

Domestic Homicide Reviews – Consultation

RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

The Department of Justice (DOJ), is seeking your views on a proposed model for the introduction of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in Northern Ireland, which will seek opportunities for learning from cases of homicide resulting from domestic abuse or violence.

Please use this questionnaire to tell us your views on the proposed model.

Please send your response, **no later than 5pm on Friday 28 September 2018**, to:

Department of Justice
Community Safety Division
Room A4.03
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3SG

Tel: 028 9052 3772

E-mail: DOJCommunity.SafetyUnitProjMailbox@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Confidentiality and Access to Information Legislation

The Department intends to publish responses to the consultation and a summary response report on our website. Any contact details or information that will identify a respondent as a private individual will be removed prior to publication. All information will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Your information will not be shared outside of the Department.

What rights do you have?

- You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being processed, and access to your personal data;
- You are entitled to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete;
- You have a right to have personal data erased and to prevent processing, in specific circumstances ;
- You have the right to 'block' or suppress processing of personal data, in specific circumstances;
- You have the right to data portability, in specific circumstances;
- You have the right to object to the processing, in specific circumstances;
- You have rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

Respondents should also be aware that the Department's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) may require that any responses not subject to specific exemptions under the Act be communicated to third parties on request.

If you have any concerns about how your personal data has been handled please contact the **Departmental Data Protection Officer**:

Tel: 028 9037 8617

Email: DataProtectionOfficer@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

Northern Ireland Information Commissioner's Office

3rd Floor

14 Cromac Place

Belfast

BT7 2JB

Tel: 028 9027 8757 or 0303 123 1114

Email: ni@ico.org.uk

Website: www.ico.org.uk/

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and providing input to this consultation.

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU

Consultee Details

Question (a):

I am responding as... *(Please tick one option only)*

A member of the Public

On behalf of an organisation

Other.....*(Please specify)*

Question (b):

In some cases, the DOJ might need to contact respondents to seek further clarification on their response or to send out a summary of responses to the consultation.

Please tick the below consent box if you are willing to provide the DOJ with contact details for these purposes:

All information will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Name:	[redacted - personal information]
Job Title: <i>(if applicable)</i>	Safeguarding Children Nurse Specialist
Organisation: <i>(if applicable)</i>	NHSCT
Address:	Alder House, Antrim Hospital Site
City/Town:	Antrim
Postcode:	BT412RL
Email Address:	[redacted - personal information]

This consultation seeks views on a proposed model for the introduction of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in Northern Ireland, which will seek opportunities for learning from cases of homicide resulting from domestic abuse or violence.

Question 1:

Do you have any comments to make about the purpose of a Domestic Homicide Review?

If yes, please provide comments below.

The purpose of DHR should also be to capture;

- Victim and perpetrators family/friends perspectives about professional/organisational response to DV.
- Family reflection about how organisations worked individually and together with victim and perpetrator.

Question 2:

Do you have anything to say about when a DHR will or will not be commissioned?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- Potential for DHR and other reviews (such as CMR) especially for 16 – 18 year old to be running parallel with very similar aims/objectives. This may impact upon professionals and family members involved should the decision be made to run with 2 reviews.
- Tasks/interviews with staff/family members will need to be shared to avoid replication of work and increased stress/pressure for families and professionals.
- Will elements of reports when there is a dual process such as DHR and CMR be replicated?
- Is there an appeals process for families should a decision be made not to go to DHR when the

family are requesting DHR?

Question 3:

Do you have anything to say about what may 'typically' be outlined within the terms of reference?

If yes, please provide comments below.

Again the TOR should be compared to the TOR for any parallel reviews to prevent duplication.

Question 4:

Do you have anything to say about:

- **the knowledge and skills of the chair**
- **the recruitment and contingency for the role of chair?**

If yes, please provide comments below.

- I feel the chair needs to be independent to reassure families of an open and transparent process, therefore, drawing a deputy from the panel would not be ideal.
- Recruiting more than one Chair would be beneficial to prevent delays and would bring different qualities/skills to the process as it develops. However, there is a need to ensure underlying consistency in the process and the development of reports sharing of learning/good practice.

Question 5:

Do you have any comments to make about DHR panel membership?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- I agree there needs to be a minimum time frame for the chair and core panel members to sit on the panel. When this agreed timeframe is reached there should be a formal review of the DHR process, therefore at this early stage of development 3 years would be an ideal point to review the process.
- The idea of deputy panel members would provide an opportunity to promote different perspective/discussion between panel members about a case. However, there would need to be consistency and a clear process regarding roles/responsibilities of the main and deputy member. Having deputy and main panel members also provides an opportunity to enhance and share knowledge and skills.
- Panel membership should consider representation from education when a school aged child is involved either as victim or perpetrator or family member. Their involvement will support panel members to provide a means of driving forward the long term learning from DHR review by ensuring the learning/good practice is embedded into education programmes. Also to identify how to best engage with schools/colleges to identify how the learning from reviews is best embedded into curriculum as a means of future prevention via education.

Question 6:

Do you have any comments to make about the consideration of equality and diversity issues by the Panel?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- I strongly agree that it will be important to consult with experts and it will be important to develop a pool of experts in the review process involving BME and Traveller families. The input of experts will be invaluable to build upon knowledge and skills to help engagement with these victims and perpetrators.
- Guidance about equality and diversity and learning from the reviews will need to reach frontline practitioners to be effective. A launch and communication plan will support this but consideration should be given to supporting Trusts/agencies in the facilitation of multi-disciplinary learning from DHR reviews sessions – similar to those provided for Case Management reviews.

Question 7:

Do you have anything to say about family involvement in the process?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- Family involvement will be crucial in developing an insight of circumstances leading to the homicide from a family/victim perspective. This will also help to identify practices/processes which families found useful/challenging during the family and the victims experience of DV.
- Family involvement would be supported/enhanced if consideration was given to and advocacy service to support families throughout the process.
- The impact for families and their opinion about dual processes and the publication of different reports will need to be taken into consideration.

Question 8:

Do you have anything to say about the involvement of other individuals in the process?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- Involvement of the perpetrator and of the family/friends of the perpetrator will provide further insight and will be an important element of the learning to prevent DHR. However, for the family of the victim this may be difficult to manage as they may feel further victimised by the sheer nature of allowing the perpetrator to have a voice. Again the support/advocacy services available for both families in this stage of the process will be important to ensure they can accept the need to hear from the perpetrator.
- If the victim's family are not in agreement with involvement of the perpetrator will this be taken into consideration especially in the wider publication of reports?

Question 9:

Do you have any comments about the two key elements of the DHR process:

- (i) initial findings, learning and identification of actions needed; and**
- (ii) identification of key findings, learning, actions and longer term change**

to improve service and the response in future cases of domestic violence and abuse?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- When looking at reports from other review processes, the learning and key findings and actions that need to be undertaken frequently have similar underlying themes. If the learning from DHR is to be effective it will be necessary to look at other review processes already in use to identify the best way of sharing the learning both short and learn term with front-line practitioners to make effective change.
- Other models which fully encourages the involvement of staff in change should be considered for example the Signs Of Safety model currently being adopted regionally in which the importance of involving front line staff in managing change/improving practice is recognised and appears to be effective.
- Consultation with education providers from undergraduate level onwards needs to be considered to ensure the learning from DHR is embedded within curriculum across disciplines.
- The role and effectiveness of Routine Enquiry should be considered as part of DHR process to identify if how this is undertaken and can be strengthened in practice.

Question 10:

Do you have any comment on the approach proposed regarding gathering information, or any suggestions as to how best this could be undertaken?

If yes, please provide comments below.

As before the gathering of information when there is a dual process will need to be managed sensitively for families and professionals and duplication should be avoided.

Front line staff working with the case should be given the opportunity to speak to the panel to provide their reflection about what worked well, areas for improvement and what they feel needs to change within practice in the prevention of Domestic Homicide.

Question 11:

Do you have any comment on the suggested approach around publication of the DHR report and do you have any views on the frequency of report publication?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- Agree that reports need to be concise, meaningful and detailed logs are not required.
- A single report should be made available for families and professionals with a report published after each DHR and a yearly report focusing on key themes.

Question 12:

Do you have any comment on the potential outcome of the reviews through the development of reports?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- The production of lengthy, detailed reports may fulfil a need for families to ensure the report reflects the difficulties they have experienced when a domestic homicide has occurred in their family. However, to translate the learning into achievable actions for professionals it is important to provide a report which is succinct with focused outcomes/actions.
- Reports should recognise the challenges that exist in achieving recommendations and should look to frontline staff /teams to ask their opinions about how some of the challenges may be overcome

Question 13:

Do you have any comment on the role and scope of the Senior Oversight Forum?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- Meetings are likely to be quarterly – however, is there a minimum number of hours outside of meetings that members of the SOF will be asked to commit to?
- As outlined since 2010 an average of 5 people have been killed as a result of DHR with a peak of 11 recorded DHR in 2007/2008 - there is the potential for this role and the role of panel members to be demanding. Will the hours attributed to these positions ensure there is no delay in DHR process as a result of capacity as far as possible?

Question 14:

Do you have any comment on the organisations that would make up the Senior Oversight Forum, particularly the additional bodies that could be considered, or others that should be considered?

If yes, please provide comments below.

- Representation from education should be considered.
- A core member from mental health should be included as part of health representation given the link between mental health, domestic homicide and suicide.

Question 15:

Do you have any comment on the potential implications the proposed model may have on equality or human rights?

If yes, please provide comments below.

No comments

Question 16:

Do you have any further comment to make about the proposed model?

It would be helpful if you reference which part of the document you are commenting on. If you refer to any other documents, please provide the title, author and if possible approximate date of publication or alternatively a hyperlink if it can be accessed online.

No further comments.