

By: Stuart Beaumont, Head of Community Safety & Emergency Planning

To: Kent Community Safety Partnership - 6th March 2012

Classification: For Decision

Subject: Domestic Homicide Reviews

Summary: This paper provides an update for members of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) regarding the delivery of Domestic Homicide Reviews across Kent and Medway to fulfil the statutory requirements as set out in Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This paper also provides an update regarding the financing of the review process, the associated governance arrangements and seeks KCSP approval of one draft review report and a further cross border action plan related to a Domestic Homicide Review completed by East Sussex County Council.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At a previous meeting of the KCSP it was agreed to work to one joint Domestic Homicide Review Protocol across the county covering all CSP's including Medway and that the Kent Community Safety Partnership would take lead responsibility for instigating the Protocol should a Domestic Homicide occur.
- 1.2 A joint Kent and Medway Domestic Homicide Steering Group has been established to ensure that Kent and Medway were able to meet the requirements of the Act, with regard to the implementation guidance issued by the Home Office.
- 1.3 At the time of writing this report five Domestic Homicides have occurred, 3 in Kent and 2 in Medway, which have triggered the use of the Protocols to consider the need to review the cases. All five cases have gone forward to full reviews.

2.0 Domestic Homicide Review Protocols for Kent and Medway

- 2.1 Utilising guidance issued by the Home Office, protocols have been produced and have been used to guide agencies through the Domestic Homicide Reviews that have had to be considered since the legislation came into force.
- 2.2 Following each Domestic Homicide Review over the next 12 months, the Domestic Homicide Steering Group will meet to consider how effective the Protocols have been to assist agencies to conduct the required processes and to ensure that any changes required are affected.

3.0 Kent Community Safety Partnership Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Kent CSP has overall responsibility for commissioning Domestic Homicide Reviews and as such has specific responsibilities highlighted within the Protocols including:
 - receiving notifications that a domestic homicide has occurred;

- instructing the Kent and Medway DV Co-ordinator to proceed with the processes within the Protocols;
- if appropriate, appoint an independent Chairman to co-ordinate and produce the Domestic Homicide Report
- if appropriate, agree and sign off content of the Domestic Homicide report, executive summary and action plan;
- publishing electronic copies of reports on CSP website, where appropriate;
- monitor the implementation of action plans, including an audit process.

3.2 To allow for periods of annual leave and avoid delays in commencing the review process, the Chair of Medway CSP is delegated as a co-recipient of Domestic Homicide notifications along with the Chair of Kent CSP.

3.3 In terms of governance arrangements, it is proposed to amend the terms of reference of the Domestic Homicide Steering Group to establish this group as the gatekeeper for ensuring that recommendations arising from reviews are implemented across agencies. This group will consist of all statutory partners named in the relevant legislation and will report regularly to the Kent Community Safety Partnership with regard to the implementation of review recommendations. The Community Safety Unit will maintain appropriate records to support and manage this process.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 To conduct a full Domestic Homicide Review, it is necessary to appoint an Independent Chair/Overview Report Writer. Whilst difficult to provide exact costings in relation to this at the current time, it is anticipated that this could be in the region of £5k per review, although a complicated case may cost more.

4.2 It has been agreed that a pooled budget is assembled and contributions have been agreed by Kent Police, Kent Probation, Health, Medway Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent County Council.

4.3 In addition to the agreement in paragraph 4.2 above, a funding bid is being made to the Kent Community Safety Partnership requesting an allocation from the Community Safety Grant allocation for 2011/12 to support the review process. In the longer term as the Community Safety grant diminishes and responsibility passes to the Police and Crime Commissioner, further discussions will be required to secure suitable funding.

4.4 It is interesting to note that the issue of resourcing DHRs, along with the suggestion from the coalition government that there will be nil additional cost in undertaking DHRs, is causing nationwide concern with both the LGA and Community Safety Partnerships now raising concerns publically.

4.5 KCC's Community Safety Unit will provide administrative support around the Domestic Homicide Review Process.

5.0 Independent Chair/Overview Report Writer

- 5.1 Considerable progress has been made establishing a pool of independent chairs and arrangements are being put in place so that they are able to commence work on reviews should they be required. Currently, two independent chairs have been employed to manage the five reviews both of whom have senior management backgrounds in the Police and County Councils respectively.

6.0 Status of Current Reviews

- 6.1 Five Domestic Homicide Reviews are in progress. A short summary of the current status of each review is provided below:

DHR1: Rochester case - report complete, ready for KCSP approval to then be sent to Home Office for their sign off. (See paragraph 7 and appendix A)

DHR2: Chatham case - Independent Chair is following up questions with some agencies regarding their IMR submissions in January 2012. It is planned to draft an overview report for consideration by the Review Panel during April 2012.

DHR3: Gravesend case - currently pended on advice from CPS. Next court hearing date set for 24th Feb 2012.

DHR5: Margate case - currently pended on advice from CPS. Trial is due to start 19th March 2012.

DHR6: Canterbury case - The Independent Chair has requested IMR submissions from agencies and review panel members which is due for the next meeting of the Review Panel on the 29th May 2012.

7.0 DHR1: Rochester Case – Mrs A

- 7.1 The full draft of Domestic Homicide Report (DHR1 - Mrs A) is attached to this report as appendix A. This case was originally reviewed in August 2011 when it was considered not suitable for review, as no contact had been made with partner agencies, as Mrs A had only spent a very short time residing in the UK. Following advice from the Home Office the case was reviewed by the panel, using the Home Office guidance included within their correspondence relating to the case to frame the terms of reference for the panel. Three recommendations are included within the draft report, one relating to the Home Office and two relating to Medway Community Safety Partnership. Due to the small size of the Latvian community living in the Medway area, it is proposed by the panel that the report is not published as the family could be identified.
- 7.2 The Kent Community Safety Partnership is asked to support the recommendations and action plan contained within the report attached at appendix A. Following approval the draft report will be forwarded to the Home Office for comment and approval.

8.0 East Sussex Domestic Homicide Review – Action Plan

- 8.1 The East Sussex Safer Communities Steering Group commissioned a Domestic Homicide Review in April 2011, consisting of representatives from agencies in East Sussex and Kent. The case involved two deaths with the female victim moving from her home in Tunbridge Wells some five months before her death in Bexhill on Sea. She had previously received services from several Kent based agencies. An action plan for Kent based agencies involved (Kent Police, NHS Kent & Medway and KCC Families & Social Care) is now required. Kent Police have prepared their single agency action plan therefore action plans are required from the other two agencies.

9.0 Recommendations

- 9.1 That the Kent Community Safety Partnership notes that a pooled budget has been established for delivering Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- 9.2 That the Kent Community Safety Partnership notes that a small pool of suitably qualified independent chairs has been established, to service Domestic Homicide Reviews over the forthcoming months.
- 9.3 That the Kent Community Safety Partnership notes the progress being made on the five Domestic Homicide Reviews that have been commissioned.
- 9.4 That the Kent Community Safety Partnership approve the DHR1 Rochester review report (appendix A) to enable the report to be forwarded to the Home Office for approval.
- 9.5 That the Kent Community Safety Partnership tasks NHS Kent & Medway and KCC Families and Social Care to devise action plans to meet requirements highlighted as part of the East Sussex Safer Communities Steering Group Domestic Homicide Review. See appendix B

For further information contact:

Jim Parris
Assistant Manager of Community Safety, KCC

Tel: 01622 696187 Email: jim.parris@kent.gov.uk