

COMMUNITY SAFETY

COST OF DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS

Background

1. This paper explains what Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) are, the associated costs and welcomes discussion on current arrangements.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

2. DHRs were established on a statutory basis under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. The Home Office have issued Multi-agency Statutory Guidance for the Conduct of DHRs. Under section 9(1) of the 2004 Act, a domestic homicide review means a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:
 - (a) A person to whom s/he was related or with whom s/he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
 - (b) A member of the same household as himself.
3. The purpose of a DHR is to:
 - (a) Establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims;
 - (b) Identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result;
 - (c) Apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate;
 - (d) Prevent domestic violence and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic violence and abuse victims and their children through improved intra and inter-agency working;
 - (e) Contribute to a better understanding of the nature of domestic violence and abuse; and
 - (f) Identify good practice.
4. When a domestic homicide occurs in Cardiff, the Police will inform the Chair of Executive Public Service Board of the incident. Following a decision to proceed, a Panel is established (**See separate briefing paper on the DHR process, Item 8.1a**).

5. Home Office Guidance states, that an independent Chair should be appointed to Chair the Panel. Where possible, this should be an experienced individual who is not 'directly associated' with any of the agencies involved in the review. The Chair should not be a member of the Community Safety Partnership, which locally means not a member of Cardiff Executive Public Services Board.
6. The City of Cardiff currently has six DHRs; of these, two are near completion, two are currently being reviewed by Panel and two are about to commence.

DHR Number	Name(s) of Victim(s)	Stage in process
DHR01	Abruas	Final report signed off by Exec PSB
DHR02	Harrington	Final report signed off by Exec PSB
DHR03	Sadler	Being reviewed by Panel
DHR04	Mayer	Being reviewed by Panel
DHR05	Simmonds/Morgan	Chair recruited and about to commence
DHR06	XiXi Bi	Chair recruited and about to commence

Core Costs

7. The principal cost associated with the undertaking of a DHR is the fee charged by the external chairs who lead the respective reviews.
8. The current approach used for the DHRs in Cardiff (including the two that are about to be undertaken) is for the same individual to chair the DHR panel and author the DHR report.
9. For the first four Cardiff DHRs, Cardiff Council commissioned Winston HR Investigation and Criminal Justice Consultancy to carry out these roles. For the two Cardiff DHRs that are about to commence, Johnston & Blockley Limited have been commissioned following a tender process.
10. The following table provides an overview of the core costs (i.e. the cost for chairing and authorship services) attributed to each of the six DHRs in Cardiff, along with a breakdown of whether these costs have been met or are still outstanding.

Domestic Homicide Review	Costs Paid	Outstanding Costs	Total
DHR01: Abruras	£2459.40	£4638.60	£7,098
DHR02: Harrington	£2,400	£4,698	£7,098
DHR03: Sadler	N/A	£7,800	£7,800
DHR04: Mayer	N/A	£7,800	£7,800*
DHR05: Simmonds/Morgan	N/A	£8,000	£8,000
DHR06: XiXi Bi	N/A	£8,000	£8,000
Total Costs			£45,796
Total Cost Outstanding		£40,936	
*Additional costs are expected due to increased costs incurred visiting family. This will be charged at £300 per day plus travelling expenses of 0.45p per mile			

11. The total cost for the Charing and Authoring of Cardiff's six existing DHRs is £45,796, for an average cost of £7,632.

Additional Costs – administrative support

12. The successful undertaking of a DHR requires significant administrative support. Typical tasks that require completion are detailed in the following table.

Domestic Homicide Review	Task
Establishing DHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending out correspondence to Agencies, Home Office & Chair • Setting up Panel meetings • Administration support to commission Chair/Author
Panel Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending out invitations/Agendas • Preparation for Panel meetings • Photo copying • Minute taking • Co-ordination of Individual Management Reports • Proof reading reports • Requesting /updates on actions form Panel meetings • Using the Chronolator tool to produce timelines • Sending out correspondence to Agencies & Home Office
Publication of DHR & monitor action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate Publication of final overview report • Request updates and collate information in relation to the action plans

13. Currently the City of Cardiff Council is able to provide some existing administrative capacity through existing resource; however this resource is only sufficient to take minutes at the meetings of the Domestic Homicide Review Panels.
14. This has meant that the vast majority of the tasks outlined in the table above have been undertaken by the officers from the Council who provide the lead role on behalf of the authority.
15. However, this is not an appropriate use of their time. As the following section outlines, the Lead Officers have a variety of other roles they need to carry out as part of the DHR process, so a more sustainable solution needs to be found for the purely administrative tasks involved in the successful undertaking of the DHR process in Cardiff.
16. A temporary full time post will be established to provide secretariat support to the process. This role will be subject to job evaluation but the estimated salary is £17419 to £20138, plus on costs.

Lead Officer Roles

17. Currently the responsibility for co-ordinating Domestic Homicide Reviews is shared between two Local Authority Officers who perform the 'Lead Officer' role for the Council. One officer has been coordinating DHRs 01, 02 and 03 and the Council's Community Safety Manager is coordinating DHRs 04, 05 and 06, and will coordinate any future reviews. The Lead Officer role includes:
 - Commissioning a Chair/ Report Author
 - Contract management
 - Liaison with the Home Office
 - Refining and developing processes
 - Ensuring that prompt action is taken to implement the review
 - Disseminating good practice
 - Providing a quality assurance function
 - Managing the implementation of resulting action plans
18. It should be emphasised that in both case, the Lead Officers are fulfilling this role in addition to their substantive posts.

Conclusions

19. The successful undertaking of Domestic Homicide Reviews is a responsibility of the Cardiff Public Services Board. The unfortunate reality is that the need for Domestic Homicide Reviews is unlikely to abate; a certain proportion of homicides committed within the city of Cardiff will fit the criteria for DHRs because of the statistical likelihood that victims will be murdered by a perpetrator they knew well.

20. The first DHRs undertaken within Cardiff have provided an excellent opportunity for learning across the partnership. The process of undertaking DHRs continues to be refined in light of the experience gained through each review and from partner feedback, and this is formalised in a separate report.
21. The cost of the Domestic Homicide Review process is currently being largely borne by Cardiff Council. The sustainability of this arrangement needs to be considered and a discussion with partners is welcomed.