

16 June 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Update on delivery of Domestic Homicide Review Reform

I hope this letter finds you well. I wanted to write to you to provide a brief update on the progress and developments we have made on the delivery of the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Reform commitments made in the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan. We recognise all of the dedicated and thoughtful work that goes into DHRs from Community Safety Partnerships, Review Chairs, local panels, family advocates, the Quality Assurance Panel and many more besides, and so want to take this opportunity to update you on our progress and again ask for your expertise, as we know improving the DHR system will be a collective effort.

DHR Legislation Public Consultation

Through the process of redrafting DHR statutory guidance, it became apparent that legislative amendments are required to ensure any changes to the DHR process are robust. As such, we have launched a public consultation today to invite feedback on two issues.

Firstly, the consultation asks whether the definition of a DHR should be amended so that a DHR is commissioned when a death has, or appears to have, resulted from domestic abuse as defined by the Domestic Abuse (DA) Act 2021. The DA Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse and explicitly including this definition for when a DHR should be considered will ensure that DHRs continue to contribute to our understanding of DA, and capture learnings to prevent fatal domestic abuse.

Secondly, the consultation considers whether the term the 'homicide' should be amended in DHRs to reflect the range of the deaths which fall within the scope of a review, such as suicides related to domestic abuse. We are responding to stakeholder feedback that the term 'homicide' can be confusing for bereaved families and friends as well as practitioners when reviewing a case that has not been ruled a homicide. In particular, families and friends bereaved by suicide linked to domestic abuse have been calling for alternative naming conventions for DHRs.

This consultation outlines our commitment to continuing to improve the way DHRs are conducted in close partnership with family and friends bereaved by domestic abuse, the domestic abuse sector, academics, and Community Safety Partnerships.

The consultation can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-homicide-review-legislation-consultation> until 11 August 2023. We look forward to hearing your views and encourage you to circulate the consultation to your networks.

DHR Statutory Guidance

We continue to redraft the statutory guidance and are grateful to those that have generously provided feedback on their experiences of the DHR process and how we can strengthen the next version of the guidance. We have also been working closely with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's office to determine how their roles will be reflected in the statutory guidance.

We will be formally consulting on the statutory guidance later this year and look forward to receiving your feedback on it.

DHR Library

To ensure all DHRs are accessible to the public, relevant stakeholders, and researchers, we have been working to build an online tool that will house all DHRs. A single home for DHRs means that it will be easier to analyse the reports to understand key trends, factors and risks relating to domestic homicides. Thank you to all those that have been supporting the testing of the DHR Library, we are pleased to inform you that the beta version of the DHR Library will be launched this summer. We hope this tool will support in allowing easier access to material that can help us to learn from previous reviews and ultimately, prevent future deaths.

DHR Chairs Training

We are exploring how to best implement a new training plan for DHR Chairs and will be working alongside our commercial colleagues to procure a high-quality service that represents value for money. We will provide an update on how potential providers can register their interest to deliver the service in due course.

The ongoing implementation of DHR Reform commitments are integral to driving systematic change across government and tangible improvements in services for victims locally. We continue to be grateful for your support as we work to make sure the DHR process is working as effectively as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Lynne Abrams

DHR QA Panel Chair

Deputy Director of the Interpersonal Abuse Unit
