

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>	Social Worker
Organisation: <i>(if applicable)</i>	Zakkon Ltd
Address:	Holywell 10-14 Bishop Street
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Postcode:	BT48 6PW
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 review should seek to identify predisposing factors in both victim and perpetrator that might have contributed to mental, ill-health in later adult life. The use of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) questionnaire would be very useful.

I have worked with many domestically abusive men and found the vast majority has experienced multiple ACE. I assume many victims would also have experienced similar trauma.

The review should identify if/when victims and perpetrators sought help and whether or not help was provided and if so the type and timing of service delivery. It would also be useful to identify the training background of the staff delivering the interventions. For example, social work training does not equip professionals to work effectively with perpetrators and yet it is often the case they are called upon to do so.

The review should establish how service delivery by properly trained staff might reduce the incidence of domestic homicide.

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Question 2:
Do you have anything to say about when a DHR will or will not be commissioned?
If yes, please provide comments below.



The commissioning of a DHR is long overdue and should be implemented as soon as is practicably possible.

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.

To identify pre-existing risk factors associated with domestic homicide.

To consider what type of intervention might be used to persuade men to adopt non-abusive modes of communication.

To consider whether social work practitioners are equipped to deal effectively with perpetrators.

To identify successful interventions from a global perspective.

To question whether the criminal justice system (Probation Service) is best placed to deliver domestic abuse prevention interventions or whether such interventions should be delivered through the independent private sector.

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.

The world of domestic abuse is already full of controversy and it is therefore vitally important that the Chair has not worked for a victim or perpetrator service.

Question 5:

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

If yes, please provide comments below.

The panel membership should include people, in equal numbers and standing, who have worked with victims and perpetrators.

However, the panel should include members who have a strong research track record so that bias is reduced through questioning that challenges existing prejudice and perspectives uninformed by the rigour inherent in research practice.

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.

Equal numbers of male and female members.

Question 7:

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

If yes, please provide comments below.

Family can provide an abundance of important information and insight and therefore should be involved.

Question 8:

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

If yes, please provide comments below.

It would be very useful to involve domestically abusive men who have changed their behaviour. Domestic abusive perpetrators blame their victims and it is the process of blaming that creates a target for the abusive behaviour, including homicide. A DHR should be looking to establish what interventions proved successful in helping abusive men to change their thinking and behaviours.

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.

There is a paucity of research-informed information regarding the most effective types of intervention that can be used to persuade and help domestically abusive men to choose non-abusive modes of communication. Current strategy is heavily influenced by the gender-based ideology and therefore limits the creation of varied approaches to tackle domestic abuse. The DHR review must ensure it considers emerging research that is often marginalised because it does not accord with the main Duluth inspired ideology that presumes ALL male domestic abuse results from patriarchy, and ONLY patriarchy. This sole explanation does not allow for a proper consideration of evidence-informed findings that are not based upon such an ideology.

It is not feasible to continue doing the same thing to address a complex social problem from a narrow perspective.

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.

Focus groups with domestically abusive men and non-domestically abusive men are vital. Without this format the DHR findings will not be as rich and deep as they ought to be.

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.

No

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.

I would hope the outcome of the DHR would lead to a better understanding of the factors associated with domestic homicides alongside an increased understanding of the most effective methods of intervention with domestically abusive men.

Question 13:

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

If yes, please provide comments below.

It should consider the weight given to victim groups who will want to influence the outcome of findings. This is to ensure a wide variety of views are sought and equal weight given to all sources.

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.

The membership of the Senior Oversight Forum needs to be balanced in terms of various interest groups. It must include, in equal numbers, those who work with victims and those who work with perpetrators. If the SOF is top heavy with members aligned to victims groups the findings will be biased and the danger is that revised working practices informed by the DHR will not alter sufficiently.

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.

The proposed model should uphold the human rights of all citizens affected by domestic abuse, including homicide, including the perpetrators.

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.