



Home Office

Domestic Homicide Review Statutory Guidance

Government consultation

This consultation begins on **1 May 2024**

This consultation ends on **1 July 2024**

About this consultation

To: Organisations, agencies, practitioners and individuals who coordinate and conduct DHRs, and those who are responsible for creating, leading and overseeing local and national action plans. In addition, this Statutory Guidance may also be of use to the family, friends and community of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) involved in DHRs.

Duration: From [01/05/24] to [01/07/24]

Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to: Email: DHRReform@homeoffice.gov.uk

How to respond: Please submit your response by 01/07/24 via:
Online form OR
Email: DHRReform@homeoffice.gov.uk

Additional ways to respond: DHR Reform Consultation
Home Office
5th Floor Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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Ministerial Foreword

Domestic abuse and domestic homicide are despicable and destructive crimes, which is why tackling them demands a whole-system response. Protecting the public is a top priority for this Government and that is why we are taking action and focussing on prevention, victim support and the pursuit of perpetrators to transform the whole of society's approach to domestic abuse.

In March 2022 we published the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan to drive these efforts forward. The Plan outlined reforms to the Domestic Homicide Review process, including refreshing the accompanying statutory guidance. This will provide more information on conducting Domestic Homicide Reviews in instances of suicide or unexpected deaths following domestic abuse, introduce a 'Scoping Review' to improve how early learning is recorded and actioned and defining the formal roles of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and Police and Crime Commissioners, to ensure local and national learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews is implemented and leads to real change.

We owe it to the victims and their loved ones to keep the momentum in reforming the Domestic Homicide Review process. Learning lessons in isolation isn't enough; we want to go further and make sure we are reviewing all the data at our disposal to better understand all deaths related to domestic abuse. That is why we have built an online repository of Domestic Homicide Reviews, which went live in June 2023. This will help to improve the whole of society's understanding of the triggers and patterns in domestic abuse related deaths.

This consultation demonstrates our commitment to continuing to improve the way Domestic Homicide Reviews are conducted in close partnership with the family and friends bereaved by domestic abuse, the domestic abuse sector, academics and Community Safety Partnerships. By actively engaging with those involved in the Domestic Homicide Review process to create the statutory guidance, we hope to ensure that the process remains victim focussed and acts to prevent these terrible crimes from happening.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation and your contributions to the Domestic Homicide Review process overall. This is extraordinarily important work; as well as my gratitude, you have my enduring admiration and respect.



Laura Farris MP

Minister for Victims and Safeguarding

Executive summary

Domestic abuse is the most common form of violence against women and girls and the Government is committed to ensuring it is doing everything it can to better understand how to protect victims and prevent it. Tragically, in some cases, domestic abuse (DA) can lead to the death of a victim. It is horrendous and pervasive and still too often hidden from view. A DHR is an opportunity for national and local agencies, local communities and society to pay attention to each individual victim and to treat every death as preventable.

This Government has already taken steps to improve its response to DA, including by increasing funding for vital support for victims and survivors, passing the landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ('the DA Act 2021') and publishing the Tackling DA Plan in 2022. The Plan invests over £230 million of cross-Government funding into tackling this heinous crime. This includes over £140 million for supporting victims and over £81 million for tackling perpetrators. The 2022 Plan also set out the Government's intention to reform the DHR process, recognising there is room for improvement.

DHRs were legislated for via the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (DVCVA), and in 2016 the Government updated the statutory guidance to include instances where a victim has died by suicide. We are now revisiting the statutory guidance to ensure DHRs continue to drive learning and action to prevent domestic abuse related deaths.

In our consultation of June 2023 on legislative changes to DHRs, we sought views on changing the name to reflect the range of deaths which fall under the scope of a review and updating the legislation to ensure a DHR is commissioned when the death has, or appears to have, resulted from domestic abuse as defined by the DA Act 2021. As a result of the consultation findings, we have decided to make these legislative changes and will be inserting a new section in the DVCVA providing for Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews to replace Domestic Homicide Reviews under section 9 of that Act in England and Wales. The current section 9 and the reference to Domestic Homicide Reviews will remain for Northern Ireland. The final version of the Statutory Guidance will reflect these changes once the Bill has received Royal Assent. In this consultation, we are seeking views on this renewed version. Our aim is that the changes will aid the completion of high quality, thorough and informative reviews, which will enhance local and national learnings, ultimately working to prevent all domestic abuse related deaths.

Introduction

This document sets out for consultation the updated Domestic Homicide Review Statutory Guidance. This comes as key legislative changes to the DHR process are set to be made. The new guidance also seeks to better reflect current processes, for example, changes have been made to reflect when a victim of domestic abuse has died by suicide. Further amendments can be found under 'The proposals'.

The consultation is aimed at those organising, conducting and participating in a DHR. This includes Community Safety Partnerships, the DHR Chair and Panel, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Police and Crime Commissioners, organisations working with victims, perpetrators, commissioning services (including the police, local authorities and the NHS) and the family, friends and community of the victim. This is applicable to all those listed operating in England and Wales.

We wish to hear from the following groups through this consultation:

- Law enforcement agencies (police, policing body, Crown Prosecution Service);
- Healthcare organisations;
- Local Authorities (including Community Safety Partnerships);
- Educational institutions or student bodies;
- Violence Against Women and Girls organisations;
- Specialist 'by and for' services who may be able to offer specific expertise on issues affecting local communities;
- Domestic abuse related death organisations; and
- Family member or friend bereaved by a domestic abuse related death.

However, this list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in or views on the subject covered by this paper.

The proposals

The revised DHR Statutory Guidance includes a number of amends and additions. These include:

- The inclusion of guidance and information for reviews that cover where a victim has died by suicide, neglect or in unexplained circumstances;
- Details on how and when perpetrator engagement should be conducted;
- Details on how to ensure a DHR uses a trauma-informed approach;
- Details on how to ensure the DHR takes a victim-centred approach;
- An outline of the role and responsibilities for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and Police and Crime Commissioners;
- The introduction of a new 'Scoping Review' process to ensure all potential DHRs are progressed; and
- The inclusion of a 'DHR Toolkit', which includes templates to support those completing DHRs.

Questionnaire

<https://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/dhr-guidance/>

We would welcome responses to the following questions set out in this consultation paper.

1. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

- Individual
- Organisation

[if 'Individual then Q2, if Organisation then Q3]

2. If you are responding as an individual, please select the option which best describes your status.

- Family member or friend bereaved by domestic homicide
- Family member or friend bereaved by another type of domestic abuse related death (not a homicide)
- DHR Chair or Panel member
- Academic / researcher / student
- Other (please specify):

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the option which best describes the type of organisation.

- Law enforcement agency (police, policing body, Crown Prosecution Service)
- Healthcare organisation
- Local Authority
- Community Safety Partnership
- Educational institution or student body
- Violence against women and girls charity / service provider
- Other (please specify):

Click or tap here to enter text.

4. What is the name of the organisation?

[Text box]

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. From the list below, where are you or your organisation based?

- National
- South West

- South East
- North West
- North East
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East of England
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- London
- Wales
- Another part of the UK

6. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 1: 1 Purpose of a DHR’ in terms of content or clarity?

- Yes
- No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 1: 2 Criteria and definitions for a DHR’ in terms of content or clarity?

- Yes
- No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Do you think ‘Figure 1: Domestic Homicide process map’ is useful?

- Yes
- No

Please provide explanation for your answer in the text box below.

[Text box]

Click or tap here to enter text.

9. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 4 Notification of a death to the Community Safety Partnership’ in terms of content or clarity?

- Yes
- No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

10. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 5 Scoping Review process’ in terms of content or clarity?

- Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

11. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 6 Coordinating a Domestic Homicide Review at a local level’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

12. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 7 Conducting the Domestic Homicide Review’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

13. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 8 Compiling the Domestic Homicide Review’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

14. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 9 Parallel Reviews’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

15. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 10 Criminal investigations’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

16. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 11 Coronial Inquests’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

17. Do you have any comments on Section 1: 3 and Section 2: 12 ‘Conducting a DHR in Wales: The Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

18. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 13 Anonymisation’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

19. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 14 Data Protection’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

20. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 15 Home Office Quality Assurance Board’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

21. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 2: 16 Publication’ in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

22. Do you have any comments on ‘Section 3: Implementation of Learning – Making the Future Safer’ in terms of content or clarity? Please specify which subsection you are referring to or enter ‘No’ if no further comment.

[Text box]

Click or tap here to enter text.

23. Do you think the DHR Toolkit is useful?

Yes

No

24. Do you have any comments on the 'DHR Toolkit' in terms of content or clarity?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

25. Do you think there are any ways that the guidance could be improved overall?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

26. Is there anything missing in the guidance that you would like to see included?

Yes

No

[Text box if answered yes]

Click or tap here to enter text.

Thank you for participating in this consultation.

About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

Full name	
Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (for example, member of the public)	
Date	
Company name/organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Postcode	
If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick box)
Address to which the acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above	

If you are a representative of a group, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

Contact details and how to respond

Please complete your response online via
<https://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/dhr-guidance/>

OR send your response by 01/07/24 to:

DHR Reform Consultation
Home Office
5th Floor Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Email: DHRReform@homeoffice.gov.uk

Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Home Office at the above address.

Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available online at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/updating-the-domestic-homicide-review-statutory-guidance

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from
DHRReform@homeoffice.gov.uk

Publication of response

A paper summarising the responses to this consultation will be published in due course. The response paper will be available online at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/updating-the-domestic-homicide-review-statutory-guidance

Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Home Office.

The Home Office will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.



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