

Homicide prevention rapid debrief process

A rapid debrief process for homicides or 'near miss' incidents, completed as soon as appropriate after the offence to capture early learning and good practice.

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Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Crime prevention Leadership, development and learning Offender management Violence against women and girls Violence (other)
Organisation	Essex Police
Smarter practice	Essex rapid debrief process – Homicide prevention framework
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Region	Eastern
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Adults Children and young people General public Offenders Victims
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Aim

The aims of the rapid debrief process are to:

- help understand risk and vulnerabilities in relation to a specific homicide or near miss homicides
- support the effective management of ongoing incidents
- promote reflective practice between police and partner agencies
- identify 'quick-time' learning to prevent future homicides

Intended outcome

The rapid debrief process has four main intended outcomes.

1. Identify learning for offender management and safeguarding.
2. To quickly identify, understand and learn from any previous contacts between the police, victim and/or offender prior to the incident, to see if any opportunities for intervention were missed.
3. To assess whether any of the learning from the particular incident can help improve responses to future crimes.
4. To provide recommendations for action based on lessons learned.

Description

Incidents considered eligible for a rapid debrief process are primarily identified through force daily management meetings. Incidents currently considered in scope include homicides and near miss offences resulting from domestic and non-domestic serious violence.

Homicide prevention rapid debriefs are primarily an internal police process. Partner agency involvement is however seen as positive and is encouraged. Attendance is by invite on a case-by case basis. Where not directly achievable through the rapid debrief process, recommendation can still be made to pursue through existing partnership arrangements.

Resourcing

The Essex Police review team has ownership for the rapid debrief process. The review team is a dedicated resource that provides a review function to the Serious Crime Directorate and wider force. The team consists of two review officers and one assistant review officer.

Rapid debrief process

The review team starts the rapid debrief process by defining the parameters of the incident being debriefed. The team also produces a chronology document outlining key issues, which they use to support a rapid debrief meeting.

Attendees at the rapid debrief meeting analyse the incident of serious violence or homicide. A document of learning and actions is produced from this meeting.

A rapid debrief working group ensures in-force accountability for any learning and actions from the rapid debrief meeting. Governance oversight is held by a homicide prevention board.

Terminology

Rapid debriefs have been deliberately labelled as debriefs rather than 'rapid reviews'. The terminology reflects the intention for these debriefs to be agile and timely, as opposed to a review which can be more detailed and in-depth.

Overall impact

The rapid debrief process has led to Essex Police revising some of its working arrangements in relation to homicide. These improvements have included:

- additional and improved training
- improved relationships with partner agencies
- more effective processes for dealing with mental health calls to the police
- more robust risk assessment processes
- a proactive approach towards homicide prevention

Examples of targeted improvement actions achieved to date include:

- updated management of s135 warrants
- the creation of a mental health risk management board
- updated training on coercive control
- updated governance for the grading of risk assessments

Learning

Essex Police highlights the following considerations for forces seeking to implement a rapid debrief process.

Where possible, forces should include those with knowledge of the particular incident in the rapid debrief process. Having this knowledge can speed up the process and avoid creation of additional work for the team leading the rapid debrief process.

Officer nervousness around their actions being scrutinised can lead to hesitancy about putting forward cases for a rapid debrief. In this respect, the learning ethos behind the rapid debrief process needs to be filtered through to all levels.

There is potential risk for rapid debriefs to overlap with criminal investigations and/or statutory reviews. While this risk is considered minimal, any concerns in this area should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Risks are considered to be minimal due to:

- rapid debriefs being conducted within policing and trusted partners, not with victim family members or witnesses
- the senior investigating officer of the criminal investigation being involved in the rapid debrief process

- rapid debriefs being conducted too early to contribute to statutory reviews

Using existing partnership frameworks or official processes for contacting partner agencies can expediate identifying the right external attendees for the rapid debrief process.

Forces should consider having officers trained in both debriefs and reviews in their review team. Nationally trained debriefing officers who also have investigative and review experience will be well placed to conduct homicide prevention rapid debriefs.

The rapid debrief process should be initiated and piloted with recognition of the fact that the process may not be perfect. The process will need to be reviewed and tweaked along the way to suit the force, its partners and local circumstances.

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Tags

Homicide