



1. What is a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR)?

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) considers 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 person to whom s/he was related or with whom s/he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or a member of the same household as him/herself.

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

7. How we have responded:

- Learning and recommendations from DHRs have informed developments in Northumberland over recent years and have also fed into the domestic violence breakthrough priorities.
- Northumberland is one of 10 CSP national pilot sites for the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office (DACO) DHR Oversight Mechanism that seeks to develop professional practice to improve implementation of DHR recommendations as well as identifying common themes and trends supporting change at a national level.
- Implementation of an innovative DHR/DARD Rapid Review process.

2. What is a Domestic Abuse Related Death (DARD)?

Where a victim took their own life (suicide) and the circumstances give rise to concern, for example it emerges that there was coercive controlling behaviour in the relationship, a review should be undertaken, even if a suspect is not charged with an offence or they are tried and acquitted. Reviews are not about who is culpable.

6. The following learning was identified from recent DHRs in Northumberland:

- Some risk assessments underestimated the significance of coercive and controlling behaviour; now a recognised 'high risk' indicator of potential homicide.
- Whilst improvements have been made, we need to further improve how we identify domestic abuse, respond to disclosures, and both record and flag information on systems.
- Services and interventions with abusive men are limited.
- Agencies need to improve information sharing, and linking service users who are in abusive relationships.
- Many agencies respond to presenting issues such as substance misuse without also addressing domestic abuse when it is present and known.
- Learning from DHRs should be integrated into all key areas of workforce development, service improvement and commissioning activity.

3. The purposes of a DHR is to:

- Identify any lessons to be learned about the way in which local practitioners and agencies work to safeguard victims, and identify how agencies will respond to these lessons; and
- Improve intra and inter-agency working to improve service responses for all domestic violence victims and their children, to prevent further domestic homicide and DARD.
- Under the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004), Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's) have statutory responsibility for DHRs. Locally this is the Safer Northumberland Partnership (SNP).

5. What do we know from the 3 most recently published DHR's in Northumberland?

- Two victims were female, one victim was male.
- Two offenders were female, one was male.
- Mental health, physical domestic abuse, including with older people as both victim and offender, stalking and coercive controlling behaviour were all factors in the deaths.

4. DHR Rapid Review Process

- Review the facts about the case as presented from initial agency reporting upon the death.
- Seek to identify any immediate action needed to ensure safety of others and share learning appropriately.
- Consider the potential for identifying improvements to agency delivery and practice to safeguard and mitigate risk.