Hackney Domestic Homicide Review Protocol

The revised multi agency statutory guidance for the conduct of DHRs, published in June 2013, issued under section 9(3) of the DV, Crime and Victims Act (2004), should be referred to alongside the detailed Home Office Guidance:


The Home Office guidance addresses issues to be considered and provides templates that can be used/amended. This Hackney Domestic Homicide Review Protocol summarises and in builds upon the Home Office guidance.

1. What is a Domestic Homicide Review?

1.1. 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 her/himself.

2. What is the purpose of the Domestic Homicide Review?

2.1. To assess whether agencies have sufficient and robust policies / procedures in place and whether these were understood and adhered to by staff.

2.2. To 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, how and within what timescales any lessons will be acted on and what is expected to change as a result

2.3. To apply these lessons to service responses including changes to policies and procedures as appropriate

2.4. To prevent domestic homicides and improve service responses for all domestic abuse victims and their children through improved intra- and inter-agency working. This is done through ensuring agencies are responding appropriately to victims of domestic abuse by putting in place appropriate procedures, resources and interventions with an aim to avoid future incidents of domestic violence and homicide.

3. Notification of the Domestic Homicide
3.1. The Police Borough Commander is required to formally inform the Director of Children and Families Service, and the London Borough of Hackney (The Council’s) Chief Executive, of any domestic homicide with details of all individuals in the household.

3.2. The notification from the Police Borough Commander should include:

   a) Names, dates of birth and addresses of the victim, alleged perpetrator, others in the perpetrator’s and/or victim’s household and the children of the victim and/or alleged perpetrator.

   b) An update concerning the status of the alleged perpetrator, others in the perpetrator’s and/or victim’s household and the children of the victim and/or alleged perpetrator.

3.3. The Director of Children and Families Service will be responsible for notifying the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, Head of Public Health (who heads the Child Death Overview Panel), the Independent Chair of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board and the Independent Chair of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board.

3.4. Confirmation of a decision to establish a DHR or a decision not to review a homicide should be sent by the Director of Children and Families Service to dhrenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk within one month of Police notification of the death.

4. Domestic Homicides and Serious Case Reviews

4.1. Serious case reviews (SCRs) are undertaken by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children’s Board for every case where abuse or neglect is known - or suspected - and a child (anyone under 18)

   - has died
   - has been seriously harmed and there are concerns about how organisations or professionals worked together to protect the child.

4.2. If a DHR is to take place and the CHSCB feel that the Serious Case Review criteria have been met, consideration will be given to combining all or some of the aspects of these reviews and agreement will be reached between CHSCB and Children and Families Service as to how the two processes will be integrated.

5. Domestic Homicides and Safeguarding Adults Reviews
5.1. Safeguarding Adults reviews are undertaken by City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board where an adult with needs for care and support

- has died and the CHSAB knows or suspects that the death resulted from abuse or neglect
- has experienced serious abuse or neglect

and there is reasonable cause for concern about how the CHSAB, members of it or other persons with relevant functions worked together to safeguard the adult

5.2. If a DHR is to take place and the CHSAB feel that the Safeguarding Adults Review criteria have been met, consideration will be given to combining all or some of the aspects of these reviews and agreement will be reached between CHSAB and Children and Families Service as to how the two processes will be integrated.

6. Commissioning the Chair of the Domestic Homicide Review Panel

6.1. Overall responsibility for establishing and commissioning the DHR rests with the Community Safety Partnership. The Director of Children and Families Service, on behalf of the CSP, should appoint an independent Chair of the DHR Panel who is responsible for managing and co-ordinating the review process and for producing the Overview Report based on Independent Management Reviews and any other evidence the Panel decides is relevant. The Chair should not be directly associated with any of the agencies involved in the review.

6.2. The DHR Panel Chair should author the DHR Overview Report.

6.3. It is advised that the following are considered in the selection and appointment process of the DHR Panel Chair:

   a) The prospective Chair should be asked to provide a CV and should have prior experience of chairing DHRs and/or extensive expertise on the issue of domestic abuse
   b) References from any previous CSPs who have commissioned them should be sought
   c) Anonymised published copies of previous DHR reports that the chair has authored should be requested; these should include the feedback letters received from the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel

6.4. A contract should be agreed which details the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and that of the Panel and the Council (including the CSP).
7. **Coordinating and convening the DHR Panel**

7.1. A senior manager from Children and Families Service and the Chair of the DHR Panel will agree who will provide assistance in arranging and taking minutes of meetings, producing the combined chronology and editing the final reports.

8. **Forming and populating the DHR Panel**

8.1. The senior manager from Children and Families Service should be a member of the DHR Panel and work alongside the Chair of the DHR Panel to identify and request membership of key appropriate individuals to join the panel.

8.2. The following agencies should be invited to attend the DHR Panel:

   a) Hackney Police (Community Safety unit)
   b) The Specialist Crime review Group (SCRG)
   c) Children and Families (LBH)
   d) Adult Social Care (LBH)
   e) Housing and Benefits (LBH)
   f) Clinical Commissioning Group
   g) Homerton NHS
   h) National Probation Service
   i) Hackney Community Rehabilitation Company
   j) City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board
   k) City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board.
   l) Any domestic abuse agencies known or thought to have had involvement with the victim, perpetrator or family
   m) Any other agencies known or thought to have had involvement with the victim, perpetrator or family

8.3. The Specialist Crime Review Group (SCRG) is responsible for determining who will provide the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) response to all statutory reviews. This is in addition to representation from the local Borough Police. The SCRG is also responsible for provision of the MPS response to statutory Serious Case reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews and statutory Multi-Agency public protection Arrangement Reviews. The contact number is 020 8721 4182. Notifications should be sent to: SeriousCaseReviews@met.police.uk to ensure prompt attention.

8.4. Agencies who have had no contact with the victim, perpetrator or their families should inform the senior manager from Children and Families Service and/or the DHR Panel Chair.
8.5. The Panel should include representation from a local independent specialist domestic abuse service e.g. the nia project or Refuge - even if they have not had contact with the individuals concerned - to provide additional insight and expertise.

8.6. The DHR Panel Chair has the final decision on DHR Panel membership

9. The Initial DHR Panel Meeting

9.1. The Initial DHR Panel should be convened at the earliest practicable date after the Chair has been appointed. The Initial DHR Panel should:

   a) Clarify the scope of the DHR
   b) Clarify membership of the Panel
   c) Clarify what information is needed and from whom (e.g. Independent Management Reviews)
   d) Agree how the DHR process will interact with any parallel processes e.g. Serious Case Review / Safeguarding Adults Review / criminal investigations
   e) Identify any issues likely to cause delay or require additional input
   f) Request an update from Metropolitan Police Service (potentially through a report from the Family Liaison Officer) and agencies attending the Panel regarding any issues facing the victim's family
   g) Agree any actions within agencies to address risk of harm
   h) Agree with partner agencies any actions they can take to help resolve issues for the victim's family as soon as possible
   i) Agree which family members will be communicated with by the Chair, taking into consideration issues such as their known relationship to the victim, whether they were potentially collusive, any issues relating to so-called honour based violence, their involvement as witnesses in any criminal proceedings – and how they will be involved in the DHR process, being mindful to utilise any advocates who the family are known to have identified as support. The final decision on which family members to involve in the DHR process and how rests with the Chair. Communication by the Chair with agreed family members
   j) Agree if further Panel meetings are required prior to the final Panel

9.2. Any protected characteristics of the individuals should be identified and examined and relevant community groups may be invited to join the Panel to offer expertise if required. This input may need to be commissioned if not available locally, such as an expert resource. The Chair should incorporate their contribution into the analysis of the circumstances of the death and the consideration of the protected characteristics.

9.3. The Chair should agree a process of involving agreed family members on an ongoing basis regarding the progress / outcome of the Review process and
the delivery of the action plan. This includes thinking about support around the publication of the DHR Overview Report.

9.4. The involvement of and communication with agreed members of the victim’s family should be a standing agenda item at all Panel meetings.

9.5. Members of statutory agencies who have responsibilities for completing Individual Management Reviews may also be members of the DHR Panel, but the Panel should not consist solely of such people.

10. Timescales

10.1. The Overview Report should be completed within six months of the date of the decision to proceed unless the Review Panel formally agrees an alternative timescale with the Director of Children and Families service who will respond on behalf of the CSP. Please see Appendix A (page 13) for a timeline of the DHR process in Hackney.

11. Individual Management Reviews

11.1. The Chair of the Review Panel should write to the senior manager in each of the participating agencies to commission their Independent Management Review (IMR). The IMRs will form part of the DHR Overview Report.

11.2. The aim of the IMR is to:

   a) Set out contact between the agency completing the IMR and the victim, perpetrator, any children or significant other persons.
   b) Allow agencies to look openly and critically at individual and organisational practice within their respective agencies and the context within which people were working to identify strengths and weaknesses in the agency’s systems / practice and identify whether the homicide indicates that changes should be made. Agencies may conduct disciplinary action / complaint investigations regarding specific employees due to issues relating to the DHR
   c) Identify how any agreed changes will be brought about.
   d) Identify examples of good practice.
   e) Identify actions by their agency needed to reduce harm

11.3. IMRs will in all cases be obtained from:

   a) Hackney Police (Community Safety unit)
   b) Children and Families (LBH)
   c) Adult Social Care (LBH)
   d) Housing and Benefits (LBH)
   e) Clinical Commissioning Group
12. **DHR Overview Reports and DHR Action Plans**

12.1. The DHR Overview Report should bring together and draw overall conclusions from the information and analysis contained in the IMRs and reports and discussions with or information from any other relevant source.

12.2. The presumption should be that the agreed members of the victim’s family and the perpetrator will be interviewed by the Chair as part of their work in understanding the case and writing the DHR Overview Report unless they decline or the DHR Panel feels it to be inappropriate.

12.3. The findings of the review should be regarded as ‘restricted’ as per the Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) until the agreed date of publication. Prior to this, information should be made available only to participating professionals and their line managers who have a pre-declared interest in the review. The presumption should be that these findings will be shared with agreed family members as directed by the Chair, taking into account ongoing criminal proceedings.

12.4. The Chair should meet with agreed members of the victim’s family to summarise the findings and lessons identified, outline the proposed DHR Action Plan and to check that the information contained in their draft DHR Overview Report is factually correct.

12.5. The draft DHR Overview Report should then be updated by the Chair to include the family’s input (highlighting where they agree / disagree with findings), correct any factual errors before a final draft of the DHR Overview report and DHR Action Plan are circulated to Panel members.

12.6. The Chair’s draft DHR Overview Report and Action Plan should be circulated to Panel members at least one week before the Final DHR Panel.

13. **Final Domestic Homicide Review Panel**

13.1. The Chair and Panel members should identify any issues pertaining to the draft DHR Overview Report, its recommendations and/or the Executive Summary regarding inaccuracies or issues requiring greater clarity/investigation.
13.2. The Panel should translate the recommendations contained in the draft DHR Overview Report into an Action Plan.

13.3. The Chair should make any agreed changes to the draft DHR Overview Report, the Executive Summary or Action Plan and obtain final agreement from Panel members before submitting all three to the Director of Children and Families Service, the CSP Strategic Officers Group and the Chair of the VAWG Strategic Board.

14. Community Safety Partnership approval

14.1. On receiving the Overview Report and Executive Summary the Director of Children and Families, the Chair of the CSP Strategic Officers Group and the Chair of the VAWG Strategic Board should meet with the Chair of the DHR Panel, and, as applicable, the Chair of the CHSAB /CHSCB to:

   a) Agree the content of the Overview Report, Executive Summary and Action Plan for publication, ensuring that it is fully anonymised apart from including the names of the Review Panel Chair and members
   b) Approve arrangements to provide feedback and debriefing to agreed family members, staff and the media as appropriate.
   c) If changes have been made to the DHR Overview Report, Executive Summary or Action Plan since the family gave feedback (point 37) prior to the Final DHR Panel then the family will need to be sent the finalised version before it is sent to the Home Office. Depending on the nature and number of changes a further meeting with the agreed family members by the Chair, possibly with a senior manager from Children and Families Service (Domestic Abuse Intervention Service) can be agreed.
   d) Agree how the VAWG Strategic Board will be provided with a briefing e.g. by the Chair of the DHR Panel / senior manager from Children and Families.
   e) Agree a plan to disseminate learning to staff and the wider partnership including through forums such as CHSCB, CHSAB, and Hackney Health and Wellbeing Board
   f) Sign off the Overview Report and Executive Summary
   g) Ensure that documents are not published until clearance has been received from the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel
   h) Agree that the Director of Children and Families, on behalf of the CSP, will provide the Home Office’s Quality Assurance Panel the anonymised DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary to: dhrenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.
15. **Home Office clearance**

15.1. Any revisions to the Overview Report and Executive Summary requested by the Home Office will be provided by the Chair to the Home Office DHR Overview Panel until approval has been confirmed.

15.2. The Home Office will notify the DHR Panel Chair once the anonymised DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary are cleared for publication.

15.3. The DHR Overview Panel Chair will notify the Director of Children and Families and Chair of the CSP of their approval of the documents and clearance to publish.

16. **Publication of Overview Report and Executive Summary**

16.1. Following Home Office clearance, the publication of the DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary needs to be timed in accordance with the conclusion of any related court proceedings or other review processes and with reference to Section 9 of the Home Office guidance.

16.2. The Director of Children and Families, VAWG Strategic Board and Community Safety Partnership will need to consider a media plan prior to publishing the DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary, which must include discussion with appropriate family members (and any other significant individuals such as friends, colleagues) who contributed to the review, along with the Chair of the DHR Panel.

16.3. The Chair of the DHR Panel and potentially a senior manager from Children and Families should meet with agreed family members prior to publication and go through the version of the DHR Report and Executive Summary due to be published. Any further needs for support can be followed up by the senior manager from Children and Families.

16.4. Publication of the Domestic Homicide Overview Report and Executive Summary should follow briefings with agreed family members, friends and colleagues and should avoid important dates such as the anniversary of the death and the victim’s birthday.

16.5. On receiving clearance from the Home Office Quality Assurance Group, the Director of Children and Families Service, on behalf of the CSP, should:

   a) Provide senior managers from agencies involved in the DHR with copies of the Overview Report, Executive Summary and Home Office letter confirming clearance for publication
b) Provide London’s Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime from with copies of the Overview Report, Executive Summary and Home Office letter confirming clearance for publication

c) Publish an electronic copy of the Overview Report and Executive Summary on the Council Domestic Abuse and Community Safety Partnership web pages

d) Formally notify the Chair of the Domestic Homicide Review Implementation Group

16.6. The Director of Children and Families, on behalf of the CSP, should formally conclude the Review when the Action Plan has been implemented and include an audit process.

16.7. The senior manager within Children and Families should check in with the agreed family members 6 months after publication of the DHR Overview Report.

17. Domestic Homicide Review Implementation Group + DHR Action Plan

17.1. The DHR Implementation Group’s role is:

   a) to be notified of any Domestic Homicide Reviews published in Hackney
   b) agree actions within the DHR Action Plan
   c) to implement the DHR Action Plan.

17.2. The DHR Implementation Group Chair will, upon being notified of the DHR publication, notify members of the DHR Implementation Group of its publication.

17.3. The DHR Implementation Group Chair will, upon notification of the DHR publication, convene a DHR Implementation Group to:

   a) agree which recommendations of the DHR Overview Report should be incorporated into Hackney’s DHR Action Plan and record in the meeting minutes the rationale for any recommendations not incorporated
   b) agree with agencies timescales within which they will complete actions
   c) provide support and challenge to member agencies regarding any barriers to achieving agreed actions
   d) agree a programme of training within agencies on lessons arising from the DHR
   e) agree a programme of public awareness-raising on lessons arising from the DHR
   f) agree with agencies how any media interest arising from the DHR should be responded to
g) agree whether other agencies should be invited to join the DHR Implementation Group and invite representatives from these agencies

17.4. In addition to meetings arising from specific DHR publications the DHR Implementation Group will meet twice yearly to take forward Hackney’s DHR Action Plan.

17.5. The DHR Action Plan is the primary tool for incorporating recommendations from DHRs into actions for agencies to implement to reduce domestic abuse within Hackney and to prevent future domestic homicides.

17.6. The DHR Action Plan should inform and be informed by Hackney’s VAWG Action Plan.

17.7. The DHR Implementation Group Chair will report to the VAWG Strategic Board and the VAWG Strategic Board will report to the CSP on the DHR Action Plan with reference to DHR Overview Report recommendations.

17.8. The DHR Implementation Group will, via a Children and Families senior manager, update the MARAC Steering Group and VAWG Operational Group on publication of DHRs and the DHR Action Plan.

17.9. DHR Implementation Group Meeting structure and agenda

There will be a standard agenda for meetings:

a) Welcome, introductions and apologies
b) Review minutes and actions of last meeting
c) Update from the Chair regarding uncompleted/unpublished DHRs
d) Actions needed to complete Hackney’s DHR Action Plan
e) Any feedback from the VAWG Strategic Board
f) Any other business

17.10. DHR Implementation Group Meeting timescales

a) Additional agenda items and AOB are to be submitted by members 10 days prior to the meeting.
b) The agenda and papers will be circulated 5 days before the meeting.
c) Meetings will take place bi-annually.
d) Meeting dates will be set and circulated a year in advance.
e) Minutes of and actions from the meeting will be circulated within 2 weeks of it taking place.
17.11. DHR Implementation Group Meeting membership

   a) There will be representation from all relevant statutory agencies as well as the voluntary sector.
   b) Members or their delegates should be able to commit resources to deliver the DHR Action Plan.

17.12. The DHR Implementation Group will be chaired by the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Learning, Hackney Children and Families Service.

17.13. There will be representation from the following:

   a) Hackney Police (Community Safety unit)
   b) Children and Families (LBH)
   c) Adult Social Care (LBH)
   d) Housing and Benefits (LBH)
   e) Public Health (LBH)
   f) Community Safety Partnership
   g) Clinical Commissioning Group
   h) Homerton NHS
   i) National Probation Service
   j) Hackney Community Rehabilitation Company
   k) City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board
   l) City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board.
   m) At least one independent specialist domestic abuse agency in Hackney
   n) Hackney CVS

17.14. If there is any conflict of interest arising with regards to a particular DHR, members should remove themselves from discussions / nominate a colleague from their agency to participate

17.15. The Chair will report to Hackney’s VAWG Strategic Board, identifying any strategic issues that may impact on the successful Co-ordinated Community Response Model to VAWG.

17.16. The VAWG Strategic Board may request further information from or give additional actions to the DHR Implementation Group

17.17. Children and Families Safeguarding and Learning team, will maintain the membership and distribution list.
## Appendix A - Domestic Homicide Review Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Person / agency responsible</th>
<th>Timescale (after death)</th>
<th>Date of completion / Date to be completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal notification is given to CSP Chair, Director of Children and Families Services and Chief Executive of domestic homicide with details of all individuals in the household and details of victim’s / perpetrator’s children</td>
<td>MPS Borough Commander</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal notification is given to Head of Public Health and Independent Chairs of the CHSAB and CHSCB</td>
<td>Director, CFS</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement is reached on whether to combine the DHR process with Safeguarding Adults Review and/or Serious Case Review</td>
<td>Director, CFS</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office are notified of decision to establish a DHR (including whether this is joint with SCR and/or SAR) or not to via <a href="mailto:dhrenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk">dhrenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>Director, CFS</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of DHR / joint Safeguarding Adults Review and/or Serious Case Review is formally appointed</td>
<td>Director, CFS</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed family members are written to with introduction, outline of DHR process and proposed meeting times</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial DHR Panel takes place</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed family members are interviewed</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator and any other relevant individuals are interviewed</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>16 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Management Reviews are provided to the DHR Chair</td>
<td>DHR Panel Members</td>
<td>16 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft DHR Overview Report shared with agreed family members and opportunity given for views / factual corrections</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>20 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final DHR Panel takes place</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>22 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary sent to the Director of Children and Families, Chair of the CSP Strategic Officers Group and the VAWG Strategic Board Chair</td>
<td>DHR Chair</td>
<td>24 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of CFS on behalf of the CSP send Home Office a final version of the DHR Overview Report and Executive Summary</td>
<td>Director, CFS</td>
<td>28 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following clearance from the Home Office Quality Assurance Group (timeline = weeks after clearance is given):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Mayor for Policing and senior managers from agencies involved in the DHR receive copies of Overview Report, Executive Summary and Home Office letter confirming clearance for publication</td>
<td>Chair, Director, CFS</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHR Implementation Group meets to incorporate DHR Overview Report recommendations into DHR Action Plan</td>
<td>Head of Service, CFS</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed family members are met with to discuss publication and any issues around timing and any outstanding support needs</td>
<td>DHR Panel Chair, CFS</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHR Overview Report, Executive Summary and Home Office letter confirming clearance for publication are published</td>
<td>CFS Manager</td>
<td>6 weeks (avoiding key dates)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed family members are met with to see how they are and identify any areas where support is needed</td>
<td>CFS Manager</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>