

Leicestershire & Rutland

Domestic Homicide Review Management

Local Procedural Responsibilities

**Setting out procedural responsibilities within delegated local arrangements
to manage Domestic Homicide Reviews**

Introduction

1. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) are required by statute with responsibilities to facilitate reviews incumbent on local authorities and partners through Community Safety Partnerships.
2. However, given the infrequency of such occurrences retaining staff in localities with the requisite knowledge and expertise to deal with them effectively and efficiently could prove problematic.
3. As a solution, centralised arrangements were first agreed in 2013 to support local authorities and partners meet their statutory responsibilities. This document reviews, clarifies and updates responsibilities incumbent on parties within these local arrangements.
4. This document should be read in conjunction with two key documents:
 - i. “The Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews”, produced by the Home Office.
 - ii. “The Leicestershire & Rutland Domestic Homicide Reviews: Local Procedures”, produced by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office. Please note: This document is being updated and temporarily unavailable.
5. This document does not seek to replicate the procedures set out within the above publications, rather it supplements them, adding clarity regarding principles and responsibilities governing local arrangements and the potential consequences of divergence from them.

Background

6. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This provision came into force on 13th April 2011, requiring local authorities and partner agencies to devise a process underpinned by the statutory guidance provided.
7. In 2013 The Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board (LSCSB), on behalf of local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and the Safer Rutland Community Partnership all agreed that DHRs will be

conducted across Leicestershire and Rutland as part of the Serious Case Review (SCR) arrangements.

8. The LRSCSB is now the Leicestershire & Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board (LRSCSB) and LRSCB the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP).

Governance

9. The Leicestershire & Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board (LRSCSB), in conjunction with the LRSCP and the LRSAB, are responsible for agreeing the overall DHR arrangements across Leicestershire and Rutland.
10. The LRSCSB will also be responsible for securing the necessary funding via agreed partner contributions to support the DHR process, including addressing any shortfall arising out of an unexpected increase in numbers of DHRs in any given year.
11. The Leicestershire and Rutland SCP and SAB Case Review Group (CRG) is made up of cross-agency safeguarding specialists. The CRG will oversee and manage DHRs on behalf of the LRSCSB and CSPs in Leicestershire and Rutland. Any potential or current cases will be discussed and planned for in the Joint Section of the Subgroup's meeting which takes place monthly. An extraordinary meeting can be convened to discuss a case if required.
12. The Chair of the geographically relevant CSP will be responsible for individual DHR decisions as detailed in statute including the requirement to hold a DHR. Such decisions will be supported by recommendations from the monthly CRG meeting.

The DHR Local Pathway Prerequisites

13. The DHR process timeline is covered in the next section; however, in order for the process to work successfully all those involved must:
 - i. Adhere to the strict lines of communication set out within appendix 1. These can appear repetitive and may at times produce short delays; however, they are designed to build in checks and balances and formally record and time decision making. This is particularly important given the delegated actions within the process.

- ii. Under no circumstances should contact be made directly outside the lines of communication stated, e.g. omitting the Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office (SPBO) and contacting the Home Office directly. This can potentially lead to adverse consequences not least voids in knowledge amongst parties involved, omissions or duplication and the potential for misinformation being generated.
- iii. All those involved must declare any conflict of interest no matter when it arises; this is particularly important for the Independent Chair/Author and the CSP Chair as the statutory decision maker. Declarations regarding independence are required within DHR reports. Any subsequent revelation could seriously undermine the independence of the process.

A failure to adhere to these principles, or undertaking actions that would undermine them, could adversely affect decision making and impact confidence and trust amongst the constituent agencies. The consequences are covered below in 'divergence from agreed process'.

The DHR Process

- 14. At the point of referral, a potential DHR triggers agreed actions under local arrangements. These actions are set out in detail within the 'DHR Timeline' at appendix 1.
- 15. The timeline shows a clear interdependency for all parties involved in the DHR, adhering to the procedures outlined is vital for the effective and efficient passage of the DHR from notification through to conclusion.

Divergence from agreed process

- 16. A delegated process exists to address the absence of local safeguarding expertise liable due to the infrequency of DHRs. For this reason, the CRG, made up of safeguarding experts from across partners and specialist officers from the SPBO will advise, support and engender informed decision making by the CSP Chair.

17. As final decision maker the CSP Chair can, following due consideration, disagree with the recommendations from CRG. If this is the case, the CSP Chair must clearly state their rationale for doing so in writing to the CRG Chair. This will trigger a further detailed scrutiny and appraisal of the case by the CRG. The CSP Chair and relevant Borough/District Council Lead Officer may be asked to attend the CRG meeting, allowing the CSP Chair to present their reasons for further discussion.
18. If the CSP Chair and/or the District/Borough lead officer undertake actions which may have the effect of undermining the delegated management of the DHR this would trigger intervention by the CRG. Any issues will be discussed and minutes taken at the CRG meeting with a view to seeking resolution.
19. If disagreement remains then continued management of the case under the delegated process may be untenable. For example, where the legal advice and decision of the CRG is that the criteria for a DHR is not met but the CSP Chair takes the opposite view...
20. In these circumstances management of the case would then have to sit outside the delegated management process. It would revert directly to the relevant CSP area, without support from the CRG and SPBO. The relevant CSP would be responsible for the establishment and administration of the DHR (including all factors set out at paragraph 24 below) and the specified persons or bodies should be asked to participate in it.

There would be no corresponding rebate of funding costs (see agreed amounts at para 27 below) – the relevant CSP area would have to fund the cost of the review in addition to any amount already contributed to support the delegated arrangements.

Training and Development

21. This document and the procedure documents itemised in paragraph three are good reference sources – the first document outlines national guidance and the second local process. A copy of the statutory guidance is attached at appendix 2, the local procedure document will follow once updated.
22. There is also additional free online training available which would be beneficial to CSP Chairs. Further detail is also outlined at appendix 2.

23. The SPBO Officers also have a wealth of experience and can readily provide advice and guidance to the CSP Chair and District & Borough via the LCC Community Safety Team contact.

Resources and Funding

24. There are two elements to the additional resources required to support the DHR process:

- a. Commissioning of the Independent Chair/Author and associated costs such as panel expenses, venues, travel and refreshments.
- b. Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office (SPBO) support including:
 - i. Managing and coordinating the documentation from a number of agencies involved in the process
 - ii. Arranging and supporting meetings
 - iii. Support to the Independent Chair/Author and Panel members
 - iv. Support to the Case Review Group (CRG)
 - v. Use of IT systems such as the "Chronolator" to 'timeline' DHR events and agency interactions
 - vi. Liaison with individuals and agencies relevant to the DHR
 - vii. Family meetings & Prison visits with the DHR Chair/Author as required.

25. The additional office support required by the SPBO for 3 DHRs per year when originally agreed in 2013 was estimated to require a part time Safeguarding Officer post and a part time administration post. This estimate was based on three DHRs in a year, the cost of commissioning the Independent Chair/Author and associated costs. This estimate was, at the time, in the region of £25.5k whilst the cost of the additional Business Office staff would be £40.5k per annum, including on costs. Total estimated costs of undertaking 3 DHRs per year were estimated to be £66k.

26. The above approximations are conservative. The number of DHRs, their complexity and the time employed in managing them has increased considerably since 2013. There is, quite rightly, a far greater focus on family involvement in the DHR process, all of which has to be carefully managed and is time consuming. Furthermore, the criteria for undertaking a DHR have also broadened since 2013, for example, suicides with allegations of coercive control are now subject of DHR.

27. Partner agencies have agreed to contribute as follows; these amounts remain unchanged from the original agreement but are subject to annual review:

I. Leicestershire County Council	£30k
II. Leicestershire Police	£16k
III. Rutland County Council	£2.5k
IV. District Councils x 7 @ £2.5k	£17.5k

28. The Panel Independent Chair/Author will be commissioned by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board on behalf of individual CSPs (including Rutland CC) on a case-by-case basis. However, the actual procurement and appointment of the Panel Independent Chair/Author will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office on behalf of the LRSCSB.

29. The funding for the additional SPBO staff will be provided on an annual basis to enable the Business Office to appoint the required staff on an on-going basis as DHR commitments vary.

30. The Community Safety Team of the County Council will lead on invoicing partner agencies and transferring the funding to the Business Office for both the on-going staffing costs and the costs of commissioning the Independent Chair/Author on a case-by-case basis.

Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Process Timeline

Key Principles

- Follow the lines of communication, circumventing them has the potential to lead to statutory non-compliance and other unintended consequences.
- Declare any conflict of interest as soon as it comes to light.
- Act promptly, others in the 'chain' may be reliant on your response
- Maintain confidentiality, sharing information on a 'need-to-know' basis using secure local authority email.

Glossary

LCC CST - Leicestershire County Council Community Safety Team

SPBO - Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office

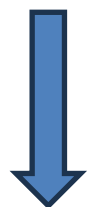
CRG. - Leicestershire & Rutland Case Review Group (Joint Section)

HO. - Home Office



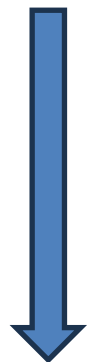
DHR Referral

- DHR Referral (Usually by Police)
- SPBO receive the referral form and in-turn advise LCC CST.
- SPBO will place case on Safeguarding CRG meeting agenda... meeting 1st Thursday each month.



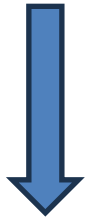
Initial Notification to CSP

- LCC CST act as liaison and will inform the relevant District/Borough community safety lead officer.
- The D&B lead officer will inform their CSP Chair & advise LCC CST of time and date this was done for SPBO records.
- LCC CST inform SPBO Officer regarding completion of the initial notification.

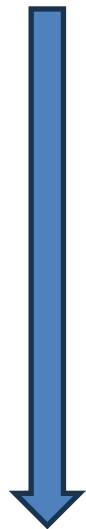


CRG Discussion

- The case is presented (by referrer) and discussed at the CRG. The CRG will assess if the case meets the criteria for a DHR and provide a steer and recommendation to CSP Chair. If required, any additional work/info will be commissioned to facilitate informed decision making. In some cases a decision may be deferred to the next CRG meeting.
- Discussions will also include additional matters such as criminal proceedings and/or other agency reviews running in tandem. Consideration will also be given as to whether an alternate review process may be more appropriate such as a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR).

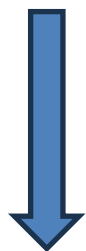


- Discussions may also include the likely complexity of the case e.g. if the independent chair/report author should be separate functions or could be carried out by a single individual.
- CRG is additionally supported by advice from LCC legal services.
- LCC Community Safety sit on CRG and act as liaison between CRG, SPBO and the District/Borough/CSP and will convey relevant updates to them.



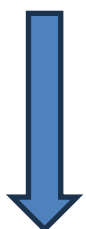
CSP Chair Decision

- LCC CS Rep informs District/Borough CS Lead/CSP Chair of CRG recommendation.
- CSP Chair is the statutory body who will decide if a DHR is to be instigated, in Leicestershire & Rutland this decision is supported by expert advice and recommendations via the above CRG process.
- The CSP Chair will decide if a DHR is to be commissioned and advise the District/Borough lead officer if they concur or otherwise with the CRG recommendation. The District/Borough lead in-turn will advise LCC Community Safety Officer who will liaise with SPBO.
- If the CSP Chair disagrees with the CRG recommendation they must detail their rationale in writing to the CRG Chair using the same channels of communication.
- The case will be re-examined at the CRG. The CSP Chair and District/Borough lead officer may be asked to make representations directly at the CRG meeting to support their position.
- If the disagreement cannot be resolved continued delegated management of the DHR case will become untenable and the DHR will revert to local management by the relevant CSP.



HO Informed

- If the CSP Chair concurs with the CRG recommendation the SPBO will formally notify the HO in writing of the CSP Chair decision, date and time is recorded.
- The SPBO officer will liaise with the HO and follow the lines of communication via LCC CST when passing information/liasing with the District/Borough lead officer and CSP Chair.



SPBO initial actions

- If the decision is to instigate a DHR the SPBO will by this point have appointed a dedicated SPBO officer for the case.
- SPBO will start an initial information trawl across agencies to gauge agency involvement with the homicide family/victim/perpetrator, this will inform panel makeup and scope of the DHR.

- A recruitment process will be commenced by SPBO to appoint an independent panel chair/author and with support from partners an appointment/s is made.

Panel Convened

- The initial information trawl will inform which agencies should form part of the panel. The panel will determine its terms of reference and scope of the DHR at an early stage. It will also determine whether any additional agencies need to be involved in the review.
- The panel will include a senior District/Borough Council Officer from the relevant CSP and the LCC CST representative.
- Other factors may govern when a panel can actually start reviewing a case e.g., criminal and coronial considerations. SPBO will liaise with Police Senior Investigating Officers and Coroners Officers to ensure there is no conflict.
- CRG will be updated at its monthly meeting regarding case progress to ensure cases are being dealt with expeditiously and efficiently and render remedial support as required.
- The SPBO Officer may on behalf of the DHR Chair convene a meeting to brief agency information authors. In most cases this will be: a chronology; an Independent Management Report (IMR) which details the relevant information from agencies. The content of the IMR must include an analysis of involvement which identify any single or multi agency practice/systems issues and highlight actions to address these. At a later stage in the process IMR authors may be required to produce an anonymised version of their report, using the anonymisation code agreed by the DHR Panel.
- In some instances, agencies, with very limited involvement, may be asked to provide a Factual Summary Report with specific questions framed from the Terms of Reference.
- The Panel will review all of the IMR and Factual Summary Reports and draw out the main themes to be addressed by the Independent Chair/Author within their report.
- The report recommendations must be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) actions and include proposals as to how these could be achieved and by whom and within specified timeframes.
- In preparation for submission of the report to the HO the DHR Report Author may be required to prepare an anonymised version of the Overview Report and an anonymised Executive Summary.
- The number of panel meetings varies, most will meet 5-6 times, factors affecting this may be the complexity of the case and number of agencies involved and the cooperation from perpetrators, family and friends.
- Many DHR's typically will identify actions which participating agencies will start to address prior to review conclusion.

Monitoring Case Progress

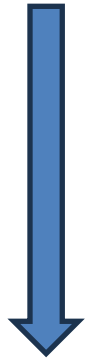
- The CRG will continually monitor DHR case progress and receive regular updates at its monthly meeting from the SPBO.
- The SPBO officer will also ensure the HO is kept updated regarding case progress and informed of any significant delays etc. any such contact however will be done in partnership with the CSP Chair (who has statutory responsibility to keep the HO updated) and will be notified and asked to concur with any communications. This will follow the usual line of communication via the LCC CS Rep and District/Borough lead Officer.

DHR Report & Recommendations

- Toward the latter stages of the DHR the panel will decide the format and scope of the final report, these matters will be discussed in more detail in a 'specific' DHR Publication Meeting' but it will also be important to consider some elements at this stage. For example, the panel will be cognisant at this point of any additional factors determining the family's wishes regarding any pseudonyms to be used in the report and any redaction required to protect vulnerable individuals and/or children. there may for example be a requirement for the author to produce an executive summary for publication with the main report remaining confidential.
- A series of recommendations and an action plan will be formulated along with the final report.
- The SPBO Officer will complete the relevant Master Action Plan which the CRG will oversee until all actions are evidenced and completed. If there are any specific actions for the CSP or LRSCSB these will be shared immediately.
- The CRG will be given regular progress updates from the SPBO Officer and will receive the final draft of the Overview Report and the Executive Summary for quality assurance purposes and to agree the final content for publication. The DHR Author will make any required alterations.

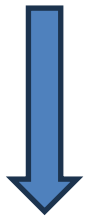
CSP Sign Off

- The SPBO Officer in collaboration with the Independent Chair/Author will collate the final report, action plan and letter outlining the DHR findings etc on behalf of the CSP Chair and send these to the LCC CS lead requesting sign off.
- The LCC CST Rep will likewise forward and liaise with the District/Borough lead officer to facilitate sign-off by the CSP Chair.
- Statutory responsibility for production of the report and action plan remains with the CSP Chair and as such it is for the CSP Chair to



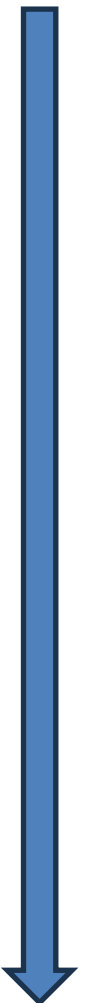
advise if the report is approved and/ or indicate any additional work required.

- It is important to return documents ASAP particularly if further work is requested.
- If approved the CSP Chair will advise the District/Borough lead officer who will in-turn advise the LCC CST that the report is signed-off. LCC CST will formally advise the SPBO officer.
- The SPBO Officer will forward to the HO on behalf of the CSP Chair.
- The CRG will be informed of any decisions actions taken as part of its monitoring function.



HO QA Panel

- The HO Quality Assurance Panel will scrutinise and feedback regarding the report and action plan and may indicate additional work required.
- This may take some time due to HO workloads, the panel will when satisfied with the report/action plan authorise publication.



Publication

- The CRG will consider the publication of the case in line with statutory requirements. N.B - careful consideration must be given to any compelling reasons relating to the welfare of children or other persons directly concerned in the review e.g. it may not be in their best interests to put the reports into the public domain. If a departure from the statutory guidance is considered then legal advice should be sought in these circumstances, together with ratification from the Independent Chair of the DHR and the Chair of the relevant CSP.
- Once any remedial work is completed and the above considered a publication meeting will be convened. SPBO will arrange the meeting which will be chaired by the LCC Community Safety Team Manager.
- Membership will include key members from the panel including the District/Borough lead officer together with the media lead officers from the main organisations impacted by the DHR.
- The meeting will confirm scope of any publication (There is a presumption of publication to show transparency of process) and ensure any limitations placed on publication are both justified and are defensible.
- Crucially the meeting will determine a publication date and ensure it is sensitive to family wishes etc e.g. anniversary of death etc. It will also determine which agency will take primacy for any media interest or approach.
- The SPBO Officer will arrange publication on a central website for Leicestershire & Rutland CC cases. The officer will also liaise with the HO regarding any additional requirements they may have specified when authorising publication.

Post DHR

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- The recommendations and action plan will usually have been highlighted at an early stage; agencies involved in the DHR will in most cases be addressing issues well before DHR publication.
 - The actions must be 'SMART', specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.
 - There may be ongoing remedial actions/work by individual agencies or more broader actions by partnerships required.
 - Addressing individual agency actions will be the responsibility of the relevant agency, the agency and individual responsible will be identified in the action plan.
 - For broader cross agency actions, the action plan must identify a body/group/lead agency responsible for completion e.g. the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Co-ordination Board. The Board meets quarterly, any remitted DHR actions will form a standing agenda item.
 - Monitoring of DHR actions/recommendations will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Partnership Business Office as part of a commissioned service on behalf of the relevant Community Safety Partnership. The SPBO will direct any remedial actions required to ensure completion of actions/recommendations.

Domestic Homicide Reviews – Training Resources

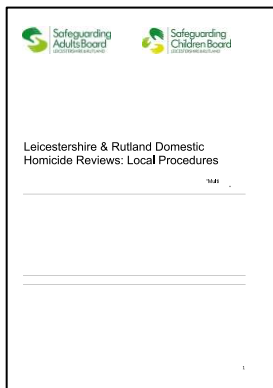
There are some useful DHR training resources available...

The two documents referred to in paragraph 3;

1. The Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of Domestic Homicide Reviews”, produced by the Home Office.

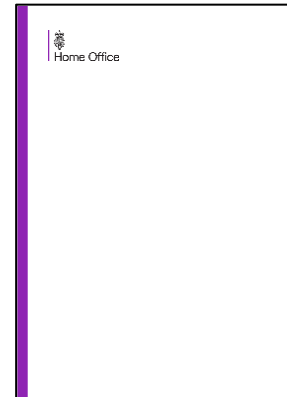


- 2.



3. “The Leicestershire & Rutland

Domestic Homicide Reviews: Local Procedures”, produced by the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office. This document is being updated and currently unavailable, a revised version will be added when published.



4. Govt (Home Office) website... <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/domestic-homicide-review> this link contains a repository of all relevant DHR documents.
5. An online learning course is available ‘Conducting a domestic homicide review’, the course is separated into two modules;

Module 1: Introduction to the domestic homicide review process

Module 2: The chairperson’s responsibilities and the overview report

Both modules are a must for a CSP Chair to understand purpose and ramifications of key decisions required within local process/procedure. The free online course can be accessed here...

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conducting-a-domestic-homicide-review-online-learning>

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