

## Domestic Homicide Review Guidance

**What is a Domestic Homicide Review?** A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:

- i. a person to whom s/he was related or with whom s/he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship,
- ii. a member of the same household as her/himself.

held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

Where a victim took their own life (suicide) and the circumstances give rise to concern, for example it emerges that there was coercive controlling behaviour in the relationship, a DHR can also be undertaken, even if a suspect is not charged with an offence or they are tried and acquitted.

DHRs were established on a statutory basis in April 2011, under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), and revised Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews ('the statutory guidance') was issued in 2016. The statutory guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>.

**What is the purpose of a DHR?** DHRs look at how local professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together and identify what needs to be changed to reduce the risk of a homicide happening again. DHRs aim to:

- Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims
- Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result
- Apply those lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate
- Help services work to prevent domestic violence and improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working.

**Who is responsible for DHRs?** Depending on where the victim lived, either the Brighton & Hove Safe in the City Partnership (<https://www.safeinthecity.info/>) or the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership (<http://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/index.php>)<sup>1</sup> is responsible for a DHR.

**Establishing a DHR** – When a domestic homicide occurs, Sussex Police will inform either the Safe in the City Partnership or the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership in writing of the incident. However, any professional or agency may refer a case in writing if it is believed that there are important lessons to be learnt.

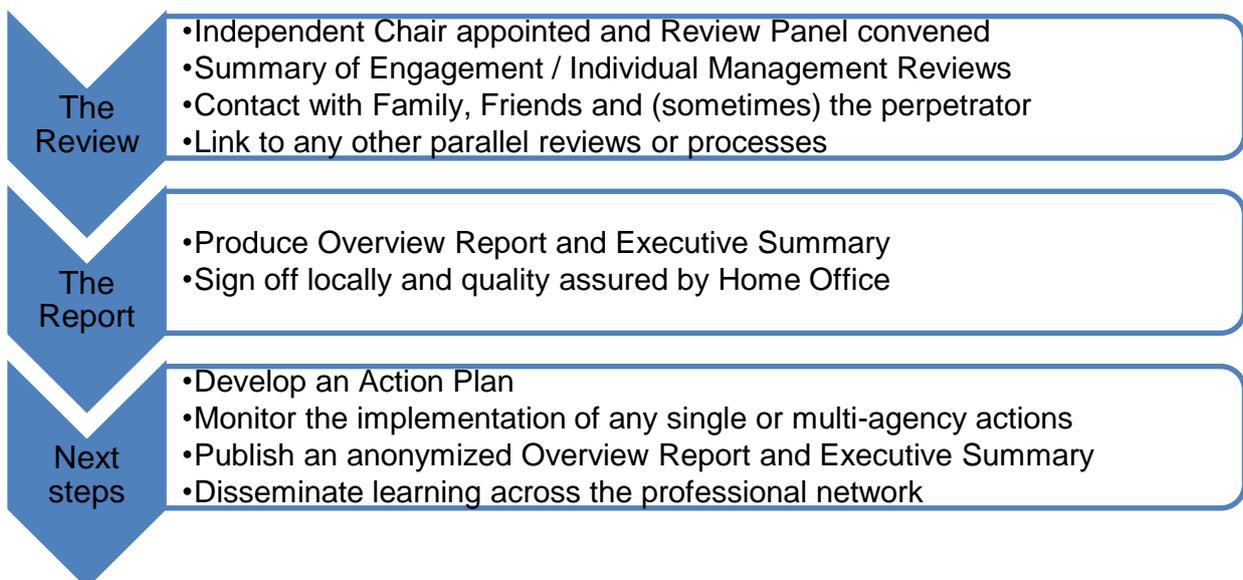
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<sup>1</sup> Where a DHR occurs in East Sussex, the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership will liaise with the local District and Borough Community Safety Partnership around any decision.

The chair of the relevant partnership holds responsibility for establishing whether a homicide is to be the subject of a DHR by giving consideration to the definition set out in section 1 of the 2004 Act – see section 2 of the statutory guidance. This decision is taken in consultation with local partners with an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and abuse.

The decision on whether or not to proceed with a DHR should be taken by the chair of the relevant partnership within one month of a homicide coming to attention.

**How is a DHR conducted?** The statutory guidance sets out the process for conducting a DHR, which in summary has three stages:



When a DHR is undertaken the local Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) and / or Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is also involved where appropriate.

**What information is published locally?** When completed, an Executive Summary and Overview Report are published on the partnership's website. Other resources (like briefing documents or training sessions) will also be made available.

**Useful resources** – The Home Office has published a range of useful resources about DHRs, including leaflets for family, friends and employers. These can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-statutory-guidance-for-the-conduct-of-domestic-homicide-reviews>.

Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AFFDA) provides emotional, practical and specialist peer support to those left behind after domestic homicide, as well as advice and training to professionals. AFFDA has a range of information and resources available at <https://aafda.org.uk/about-us/>.

### Further information

#### Brighton & Hove

<https://www.safeinthecity.info/domestic-homicide-reviews>

#### East Sussex

<http://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/Domestic%20Homicide%20Reviews.html>

For further information contact James Rowlands, the Strategic Commissioner by email ([James.Rowlands@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:James.Rowlands@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk)) or telephone (01273 291032).