

Domestic Homicide Review Survey 2024

Research Report

Conducted January - February 2024



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Summary

Background

The Domestic Homicide Review Survey was sent to all local authorities in England in response to feedback to the Local Government Association regarding the costs and resourcing of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). The results will be used to inform the future of DHRs. It was conducted jointly by the LGA and the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC), which is developing an oversight mechanism in relation to the implementation of recommendations within reviews. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner will report annually to Ministers with regards to the findings from the oversight mechanism. A total of 103 responses were received, covering 182 authorities (57 per cent).

Key findings

- Respondents reported a total of 370 ongoing DHRs currently in their area, as well as 144 open DHRs and 109 pending DHRs .
- Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 the number of DHRs undertaken by respondents increased by 76 per cent from 94 to 165.
- Respondent authorities spent a total of £1.0 million on DHRs in 2022/23, 45 per cent more than the 2021/22 figure. Around three-quarters of expenditure was on DHR chairs.
- On top of expenditure, staff time spent on undertaking and implementing DHRs was equivalent to 82 full-time staff in respondents.
- 47 per cent of respondents' CSPs had a formal partnership arrangement governing which agencies contribute to the cost of DHRs, and 48 per cent did not have such an arrangement (the remainder did not answer the question).
- Aside from the local authority itself, 26 per cent of respondents reported that police and crime commissioners had contributed to the cost of DHRs, 21 per cent other local authorities, and 19 per cent each for the police force and NHS trusts.

- In relation to the overall process, monitoring and governance arrangements, 63 per cent of respondents held scheduled review meetings for specific DHRs and 58 per cent had a named CSP lead for individual DHRs.
- 90 per cent of respondents shared learning from DHRs across CSP partners, 62 per cent shared with neighbouring CSPs or partner agencies, 51 per cent wrote briefing papers and 51 per cent held learning events.
- The main challenges reported by CSPs were Home Office delays (79 per cent), funding (77 per cent), increasing numbers of DHRs (63 per cent) and sourcing chairs (63 per cent).

Introduction

The survey was emailed to heads of community safety, or nearest equivalent, in all local authorities in England in January 2024 in response to feedback to the Local Government Association regarding the costs and resourcing of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). The results will be used to inform the future of DHRs. It was conducted jointly by the LGA and the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC), which has an interest in the DHR process as a whole and will report annually to Ministers with regards to the oversight of implementation of recommendations within DHRs.

A total of 103 responses were received, covering 182 local authorities (57 per cent).

A Domestic Homicide Review is defined as a review of 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) a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or (b) a member of the same household as himself, held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death (Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004). The definition is likely to change in future following a proposed amendment in the Victim and Prisoners Bill, as will the name of reviews to Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.

Methodology

Although DHRs are commissioned by community safety partnerships (collaborations of local agencies to tackle crime and disorder, involving police, fire and rescue services, local authorities, NHS trusts and the National Probation Service), local authorities are usually the lead agency. However, whilst there is statutory guidance for the conduct of DHRs, there is no single model of how DHRs are managed across the country so while 103 responses were received, fourteen of these covered more than one local authority (most commonly a county council responding on behalf of all districts in its area), meaning in effect that the responses covered 182 authorities (57 per cent of all authorities). Some of these represent a response from a single CSP, but some cover multiple CSPs and some will simply be authorities working jointly so it is not possible to present a definitive number of either local authorities or CSPs responding. This report uses the 103 figure as the total response rather than 182 unless otherwise stated.

While the respondents may not be fully representative of all local authorities (see below), the level of response means that the results are likely to be reasonably indicative of the sector as a whole.

Response is detailed in tables 1 and 2. These tables use the 182 response figure as it is the only way of producing percentage response rates and providing an idea of the coverage of response.

By type of authority it varied between 68 per cent of shire districts and 30 per cent of London boroughs and was around 50 per cent in other types. Response exceeded

50 per cent in six regions (highest at 70 per cent in the East of England and South East), but was markedly lower in Greater London (30 per cent), North West (31 per cent) and North East (33 per cent).

Table 1: Response by type of authority

Type	Total number of authorities	Number of authorities covered by responses	Response rate
Counties	21	11	52%
London boroughs	33	10	30%
Metropolitan districts	36	18	50%
Shire districts	164	112	68%
Unitaries	63	31	49%
Total	317	182	57%

Table 2: Response by region

Region	Number of authorities	Number of responses	Response rate
East of England	50	35	70%
East Midlands	39	26	67%
London	33	10	30%
North East	12	4	33%
North West	36	11	31%
South East	70	49	70%
South West	29	17	59%
West Midlands	33	22	67%
Yorkshire and Humber	15	8	53%

It should be noted that not all responses covered every question so the base number of responses to individual questions varies (shown below each table). In tables, percentages may not always add exactly to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Domestic Homicide Review Survey 2024

DHR numbers

Respondents reported a total of 370 ongoing DHRs currently in their area, as well as 144 open DHRs, 109 pending DHRs. This number is considerably higher than the annual number of DHRs undertaken, shown in Table 4, most likely because reviews can run over multiple years. Also, criminal proceedings and/or inquests can be delayed resulting in reviews being paused. There were 394 published DHRs. The largest number of ongoing cases in a single response was 20 while 21 respondents reported no ongoing DHRs. The largest number of open cases reported by a respondent was also 20, but 59 reported no open DHRs. See Table 3.

Ongoing DHRs are cases where the DHR is currently taking place, a decision has been made to hold one and a panel will or has been convened.

Open DHRs are cases where the DHR has been drafted and is with the QA panel.

Pending DHRs are cases where a notification has been received and a decision is awaited as to whether a DHR will be held.

Published DHRs are cases where it has been signed off by QA and either the full reports or learning has been shared publicly.

Unlike the other categories, which are at a point in time, the number of published reviews could have been interpreted by respondents as those published over the last year or, more likely, at any time so the figure should be treated with caution.

Table 3: How many DHRs do you currently have in your area?

	Number	Average per respondent
Ongoing	370	4
Open	144	2
Pending	109	1
Published	394	4
Total	1,017	11

Base: 94 responses.

In respondents, 94 DHRs had been undertaken in September 2018 – August 2019, 80 had been undertaken in 2019/20, 117 in 2020/21, 139 in 2021/22 and 165 in

2022/23. This is higher than the number of domestic homicides reported by ONS (100 in the year ending March 2023) as reviews can relate to deaths in previous years and because some relate to suicide cases. The figure for 2022/23 represents a 76 per cent increase on 2018/19. The largest number reported by a respondent in a single year varied between 5 and 9 depending on the year, and between 35 and 45 respondents reported having undertaken no DHRs in the year. See Table 4.

Table 4: How many DHRs have been undertaken in your area in each of the last five years?

	Number
September 2018 - August 2019	94
September 2019 - August 2020	80
September 2020 - August 2021	117
September 2021 - August 2022	139
September 2022 - August 2023	165

Base: 95 responses.

In respondents, 12 DHRs undertaken in September 2018 – August 2019 had been related to cases of suicide, 14 of those undertaken in 2019/20, 32 in 2020/21, 62 in 2021/22 and 83 in 2022/23. In 2022/23, 46 respondents reported no cases of suicide while 81 reported none in 2018/19. The increase over this period may at least be partly due to [greater efforts to identify suicide cases](#) rather than an actual increase in cases. See Table 5.

Table 5: Of these, how many DHRs related to cases of suicide in each of these years?

	Number
September 2018 - August 2019	12
September 2019 - August 2020	14
September 2020 - August 2021	32
September 2021 - August 2022	62
September 2022 - August 2023	83

Base: 93 responses.

There were generally few reviews that a CSP had been directed by Government to undertake, having previously determined locally that a DHR was not required. There was a total of one in September 2018 – August 2019, zero in 2019/20, nine in 2020/21, two in 2021/22 and 10 in 2022/23. See Table 6.

Figure 1. Domestic Homicide Reviews undertaken (20218/19 – 2022/23)

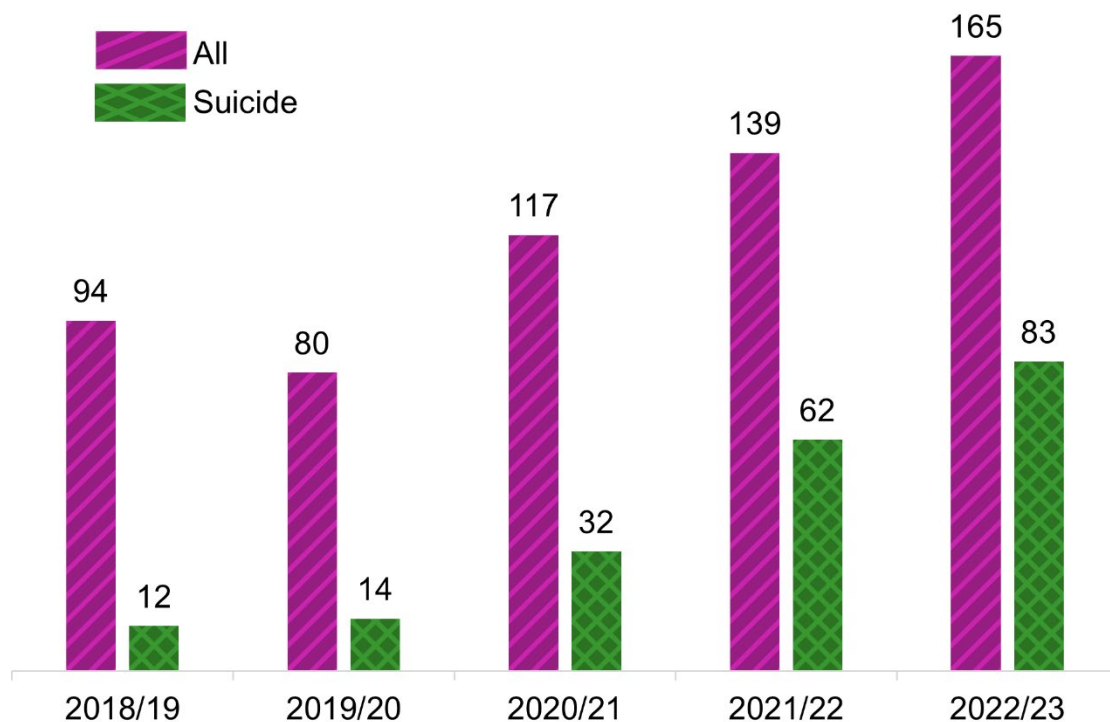


Table 6: How many, if any, of the DHRs undertaken in each of the five previous years were reviews that the CSP was directed by Government to undertake, having previously determined locally that a DHR was not required?

	Number
September 2018 - August 2019	1
September 2019 - August 2020	0
September 2020 - August 2021	9
September 2021 - August 2022	2
September 2022 - August 2023	10

Base: 89 responses.

DHR costs

Respondents spent a total of £1.0 million on DHRs in 2022/23, 45 per cent more than the figure of £0.69 million in 2021/22, which in turn was 29 per cent higher than the 2020/21 figure of £0.53 million. The total was relatively steady between 2018/19 and 2020/21. See Table 7.

The distribution of spending did not vary much over the period, with around three-quarters on DHR chairs, less than 1 per cent each on translation and experts, and around a quarter on a variety of other items written in by respondents, most commonly administration costs (6 responses), software/IT (5) and staff training (4).

Respondents were also asked to provide the average financial cost of holding a single DHR in their area in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which they had one), and 74 did so. The average cost was £10,000, with the single highest figure being £39,000. Twenty-two respondents indicated an average cost of between £4,000 and £7,500, eighteen a figure of between £8,000 and £9,800, nineteen a figure of between £10,000 and £11,600, and fourteen indicated a figure of £12,000 or more.

The average cost produced by this question cannot be directly compared with an average produced by dividing the total cost (as shown in Table 7) by the total number of DHRs undertaken (Table 4) as (i) response to these questions varied, (ii) the average cost figure was based on the last year in which a DHR was held which varies between respondents, and (iii) expenditure in any given year may relate to homicides in earlier years.

Table 7: Please indicate your authority’s total expenditure on DHRs according to the categories below.

Expenditure (£)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
DHR chair	£428,711	£399,407	£402,854	£500,626	£704,869
Translation	£434	£524	£546	£390	£732
Experts	£1,000	£1,886	£1,147	£2,110	£13,205
Other	£137,909	£139,154	£130,062	£187,579	£283,283
Total	£568,054	£540,971	£534,609	£690,706	£1,002,088

Base: 64 responses. Note: translation includes interpretation and community liaison.

Respondents were asked to provide the non-financial resource costs, in full-time equivalent staff terms, incurred in undertaking and implementing DHRs in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which they had one), and 51 did so. See Table 8.

Respondents equated the cost to a total of 81.6 full-time equivalent staff. As an illustration, an average salary of £30,000 would represent an annual cost of £2.4 million on salaries alone. Around a fifth (19 per cent) was on each of secretarial support and monitoring oversight, 15 per cent was on each of supporting DHR chairs and implementation decisions. Almost a third (31 per cent) was on a wide variety of other items written in by respondents, most commonly policy leads or DHR co-ordinators, DHR panels, line management/supervision, and steering groups.

Table 8: Please indicate the non-financial resource costs, in full-time equivalent staff terms, incurred in undertaking and implementing DHRs in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which you had one).

	FTE staff	Per cent
Secretarial support	15.8	19%
Monitoring oversight	15.8	19%
Chair support	12.3	15%
Implementation decisions	12.2	15%
Other	25.5	31%
Total	81.6	100%

Base: 51 responses.

Respondents were evenly divided between those whose CSP had a formal partnership arrangement governing which agencies contributed to the cost of DHRs (47 per cent) and those which did not have such an arrangement (48 per cent). See Table 9.

Table 9: Does your CSP have a formal partnership arrangement governing which agencies contribute to the cost of DHRs?

	Number	Per cent
Yes	47	47%
No	48	48%
Don't know	4	4%
Total	99	100%

Base: 99 responses.

Just over two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) indicated that the local authority itself had contributed to the cost of undertaking DHRs in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which one had been held). This was markedly higher than the proportions for other CSP partners: 26 per cent indicated the police and crime commissioner or equivalent, 21 per cent other local authorities, 19 per cent the police force, 19 per cent an NHS trust, 13 per cent the fire and rescue service, and 3 per cent reported

that the National Probation Service had contributed to costs. Seven per cent of respondents indicated that no CSP partners had made contributions. Eighteen per cent of respondents referred to a variety of other bodies, the single most common being Integrated Care Boards (4 respondents). See Table 10.

Table 10: Please indicate which, if any, CSP partners have contributed to the cost of undertaking DHRs in your CSP in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which you had one).

	Number contributing	Per cent
This local authority	65	68%
Police and crime commissioner or equivalent	25	26%
Other local authorities	20	21%
Police force	18	19%
NHS trust	18	19%
Fire and rescue service	12	13%
National Probation Service	3	3%
Other	17	18%
None	7	7%
Don't know	1	1%
Total	96	100%

Base: 96 responses.

Respondents were then asked to quantify the cost contributions from partners, and 56 did so. In 24 of the 56 respondents, local authorities were the only contributors to DHR costs, and overall they contributed 56 per cent of total costs. Thirteen per cent was contributed by each of police and crime commissioners and NHS trusts, and 8 per cent by police forces. Fire and rescue services and the National Probation Service contributed less than 5 per cent between them. See Table 11.

It should be noted that because some responses covered multiple local authorities it is possible that “this local authority” was interpreted as meaning more than one, which suggests that the figure of 68 per cent in Table 10 and the corresponding

expenditure figures in Table 11 may be understatements. Considering only the 46 authorities which responded on behalf of their authority alone shows that 52 per cent of costs was contributed by that local authority, 11 per cent by other local authorities, 10 per cent by PCCs, 10 per cent by NHS trusts, 6 per cent by police forces, 2 per cent by fire services and 10 per cent by other agencies.

Table 11: Where CSP partners have contributed to the cost of undertaking DHRs in your CSP in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which you had one), please indicate the amount each has contributed.

	Amount contributed	Per cent
This local authority	£627,359	39%
Other local authorities	£274,223	17%
Police force	£119,933	8%
Police and crime commissioner or equivalent	£203,722	13%
Fire and rescue service	£25,015	2%
NHS trust	£206,516	13%
National Probation Service	£9,850	1%
Other	£127,034	8%
Total	£1,593,652	100%

Base: 56 responses.

Oversight and learning

Almost all respondents (95 per cent) had some oversight mechanisms in place to ensure that actions from DHRs were completed and recommendations implemented. The two most common were scheduled review meetings (63 per cent) and a named CSP lead for individual DHRs (58 per cent). Around a fifth (19 per cent) had software/computer systems to track progress. Just under a half (48 per cent) wrote-in other items, almost all of which referred to a wide variety of local boards, strategic, scrutiny or steering groups. See Table 12.

Table 12: What, if any, oversight mechanisms do you have in place to ensure actions from DHRs are completed and recommendations implemented?

	Number	Per cent
Scheduled review meetings for specific DHRs/DHRs collectively	62	63%
Named CSP lead for individual DHRs	57	58%
Software and/or computer systems to track progress	19	19%
Other	48	48%
No oversight mechanisms currently	5	5%
Total	99	100%

Base: 99 responses.

Nine out of ten respondents (90 per cent) disseminated learning from DHRs by sharing across partner organisations in their CSP, 62 per cent shared with neighbouring CSPs or partners, 51 per cent produced briefing papers, 51 per cent held learning events, and 34 per cent convened task and finish groups. Around a third wrote-in other methods, most commonly sharing via various different local groups or boards such as children’s and adults safeguarding (11 respondents), incorporating learning into training (7), and local authority-wide forums or events (6). See Table 13.

Table 13: How does your CSP disseminate learning from DHRs?

	Number	Per cent
Share across CSP partners	89	90%
Share with neighbouring CSPs/partner agencies	61	62%
Briefing papers	50	51%
Periodic learning events	50	51%
Task and finish groups	34	34%
Other	36	36%
Total	99	100%

Base: 99 responses.

DHR challenges and system improvements

Almost all respondents (96 per cent) reported that their CSP was experiencing challenges in undertaking and implementing DHRs. The two most common challenges were delays in Home Office panel reviews (79 per cent) and funding (77 per cent). These were followed by increasing numbers of DHRs (63 per cent), sourcing chairs (63 per cent), and quality assurance of chairs (47 per cent). Forty per cent of respondents wrote-in a variety of other challenges, by far the most common of which was a lack of capacity, in terms of staff and/or funding (14 respondents). See Table 14.

Table 14: What current challenges, if any, is your Community Safety Partnership experiencing in undertaking and implementing DHRs in your area?

	Number	Per cent
Delays in Home Office panel reviews of DHRs	77	79%
Funding DHRs	75	77%
Increasing numbers of DHRs being undertaken	62	63%
Sourcing chairs	62	63%
Quality assurance of chairs	46	47%
Ensuring/maintaining independence of chairs	19	19%
Other	39	40%
We are not currently experiencing any challenges	4	4%
Total	98	100%

Base: 98 responses.

Authorities were invited to describe any recommendations they had for improving the local and national framework of undertaking and overseeing DHRs, and 74 did so. A wide variety of suggestions were made, from which the following main themes emerged:

- Funding – including increased funding, dedicated DHR funding, centralised funding of DHRs (45 respondents)
- Clearer or more robust Home Office guidance, with several specifically mentioning suicide cases (24)
- Chairs – most commonly a list of approved chairs, with some referring to the quality of chairs (24)
- Quicker Home Office quality assurance processes (24)
- More equitable sharing of costs between CSP partners (19)

Other topics mentioned by smaller numbers included Home Office feedback on national recommendations (10), scope for 'light touch' reviews (8), training for panel members/council officers/chairs (6), and more local discretion in making decisions (5).

Annex A: Questionnaire

LGA/DAC Domestic Homicide Review Survey 2024

Please amend your contact details as necessary:

Name:

Local authority:

Email address:

If you are completing this survey on behalf of other local authorities, please give their names below:

DHR NUMBERS

1. How many DHRs do you currently have in your area?

Ongoing

Open

Pending

Published

Total

2. How many DHRs have been undertaken in your area in each of the last five years?

Please enter '0' if any information is zero and 'DK' if any information is not available.

September 2022 – August 2023

September 2021 – August 2022

September 2020 – August 2021

September 2019 – August 2020

September 2018 – August 2019

3. Of these, how many DHRs related to cases of suicide?

Please enter '0' if any information is zero and 'DK' if any information is not available.

September 2022 – August 2023

September 2021 – August 2022

September 2020 – August 2021

September 2019 – August 2020

September 2018 – August 2019

4. How many, if any, of the DHRs undertaken over the previous five years were reviews that the CSP was directed by Government to undertake, having previously determined locally that a DHR was not required?

Please enter '0' if any information is zero and 'DK' if any information is not available.

September 2022 – August 2023

September 2021 – August 2022

September 2020 – August 2021

September 2019 – August 2020

September 2018 – August 2019

DHR COSTS

5. Please indicate your authority's total expenditure on DHRs according to the categories below.

Please enter '0' if any information is zero and 'DK' if any information is not available.

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
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DHR chair

Translation/interpretation/community liaison

Experts

Other (please specify)

Total

6. What was the usual/average financial cost of holding a single DHR in your area in 2022/23 (or the most recent year in which you had one)?

Please enter 'DK' if the information is not available.

7. Please indicate the non-financial resource costs, in full-time equivalent staff terms, incurred in undertaking and implementing DHRs over the last twelve months (or the most recent year in which you had one).

Please enter '0' if any information is zero and 'DK' if any information is not available.

Chair support

Secretarial support

Implementation decisions

Monitoring oversight

Other (please specify)

Total

8. Does your CSP have a formal partnership arrangement governing which agencies contribute to the cost of DHRs?

Yes

No

Don't know

9. Please indicate which, if any, CSP partners have contributed to the costs of undertaking DHRs in your CSP over the last twelve months (or the most recent year in which you had one), and, if possible, the amount each has contributed.

Please tick all that apply, enter '0' if any information is zero and 'DK' if any information is not known.

This local authority

Other local authorities

Police force

Police and crime commissioner or equivalent

Fire and rescue service

NHS trust

National Probation Service

Other (please specify)

None

Don't know

OVERSIGHT AND LEARNING

10. What, if any, oversight mechanisms do you currently have in place to ensure actions from DHRs are completed and recommendations implemented?

Please tick all that apply.

Scheduled review meetings for specific DHRs/DHRs collectively

Named CSP lead for individual DHRs

Software and/or computer systems to track progress

Other (please specify)

No oversight mechanisms currently

11. How does your CSP disseminate learning from DHRs?

Please tick all that apply.

Share across CSP partners

Share with neighbouring CSPs/partner agencies

Briefing papers

Task and finish groups

Periodic learning events

Other (please specify)

DHR CHALLENGES AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

12. What current challenges, if any, is your CSP experiencing in undertaking and implementing DHRs in your area?

Please tick all that apply.

Increasing number of DHRs being undertaken

Funding DHRs

Sourcing chairs for DHRs

Quality assurance of chairs

Ensuring/maintaining independence of chairs

Delays in Home Office panel reviews of DHRs

Other (please specify)

We are not currently experiencing any challenges

13. What, if any, recommendations do you have that would improve the local and national framework of undertaking and overseeing DHRs?

14. This survey is being undertaken by the LGA on behalf of the LGA and Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office, which has a statutory role to oversee the implementation of findings from DHRs. Please indicate whether you consent to the LGA sharing your individual response with the DACO.

Yes, I consent to LGA sharing my response including the authority name

Yes, I consent to LGA sharing my response but only without the authority name

No, I do not consent at all



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