

Homicide and near-miss homicide problem profile Force template

Information for forces

This template is designed as a guide to support an annual review of homicide within a police force (or group of police forces). Its features have been collated from examples of good practice in existing homicide problem profiles.

Much of the information required for this review will already be at hand as part of a force's homicide return to the Home Office. In places, this template broadens the catchment of crimes to include near-miss homicides (defined later), which may require additional data collation and analysis. When this is the case, the data required is not extensive. Case-level analysis is not required and will be accessible from routinely available data.

The template is designed as a guide on what should be included in a problem profile, but it is not prescriptive. Forces may wish to add more detail in places according to their local issues and priorities. Instruction for what to include is provided in each section. Word counts have been suggested but these are indicative only.

Some sections request only cursory information that can be amalgamated with other sections, while others will require more space. As far as possible, present the information in the order presented here.

Data is requested for the most recent three financial years: 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. This covers the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.

Please email your completed profile to the College of Policing at WhatWorks@college.police.uk by 31 January 2023.

Any questions can also be sent to this address.

1. Introduction

A summary of the overall problem profile that provides:

- headline statistics
- emerging themes
- reflections on the success of specific operations and/or serious violence and homicide strategies within the review period

[Indicative length: 750 words]

2. Scope

A section defining the:

- scope of the review
- timeframe for the review (typically the most recent three-year period)
- area (often a police force area, but it may be a combined force review or, in more populous forces, divisions may be preferred)
- crime types (for example, homicide and near-miss homicide)
- timeframe for the next review

It is recommended that the broad scope of the problem profile includes homicides and near-miss homicides, with a specific focus on homicides. Homicide and near-miss homicide are defined in Box A below.

[Indicative length: 300 words]

Box A: Definitions: Homicide and near-miss homicide

Homicide

001/01 Murder age over 1

001/02 Murder age under 1

004/01 Manslaughter

004/10 Corporate manslaughter

004/02 Infanticide

Near-miss

002/00 Attempted murder

004/07 Cause/allow death or serious physical harm to child or vulnerable person

003/02 Conspiracy to murder

005/01 Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm (GBH)

008/01 Malicious wounding or inflicting GBH (excluding sub category of minor wound without intent)

056/01 Arson endangering life

5E (all sub-categories) Endangering life (all sub-categories)

3. Connecting homicide to force plan

A reflection on how homicide prevention connects to the force priorities. Where possible, provide specific examples of operations and strategies from within the review period.

[Indicative length: 400 words]

4. Summary of actions and priorities for period ahead

This section should describe any specific homicide-specific actions, operations or priorities for the next period. If logic models have been prepared for specific activities, these can be included in section 30 ('Response logic models'), where information is provided on how these can be populated. Where possible, relate any planned actions or operations to force priorities and plans.

[Indicative length: 500 words]

5. Highlights of report

Provide an overview of the report sections. Consider including the following questions and themes. Where included, they can be supported with graphics, statistics and tables.

a) How does the current period's patterns compare to previous periods?

- b) Relate the current period's patterns to any ongoing homicide-specific activity.
- c) Relate the current period's patterns to any major operations (specific to, or not specific to, homicide).
- d) Relate the current period's patterns to major drivers of homicide – have there been any changes in these drivers that might explain the observed pattern?
- e) Criminal justice outcomes for homicide investigation.
- f) Suspect characteristics (demographic and socioeconomic characteristics).
- g) Victim characteristics (demographic and socioeconomic characteristics).
- h) Patterns in homicide type, timing, location, weapons used, and relationship between victim and suspect.
- i) Connection between homicide and other offence types.
- j) Community impact of homicide and homicide policing.

[Indicative length will vary by section, but brevity is recommended]

6. Intelligence and data gaps

This section should begin with a general reflection on standards and issues in the intelligence and data used to understand and investigate homicide. Consider including the following questions and themes.

- a) Is there observed or suspected under-reporting and/or missing data?
- b) If there are limitations in the provision of near-miss homicide data where requested, please explain why this data cannot be provided.
- c) Are there any concerns about the processing of free-text logs?
- d) Is the data input timely and efficient?
- e) Are there any limitations on how the data is being used to generate insight?
- f) Is data-sharing with external partners effective?

[Indicative word count will vary depending on local issues]

7. Progress on last period's report

This section should reflect on activities described in the previous period's homicide problem profile (where available) and should directly reference that document. This section should also describe any specified planned actions from the previous period and, where available, should refer to stated outcomes and timelines. Describe the following activity.

- a) Assess progress and outcomes.
- b) Specify plan for continuing or ceasing the specified actions.

[Indicative word length will vary, but 100-200 words per action is sufficient]

8. National context

This section begins with a brief overview of recent national trends in homicide.

Every murder is a tragedy, and we are deeply concerned by the levels of homicide in England and Wales. Homicide had a long rise up to the early 2000s, then fell for a decade before rising again in 2014-18, driven mainly by drug-related murders.

The [Beating Crime Plan](#), which was published on 21 July 2022, sets out the government's commitment and plans to reduce homicide. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions in 2021, homicide rose sharply between April and December that year, reaching pre-pandemic levels (691 homicides in the year ending December 2021). This prompted increased collaboration across the policing system on homicide. The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) crime statistics, published in July 2022, showed a total of 710 homicides in the year ending March 2022, a rise of 25% compared to the previous year when lockdown restrictions had been in place (570).

Throughout the rise in 2021, there was also an uncharacteristic divergence of serious violence and homicide trends. Historically, the levels of homicide and serious violence have risen and fallen together. However, since April 2021, serious violence has been decreasing as homicide has increased. Data for NHS England and Wales hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object were 14% lower in the year ending March 2022 compared with the pre-COVID year ending March 2020.

We know that there are key drivers of homicide – 50% of homicides have a link to drugs and 20% are domestic homicides. Of all recorded homicides

in the year ending March 2022, 40% were committed using a knife or sharp instrument ¹.

Where possible, discuss how observations on national issues may be related to, or affected by, patterns within force.

[Indicative length: 300 words]

9. Force overview

Describe numbers and timing of homicide and near-miss homicide for the most recent three financial years. When describing numbers, these should be expressed as counts and population-adjusted rates.

[Indicative length: 200 words but can include tables and graphs]

10. Case-level analysis (homicide only)

Summarise a case-level review of homicides for the most recent three financial years. This is best presented as a table and, as far as possible, should include the following columns:

- a) crime reference or operation name
- b) victim unique reference number (URN) and last name
- c) victim gender
- d) victim age
- e) incident date and time
- f) incident log creation date
- g) offence overview (up to 50 words)
- h) influencing factors – primary, secondary and tertiary, with one column per level (see **Box B** below)
- i) modus operandum
- j) weapon
- k) domestic abuse flag

¹ **[ONS. Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)** [internet].
[Accessed October 2022]

11. Timing of incidents

Describe the timing of combined homicide and near-miss homicide incidents, in terms of the number of crimes per six-hour block:

- midnight to 5.59am
- 6am to 11.59am
- midday to 5.59pm
- 6pm to 11.59pm

Describe the number and proportion of combined homicide and near-miss homicide per day of the week. A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 50 words or 2-3 bullet points]

12. Geographical distribution

Summarise the geographical distribution of homicide and near-miss homicide with overlaid dots to indicate homicide and, where suitable, an overlaid heat map using last three years of data (or more, where available).

Include a table of counts of homicide and near-miss homicide and population-adjusted rates by local authority. Include a table of wards ranked by highest count areas (and population-adjusted rate per 1,000 population). Forces with higher volumes of homicide and near-miss homicide may be able to undertake description at a lower layer super output area (LSOA) level.

A summary of patterns in geographical distribution is advisable.

[Indicative length: 50 words or 2-3 bullet points]

13. Influencing factors

Summarise the distribution of key influencing factors for homicide (see Box B). Near-miss homicide data may not be available for this section on the grounds that:

- the required data is not available in an accessible format
- there will be significant bias in the data availability that may result in inaccurate interpretation of patterns

However, near-miss data provides valuable information on the drivers of homicide. If influencing factor information is routinely available and its quality is deemed to be sufficient, it should be included. Please specify whether the data is limited to homicide only.

Include a graph showing distribution of combined primary, secondary and tertiary influencing factors for homicide (and near-miss homicide if available). A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 50-100 words or 3-4 bullet points]

Box B: Influencing factors

These are at the discretion of the force, but might include:

- spontaneous altercation
- domestic abuse
- alcohol-related
- mental health
- drug use
- drug market
- county lines or criminal exploitation
- financial or property gain
- collateral or bystander victim
- murder-suicide
- revenge or retribution
- gang or group violence involvement
- night-time economy
- ideologically motivated or terrorism

14. Modus operandum

Summarise the distribution of assault modus operandum for homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined), aggregated for the most recent three financial years. Use counts and proportions.

Categories of modus operandum are at the force's discretion but a suggested set of categories is:

- stabbing or slashing
- assault with blunt object
- bodily assault
- shooting
- drowning

- suffocation, asphyxiation or strangling
- vehicular assault
- arson, fire or heat-related
- poisoning
- maltreatment and neglect
- explosion
- other
- undetermined

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 50 words or 1-2 bullet points]

15. Weapons

Summarise the distribution of assault mechanism or weapon for homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined), aggregated for the most recent three financial years. Use counts and proportions.

Categories of weapon type are at the force's discretion. A suggested set of categories that corresponds with the ICD-10 hospital admissions categories is:

- drowning or submersion
- handgun
- rifle, shotgun and larger firearm
- other or unspecified firearm discharge
- explosive material
- smoke, fire and flames
- steam, hot vapours and hot object
- sharp object
- blunt object
- height or moving object
- motor vehicle
- bodily force
- other
- unknown

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 50 words or 1-2 bullet points]

16. Victim profile (combined homicide and near-miss homicide)

Summarise the distribution of victim demographics for homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined), aggregated for the most recent three financial years, by the following categories. Use counts and proportions.

- Gender: three categories.
- Ethnicity: five categories.
- Age: under 1 year, over 90 years, each five-year category in between (1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and so on, until 86 to 90 years).

If data for near-miss homicide is not routinely available for this section, please explain why and specify that the return is limited to homicide only.

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100 words or 3-4 bullet points]

17. Suspect profile (combined homicide and near-miss homicide)

Summarise the distribution of suspect demographics for homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined), aggregated for the most recent three financial years, by the following categories. Use counts and proportions.

- Gender: three categories.
- Ethnicity: five categories.
- Age: under 1 year, over 90 years, each five-year category in between (1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and so on, until 86 to 90 years).

If data for near-miss homicide is not routinely available for this section, please explain why and specify that the return is limited to homicide only.

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100 words or 3-4 bullet points]

18. Major crime perspective (homicide only)

Provide reflections from senior investigating officers and homicide review teams on the current period. Themes are at the force's discretion, but might include:

- a) major themes
- b) ongoing activity
- c) anticipated legislative changes and interventions
- d) changes in investigation strategy and techniques
- e) resource availability and allocation

[Indicative length: 300 words]

19. Domestic abuse homicide and near-miss homicide

Summarise domestic abuse homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide only and near-miss homicide combined), aggregated for the most recent three financial years. Consider the themes below.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

- a) Number of domestic abuse incidents disaggregated by homicide and near-miss homicide.
- b) Trends in combined homicide and near-miss homicide over three years.
- c) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- d) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence (noting where victim and suspect were not co-habiting).
- e) Distribution of assault mechanism.
- f) Distribution of influencing factors.
- g) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for domestic abuse homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.
- h) Narrative on domestic abuse partnership and any changes in domestic abuse service provision in area.

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100 words or 3-4 bullet points]

20. Organised crime

Summarise homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined) related to organised crime, aggregated for the most recent three financial years. For inclusion, the victim or suspect should be part of a flagged cohort of an organised crime group, an urban street gang, or individuals linked to county lines crime. Consider the themes below.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

- a) Number of organised crime incidents, disaggregated by homicide and near-miss homicide.
- b) Trends in combined homicide and near-miss homicide over three years.
- c) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- d) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence.
- e) Distribution of assault mechanism.
- f) Distribution of influencing factors.
- g) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for organised crime homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.
- h) Narrative on patterns in organised crime violence and collaborative activity (regional and national).

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100 words or 3-4 bullet points]

21. Drugs market

Summarise homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined) related to the drug market, aggregated for the most recent three financial years.

Note: 'Drug market-related' should not be based on the CrimSec7 'drug-related' flag (which means that the victim was a known drug user). The crime should be directly attributable to involvement in a drug market or ancillary activities. This is not readily available through crime records, so analysts may wish to identify and document a consistent method for determining inclusion in this cohort.

Consider the following themes.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain why and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

- a) Overview of the link between the drugs market and violence in force area.
- b) Structure of the market and connection to serious violence.
- c) Overview of drug types and connection to serious violence.
- d) Supply and demand, as well as connection to serious violence.
- e) Impact of enforcement on market and serious violence.
- f) Number of drug market crime incidents, disaggregated by homicide and near-miss homicide.
- g) Trends in combined homicide and near-miss homicide over three years.
- h) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- i) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence.
- j) Distribution of assault mechanism.
- k) Distribution of influencing factors.
- l) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for drug market homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 200 words or 4-5 bullet points]

22. Mental health

Summarise homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss

homicide combined) related to mental health, aggregated for the most recent three financial years. For inclusion, the crime should be directly attributable to a mental health cause, such as suspected mental health crisis. Consider the themes below.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain why and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

- a) Number of victims and suspects of homicide and near-miss homicide where mental illness was flagged.
- b) Three-year trends in number of homicide and near-miss homicide where mental illness was flagged.
- c) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- d) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence.
- e) Distribution of assault mechanism.
- f) Distribution of influencing factors.
- g) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for mental health-flagged homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.
- h) Narrative on mental health partnership activity and any changes in mental health service provision in area.

A summary of these patterns and investigations is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100 words or 3-4 bullet points]

23. Knife crime

Summarise knife-involved homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined), aggregated for the most recent three financial years. For inclusion as knife crime, a knife or sharp object should have been identified or detected at the incident, but a knife or sharp object need not be the weapon used. Consider the themes below.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain why and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

- a) Number of victims and suspects of homicide and near-miss homicide where a knife was used.
- b) Three-year trends in number of homicide and near-miss homicide where a knife was used.
- c) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- d) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence.
- e) Distribution of influencing factors.
- f) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for knife-flagged homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.

A summary of these patterns and investigations is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100-200 words or 4-6 bullet points]

24. Night-time economy

Summarise homicide and near-miss homicide (homicide and near-miss homicide combined) related to the night-time economy, aggregated for the most recent three financial years. For inclusion as night-time economy, the incident should have taken place in or around a licensed premises or the night-time economy. Consider the themes below.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain why and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

- a) Number of victims and suspects of homicide and near-miss homicide where the night-time economy was flagged.
- b) Three-year trends in number of homicide and near-miss homicide where the night-time economy was flagged.
- c) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- d) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence.
- e) Distribution of assault mechanism.
- f) Distribution of influencing factors.

- g) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for night-time economy homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.

A summary of these patterns and investigations is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100-200 words or 4-6 bullet points]

25. Other homicide types of note

Use this section to describe other homicide types that are regarded to be of importance to the force. Examples of these may be, but are not limited to, elder abuse, so-called honour killings, child abuse or corporate homicide.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain why and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

Consider the themes below for **each** homicide type.

- a) Short narrative on why this homicide type has been selected.
- b) Number of victims and suspects of homicide and near-miss homicide.
- c) Three-year trends in number of homicide and near-miss homicide.
- d) Distribution of victim gender, age, ethnicity, residence and relation to suspect.
- e) Distribution of suspect gender, age, ethnicity and residence.
- f) Distribution of assault mechanism.
- g) Distribution of influencing factors.
- h) Distribution of criminal justice outcomes for homicide and for combined homicide and near-miss homicide.

A summary of these patterns and investigations is advisable.

[Indicative length: 100-200 words or 4-6 bullet points]

26. Suspect criminal history

Limiting sample to suspects for homicide or near-miss homicide charged in the most recent three financial years. Provide a summary of the following.

- a) Distribution of conviction in past three years for violent, sexual, drugs or other offence.

- b) Proportion of sample with conviction for any offence involving the victim in past three years.

Data for near-miss homicide may not be routinely available for some themes. Where this is the case, explain why and specify that a section is limited to homicide only.

A summary of these patterns is advisable.

[Indicative length: 50-100 words or 2-3 bullet points]

27. Issues of note

Note any issues not covered by the template. These are at the discretion of the force but might include the following.

- a) Connection between homicide and near-miss homicide and other offence types.
- b) Potential emerging patterns.
- c) Current and future vulnerabilities.
- d) Incidents in prisons, hospitals and other institutions.
- e) Trends in weapon types and availability.

[Indicative length: 300 words]

28. Criminal justice outcomes

Summarise the distribution of criminal justice outcomes for homicide and near-miss homicide over the most recent three financial years.

Provide a short reflection on partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service in investigating and prosecuting homicide.

[Indicative length: 200 words]

29. Horizon scanning

Summarise any noteworthy issues that may affect the prevention or response to homicide in the force in the next review period. These may include the following.

- a) Anticipated activities and operations relevant to homicide and near-miss homicide.

- b) Incoming legislation and powers relevant to homicide and near-miss homicide.
- c) Periods of vulnerability and focus.
- d) Assessments of force capacity to forecast, prevent and investigate homicide and near-miss homicide over the next five to ten years.

[Indicative length: 200-300 words]

30. Response logic models (responses to homicide and near-miss homicide)

If the force is currently implementing or planning to implement an operation to prevent or respond to homicide, near-miss homicide, serious violence or a related issue, it may be useful to map the activity using a logic model framework. The following themes are a helpful set of questions to describe the activity. These can be represented visually as a flowchart.

- a) Define the specific homicide and near-miss homicide problem.
- b) What activities will the force do?
- c) What are the required inputs for these activities, including resources and partnerships?
- d) How (and through which mechanisms) will the activity affect the problem?
- e) What outputs will the activities produce?
- f) What outcomes are the specific intended change?
- g) Are there any risks of unintended outcomes, and how can they be monitored and mitigated?
- h) What are the timelines for achieving these outcomes?
- i) Evaluation and assessment strategy.

For further details, see [**College guidance on logic models.**](#)

[Indicative length: 300 words]

31. Connections and overlaps

Indicate where operations and activities overlap with existing force strategies (for example, vulnerability, domestic abuse and youth violence). Identify any potential for conflict, or for collaboration and shared ownership.

[Indicative length: 200 words]

32. Relevant documents

Provide links to any relevant documents.