

Terms of Reference

Pillar A: Familicide

Meeting the Future Support Needs of Family Members

1. To consult and consider the experiences of close family members of those who die in familicides, in relation to their experiences in the aftermath and their support needs, particularly with reference to the period from the start of the year 2000 to date. Such consultation may only take place in cases where all legal processes have been completed.
2. To consider the adequacy and suitability of current policies, protocols, procedures and practices of state services in supporting close family members of those who die in familicides (where all legal processes are completed) and to make recommendations.

Methodology

3. To draw on relevant peer-reviewed research.
4. To consult with the close family members of victims of familicide.
5. To consider the ways in which support services are delivered in other comparable jurisdictions and identify successful practices which might be helpful to those affected in Ireland.
6. To consider how to develop an integrated procedure to support close family members of those who die in familicides in the most competent, caring, effective and efficient way in the future.
7. To consider the range of supports which should be provided, in the immediate, short and long terms, to local communities impacted by such crimes.
8. To take account of the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, the Coroners Act 1962, as amended, and the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland for the establishment of Crisis Intervention Teams.
9. The following state agencies and other stakeholders should be consulted:
 - a. An Garda Síochána.
 - b. Acute hospitals including accident and emergency departments.
 - c. GPs through the Irish College of General Practitioners.
 - d. The Probation Service.
 - e. The Royal College of Physicians in Ireland, Faculty of Pathologists.
 - f. Tusla.
 - g. The Coroners Service.
 - h. Irish College of Psychiatry.
 - i. The Mental Health Commission and mental health services as appropriate.
 - j. The Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board.
 - k. National Educational Psychological Services and, where appropriate school management.

- l. The National Suicide Research Foundation.
- m. The HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and HSE Regional Officers for Suicide Prevention.
- n. Any other state service, which has a significant role in supporting family members or NGOs providing services under contract by a state agency.
- o. Any other relevant agencies or NGOs.

The Role of the Media

- 10. To consider, in consultation with the Press Ombudsman, The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, the National Union of Journalists, Headline (Ireland's national programme for responsible reporting and representation of mental illness and suicide), Samaritans Ireland and any other relevant bodies, how the media report on such events, and make recommendations on best practice.
- 11. To consider how social media deals with such events, engaging with relevant stakeholders, and make recommendations on how to progress this issue.

Requested Outcomes

- 12. The objective is that, on completion of this study, a series of recommendations will provide for enhanced information and supportive arrangements to the family members of victims of familicide and others affected by these harrowing crimes.
- 13. The identification, if possible, of potential warning signs and possible responses/actions including the development of protocols to allow relevant information to be shared by professionals or with family members.
- 14. The development of clear protocols by state agencies and other agencies and individuals for sharing information with immediate family members
- 15. The development of an emergency team protocol which would bring together key officials as soon as possible after an incident to review information known at the time, identify agencies who might hold relevant files, and crucially, identify what supports are needed by family and community and whom is best placed to provide this.

Pillar B: Identifying International Best Practice in Domestic Homicide Reviews

The second pillar of the research should address the issue of Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Methodology

- 16. To draw on relevant peer-reviewed research.
- 17. To consult with the close family members of victims.
- 18. To consult with NGOs working in this field.

19. To consult with appropriate experts, state agencies and any other agency/organisation in jurisdictions with experience of domestic homicide reviews in comparable foreign jurisdictions.

20. The following state agencies and other stakeholders should be consulted:

- An Garda Síochána
- The Probation Service.
- Tusla.
- The Mental Health Commission and mental health services as appropriate.
- The Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board.
- Acute hospitals including accident and emergency departments.
- Any other state service or relevant agencies.

Requested outcome

21. To identify international best practice in respect of domestic homicide reviews and to make recommendations in relation to their application to this jurisdiction.

Practical Arrangements

22. Both pillars of the study will be led by an experienced suitably qualified person and appropriate experts will be contracted to assist the lead person.

23. The study will be submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality within twelve months or as soon as possible thereafter and will be published.

Ends