

## Where to go for support

You can contact us any time on:  
**0300 303 1984**

Or you can email us on:  
**DHRenquiries@victimsupport.org.uk**

We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents. For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using Next Generation Text (add **18001** before any of our phone numbers)
- Online: **victimsupport.org.uk**

To find out how you can help us, visit **victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved**

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**VICTIM  
SUPPORT**  
NATIONAL HOMICIDE SERVICE

# DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS:

## The role of the National Homicide Service

How your Homicide Caseworker can help

January 2020

**victimsupport.org.uk**

## Domestic Homicide Reviews

### How your Homicide Service Caseworker can help

When someone dies as a result of domestic abuse, there is likely to be a review into the circumstances that led to their death. This is called a Domestic Homicide Review, or DHR.

The local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) decides whether the circumstances meet the criteria for holding a DHR and they should let you know, normally by letter, that the DHR is happening. If you have been told there will be a DHR (or there will not be one and you think there should be) you can discuss this with your Homicide Service Caseworker (HS Caseworker).

### What is a Domestic Homicide Review?

The DHR is undertaken in addition to any criminal proceedings relating to the domestic homicide. It is an opportunity for the police, social services, and any other agencies who either interacted with your family member or should have prior to their death, to review how they respond to victims of domestic abuse. This group of agencies and individuals is called the DHR 'panel' and their role is to review all activities and interactions and learn how they can improve to try and keep others safer in the future.

A chair is appointed by the CSP to manage the review and the panel, and to make sure each agency is fully involved. Importantly the DHR Chairs also have the responsibility to make sure that you are involved if you want to be. The DHR Chair will therefore contact you to ask you if you want to be involved, if you aren't sure you can discuss this with your HS Caseworker.

Once all aspects of the review have been completed, the chair is responsible for writing a DHR Report, which should summarise all of the findings and make recommendations as to how improvements can be made.

The name/s of your family member will be anonymous and you can choose a different name (pseudonym) if you want to. It is important for you to know that the DHR is published and therefore it is important that you get to have a voice in the process and that you get an opportunity to review the final report.

### Should I get involved with the DHR?

Your involvement is really important to help give a whole picture of your family member to the chair who will be conducting the review and the agencies who form the Panel.

There are many benefits to being involved such as:

- Making sure the voice, views and experiences of your family member are central to the review; it makes the review more personal and meaningful

- You can meet the chair and the panel and help to define the scope content and impact of the review
- You will be involved in a process that can help prevent other similar tragedies
- It may be helpful to your recovery to be able to explain your version of what happened to your family member and ensure accuracy.

It is entirely your choice whether you want to be involved and if you do, how you are involved. Your HS Caseworker can discuss this with you and will support you in whatever decision you make.

You may not be ready to be involved straight away when the DHR starts, however you can change your mind. If you do, you can let your HS Caseworker know and they can contact the DHR Chair on your behalf or you can contact the DHR Chair directly.

### How can I be involved?

You can be as involved as you feel ready to be, for example:

- You can meet with the chair and the DHR Panel to discuss what happened and to explain your experience of your family member so their voice is heard in the DHR
- You can write or explain a description of your family member (pen portrait)
- You can choose a different name (pseudonym) rather than using initials, numbers or other identifiers.

This helps to make the report more personal as well as making it easier to read and understand:

- You can share your understanding of the events that led to the tragedy
- You can put questions to the panel you want the review to answer/consider
- You can review the DHR Report written by the chair before it is published to check that the views and the voice of your loved one are reflected in the Report.

### What support can I get to help me through the DHR?

Your HS Caseworker can provide you with specialist support and advocacy throughout the whole DHR process. They will also explain the role of other organisations such as Advocacy after Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) and Hundred Families, and if you wish you can be referred to them for support.

The Chair of the DHR should make sure that your ethnic, cultural and linguistic needs are taken into account and will keep you up to date with the progress of the DHR.

### How to contact and refer to the National Homicide Service

You can speak to your HS Caseworker regarding the DHR and they will be able to answer any questions and support you however you want to be involved. Or you can contact us on:

**Email:**  
**[hssupport@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:hssupport@victimsupport.org.uk)**  
**Tel: 0300 303 1984**