

Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Related Death Review Steering Group

Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

To ensure compliance and to meet the requirements of Section 9 of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004), whilst being cognisant of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and conforming to the Home Office Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) statutory guidance (issued in April 2011 and subsequently updated in December 2016). For compliance to be continued once the move to Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 has been enacted, and the supporting updated statutory guidance released and implemented.

All Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Kent and Medway agreed to a joint DHR Protocol covering all community safety partnership areas to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the county. As a result, the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) has lead responsibility for instigating the protocol on behalf of all CSPs in Kent and Medway should a domestic homicide occur.

The DHR Protocol is managed, commissioned and administered by the Kent Community Safety Team (on behalf of the KCSP) in accordance with the Home Office DHR Guidance.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- To lead the development, monitoring and implementation of processes associated with DHRs across Kent and Medway, including the intentional engagement of families where possible.
- To maximise agency co-ordination and co-operation in implementing the Kent and Medway DHR protocol and procedures.
- To monitor and report on DHR progress, prevalence, performance and activity, including the quality assurance of action plans in relation to recommendations arising from active reviews, as well as overseeing their implementation upon completion.
- To advise the Kent and Medway Community Safety Partnerships on emerging issues, priorities, solutions and the most effective use of available resources.
- To ensure that lessons learned from DHRs are cascaded to the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group, local DA Partnership Boards, MARAC Steering Group, DA Commissioning teams and agencies across Kent and Medway.
- To review and receive feedback on the quality of the work of the Independent Chairs, Review Panels and the effectiveness of the DHR protocols and procedures.

- To monitor the costs associated with DHRs, seeking to ensure best value in partnership funding spend, and report back to partners via the Kent Community Safety Partnership as appropriate.
- To monitor regional and national DHR developments and related learning.
- To collaborate with KMSAB and KSCMP to triangulate common themes and recommendations and to work on a system wide approach recommendations and learning.

MEMBERSHIP

Criteria for membership

Steering Group meetings are to be attended by; staff members that represent the organisations with a statutory duty to co-operate in DHRs (and/or Community Safety Partnerships if not listed below) as well as any other persons/agencies the Steering Group deem appropriate.

Agencies with a statutory duty to co-operate with DHRs as named in the 2016 updated Home Office DHR guidance are:

- Chief Officers of Police for Police areas in England and Wales;
- Local Authorities;
- Strategic Health Authorities established under [section 13 of the National Health Service Act 2006];
- Primary Care Trusts established under [section 18] of that Act;
- Providers of Probation Services;
- Local Health Boards established under [section 11 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006];
- NHS trusts established under [section 25 of the National Health Service Act 2006 or section 18 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006];

It is recognised that the above list does not take into consideration the subsequent reorganisation of the National Health Service and the unification of Probation providers – these agencies have been replaced in the membership list with the relevant new bodies.

It is also recognised that the Police and Crime Commissioner has a vital role to play in the DHR process and as such, a member of the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner is also invited to Steering Group meetings.

A representative from the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and Kent & Medway Safeguarding Adults Board are also invited to Steering Group meetings to facilitate the sharing of lessons learnt and good practice.

Member Responsibilities

Members should be able to:

- Effect policy and resourcing decisions on behalf of their organisation.
- Effect organisational change to address blockages, problems and barriers to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
- Take responsibility in cascading information across their organisations/partnerships.
- Provide updates on DHR recommendations.
- Nominate substitutes to attend meetings and provide Action Plan updates.

MEETINGS

Frequency

- The Kent & Medway DHR Steering Group will meet at quarterly intervals during the year as a minimum to be able to provide appropriate feedback and adequate reassurance to the KCSP at their meetings.
- Members will undertake to attend all meetings of the Kent & Medway DHR Steering Group. Members should nominate an appropriate substitute to attend in their absence where possible.

Quorum

- A meeting will be regarded as quorate if 4 or more members of the group (representing different organisations) are present.

Chair

- The Kent Community Safety Partnership (who have accepted lead responsibility for implementing DHRs across Kent and Medway) have nominated the Head of Community Safety for Kent County Council to Chair the Steering Group, with the Vice Chair being nominated and appointed from the other Statutory members. The chair(s) will be reviewed every two years.

Decision-making

- The aim is to make recommendations and decisions by consensus to ensure that all legislative requirements are met.