

Domestic Homicide Review Information Leaflet for Family Members



Home Office

What are Domestic Homicide Reviews?

Domestic Homicide Reviews are one way to improve responses to domestic violence and aim to prevent what happened to your family member happening to others. They will try to ensure that public bodies like social services, councils, police and other community based organisations understand what happened that led to the death of your family member and identify where responses to the situation could be improved. From this, the public bodies hope to learn all the right lessons including those which impact how they work together. These reviews will not seek to lay blame but to consider what happened and what could have been done differently. They will also recommend actions to improve responses to domestic violence situations in the future.

Domestic Homicide Reviews are part of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and became law from 13th April 2011. They do not replace but will be in addition to the inquest or any other form of inquiry.

Who will undertake the review?

A review team will be formed of members of local statutory and voluntary bodies but it will not include any officials who have been directly involved in the case. The review team will look at how the entire community's response to domestic violence could be improved to help better support victims.

Your involvement in this review

We think friends, family members and other people who knew the victim and perpetrator are the best people to help officials understand what happened. Victims often tell their family about the abuse they suffered and, sometimes, about their experiences in asking for help. It follows that family members can help public bodies to identify what lessons should be drawn from this tragedy, so your voices need to be heard.

Taking part in the review

If you do decide to take part in the review, you will be asked by the review team to share your understanding of what happened and why. This might include your thoughts, memories and point of view on any aspect of this tragedy. The review team are trying to ensure that the circumstances around the death of your family member are understood as far as possible and that learning is used to prevent further deaths in the future. As part of this, you might know about attempts your family member made to seek help from public bodies, community organisations and others because sometimes not all of these contacts are known to the review team. You might also want to recommend other persons you think should be invited to submit a view.

You can give your thoughts and views in all or some of the following different ways:

- In writing or via a recording
- Via a telephone conversation
- Face-to-face meeting with some of the reviewers. This meeting would not take place in a court and you would not be asked to share your thoughts under oath. The reviewer would ask questions to assist the discussion and the whole process would last no longer than a few hours or as long as you feel able to participate.

What happens to the information you share?

The information you share will help the review team to build a comprehensive picture of what happened before the homicide and in turn will help the team formulate their recommendations for change. These recommendations will then be put into an action plan. Your input will be confidential and you will not be named in the review report.

Your contribution will be valuable and may help change the way the community, including public bodies, respond to victims of domestic violence.

How long will the review process take?

There is no set time frame for a domestic homicide review but it is anticipated that it will start about one month after the death. The review should be completed within about six months but could be longer depending on the outcomes of other inquiries, for example, any ongoing criminal proceedings against the perpetrator.

What does the review produce?

- A detailed report and summary of that report which will be available on a public website
- An action plan to ensure any recommendations made in the report are taken forward appropriately

Next steps

The decision to take part in this review is entirely yours and if you do not wish to take part your decision will be respected. We may need to contact you again to let you know when the review has been completed.

If you would like to take part or have any further questions about the review process please contact the person who has signed the letter attached to this leaflet. They will either answer your questions or direct you to someone who can.

Further information and support

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247 or www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327 or www.mensadvice.org.uk

GALOP: 0800 999 5428 or galop.org.uk

AAFDA (Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse): 07768 386922 or www.aafda.org.uk

National Homicide Service: 0845 3030 900 or www.victimsupport.org.uk

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