matter and did not help her. That it seems Mr Parry flagged down Mrs Parry's car shortly before she was killed and it is believed he suggested he would return her documents, which is why she stopped her car. That if the police had dealt with Mrs Parry's report about her passport, this may not have happened.

Subjects to the investigation

6. A Regulation 16 notice is served on an officer if there is an indication they may have committed a criminal offence or behaved in a manner that would justify the bringing of disciplinary proceedings.
7. Once conduct has been identified, in accordance with paragraph 19B (3), Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002, a severity assessment is conducted to determine whether the conduct, if proven, would amount to misconduct or gross misconduct.

PC A

8. It was identified that PC A was tasked with making a referral to the Gwent Police Firearms Licensing Department and that no referral was made, despite an incident log indicating that he was aware of the referral request. It was determined that the officer's conduct, if proven, would amount to misconduct. On 8 October 2013, PC A was served with a Regulation 16 notice of investigation in respect of this matter. The notice was worded as follows:

On 20th May 2013 you attended [Mr Parry's address] in response to a report of assault (log 77 of that date refers). At 15.27 hours you updated the Control Room with details of your attendance. At 15.46 hrs that day the Control Room queried whether a risk assessment was required as a firearms [sic- shotgun] certificate holder resided at the address. At 15.50hrs that day the log was endorsed with a request that the log be viewed by you and advice that the 'firearms aspect needs to be addressed asap'.

At 07.30hrs on 21st May 2013 a further update was added to the incident log by a member of the Control Room log closure team. The update directed: 'xxxx to be updated in respect of this information [PNC shotgun certificate information in respect of Christopher Parry] and complete initial risk assessment and refer incident to firearms licensing (can be done via email to generic email address)'. You were informed by text message; the

log was updated at 08.50 hrs that day to indicate '1082 aware'.

Enquiries conducted with the Firearms Licensing Department indicate that you did not refer this matter to them for consideration. The log was endorsed at 14.33hrs that day to indicate that an update was awaited but the log was closed with no further update added at 17.40hrs that day.

9. PC A provided a written response on 25 October 2013. He was subsequently asked to address some additional matters, including the complaint made about his attendance; these additional matters were addressed in a written response received on 5 November 2013. Both responses were deemed comprehensive; PC A was therefore not required to attend a misconduct interview.

PC B

10. Following receipt of a complaint about PC B's attendance at Mr Parry's address on 2 May 2013, it was concluded that there was an indication she may have behaved in a manner that would justify the bringing of disciplinary proceedings. It was determined that the conduct subject of complaint, if proven, would amount to misconduct.
11. PC B was served with a Regulation 16 notice of investigation on 20 November 2013. The notice contained a number of allegations in respect of her attendance on 2 May 2013 (log 565 of 1 May 2013 refers). It was alleged that she did not take a sufficiently firm approach in dealing with the reported incident. Specifically, it was alleged that she:
 - told Christopher Parry what he was doing [following his wife] was understandable as he wanted to know what she was doing;
 - told Christopher Parry about her own personal life, specifically a past divorce, which was deemed inappropriate; and
 - approached the matter as though she had visited Christopher Parry to 'have a chat' with him rather than to advise him about his behaviour towards Caroline Parry.

It was further alleged that Christopher Parry admitted he had been following Caroline Parry and that PC B should have taken action in respect of that admission. It was alleged that PC B was not forceful enough in dealing with the incident in that she did not tell Christopher Parry that his conduct in following his wife was wrong- it was alleged PC B said words to the effect of 'You'll have to leave it there now'.

12. PC B provided a comprehensive written response on 29 November 2013; PC B was therefore not required to attend a misconduct interview.

Chronological summary of events

1 May 2013

13. At 8.49pm on 1 May 2013 Mrs Parry contacted Gwent Police using the non-emergency 101 number to report that she had separated from her husband some three weeks before and that he had been stalking her. She disclosed that he had been possessive and controlling during the marriage and that she was concerned because he had shotguns. She advised that Mr Parry had taken the separation very badly, that he had seemed '*very on edge today*' and '*didn't seem himself*'.
14. Whilst Mrs Parry was making her telephone report, she also spoke to her mother, who was in the background, telling her: '*I got to, see mum, for my own safety.*' Mrs Parry advised the police call handler that her husband had dealt with his shotguns in an '*above board*' manner previously but that she was concerned because '*he's so upset over this marriage breakup, he's just not in the right frame of mind at this moment, so who knows really?*'
15. Mrs Parry informed the police call handler that she was staying with her mother in Newport. The call handler advised that officers would visit her that evening.
16. The incident was recorded on the force command and control system,

ORIS, as log 565 of that day and graded for a priority response (response within an hour).

17. Two PCs were dispatched to the incident at 10.34pm. Dispatch to the incident was not timely due to a lack of available units.
18. One of the PCs, a Neighbourhood Support Officer on the Newport Local Policing Unit (LPU), provided a statement detailing her role in respect of the incident. She recalled that she began her tour of duty at 10.00pm on 1 May 2013. She stated that at around 10.35pm that evening she was notified of ORIS log 565 and asked to attend. She explained that it was a report made by Mrs Caroline Parry, who was concerned that her estranged husband had been following her. The officer stated that she had not had any previous contact with the family and that there were no previous incidents involving Mr and Mrs Parry on the ORIS system. She explained that she did not carry out intelligence checks as she did not feel they were required on the basis of the incident reported. She recalled that a Police National Computer (PNC) check on Mr Parry returned only details of his shotgun certificate.
19. The officer recalled that she and her colleague arrived at the address in Newport at around 10.50pm where they met with Mrs Parry and her mother. She recalled that she spoke to Mrs Parry whilst her colleague spoke with her mother. The officer recounted how Mrs Parry provided her with some background on her relationship with her husband - she told her that she had left him some three weeks before and that she had moved out of the marital address at Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran, to move in with her mother. She informed the officer that, during their 27 year relationship, her husband had been very jealous, quite controlling and that she was largely unhappy. She explained that her teenaged son and adult daughter were both still residing with their father at the marital address.
20. The officer recalled Mrs Parry telling her that her report to police had been prompted by her husband's actions that day. She explained that she had picked her son up from school and dropped him off at the marital address;

whilst at the address, she had seen her husband but he had seemed fine and there were no issues at that time. She told the officer that she then left the address to visit a friend; when she arrived at her friend's address, she discovered that her husband had followed her there. She said he was upset, that he was asking why they had broken up and that he wanted to know if she was having an affair. Mrs Parry said she asked him to leave and he eventually complied; she told the officer that she had found the incident disconcerting.

21. The officer stated that she asked Mrs Parry about her husband's weapons, as she remembered that guns were mentioned on the incident log. She recalled Mrs Parry telling her that her husband had a shotgun and an air rifle. The officer stated that she asked Mrs Parry if she felt her husband was capable of hurting her or their children and she said no, but disclosed that he had threatened to shoot himself years before. The officer recalled that she also asked Mrs Parry if she believed her husband's current state of mind could lead to him self-harming and she replied that she didn't think so.
22. The officer stated that she tried to gauge what Mrs Parry wanted from Gwent Police - she recalled Mrs Parry telling her that she wanted the police to be aware of what had happened and asked if her husband could be advised about following her. The officer stated that she was satisfied there was no offence of harassment or stalking as there had only been one incident and a 'course of conduct' (more than one incident) was required for both harassment and stalking.
23. The officer explained that she completed a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment form (DASH) with Mrs Parry during the attendance. This is a national pro forma which is completed to identify risk indicators and to generate a risk assessment in respect of the individual.
24. A copy of the completed DASH form was obtained. The form includes several questions that are highlighted in bold; these questions relate to high risk factors. Mrs Parry answered 'yes' to the following high risk

questions:

8. *Does (...) constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you?*

15. *Does (...) try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous?*

19. *Does (...) do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else?*

24. *Has (...) had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life?*

25. *Has (...) ever threatened or attempted suicide?*

25. In addition, Q.6 (*Have you tried to separate from (name of abuser(s)...) within the past year?*) is also a high risk factor. The officer ticked 'no' for this question, but Mrs Parry had made clear that she had recently separated from her husband. Indeed, the notes the officer wrote on the DASH form stated: 'first time this time'. The officer was asked about this at interview and conceded that she had made a mistake in respect of this question, which should have been ticked 'yes'.
26. The officer recalled that Mrs Parry told her that she was scared of her husband, and recalled that she appeared to be anxious. The officer explained that this anxiety prompted her questions about what Mrs Parry thought her husband might do. She recalled that Mrs Parry was unsure why she was anxious, but she wanted to notify the police about the matter and stressed that she thought her husband's behaviour would become worse unless the police spoke to him.
27. The officer explained that she graded the DASH form risk assessment as 'standard', based on the following:
- Mrs Parry's responses to the questions;
 - the number of negative responses she provided;

- the fact that she was living apart from her husband; and
 - the fact that she had been independent enough to seek police intervention at an early stage.
28. The officer stated that, when completing a DASH form, she considers the questions on the form, the victim's behaviour, the specific circumstances and any other relevant factors, such as available family support.
29. The officer recalled that she agreed a safety plan with Mrs Parry, the key points being that Mrs Parry should keep her mobile phone charged and on her person and that she should keep police informed of the situation as it progressed. The officer advised Mrs Parry that she would speak with her husband, explaining that if it was too late when they arrived at his address she would ask local units to attend at a later date. The officer explained the intention in attending at Mr Parry's address was to check his welfare and that of his son, to check whether he was in lawful possession of his shotguns and to advise him about following his wife.
30. Mrs Parry asked to be updated that evening and said that she would keep her mobile phone on. Upon arriving at Mr Parry's address, the officers found it in darkness. A vehicle parked on the drive was checked on the PNC (Police National Computer) and found to belong to Mr Parry's daughter. The officer stated that she agreed with her colleague that it was not proportionate to wake the family at that time, as it was around midnight. She recalled that they kept the incident log open, so that local officers could attend the next day.
31. The officer recalled that she left a voicemail on Mrs Parry's mobile phone at around 1.00am on 2 May 2013. She explained that she also updated the Control Room, requesting a welfare check on Mr Parry and his son, asking that he be given advice about following his wife and that a check be conducted on his firearms certificate.
32. The officer conceded that the update typed onto the incident log was not

entirely clear as to what she wanted oncoming officers to do. The update stated 'check firearms certificate'. The officer explained that she wanted officers to check whether Mr Parry was in lawful possession of the weapons he held. She said that she was not aware of the process whereby officers referred firearms licensing concerns to the Firearms Licensing Department and was unable to recall receiving any training on firearms licensing. The officer further stated that she had not had any contact with the Firearms Licensing Department in the past and advised that she would have contacted her Sergeant over the radio if she had attended Mr Parry's address and had concerns about his weapons.

33. The officer recalled that her colleague scanned the DASH form onto the Domestic Abuse Management System (DAMS) and that she finished her shift at 7.00am on 2 May 2013.
34. The officer was asked about her knowledge of the DASH process. She explained her understanding of the process was that DASH forms were uploaded onto DAMS and that the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU), and possibly relevant partner agencies, subsequently reviewed assessments conducted at scenes.
35. The officer was asked about her training in respect of stalking and harassment. She stated she had not completed the NCALT Stalking & Harassment e-briefing package. Indeed, she did not recall being required to complete it, explaining that officers were informed of mandatory e-briefing packages.

Note: The National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) provides interactive online training packages, often referred to as e-learning or e-briefing. The Stalking & Harassment package relates to stalking and harassment behaviours and the ACPO Stalking Tool, a series of questions designed to identify stalking behaviour.

36. PC B provided a written response outlining her role in respect of incident 565 of 1 May 2013. She stated that on 2 May 2013, she was single

crewed covering the Cwmbran area, working a 7.00am - 5.00pm shift. She recalled that shortly after her start-of-shift briefing, she was allocated to the incident via her personal radio.

37. PC B recalled that she was advised to read the incident log before attending, which she did. She explained that she was asked to conduct a welfare check on Mr Parry, to check his firearms certificate and to warn him about his conduct.
38. PC B was unable to recall when she arrived at Mr Parry's address in Cwmbran, but she remembered that it was in the morning. She stated that Christopher Parry answered the door and invited her into the address; he informed her that he was the only person at home as his two children were out.
39. PC B recalled that when she entered the address Mr Parry instantly picked up his firearms certificate from a sideboard and handed it to her without her prompting him to do so. He indicated to her that his guns were locked in a cupboard. She explained that she did not ask to look at them as, at that stage, the report concerned a marital breakdown and there was no evidence or indication that violence was an issue. She stated that she therefore did not consider making a referral to the Firearms Licensing Department.
40. PC B recalled that Mr Parry seemed calm but upset. He told her that his wife had left him after 27 years of marriage and he believed this was due to the fact she was having an affair. Mr Parry told PC B that he had followed his wife the previous day in an attempt to discover whether she was having an affair. PC B recalled that she told Mr Parry that his behaviour was unacceptable. She said that she empathised with him and told him it was probably a very difficult time for him, as she had also been through a divorce where children were involved; however, he needed to stop contacting his wife. PC B recalled telling Mr Parry that all contact should be via a third party, such as a solicitor.

41. PC B recalled informing Mr Parry that he could be issued with a Police Information Notice (PIN) regarding his 'course of conduct' or that he could be arrested. She remembered that Mr Parry seemed to take the advice on board at the time and that he asked her how he could 'sort the marital home out'; she advised him to speak with a solicitor. PC B stated that she felt she dealt with Mr Parry appropriately in the circumstances; she explained that she was polite but informed him repeatedly that his behaviour was unacceptable and must stop.
42. PC B explained that she did not consider issuing a Police Information Notice (PIN) at that time as a course of conduct had not taken place: it was a 'one-off' incident. She stated that she did not seek advice from a supervisor as the call was 'a regular day-to-day call'. PC B recalled she advised the Control Room that she had completed the call and would update the log upon her arrival back at Cwmbran Police Station.
43. PC B stated that upon returning to Cwmbran Police Station she updated the log. The update added to the log is as follows:
- 'Spoke to Christopher Parry this morning. He is upset that his wife has left after an alleged affair and states he wants to know for certain if she is having an affair. There is [sic] no concerns that he will harm himself and appears to be keeping things together for the children's sake. He is no risk to himself or others. I have suitably advised him re. contact and to communicate via a third party only. He seemed happy with the advice and will be contacting a solicitor regarding the house.'*
44. PC B recalled that she was just about to call Mrs Parry to update her when she was notified that Mrs Parry was on the line at Cwmbran Police Station, requesting to speak with her. PC B recalled that she told Mrs Parry she had warned Mr Parry about his behaviour and also informed her that both parties should communicate with one another via third parties. PC B stated that Mrs Parry was happy with the update and thanked her for her assistance. She concluded the call by advising Mrs Parry to notify the

police of any further issues.

45. PC B stated that she had no contact with the DAIU as she was not the officer in charge for the victim. When asked about her training, PC B explained that she had training on firearms and licensing during her initial police training in 2004 but that she had not had refresher training since then. She stated that she had never been in contact with the Firearms Licensing Department, and had never made any referrals to them, as she had not encountered a situation where there was a need to. PC B explained that, if she encountered such a situation, she would seek advice from a supervisor. In respect of other training, PC B stated that she had undergone training on DASH some 3 years ago and explained that she uses her knowledge in this area regularly, as she deals with domestic incidents on a daily basis.

46. On 2 May 2013, Mrs Parry's report was discussed at the local Domestic Abuse Conference Call (DACC). All domestic incidents, regardless of the identified risk level, are referred to the DACC, a process whereby the police and partner agencies discuss the appropriate response to each incident to ensure a co-ordinated, multi-agency response.

Note: The DACCs are managed using a SharePoint site which partner agencies can access; this site is available to Gwent Police via the force intranet. A dedicated DAIU Detective Constable or Police Constable chairs the DACC; he or she is responsible for researching cases prior to the meeting and updating the DACC SharePoint site. Partner agencies include Health, Social Services, Housing, local Women's Aid and sometimes the Local Education Authority. There are five DACC units, one for each of the Gwent Police Local Policing Units: Newport, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire. Each DACC is led by experienced domestic abuse staff, either from the DACC team or from the investigative team, which also has safeguarding officers.

47. The minutes made in relation to Mrs Parry at the DACC held on 1 May 2013, indicate that there were no previous reported incidents and that the

couple was not known to Probation, Women's Aid, Health Services or Social Services. The notes went on to state that the '*Standard risk DASH [was] received with consent, panel advised to maintain the risk at this time*'. The reference to 'with consent' referred to Mrs Parry's consent to her data being disclosed to statutory and non-statutory agencies to prepare a risk strategy.

48. The DACC minutes made no reference to Mr Parry's status as a shotgun certificate holder, nor to his wife's concerns about his mental health and possession of weapons. The risk level agreed at the DACC did not correspond to the risk factors set out on the completed DASH form. The number of high risk questions with 'yes' responses should have prompted the DACC to amend the risk assessment upwards and to note that the officer who had completed the DASH form had completed the question about separation incorrectly. No risk level was completed on the DACC SharePoint site which resulted in 'not graded' appearing on DAMS in relation to the DACC risk level.

20 May 2013

49. Gwent Police had no further involvement with the Parry family until 20 May 2013. At 9.12am, Mr Parry's father called Gwent Police, using the 101 line to report that his wife had been assaulted by her daughter-in-law, Caroline Parry. Incident log 77 of 20 May 2013 was created in respect of this report. The incident was given an emergency response grading; officers were dispatched to the address within minutes of the log being opened.
50. At 9.14am that morning, Caroline Parry also called Gwent Police using the 101 line to report that her husband was being aggressive to her. She advised that he was outside her address and that she was inside with her two children; Mrs Parry further disclosed that she had recently reported him to police for stalking her.
51. Incident log 78 of 20 May 2013 was created following Caroline Parry's report; however at 9.16am, this log was merged with log 77 of the same

date on the basis that both logs concerned the same incident. Whilst both logs concerned the same incident, they were not the same, in that log 77 related to an incident in which Caroline Parry was the alleged perpetrator (and Christopher Parry's mother the victim), whilst log 78 was a reported domestic incident, with Caroline Parry recorded as the victim (and Christopher Parry as the aggressor). Incident 78 was classified as a domestic incident and bore a firearms warning flag, as the call was made in respect of the ex-marital address, where Mr Parry's shotgun certificate was registered. However, the incident was not referred to the DAU due to the fact that it was only open briefly before being merged with log 77.

52. PC A and PC C were deployed separately to incident 77. Neither officer was made aware of incident log 78, due to the fact that it was merged with incident 77. Incident 77 was referred to the DAU but incident 78 does not appear to have been researched for the DACC.
53. PC A provided a written response to his notice of investigation, which included a response to the complaint made about his attendance.
54. PC A recalled that he was working a 7.00am - 5.00pm shift, on patrol in uniform in a marked police vehicle, when he was deployed at 9:15am in response to log 77. He arrived at the address at 9.21am. Upon arriving he recalled seeing PC C who was also arriving; he stated that he was aware PC C had been dispatched to the incident due to radio transmissions he had heard.
55. PC A explained that they both attended at the ex-marital address where they spoke with Caroline Parry, unaware that they actually needed to attend at the home address of Christopher Parry's mother as she was the alleged victim. PC A recalled Caroline Parry informed them that she had attended at the ex-marital address to collect her belongings and that whilst she was doing so, her husband and her mother-in-law had arrived; she stated that she and her mother-in-law then had a verbal altercation.

56. PC A recalled Mrs Caroline Parry telling him that she had previously been advised to notify the police before attending at the address, so that officers could be present to prevent a breach of the peace, because she and her husband had separated. PC A noted that Mrs Parry's children were also at the address at the time. He recalled that he advised Mrs Caroline Parry that, if she had been told to contact the police prior to turning up at the address, then she should have done so. He recalled asking her why she had not done so, to which she replied that she did not see the need. He stated that he instructed Mrs Caroline Parry to remain at the address whilst he and his colleague went to speak to her mother-in-law.
57. PC A observed that Mrs Caroline Parry was calm throughout their exchange and made no complaints against her husband or his mother.
58. PC A described attending at Christopher Parry's mother's address where Christopher Parry was present with his mother and father. He described Christopher Parry's mother as being upset and recalled that she was crying. She informed him that she had attended at her son's address with her son Christopher as she was aware his wife, Caroline Parry, was at the address removing property without the police being present. She alleged that, when they arrived at the address, she became involved in a verbal altercation with Caroline Parry and that, without any provocation, Caroline Parry had grabbed her by her chest, causing her pain and discomfort. She advised that her son, Christopher, had witnessed the incident. She explained that they had then gone home and called the police to report the assault. She told PC A that she wanted Caroline Parry to be arrested.
59. PC A stated that he did not observe any injuries to Christopher Parry's mother although he noted that she was upset and seemed out of breath. She advised PC A that she suffered with asthma; he stated that he was aware an ambulance had been requested. Christopher Parry informed him that he was present throughout the entire incident and wanted his wife arrested. PC A recalled that Christopher Parry was visibly upset about his

mother but made no complaints against his wife on his own behalf. PC A recalled that PC C then left the address to conduct further enquiries in relation to the matter.

60. Upon her return, PC C informed PC A that she had spoken to Caroline Parry, who denied assaulting her mother-in-law, stating that the altercation was verbal only and that her mother-in-law was the more aggressive party. Caroline Parry's account was confirmed by two other witnesses, one of whom had witnessed the entire incident and confirmed that no assault had taken place and that Christopher Parry's mother was the more aggressive party.
61. PC A stated that he then informed Christopher Parry and his mother that enquiries had been made and, as a result, the police would not be arresting Caroline Parry for assault. He recalled that an ambulance crew was in attendance by that time and that Christopher Parry's mother declined to accept medical attention. PC A recalled that Christopher Parry was upset that they would not arrest his wife.
62. PC A recalled that Christopher Parry's brother arrived at the address at this point; he was unable to recall his name. He recalled that Mr Parry's brother contacted his solicitor by telephone and began to inform him of the alleged incident and the fact the officers were not going to arrest Caroline Parry. PC A recalled that he and PC C then left the address. He became aware that Christopher Parry's brother had contacted PS D at Cwmbran Police Station; as a result he spoke to PS D and explained the incident and his rationale for not arresting Caroline Parry. PC A recalled that PS D instructed him to take statements from Christopher Parry and his mother and agreed that Caroline Parry should not be arrested.
63. PS D provided a statement outlining his involvement in this incident. He stated that he received a call from Christopher Parry's brother, who was unhappy that Caroline Parry had not been arrested following an alleged assault upon his mother. PS D stated that he contacted PC A, who was

dealing with the matter. He recalled that he instructed PC A to complete a DASH form in respect of the incident because the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator were in-laws. PS D stated that he also instructed him to take statements from Christopher Parry's mother, Christopher Parry and his brother if they wanted to pursue the matter. He recalled that PC A subsequently informed him that Christopher Parry's brother had apologised to him, because he had been quite aggressive towards him during the attendance.

64. PC A recalled that he then spoke to Christopher Parry and told him he intended to take a written statement from him about the incident. PC A explained the consequences of making a statement and informed Christopher Parry that he would be liable to prosecution if he wilfully stated in it anything which he knew to be false, or that he didn't believe to be true. He recalled that, after the process was explained to him, Christopher Parry declined to provide a statement or to corroborate his mother's allegations.

65. PC A explained he then made a written entry in his pocket notebook that read:

'I have had explained to me the consequences about making a written statement about the alleged assault upon my mother [...] that is alleged to have happened outside my address this morning and the consequences about making a written statement that is false. At this time I do not wish to make a statement or confirm that such an assault took place. I make this statement of my own free will and have not been placed under any pressure not to make a statement. I have fully co-operated with the police this morning and I have done everything that has been asked of me.'

He recalled that Christopher Parry then read and signed the entry.

66. Having completed this task, PC A then spoke to Christopher Parry's mother in the presence of both Christopher Parry and her other son. He informed them of the enquiries that had already been made, and of an independent witness who did not corroborate their version of events. He recalled Christopher Parry's mother stated that she no longer wished to make a complaint, provide a written statement or to confirm that she had been assaulted. PC A asked her to sign his pocket notebook entry, but she

declined to do so and also declined to complete a DASH form with him.

67. PC A recalled that he later completed a skeleton DASH form at the police station, in addition to completing a Social Services referral. PC A stated that these were submitted through PS D.
68. Following the officers' attendance, the log closure team at the force Control Room reviewed the log the next morning. A Police National Computer check revealed that Christopher Parry held a live shotgun certificate and held a number of shotguns at his address. The log was updated, with a request that PC A be notified of the information about Christopher Parry's weapons and that he complete an initial risk assessment and refer the incident to the Firearms Licensing Department. The log further advised that the referral could be made by email to the Licensing Department's generic email inbox. The log was subsequently updated to indicate that PC A had been sent a Short Text Message (STM) and that he was aware. The incident was updated at 2.33pm to indicate 'awaiting update', but was then closed with no update received at 5.40pm that day.
69. PC A explained that he was not aware of the firearms issues referred to in the log until he read the log on 7 October 2013 to refresh his memory of the incident, as he was aware that he was due to be served with a Regulation 16 notice of investigation. When asked whether he had received a text message from the force Control Room, advising him that a firearms referral was required, PC A stated that he could not recall whether he had received such a message. He stated that Short Text Messages (STMs) are never specific and normally read 'PLEASE SEE UPDATE ON LOG' with the log number and date. PC A stated that the texts never normally say what the request is, or what the officer is requested to do, other than to be aware of it.
70. PC A stated that as far as he was aware, the only outstanding issue was whether the incident should be crimed, which he discussed with PS D. He

stated that he was informed the log had been closed, pending a decision from the Crime Management Unit, at 5.32pm on 20 May 2013 and reopened at 7.24am on 21 May 2013, with the decision that the incident did not need to be recorded as a crime. PC A noted that the incident was closed without any endorsement from him to indicate that he had carried out the request to refer the incident to the Firearms Licensing Department. He stated that, if he had been aware of the request, he would have carried it out and endorsed the log.

71. In relation to the complaint that Christopher Parry was being aggressive in the officers' presence, PC A stated that Mr Parry's demeanour was calm, never aggressive and that he made no complaints against his wife. He recalled that Christopher Parry's daughter informed them that her father had placed a sum of money that belonged to her inside his gun cabinet and that she wanted the money returned to her. He recalled that Christopher Parry complied with the request and was cooperative at all times.
72. PC A stated that Christopher Parry was not physically or verbally aggressive towards anyone, at any point, whilst in their presence. He stressed that if concerns had been expressed about Christopher Parry's behaviour he would not have let him anywhere near his gun cabinet. PC A recalled that there was never any concern about Christopher Parry's behaviour, or for any person's safety, including their own. PC A could not remember whether he asked to see Christopher Parry's shotgun certificate, but he did recall that his possession of guns was not an issue nor of any concern, as they were kept in accordance with requirements. PC A stated that no information was passed to them, nor were any concerns raised. He stated that he was aware of his power to seize weapons and certificates where appropriate; he explained that it was not necessary for him to use these powers during the incident.
73. PC A stated that he was never made aware of a request for a Victim Risk Assessment (VRA), nor did he feel that a VRA was required. He explained

that this was because Christopher Parry's mother was not a victim of crime on that occasion and, prior to the incident, there were no previous incidents recorded. He further stated that Christopher Parry was not a victim of crime, nor was Caroline Parry and that he did not consider any of those involved to be at any risk at all.

74. PC A stated that he fully understood the circumstances in which a VRA would be submitted, as he was a response officer and attended such incidents on a daily basis. He explained that VRAs were used to help to identify vulnerable people and to prevent them from becoming victims of crime. PC A stated that, with regard to the relationship between the VRA and the DASH form, one did not take precedence over the other and sometimes both were required. PC A stated that a DASH form was only required for Christopher Parry's mother, as she was the alleged victim of the assault. He explained that there were no complaints from Christopher or Caroline Parry in respect of one another. He recalled that, when they asked her about Christopher's behaviour, Caroline Parry advised him and PC C that he had never been violent towards her or her children.
75. PC A explained that Christopher Parry's only involvement in the incident was as a witness to a verbal altercation between his mother and his wife. He stated that Caroline Parry made no complaint about her husband. He explained that he did not complete a DASH form for Caroline Parry because he was never given any information to suggest that one was required. He stated that on 20 May 2013 there was never an issue about Christopher Parry's suitability to hold a certificate or possess firearms.
76. When asked about his training, PC A explained he had not undergone any training on seizure of weapons, but that he had been present when weapons had been seized. He stated that he had not undergone any training on firearms licensing, or had any contact with the Firearms Licensing Department as he had never been required to make referrals to them in the past. PC A explained that he was aware a referral would be required if there were concerns around the suitability of an individual who

was the holder of a certificate.

77. PC C also provided a statement regarding her attendance at the address. Her account was consistent with the account provided by PC A. In addition to the points outlined by PC A, PC C recalled that Caroline Parry wanted her passport and that she told the officers the passport was in the gun cabinet. PC C recalled that, when the gun cabinet was opened, the passport was not there. She recalled that Mrs Parry also wanted her husband to open a garage located near to the home address as a car that belonged to her was stored there. PC C recounted how they all walked to the garage and Mr Parry unlocked it. The car had a flat battery and so they all pushed it out of the garage and Mrs Parry advised that she would arrange for it to be recovered.
78. In relation to the complaint that Christopher Parry was being aggressive whilst the officers were present and that they should have seized his weapons, PC C stated that he was compliant and calm and that they would never have opened the gun cabinet if he was being aggressive. She stated that, whilst they were in attendance the only person to be aggressive was Christopher Parry's brother; she recalled that the brother later apologised for his conduct.
79. PC C explained that she did not consider completing a DASH form for Caroline Parry, as Christopher Parry's mother was the alleged victim and Caroline Parry said nothing to make her think that there was a domestic between her and her husband. She explained her understanding of the VRA is that it should be used in respect of vulnerable and repeat victims; PC C stated that both a VRA and a DASH form could be completed in respect of the same incident, depending on the circumstances.
80. PC C stated that, whenever she attended incidents, she conducted a VSI check, as this would bring up details of any previous incidents linked to the address; PC C did not recall any incidents being brought to her attention in respect of the Parry family. She stated that she did not ask to see Mr

Parry's shotgun certificate during the attendance, as he told her that he was in lawful possession and that his weapons were locked in a gun cabinet. PC C stated that he was only a witness to the incident and that he did not display any anger or aggression in her presence. She explained she was aware that Caroline Parry had moved out of the address and that she did not consider Mr Parry to be a risk. PC C estimated that they were dealing with the incident for at least an hour.

81. Firearms Enquiry Officer (FEO) E stated that he recalled viewing this log shortly after it appeared on the Firearms Licensing Department's 'night report' (explained at paragraph 141, below). He remembered the log concerned a dispute that occurred at the home address of Christopher Parry, which was suitably flagged with a shotgun certificate warning marker. Mr E explained that no action was taken by the Licensing Department in respect of the log as no offences were recorded; he stated that the removal of Mr Parry's weapons would have been a matter for divisional officers as there were no public safety issues in respect of him and so the Department would not have confiscated his weapons. He noted the incident actually concerned an altercation between Mr Parry's wife and his mother. Mr E advised he would not have conducted a home visit in respect of the incident as he did not think a visit would be justified on the basis of the incident reported.
82. Mr E noted the log was endorsed to indicate that officer xxxx should make a firearms licensing referral in respect of the incident. He confirmed that no such referral was made.

20 July 2013

83. At 10.57am on 20 July 2013, Caroline Parry contacted Gwent Police, using the non-emergency 101 number to report that her husband was refusing to return her passport; she also advised that he possessed her driving licence. Police incident log 247 of 20 July 2013 was created as a result of this report. When she made the call, Mrs Parry provided the ex-marital address. The address bore a command and control firearms

warning marker ('F'ARM/S'GUN CERTIFICATE') as Mr Parry's shotgun certificate was registered to the address. This marker flagged the log for the attention of the Firearms Licensing Department. Mrs Parry advised the police call handler that she had been separated from her husband for some three and a half months and that he was refusing to give her a lot of her documents.

84. The report was initially graded for a priority response (response within an hour), but was regraded to a scheduled response (response at an appointed time) shortly afterwards because Mrs Parry asked officers to visit her after 6.00pm that evening, as she was going out and also thought it was more likely that her husband would be at his home in the evening. A unit was allocated to the incident at 6.03pm, but could not attend because of another commitment.
85. At 8.06pm that day, Newport Central officer PC F was allocated to the incident. She telephoned Mrs Parry and updated the incident log at 8.23pm to indicate that she had spoken with her. PC F provided a detailed summary of the telephone conversation on the incident log, highlighting that Mrs Parry had spoken to the Passport Office, who had advised her to report the matter to the police. PC F requested the allocation of Cwmbran officers to speak to Mr Parry about the matter. She noted on the log that failure to return the item could be seen as a crime.
86. In the statement she provided about this incident, PC F indicated that Mrs Parry was happy with the course of action she proposed. She explained that she was not aware of any previous domestic incidents between Mr and Mrs Parry and that her focus was on resolving the current matter. She recalled that Mrs Parry did not want to make a complaint of theft, as she thought her husband was just being spiteful.
87. At 11.17pm on 20 July 2013, PC G attended at Christopher Parry's address but found the house in darkness. A request was made for morning shift officers to attend. Police Community Support Officer H attended at

Christopher Parry's address at 4.09pm the next day but was unable to obtain a reply. The matter was referred back to the Control Room for reallocation.

88. Mrs Parry called Gwent Police at 6.05pm on 21 July 2013 to seek an update on the matter. She was advised that it was being dealt with by Cwmbran officers; the call handler transferred the call to Cwmbran, so that Mrs Parry could be updated.
89. PC I, a patrol officer stationed at Cwmbran was allocated to the incident at 6.31pm that evening. PC I provided a statement outlining the actions he took in respect of the incident. He stated that he was asked to attend to speak to Christopher Parry in relation to his estranged wife's allegation that he was in possession of her passport and refusing to return it. PC I was unable to recall being notified of any previous domestic incidents before attending at the address.
90. PC I recalled that he attended the address within minutes of being tasked. When he arrived Christopher Parry answered the door, identified himself and invited PC I into the hallway of the address. PC I recalled that he asked Mr Parry about his wife's passport, to be told that he had no knowledge of its whereabouts. PC I recalled that he contacted the force Control Room at this point, using his police radio, to ask for more information on the possible whereabouts of the passport; the Control Room advised that it was in a silver case.
91. PC I recalled Mr Parry repeated that he had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the silver case or the passport. PC I stated that, at the time, he had no legal powers to search the property and he asked Mr Parry to try to locate the passport, which Mr Parry agreed to do. PC I stated that, at the time, he did not view the incident as a criminal offence, due to the lack of information. He recalled that he updated the incident using his police radio, advising the Control Room of the actions he had taken so that Newport officers could make further, more specific enquiries.

He recalled that he spoke about his attendance briefly with PS D. The incident log was subsequently reviewed at 6.52pm. An update was added to the log to indicate that officers would need to speak with Caroline Parry again, to establish if her allegation amounted to a crime.

92. PS D stated that the log was flagged for his attention at 9.29pm on 21 July 2013. He recalled that he deferred the incident as he felt Mrs Parry needed to provide more information. PS D stated that officers had no power to search Mr Parry's address at that time, and so more clarity was required about Mrs Parry's allegations. He explained that the matter could have been criminal or civil, but that he had insufficient information to make a decision at the time. PS D stated that if Mr Parry had the passport in his possession and was refusing to return it, the matter could have been crimed, but Mr Parry was denying the allegation. PS D stated that he was tasked with making a decision as to whether the matter should be crimed and he asked officers to obtain more information; PS D stressed that he did not dismiss the matter.
93. PS D updated the log at 10.48pm that evening to indicate that the log should be deferred for officers to make contact with Caroline Parry.
94. PC J was allocated to the incident at 7.40am on 22 July 2013. She recalled that she was tasked with speaking with Mrs Parry, to determine whether her report amounted to a criminal offence. PC J updated the log at 7.53am that day to indicate that she had spoken to Caroline Parry, who had insisted that Christopher Parry did have her documents. She noted that Mrs Parry did not want to make a complaint at that time but she did want her husband to be advised of the seriousness of the matter. PC J attempted to contact Mr Parry on his mobile phone but there was no reply. She then left a message on his answering machine.
95. At 9.16am that morning, PC J updated the log to indicate that she had spoken to Mr Parry, who maintained that he did not have his wife's documents. PC J stated that, whilst not noted on the log, she recalled

advising Christopher Parry that his wife would be entitled to make a complaint against him if she believed that he had stolen the passport. She recalled informing him that he could either be arrested or attend as a volunteer for interview. PC J stated that she told Mr Parry she did not want the matter to get to that stage, as Caroline simply wanted her documents returned.

96. PC J recalled that she asked Mr Parry to check paperwork he held at his address, to establish whether he had inadvertently packed his wife's documents. He agreed to this and advised that he would return the documents the next day by 2pm if he had them but he asserted that his wife would have taken the documents with her when she left the address. PC J subsequently updated the log to indicate that she had updated Mrs Parry. The log was then deferred for PC J's attention when she started work at 2pm the next day.
97. At 10.08am that day, Mrs Parry telephoned Gwent Police as she thought the police were trying to contact her about her report as she had missed a call at 9.15am that morning.
98. The call handler advised Mrs Parry that officers needed to speak to her husband again, as he had been advised to double check whether he had her documents. Mrs Parry asserted that he definitely had the documents. She further stated: 'he does make my life as hard as possible to be honest'. Mrs Parry queried whether she should wait for a further call from the police and was advised that the police would contact her once they had an update. Mrs Parry clarified that she would be finishing work at 3.00pm.
99. Mrs Parry made a further call to Gwent Police at 3.05pm that day; she advised that officers had tried to call her at 2.15pm and asked whether there was an update. The call handler advised that she would ask the officer dealing with the matter to contact her.
100. The log was updated at 4.05pm to indicate that PC J had updated Mrs

Parry and that she would await a further update the following day.

101. PC J updated the log at 1.54pm on 23 July 2013 to indicate that she had tried to contact Mrs Parry, without success. Mrs Parry called Gwent Police at 3.31pm that afternoon. She advised that police had tried to contact her at around 2.00pm. She explained that the officer dealing with the matter was named J and the call handler advised her that the officer's collar number was xxxx and that she would update the log to advise that Mrs Parry was available and that the officer would call her.
102. Mrs Parry made a further call to Gwent Police at 7.09pm that evening. She advised that she was waiting for a call back and that no one had contacted her. The call handler advised that she would notify the Control Room and that they would radio through to the officer. The log was updated at 9.24pm to indicate that PC J had been informed that Caroline required an update. At 11.11pm that evening, PC J updated the log, to indicate that she would contact Mrs Parry again the next day.
103. PC J recalled that she spoke to Mr Parry on the 23 or 24 July and he advised that he had not found the documents. The log was updated at 4.21pm on 24 July 2013 to indicate that Mrs Parry had been contacted. The update indicated that her documents had not been returned, but it was not possible to prove that Christopher Parry had them. PC J stated that she asked Mrs Parry whether she wanted to make a complaint, to which Mrs Parry responded that she did not, and that she would report the passport as lost. She advised she only thought it probable that her husband had her passport: she was not certain. Mrs Parry informed PC J that she had no access to the marital home, which was jointly owned: PC J recalled that she advised Mrs Parry to seek legal advice in relation to this matter.
104. PC J also contacted Mr Parry that day and advised him that his wife was not making a complaint and the matter was therefore at an end.
105. PC J concluded her statement by clarifying that, at no point did Mrs Parry

allege that her husband had stolen her passport. She stressed that, had Mrs Parry wished to make a complaint and if she had evidence to suggest a crime had taken place, then suitable action would have been taken and Mr Parry would have been dealt with accordingly, by arrest or by voluntary attendance.

8 August 2013

106. At 8.46am on Thursday 8 August 2013, Mrs Parry received fatal gunshot wounds in an incident that occurred on Seabreeze Avenue, Newport. Mr Parry was found at the scene with serious gunshot wounds to his head and face. Mr Parry survived his injuries and was charged with his wife's murder.

Involvement of the Firearms Licensing Department

107. Christopher Parry was first issued with a shotgun certificate in October 1986. There were no issues in relation to his certificate until his renewal in October 2005, when he declared that he was suffering with depression. This declaration was explored during a face-to-face interview with a Firearms Enquiry Officer (FEO) and found to be historic (it had occurred some 3 years before the application, no medication was being taken and there had been no reoccurrence). Mr Parry's certificate was renewed without a request for a full medical report, on the basis that he was not taking any medication. In 2002, guidance provided to Firearms Licensing Departments indicated that *'approaches to applicants' doctors should not be made as a matter of routine. Nor should approaches be made simply to check the accuracy of the medical information provided in application forms, unless there are some grounds for concern about the applicant in question or the information given.'* The approach of the FEO in this case was therefore in keeping with the guidance applicable at the time.
108. Mr Parry's certificate was subsequently renewed in 2010; he was again visited by an FEO prior to a certificate being issued. Mr Parry again declared a depressive illness, but indicated that this was the illness he had previously disclosed- he dated it to around 2000- a discrepancy of several

years in comparison with the date declared in 2005. He was not taking any medication at the time of renewal. Again, no medical report was requested and the certificate was issued, with an expiry date of 26 October 2015.

109. Mr Parry was therefore in lawful possession of three shotguns at the time of the incident. The weapons were stored in a locked cupboard situated in the hallway of his address. Details of his shotguns were held on the National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS); the NFLMS is linked to the Police National Computer which ensures that details of all applicants (including refusals and revocations) are available to all police forces. Before 8th August 2013, Christopher Parry had held a certificate since 1986 without incident.
110. Firearms Enquiry Officer (FEO) E stated that incident log 247 of 20 July 2013 would have been referred to the Firearms Licensing Department via the 'night report' (explained at paragraph 141, below) as it was associated with Mr Parry's address, which bore a firearms marker. Mr E noted that there were no allegations of violence, no suggestion of drugs/alcohol issues, no medical concerns and no suggestion of misuse of weapons or threats. He noted that the log was marked as a civil dispute between a husband and wife and that they had been advised to contact their solicitors. He stated that these factors meant that he felt the incident to be of no concern to the Firearms Licensing Department and, as such, it did not prompt any intervention by a Firearms Enquiry Officer.

Policies and procedures

The role of the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU)

111. Temporary Detective Inspector K provided a statement regarding the work of the DAIU. She explained that the Unit is large, comprising some 70 staff. She was responsible for the safeguarding work of the Unit whilst another Inspector was responsible for the investigative arm of the Unit. The remit of the safeguarding team was, broadly: DACCs, Multi Agency

Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), safeguarding, Honour Based Violence and 'Clare's Law'.

112. DI K explained that officers attending reported domestic incidents complete a DASH form at the scene, grading the incident in accordance with the DASH risk levels (standard, medium, high) on the basis of what is known at the time. The attending officer must scan the completed DASH form onto the Domestic Abuse Management System in order that their risk identification can be checked by a member of staff within the DAIU. Where a suspect has been arrested, the Duty DAIU Detective Sergeant will review the risk identification following the handover from the Local Policing Unit (LPU). Incidents where no crime had occurred, or where the suspect has not yet been arrested, are reviewed as soon as possible but due to the large volume of incidents, this may be delayed by several days.
113. The DAIU could keep the risk level the same or amend it to a higher or lower risk level and the Unit has responsibility for all domestic incidents; prior to 1 November 2012, it was only responsible for managing high risk cases. From 1 November 2012, all domestic incidents, regardless of the identified risk level, were referred to a DACC.
114. Partner agencies do not work weekends, therefore the DACC meetings, which take the form of conference calls, take place Monday to Friday. Depending on the volume of cases reported over the weekend, there may be insufficient time to discuss every domestic incident on a Monday. An Investigative Support Officer looks at cases reported over the weekend, carries out research and produces a report. A Detective Sergeant then reviews this report on a Monday morning and highlights the incidents that should be discussed at the DACC. DI K explained that this sifting process is used to ensure that the DACC discusses those incidents that are of most concern.
115. DI K explained that DACC/MARAC operational and strategic groups, have recently been established to discuss ways of improving the processes.

Part of the DACC review involves considering whether the DACC should include standard risk cases where the victim has not given consent to share information with other agencies.

116. All high risk cases are considered for the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, in addition to the DACC. DI K chairs the MARACs, which are held fortnightly. Approximately 100 cases are heard at MARAC per month. Just under half of DI K's working hours are dedicated to MARACs. DI K expressed the opinion that the DACC process has led to more cases being referred to MARAC, as some agencies feel that risk and safety planning can be better managed at MARAC level.
117. DI K explained that the DAMS is accessible to all officers/staff via the force intranet and that staff working outside the DAIU can add notes to a person's DAMS records. The force is currently introducing NICHE, a new information management system utilised by many police forces: once this system is live, DAMS will be restricted to 'read-only' access.
118. Gwent Police does not have a local domestic abuse policy, rather, it has adopted the National Policing Improvement Agency's (NPIA) 2008 Guidance on Investigating Domestic Abuse. DI K explained that there is, however, a force Public Protection Strategy and Public Protection Communication Strategy.
119. DI K explained that the DAIU is reliant on Control Room staff sending logs to DAMS and DACC by coding them '+IDI', a code that marks domestic incident logs for the attention of the DAIU.

Shotgun certificates: legislation and national policy

120. The possession of shotguns is governed by Section 2 of the Firearms Act 1968. At the time of the reported incidents, the applicable national guidance was the Home Office Firearms Licensing Law Guidance to the Police 2002. Chapter 11 of the Guidance concerns shotgun certificate procedure; this chapter was updated in August 2013. The consolidated

2013 guidance was issued in October 2013, titled 'Guide on Firearms Licensing Law 2013'.

121. In accordance with the 1968 Act (as amended), no shotgun certificate will be granted or renewed if the chief officer of police has reason to believe that the applicant is prohibited by the Act from possessing a shotgun, or if the chief officer is satisfied that the applicant does not have 'good reason' for possessing, purchasing or acquiring one.
122. If the grant of a shotgun certificate is not precluded in relation to the above criteria, licensing staff have to satisfy themselves that the applicant can be permitted to possess a shotgun without danger to public safety or to the peace. To establish whether the applicant should be permitted to hold a shotgun, an interview and consideration of the applicant's security arrangements are required.

Gwent Police Firearms Licensing Department

123. The Firearms Licensing Department at Gwent Police is a centralised team of police staff, based at Mamhilad, Pontypool. There are no licensing staff on Local Policing Units. The Department comprises a Firearms Licensing Department Manager, three Firearms Enquiry Officers (FEOs), including one Firearms and Explosives Officer, and five Disclosure Administrators. The Department's staff are available via telephone during office hours 8-5, Monday to Friday. The Firearms Enquiry Officers have Tetra radios and mobile phones.
124. FEO E explained that his role is to carry out 'suitability' enquiries where checks are requested in respect of a firearms licence or shotgun certificate holder. These checks are undertaken where a person's suitability to hold a certificate requires review for some reason, such as medical concerns, misuse of drugs or alcohol, domestic incidents or mental health issues. The checks could be prompted by:
 - ORIS logs of incidents received via the 'night report' (explained at paragraph 141);

- E-mail referrals from divisional officers;
- Calls from the force Control Room;
- Calls from members of the public; or
- Intelligence log communications.

The role of the Licensing Department is reactive, in that certificates are not reviewed unless there was a reason to do so.

125. The Licensing Department did not receive any referrals from divisional officers in respect of the shotgun certificate held by Christopher Parry. As a result, Mr Parry's suitability to hold a shotgun certificate was not reviewed at any stage.
126. Chapter 12 of the 2013 Guide on Firearms Licensing Law concerns suitability to possess a firearm/shotgun and specifically addresses the issue of domestic abuse. The Guide advises that *'a review on the continued suitability of a firearm or shotgun certificate holder should take place following an incident of domestic violence or abuse.'* The updated chapter was issued in July 2013. Incident 565 of 1 May 2013 pre-dates the publication of the revised chapter and was not referred to the Licensing Department in any case.
127. The evidence gathered in the course of this investigation did not reveal any concerns about the manner in which Mr Parry's shotgun certificate was initially granted or subsequently renewed by the staff at the Firearms Licensing Department. However, there are broader issues in relation to the administration of firearms licensing, in particular: force policy, response officer knowledge of licensing and the 'risk based' approach to renewals.

Shotgun certificates: local policy

128. The Gwent Police Data Management Department Manager provided a statement regarding the genesis of the force firearms/shotgun licensing policies.
129. The statement explained that when she began working with the Firearms

Licensing Department it became apparent that there were no documented procedures, other than for firearms at an operational level and that the licensing staff tended to work to national guidance. She recalled raising this issue with her manager, who tasked her with writing local policies. At this point, she was the Information Disclosure Manager; this role included responsibility for Firearms Licensing. She stated that she became heavily involved in the work of the Department at the time, due to the volume of work they were experiencing. Her role included providing resilience for the sign-off of applications. She explained that the task of writing licensing policies should have passed to the Licensing Department Manager, but that she was unable to take on the task due to her high workload at the time. She recalled that Deloitte's September 2011 audit of the Licensing Department highlighted the need to develop codified force procedures in relation to licensing.

130. She stated that she conducted research in preparing the policies, and that her main method of research was to review the policies used by other forces.
131. When the policies were drafted, she passed them to her manager for review. They were then passed to the Licensing Department Manager for comment; she did not recall any comment being made. A brief period of consultation commenced; this was initially scheduled to last only one day but was subsequently extended to one week, a significant contraction of the usual 3 week consultation period. The policies were subsequently publicised on the force intranet. The policies are titled as follows:
 - Gwent Police Firearms Licensing: Revoking a Firearms Certificate (No Good Reason)
 - Gwent Police Firearms Licensing Application Procedure
 - Gwent Police Firearms Licensing: Revoking a Firearms Certificate (Public Safety) Procedure
 - Gwent Police Firearms Licensing Renewal (Failure to Apply)

Procedure

- Firearms Licensing Administration Policy

Copies of the policies were shown to FEO E in the course of this investigation; he advised that he was not aware they had been drafted. This is of great concern, given that Mr E is a key member of the Licensing Department. Mr E expressed concern about the level of knowledge of licensing law response officers possess; he explained that there had in the past been issues where officers had seized weapons but not certificates, thereby allowing the subject the opportunity to buy more weapons or ammunition. Mr E explained that there was no corporate training on firearms licensing law, but that the Department had posted a presentation on seizing weapons on the force intranet and that this was publicised periodically. He also advised that the Department had produced a video on the packaging of weapons for the information of Gwent Police officers and staff.

132. The current licensing policies are not drafted consistently in that they sometimes refer to firearms only and sometimes refer to both firearms and shotguns. The 'Revoking a Firearms Certificate (No Good Reason) Procedure' refers to revocation of a firearms certificate under s30B of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) (sic- s30A governs revocations) but is silent on shotgun revocations which are governed by s30C of the Act. The 'Refusal/Revocation of Certificates' guidance reiterates the points made in the 'Revoking a Firearms Certificate (Public Safety) Procedure'.

Firearms Guidance from the BMA Ethics Department

133. In July 2011 the BMA issued guidance to doctors on certifying 'fitness' of patients to hold firearms by acting as countersignatories/referees to shotgun or firearm certificates. The guidance also offered advice on notifying the relevant authorities when an individual legally held firearms or shotguns but was deemed unfit to do so.
134. In 2010 the BMA agreed with ACPO that, when an individual applied for a

certificate or applied to renew a certificate, a letter would be sent from the police to his or her GP, informing them of the fact. If there were no concerns, the letter did not require a reply. The letter provided an opportunity for the GP to alert the police to any medical concerns that may have a bearing on an individual's ability to safely possess a shotgun or firearm. Unless the GP considered that the patient presented an immediate risk of serious harm to themselves or others, consent for any disclosure was required from the patient. The guidance currently provided to the medical profession on the BMA's website indicates that letters are now sent post-grant. The Gwent Licensing Department follows this procedure.

135. It is submitted that issuing letters post-grant creates a risk that an applicant with health issues that could impact upon their suitability to hold a certificate (such as mental health issues or substance abuse) could be issued with a live certificate (and therefore be able to purchase weapons and ammunition) before their GP was given an opportunity to provide information. The BMA is still in consultation with the Home Office and ACPO in relation to this matter.

Risk based approach to renewals

136. Chapter 10 of the Home Office 2013 Guide on Firearms Licensing Law refers to a 'risk based assessment' in relation to the grant or renewal of a firearms certificate. The Guide indicates that such an approach may indicate the need for an interview with the applicant, which may be conducted over the telephone. The Guide accepts that chief officers may decide a home visit is not necessary in respect of all applications to renew firearms certificates. Chapter 11 of the Guide concerns shotgun certificates; it is silent on the issue of a risk based approach to renewals.
137. The Gwent Police Data Management Department Manager advised that a risk based approach to shotgun certificate renewals was implemented in Gwent on 1 August 2012. She explained that the approach was only used for cases deemed to be low risk; in such cases a certificate was issued on

the basis of checks made on police systems, before a letter had been sent to the applicant's GP and before a home visit had been conducted. The aim of the new process was to reduce the volume of shotgun renewals that related to expired certificates and to promote a customer focussed service, by processing applications on the basis of date of receipt, as opposed to date of expiry.

138. There are clear financial benefits in adopting such an approach, as outlined in the National Policing Improvement Agency's 2011 Firearms Licensing Scoping Study which identified that: *'as a result of budget pressures, some forces have adopted a risk-based approach to renewals, relying on intelligence checks rather than visits to ensure applicant suitability'* , but there are also a number of risks. Gwent's Firearms Licensing Department is currently unable to keep up with the post-certification home visits required for low risk applicants. Some applicants were issued with certificates some 10 months ago but have still not been visited at home. It is submitted that a person's circumstances could change considerably over such a long period of time and that the delay in conducting home visits could lead to the force being unaware of significant changes that could lead to a 'low risk' applicant becoming a greater risk. This is of particular concern when one considers that, on the basis of incidents brought to the attention of the Licensing Department, Mr Parry would have fallen into the 'low risk' category.
139. The risk based approach to renewals has now been adopted by a number of forces nationally; HMIC's most recent (2002) thematic inspection in relation to firearms licensing recommended that home visits be conducted for all grants and renewals (recommendation 9). ACPO's 2002 'Administration of Firearms and Explosives Licensing Procedural Good Practice Guide' indicates that home visits should be conducted in respect of all applications for renewal. Gwent's current practice is in keeping with the Guide in that home visits are still performed but the delay in carrying them out is significant. In addition, the risk based approach is not reflected

in current force policy: it is recommended that the new approach is included within the policy when it is reviewed in light of the 2013 Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law.

Firearms warning flags

140. Gwent Police Firearms Administrators attach command and control warning flags to the addresses of firearms/shotgun certificate holders. The text of the flag reads 'F'ARMS/S'GUN CERTIFICATE'.
141. When an incident is reported in relation to the address of a firearms licence or shotgun certificate holder, the flag results in the incident appearing on the ORIS 'Local Sig. Warnings' (LSW) list; typing the word 'gun' in as a search parameter, brings up a list of all incidents relating to addresses with the 'F'ARMS/S'GUN CERTIFICATE' flag. This list is referred to by staff in the Licensing Department as the 'night report'. FEO E interrogates ORIS on a daily basis to search for incidents that have occurred at addresses bearing firearms/shotgun warning markers. If an incident occurred away from the address bearing the flag, the incident could be picked up on a separate report, but only if the person holding the certificate was taken into police custody.
142. If any incidents reported in respect of addresses bearing the firearm/shotgun warning flag caused concern, consideration would be given to whether action was necessary, such as seizure of weapons or revocation of a firearm or shotgun certificate. An applicant's suitability to possess a firearms/shotgun certificate could be reviewed in the event of concerns about reported incidents. Where the Licensing Department takes action in relation to incidents appearing on the 'night report', details of the action taken are noted on the National Firearms Licensing Management System (NFLMS).
143. Given this operational practice, in respect of the incident reported on 1 May 2013, the initial report to police was made from Mrs Parry's mother's address. As such, Mr Parry's firearms marker did not appear on the

incident log, as the warning flag was attached to the ex-marital address in Croesyceiliog, where the certificate was registered and the weapons stored.

144. The Firearms Licensing Department was not aware of this incident, as it was not automatically flagged to the Department by a command and control warning flag. As officers who dealt with the matter did not refer the incident to the Firearms Licensing Department, the Department remained unaware.
145. In addition, where a domestic incident is reported from an address that has no firearms warning flag, the Licensing Department will not be aware of any seizure of weapons/certificates, unless proactive steps are taken to notify them.
146. The DAU was aware, through the incident log, that Mr Parry possessed weapons and was accused of stalking behaviour, but took no steps to notify the Firearms Licensing Department of Mrs Parry's report in order that suitability checks could be conducted.
147. Firearms Enquiry Officer E advised that he would have considered a home visit in respect of this incident, if the Licensing Department had been aware of it: *'Having reviewed the log, I believe divisional officers should have referred the same to the Firearms Licensing Department, as Mrs Parry raised public safety concerns with regards to her estranged husband's possession of shotguns'*. In the absence of a command and control warning flag, there were two opportunities for this incident to be notified to the Department: by way of a referral from response officers or by way of a referral from the DAU; neither made a referral in respect of this incident.

Conclusions

Attendance on 1 May 2013 and 2 May 2013

148. The officer who attended Mrs Parry's mother's address on 1 May 2013

obtained an account from Mrs Parry, completed a DASH form with her and took steps to ensure that Mr Parry was visited the next day to be given advice about his conduct.

149. However, she did not appropriately risk assess the incident: given the number of high risk factors present, together with Mrs Parry's fears about her husband's possession of shotguns, Mrs Parry should have been assessed as being at high risk of serious harm. The officer had a clear, considered rationale for her risk assessment but this was flawed and it raises performance issues (it is, however, noted that the DAIU is responsible for quality assuring risk assessments to ensure that they are appropriate, a point considered in more detail below).
150. It is recommended that the officer attends a DASH refresher course and that she is required to complete the NCALT Stalking and Harassment package.
151. PC B's response indicated a lack of understanding of the purpose of the Police Information Notice (PIN) and the circumstances in which it can be issued, as she suggested that a Police Information Notice (PIN) is appropriate only where a course of conduct is present. This is not correct: Police Information Notices should not be used where a course of conduct is evident, as such cases should be investigated with a view to prosecution. ACPO's 2009 Practice Advice on Investigating Stalking and Harassment indicates that a Police Information Notice (PIN) can be used in circumstances where the police wish to inform a suspect that their actions may (in the event of repetition) constitute an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
152. In respect of Christopher Parry's actions, there was only one incident, not a course of conduct. In such circumstances, a Police Information Notice (PIN) could have been issued to formally notify him that any further, similar conduct could amount to an offence. Service of a Police Information Notice (PIN) would have put Mr Parry on notice that his behaviour was unwanted and would make it more difficult for him to argue that any future, similar

behaviour was reasonable. In addition, the fact that a Police Information Notice (PIN) had been served could have been used as evidence in respect of any future proceedings.

153. Given that Mr Parry had admitted the behaviour subject of the complaint, the issue of a Police Information Notice (PIN) would have served as a form of early intervention, making clear to him that any reoccurrence could constitute a criminal offence, with the aim of preventing escalation. Decisions to issue PINs should be authorised by a supervising officer, therefore PC B would have been required to radio her Sergeant for advice, a step she chose not to take on the basis she was able to deal with the matter herself. This matter is viewed as a performance matter as opposed to misconduct, as the officer misunderstood the purpose of the Police Information Notice (PIN).
154. In respect of the complaint that PC B did not take a sufficiently robust approach to the incident, it is clear from the officer's account and from the contemporaneous notes added to the incident log that she provided Mr Parry with advice about his conduct and informed him of the potential consequences in the event of a reoccurrence. She also advised both Mr and Mrs Parry that future contact should be made via a third party. The officer's account betrays a lack of understanding of the purpose and function of the Police Information Notice (PIN); however, whilst a PIN would have been appropriate in the circumstances, it was not mandatory- it would, however, have reinforced the seriousness of repeating his behaviour.
155. PC B's written response indicates that she did not make a firearms licensing referral because there was no indication of violence- it is apparent that there were, however, a number of troubling indicators in relation to Mr Parry's behaviour, as reflected on the DASH form completed by the officer who spoke to Mrs Parry on 1 May 2013. PC B's understanding of the circumstances in which a firearms referral is appropriate is narrow, in that violence is only one circumstance that could

trigger suitability checks. This is deemed to be a performance issue.

156. PC B mistakenly believed that a DASH form was yet to be completed, and updated the log to indicate: *'A DASH will be required from Caroline'*. Mrs Parry was subsequently contacted by officers and *'was adamant she has already completed a DASH and is understandably reluctant to complete again.'* The officer who completed the DASH with Mrs Parry had updated the log earlier that evening to indicate *'DASHRA (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Risk Assessment) will be uploaded onto DAMS as soon as log transfers across'*, PC B had access to the log and should have fully appraised herself of the detail before attending the incident. The update entered onto the incident log by the officer who spoke to Mrs Parry on 1 May does not, however, reflect the gravity of the risk factors identified through the DASH process: she indicated that Mrs Parry's concerns were 'not great' and that there were no offences or complaints - there clearly was a complaint, which had prompted police involvement.

PC B

157. The officer took steps to advise Mr Parry about his conduct and noted the steps taken on the ORIS log. The officer admitted that she had disclosed some detail of her personal circumstances to Mr Parry but this is not deemed inappropriate in the circumstances: the officer advised Mr Parry that she understood the position he was in due to her own experience, but also advised him that his behaviour was inappropriate and could not continue.
158. On the basis of the evidence gathered in the course of the investigation, it is concluded that PC B has no case to answer for misconduct. However, a number of performance issues have been identified. It is recommended that PC B is required to complete the NCALT Stalking and Harassment package which addresses the purpose of the Police Information Notice (PIN). It is also recommended that she is debriefed on this incident, in order that she understands that a PIN could have been served in the circumstances she was presented with. It is considered that PC B would

benefit from the preparation of an action plan to address the shortcomings in her understanding, and to reinforce the need to fully appraise herself of log details before attending an incident.

Attendance on 20 May 2013

159. On the basis of the incident reported, the officers' actions in respect of Mr Parry were reasonable, in that the incident did not concern him or his status as a shotgun certificate holder: he was a witness to an incident involving his mother and his estranged wife. The incident appeared on the Firearms Licensing Department's 'night report', despite PC A's failure to refer the matter to them, as the ex-marital address bore a firearms warning marker. The Licensing Department did not take any action in relation to the matter, on the basis there were no risks in relation to Christopher Parry, who played only a peripheral role in the reported incident.

PC A

160. The key concern in relation to this incident is that the incident log was closed before the officer had added an update; in addition, the incident log indicated that PC A was sent a Short Text Message (STM) which he did not action. The officer stated that he cannot recall whether he received a Short Text Message (STM) in respect of the matter or not, but on the balance of probabilities it is concluded that he did, given that the incident log was updated to indicate a Short Text Message (STM) had been sent and that he was aware. PC A explained that the Short Text Messages (STM) are generally vague, however they clearly provide a log number as well as sufficient information to allow officers to locate the log and take the action required. Given that it is more likely than not that PC A had a Short Text Message (STM) to action, it is therefore concluded that PC A has a case to answer for misconduct.

161. A complaint was made to the effect that the officers did not take action in respect of Christopher Parry's weapons despite his aggression at the scene and that their attendance was rushed. Both officers who attended remarked on Christopher Parry's brother's expressed dissatisfaction with their attendance, for which he later apologised, and both officers stated that Christopher Parry was not aggressive at any time during their attendance. It is evident from log 78 of 20 May 2013 that Caroline Parry made an allegation that her husband was being aggressive towards her. However, this report was made before the officers attended; both officers stated that Caroline Parry made no complaints about his conduct when they attended and neither officer observed anything in Mr Parry's behaviour that gave them cause for concern. The officers' conduct in light of the information they possessed at the time was both reasonable and proportionate. The officers assisted in returning property to both Caroline Parry and her daughter, liaised with both parties to the dispute, carried out enquiries with neighbours and liaised with a supervisor in relation to the incident. The attendance lasted approximately an hour, therefore the officers committed significant time to resolving the matter.

Complaints against police

Complaint 1

162. The complaint that PC B did not take a sufficiently robust approach to Mrs Parry's report that her husband had followed her is not upheld on the basis of the evidence outlined above.

Complaint 2

163. The complaint that PC A and PC C did not take any action in relation to Mr Parry's shotguns is not upheld on the basis of the evidence outlined above.
164. However, it is recommended that it is appropriate for learning and performance issues to be raised in respect of PC A's failure to action a Short Text Message (STM) and his failure to complete the DASH form as

fully as was possible in the circumstances.

Complaint 3

165. The complaint that Gwent Police did not deal with Mrs Parry's report about her husband's alleged refusal to return her passport is not upheld. However, it is recommended that Control Room staff are reminded of the importance of sending incidents that could potentially relate to coercive control to the DAU.

Recommendations

166. Following evaluation of the evidence gathered in the course of this investigation, several findings have been made in respect of misconduct and performance issues for individual officers.
167. A number of organisational recommendations have also been made, given that several key shortcomings raised in this investigation concern policies, systems and processes, the timely implementation of national guidance and the need for a systematic approach to training. These recommendations have been collated in a separate learning report.
168. The recommendations concern the Gwent Police response to alleged domestic abuse and the need for fully informed risk assessments, together with effective oversight arrangements. These should be set in the context of a local domestic abuse policy which should also include consideration of firearms licensing issues in respect of alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse. The recommendation has also set out the urgent need to implement the ACPO Stalking Screening Tool and to ensure that all officers complete the NCALT Stalking and Harassment e-briefing package.
169. This investigation has outlined a series of events that had the most tragic conclusion, causing Caroline's family and friends unimaginable distress and suffering.
170. It is clear from the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report that there are misconduct and performance issues for individual officers

and a number of organisational shortcomings that Gwent Police needs to address. It is, however, impossible to say whether Caroline's tragic and brutal death could have been prevented, had Gwent Police dealt differently with Mr Parry.

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