

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

8 JUNE 2016

DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW UPDATE

Background

1. Community Safety Partnerships are required to carry out reviews into Domestic Homicides. In Leicestershire and Rutland we have a single approach where the Safeguarding Boards are commissioned to manage Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) processes on behalf of Community Safety Partnerships.
2. The actions arising from Domestic Homicide Reviews are not managed through safeguarding Board processes, but by the Leicestershire County Community Safety Team on behalf of Community Safety Partnerships and monitored through the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board.

Current DHRs

3. There are currently 2 Domestic Homicide Reviews underway in Leicestershire and a further case is under consideration within the review process.

Action Plans

4. Action plans from all domestic homicide reviews are collated into a single master plan. Progress is reported to the Board on an annual basis. From 2016/17 progress updates will be collated by the Community Safety Team on a quarterly basis.
5. There is currently no process in place for revisiting completed actions to identify the ongoing impact of those actions.
6. The outstanding actions in the master action plan can be found at Appendix 1. This includes an update on all actions identified as outstanding at the last report to the LSCSB in June 2015. The full action plan is available if required.
7. With regard to single agency actions at the end of the year (March 2016):
 - Police are still to confirm all actions relating to 'Mary' DHR are complete and that learning from 'FN' DHR has been disseminated.

- Swanswell have confirmed that they have rolled out their approach to DASH and all relevant staff have received DASH training.
 - Leicestershire County Children's Social Care have yet to confirm whether they have completed case audit to check compliance with supervision policy with regard to case closure.
8. With regard to multi-agency actions at the end of the year (March 2016) all multi-agency actions for the domestic violence delivery group were completed apart from the following:
- **A review of how domestic abuse is covered within multi-agency case management processes.** This is currently being finalised, and will be completed by the end of May.
 - **Finalising a framework of pathways for domestic abuse support.** This was delayed by the commissioning of Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland joint services for those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, but is now underway to report later in 2016.
 - **Determining an approach to working with businesses to develop employment policies regarding domestic abuse.** An approach has been identified working with Respect? This has not been implemented due to changes in the domestic abuse partnership structure and other priorities within the Leicestershire County Community Safety Team.
9. Actions from the Appreciative Inquiry into an incident in Hinckley in 2014 are being finalised and will be added into the plan.

Funding Arrangements 2016/17

10. In 2015/16 the budgeted contributions from the police, district partners and Rutland were not drawn down due to the level of reserves that had built up in the DHR pot. Charnwood chose to contribute in 2015/16 in place of 2016/17. At the end of 2015/16 £25,500 remained in the DHR pot and has been carried forward.
11. Funding contributions for 2016/17 are as previous years:
- £30,000 from Leicestershire County Council
 - £16,000 from Leicestershire Police
 - £20,000 from CSPs/District Councils (£2,500 per district area and Rutland) (£2,500 of this already in pot from Charnwood)
12. This covers costs as previously agreed:
- £40,500 to the Safeguarding Board Business Office for officer and admin support to manage the processes
 - £25,500 for independent chairs and authors based upon an estimate of £8,500 per DHR
13. The Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Business Office have identified that the contribution agreed four years ago will not cover the costs of the agreed staffing this year, being short by £1,589, and have requested that they receive £42,089 instead of £40,500 to cover this.

14. Future arrangements and amounts will be considered as part of the review.

Review of Domestic Homicide Review processes

15. The current Domestic Homicide Review processes for Leicestershire & Rutland, including partner contributions have been in place since 2012. It was agreed these would be reviewed in 2016/17 for a revised agreement to come into place for 2017/18 onwards after 5 years of the original agreement.

16. The review will consider:

- Volume and geographical spread of DHRs compared with predictions.
- Cost of DHRs and contributions from agencies
- Processes for carrying out DHRs, including time taken to complete reviews and how learning is reviewed

17. An initial review of some of these areas is outlined below.

Volume and Geographical spread

18. When the DHR agreement for Leicestershire & Rutland was drawn up it was forecast that there would be 2-3 DHRs per year in Leicestershire evenly spread across geographical locations.

19. In the 4 years since April 2016 there have been 4 standalone DHRs in Leicestershire and Rutland, 1 joint DHR and serious case review, 1 alternative review on a case that involved domestic abuse, but did not meet the DHR criteria, and 1 further case being considered for a DHR.

20. These 8 cases are split across three districts. The detail of this will be outlined at the meeting.

21. Whilst we have seen less than 2 reviews per year, there has been a significant increase in the number of reviews in neighbouring Leicester City Council area over the past couple of years.

22. It may therefore be prudent to base costs going forward on two and a half DHRs per year.

Cost of DHRs and partner contributions

23. The arrangements have a ringfenced budget of £66,000 per year based upon 3 DHRs per year. This was based upon the following budgeted costs:

- £40,500 to the Safeguarding Board Business Office for officer and admin support to manage the processes
- £25,500 for independent chairs and authors based upon an estimate of £8,500 per DHR

24. Contributions from partners were agreed as follows:
- £30,000 from Leicestershire County Council
 - £16,000 from Leicestershire Police
 - £20,000 from CSPs/District Councils (£2,500 per district area and Rutland)
25. Costs of DHRs have varied. Costs for independent chairs and authors of the initial DHRs were significantly higher than forecast. A revised approach was put in place after these DHRs to address this, including independent chairs from partner agencies (Leicestershire County Council in all cases) and setting expected costs for independent authors at the outset. Recent DHRs will come in below the original budgeted costs. Final costs for these are not yet known, as they are still underway though this does not take into account the uncharged cost of the time of the independent chairs, both of which have been provided by Leicestershire County Council.
26. The agreement with the Safeguarding Board Business Office did not take into account increases in salary and other staff costs.
27. Contributions from partners have been carried forward when not utilised. In 2015/16 because of the smaller number of DHRs than forecast the contributions from Leicestershire Police, District Councils and Rutland were not drawn down to prevent the reserve for reviews growing too large.
28. Contributions to the pooled budget for this process do not come from all responsible authorities within CSPs, notably providers of probation services and Clinical Commissioning Groups do not contribute to this budget.

Timeliness of DHRs

29. The prescribed timescale for DHRs to be carried out within the Home Office guidance is 7 months from the date of the incident. The decision to carry out a DHR should be made within one month and the review then carried out within 6 months.
30. The 4 full DHRs have all taken more than a year from the incident occurring to the final report being sent to the Home Office for approval. Decisions have been taken between 1 and 3 months following the incident. The commissioning of an author usually takes around 1 month, with a further delay until the first panel meeting can take place for availability. Therefore in most cases the first DHR panel meeting has not taken place until 3 to 4 months after the incident. In many cases criminal trials have also delayed the DHR process.

Findings of DHRs

31. All completed Domestic Homicide Reviews in Leicestershire have found the incident was not predictable or preventable, however all have also identified learning from action taken that can be used to improve services. Much of the

learning is for individual agencies involved, with a few multi-agency learning items in each review.

32. Current DHRs appear to have no apparent domestic abuse links at this time, with more learning relating to health agencies.

Initial recommendations with regard to the agreement and process going forward

33. It is recommended that

- a) The update on Domestic Homicide Reviews in Leicestershire is noted
- b) The allocation to the safeguarding Board Business Office is increased to £42,089 for 2016/17 as outlined in paragraph 13.
- c) A more detailed review is undertaken, considering:
 - Revised costs for the management of the process and cost of each review
 - Basing the budget on a lower average number of cases
 - Revised contributions across partners
 - Improving the timeliness of reviews
 - The process for action plan monitoring and follow up of impact of reviews.

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