

Domestic Homicide Review Information For Employers and Colleagues



Home Office

Why has your organisation been sent this leaflet?

You have been sent this leaflet because as a consequence of working in the same place and/or alongside the domestic homicide victim or perpetrator you, and/or the staff who work in your organisation, may possess valuable knowledge useful to the homicide review. It may even be the case that the domestic violence homicide took place on work premises.

What are domestic homicide reviews?

Domestic Homicide Reviews are part of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and became law from 13th April 2011. They do not replace, but will be in addition to, the inquest or any other form of inquiry into the homicide.

The purpose of a domestic homicide review is to consider the circumstances that led to the domestic violence death and identify where responses to the situation could have been improved. In so doing the lessons learned will be taken on board by the professionals and agencies involved (i.e. the police, social services, councils, and other community based organisations). A review team will be responsible for undertaking the homicide review and will be formed from members of local statutory and voluntary agencies. The team will consider what happened and what could have been done differently. They will also recommend actions to improve responses to domestic violence situations in the future.

Providing information to the review team

It is vital that the review team has as much information as possible, no matter how minor, so that they can fully understand why the tragedy occurred. If you and your organisation decide to contribute to the review process the information you provide will be confidential and your assistance will be highly valued not only by the review team itself, but also by the families of both the victim and perpetrator who will be keen to understand what happened. Ultimately your input may help to save lives ensuring that other families, friends and colleagues do not have to go through this same experience.

If you choose not to take part in this review, your decision will be respected. We will only contact you again about the review if you choose to become involved. However, we are actively encouraging employer involvement and would hope that engaging in the process will be seen by your organisation as an important part of your duty of care to your employees.

If you take part in the review what would you be asked to do?

You will be asked to share with the review team anything you know about the victim and/or the perpetrator. What they had told you/other members of the team about their experience/behaviour, unexplained absences and/or injuries. You might also be able to recommend other people who you think should be invited to take part in the review.

You can feed into the review in writing, via recording or by discussing what happened over the phone. Or you may choose to meet some of the reviewers in person. This would not take place in a court and you would not be asked to share your thoughts under oath. The reviewer would ask questions to assist the discussion and the whole process would last no longer than a few hours.

What information do you hold?

Employers and colleagues may have been aware that an individual was experiencing domestic violence. The individual may have formally disclosed that they were experiencing domestic violence to someone in the workplace and may have been receiving workplace support. Alternatively employers and work colleagues may have become aware that the individual was experiencing domestic violence because the perpetrator of the violence harassed them at work – for example, by stalking the individual on the way to/ from work, turning up at the workplace unannounced, constantly telephoning/e-mailing the individual or harassing the individual's work colleagues. In circumstances where domestic violence was not known about, employers and work colleagues may have suspected that an individual was being abused if, for example, they came to work with injuries, appeared distressed, had unexplained periods of time off work, or showed an uncharacteristic deterioration in work performance and morale.

Equally, employers and colleagues may have become concerned that a member of staff was perpetrating domestic violence in a number of ways. The individual may have disclosed this formally or disclosed that their partner or ex-partner had made allegations of domestic violence against them. They might have needed time off to attend court or to seek help to address their behaviour. Alternatively an employer or work colleagues may have had concerns about an employee's behaviour because of how they talked about their partner, expressing hostile and aggressive feelings towards them. Maybe the employee was using work time and resources to harass or monitor their partner or ex-partner's actions, constantly texting, e-mailing or calling them or maybe an individual had disclosed that their partner had left them and they didn't know where they or the children were.

In some cases both the victim and perpetrator may have been employees in the same organisation and there will be useful information to gather from both perspectives.

What happens to the information you and your organisation share?

The information you share will help the review team to build a comprehensive picture of what happened in the run up to the homicide and help the team formulate their recommendations for change and positive action. These recommendations will then be put into an action plan. Your input will be confidential and you/your organisation will not be named in the review report.

How long will the review process take?

There is no set time frame for a domestic homicide review but it is anticipated that it will start about one month after the death. The Review should be completed within about six months but could be longer depending on the outcomes of other inquiries i.e. any ongoing criminal proceedings against the perpetrator.

What does the review produce?

- A detailed report and summary of that report which will be available on a public website
- An action plan to ensure any recommendations made in the report are taken forward appropriately

Next steps

You may have some further questions about domestic homicide reviews. Please contact the person who has signed the letter accompanying this leaflet and they will answer your questions directly or put you in touch with someone who can. If you would prefer to talk to a voluntary sector organisation then you can access details from www.homeoffice.gov.uk

You may also want to provide details of voluntary organisations to members of your staff who may have worked closely with the victim/perpetrator and who require support as a consequence of what has happened. If you have an employee assistance programme you may want to consider reminding staff of its existence and how they can access it.

What can your organisation do to help prevent further tragedies?

Whether you choose to take part in the review process or not, the domestic homicide may have prompted you to consider how to respond to such scenarios in the future. For example, there may have been negative publicity around the incident involving your organisation or you may want to act to ensure that any member of staff experiencing domestic violence in the future is able to access support from the workplace. You may want to arrange training about domestic violence for members of staff or, as indicated above, you may want to explore what support groups exist locally. Further information on support services and resources for those affected by domestic homicide can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/vawg.

Did you know?

- If one of your team is experiencing domestic violence, this could affect your business through: absenteeism, stress, employee turnover, sick days and decreased productivity
- 12 per cent of those who experience intimate partner violence tell someone at work (Roe, 2009)
- At least one in four women will be affected by domestic abuse in their lifetime and those affected are from all social-economic backgrounds (BCS, 2009/10)
- Approximately two women a week are murdered by their partner or ex-partner (BCS, 2009/10)

For further information, contact Refuge (national domestic violence charity) and Respect (UK association for professionals working with people to end their abusive behaviour) who can provide you with comprehensive Domestic Violence Resources for Employers.

www.refuge.org.uk / info@refuge.org.uk 020 7395 7700

www.respect.uk.net / info@respect.uk.net 020 7549 0578

With thanks to Refuge and Respect who developed this leaflet with the Home Office.