

**SHEFFIELD MULTI AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE (MARAC)**

**INDUCTION PACK FOR MARAC LEADS**

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**Introduction:**

This pack has been produced with the permission of Safelives[[1]](#footnote-1), who have agreed that the Sheffield First Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership can use their resources and guidance to develop this pack.

The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) sits under the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership (SSCP) and is governed at a local level by the Sheffield Domestic Abuse Civil and Criminal Justice Sub Group who report to the Sheffield Domestic Abuse Strategic Board. This MARAC induction pack has been designed to assist MARAC representatives in supporting the MARAC process. It covers what is expected of MARAC Representatives, how the MARAC Representatives can support their agency workforce in undertaking Domestic Abuse Risk Assessments and answers any questions that may be asked in relation to the MARAC process.

MARAC representatives are asked to complete the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment: DASH and MARAC training – please refer to page 6 for more information about this training course. Any practitioner who is likely to undertake Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment can also access this training course.

**What is the MARAC?**

The MARAC helps to ensure that victims of Domestic Abuse (DA) when assessed as being at high risk of serious harm or homicide are supported and better protected from further abuse through a coordinated response from all agencies involved in the cases. Local multi-agency partners will meet to discuss the victims of domestic abuse assessed as high risk in Sheffield. Agencies will volunteer and undertake actions that form part of an effective safety plan for the victim and any dependants, including children.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

A MARAC representative may be asked questions about DA Risk Assessments and the Sheffield MARAC process by professionals within their agencies. These can include:

1. Why refer to MARAC?

Referring to MARAC enables timely interventions for the purpose of reducing the risk of serious harm or homicide for a victim and to increase the safety and wellbeing of the victim and any dependants, including children.

In addition, Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs – a statutory process introduced in 2011 similar to Serious Case reviews for children) seek to establish that Domestic Abuse processes are adhered to when Domestic Abuse is an identified feature in a case. This includes undertaking Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment and appropriate referral to MARAC and the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVAS) when the risk posed to victim is assessed as high.

2. What types of cases are discussed at MARAC?

The cases of domestic abuse assessed as at high risk of serious harm or homicide using the ACPO DASH Risk Assessment tool are discussed at MARAC. High risk refers to the high risk of the victim being caused serious harm.

Serious harm is defined as:

Serious harm is a risk that is life threatening and / or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible

The referral criteria for high risk in Sheffield is solely based on professional judgement and not the number of ticks on the form; e.g. cases where the professional has serious concerns about the victim’s situation. If you don’t think the person is at high risk but they still need support please refer or signpost them to Sheffield Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 808 2241 help@sheffielddact.org.uk .

3. What do I do if I think I have a case for the MARAC?

Only practitioners can make a referral into MARAC – people cannot self refer. You must complete the Risk Identification Check list that forms part of the ACPO DASH MARAC referral form. If you have not been trained to complete this form then please ensure your manager or agency’s MARAC lead countersigns the referral until you undertake the training.

This form is available from the MARAC Administration team by emailing:

[**marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk**](mailto:marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk) **or DACT@sheffield.gov.uk**

The form is also available to be downloaded from the Sheffield Domestic Abuse Co-ordination Team (SDACT) website here:

http://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/resources/marac-information-and-forms/

Once completed, please return the completed form to the MARAC Administrator and also the Sheffield IDVA Service by secure email only. If you do not have a secure mail please give the MARAC administrator a call on 0114 205 3965 to discuss your options.

4. How often does MARAC meet?

The MARAC meets 3 weeks out of 4 in a month on a Tuesday at South Yorkshire Police Station, Snig Hill, Sheffield, S3 8LY.

5. Who organises the meetings?

The South Yorkshire Police (SYP) MARAC Co-ordinator organises the meetings and they are currently based in the SYP Public Protection Unit, and the team can be contacted on 0114 252 3682/3597.

6. How do I know if the MARAC supports victims properly?

Every case referred to the MARAC is simultaneously referred to the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA) service. On receipt of the referral, the IDVA service will ensure that all actions that can be undertaken to reduce risk are undertaken and that appropriate agencies are involved in the case. After a case is presented and discussed in the MARAC, the IDVA service will feed back the outcome from the MARAC to the victim. If the IDVA is unable to do this, the MARAC will identify an appropriate lead to do this.

7. Can I refer a case to MARAC at short notice?

Referrals to MARAC are made nine working days before each MARAC meeting. As meetings are regular in Sheffield it is not felt that an emergency referral process is needed. The IDVAs working with the police will ensure that any urgent action needed before the meeting is taken.

8. On referring to MARAC do I need to tell the victim?

It is advisable to seek consent and inform the victim when making a referral to MARAC. However, you are able to make a referral to MARAC without consent. This also applies to situations where a victim says the injuries were not the result of violence or abuse, but your professional judgement would suggest otherwise. Your professional judgment can be informed by information from other sources such as the Police, another agency that knows the victim or alleged perpetrator well, supportive family members or friends to whom the victim has disclosed the violence or abuse.

9. Can I bring the victim to MARAC?

No, MARAC is strictly for practitioners only. The IDVA ensures that the victim’s wishes and views are shared with the MARAC.

10. What other agencies attend MARAC?

In line with Safelives guidance, the core MARAC partners are:

* South Yorkshire Police
* Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service
* Sheffield City Council (SCC) Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Joint Investigation Team
* SCC CYPF Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
* SCC Adult Social Care
* SCC Housing Services
* SCC Housing Solutions
* National Probation Service
* South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company
* Sheffield Children’s NHS Foundation Trust
* Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust (STH)
* Sheffield Health and Social Care (SHSC) – Mental Health
* SHSC – Alcohol, Opiates and Non-opiates services
* STH – Homeless and Traveller Health Team
* Addaction
* Community Youth Team (CYT)
* Youth Justice Service (YJS)
* Victim Support Sheffield

Other agencies that may attend(This list is not exhaustive.)

* Sheffield Area Refuge and Support (SARAS)
* Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs)
* Shelter
* Turning Point
* Sheffield Working Women’s Opportunities Project (SWWOP)
* Action
* Ashiana.

If you require any further support or general information about any aspect of the Sheffield MARAC process or DA Risk Assessment, please contact the MARAC Administrator on

[marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk) or [DACT@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:DACT@sheffield.gov.uk)

Or by telephoning 0114 205 3965 (you can leave a message).

**MARAC training on how to identify domestic violence high risk victims**

Sheffield DACT commissions free Multi Agency MARAC training for practitioners in all agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors within Sheffield. For information and to reserve places please contact our commissioned provider Action on 0114 249 3920 or email [training.group@actionorg.uk](mailto:training.group@actionorg.uk)

**Guidance for completing the MARAC referral form**

The MARAC referral form can only be completed by practitioners who wish to refer high risk domestic violence victims, in order that the MARAC can reduce the level of risk through a multi-agency response.

Before making a referral, as far as possible ensure that you carry out a risk assessment with the victim. (Please see FAQ re: victim consent for referral into MARAC.) This will enable you to find out as much information from the victim as possible to complete the details in relation to the perpetrator, children and any other agencies that they had involvement with. These questions form part of the referral form.

The part that indicates the level of risk and whether it is suitable for referral into MARAC is the Risk Indicator Checklist (RIC). The Checklist can be found on pages 1-4 of the referral form.

When you carry out risk assessment with the victim it is important to discuss the 27 questions in the RIC to ascertain the risk level of harm currently posed to the victim. This will enable you to establish if the case crosses the threshold for referral into MARAC. Always include the date that you carried out the risk assessment as it is important that your agency frequently reviews the assessment. Please do not simply tick yes or no – always put as much detail as possible as this will help the IDVAs to offer appropriate support to the victim.

In situations where you cannot obtain consent please ensure this is recorded clearly on the form, stating why you assess the victim is at high risk.

**Recommended threshold for referral to MARAC**

Professional judgement: if a professional has serious concerns about a victim’s situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of ‘honour’-based violence. The IDVA service can be contacted on 0114 249 3920 for advice about this.

Once you have completed the referral form and get it signed off by your Manager or MARAC representative then follow the referral pathway to refer into MARAC.

Please explain your reasons for considering the case to be high risk clearly on the form. The IDVA service may contact you if, from the information supplied, the case does not appear to be high risk. They will ask you to clarify or add to the information you have given. If following discussion with IDVAs, you agree that the case is not high risk (e.g. if protective action has already been taken, for example the victim may have moved away) then the case may be withdrawn from the agenda.

**Information to be shared at MARAC**

In line with SafeLives guidance, representatives are requested to provide an update of current/recent information as follows:

* Current – 3 months prior to the current incident
* Recent – From 3-12 months before the current incident
* Historic information is linked to events that have occurred 12 months prior to the incident. If a representative thinks this would be useful to provide this information by way of context, then the overview should be synoptic so focus can be given to the current risk indicators

**MARAC Process:**

All MARAC representatives should read the Sheffield MARAC Operating Protocol. This outlines the MARAC process in more detail. Sheffield’s forms and processes can be found here <http://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/resources/marac-information-and-forms/>

The following flowchart outlines the MARAC process:

Use the **DASH Risk Assessment Tool**

to identify domestic abuse risk factors.

Where risk is assessed as **HIGH:** discuss case with line manager/MARAC rep. and use the **MARAC Referral Form** at the end of the tool to **refer to MARAC & IDVAS**

**DASH Risk Assessment**

**HIGH:**

**refer to MARAC & IDVAS**

**C**omplete **MARAC Referral Form**

at end of **DASH Tool**

Some agencies take immediate single agency action:

e.g. referral to refuge, sanctuary scheme, child protection; Police tag address; IDVAS contact victims

Sheffield DACT

**collects MARAC referrals**: name, address and d.o.b. for victim, perpetrator and children, and name of referring agency

Relevant professional to research and complete **MARAC Research Form** for each case

**MARAC list of cases** sent out by lead agency **8 working** days before meeting via **secure e-mail** or **registered post**

Information gathered by nominated **MARAC representative**

# MARAC MEETING

relevant information is shared – **risks identified**

# Actions to address risks agreed

with **deadlines**

MARAC representative **ensures actions are carried out** and MARAC admin notified by email

**Actions carried out – MARAC Admin notified?**

**NO**

**YES**

**No further mention unless re-referred as repeat MARAC case**

**Only incomplete actions considered at next MARAC**

**What is the role of a MARAC representative?**

All referrals that are received by the deadline specified and meet the criteria for MARAC are listed for discussion at the upcoming MARAC. The list is circulated to MARAC representatives by the MARAC administrator prior to the meeting.

On receipt of the list, MARAC representatives research cases and, at the MARAC, are required to share relevant and proportionate information that identifies risk and informs safety planning. Procedures are followed to ensure that safety and confidentiality are maintained at all times.

At the MARAC, the referring agency should present the referral, and this should normally be undertaken by the MARAC representative for that agency. If the agency does not have a MARAC representative, the original referrer is required to present the referral to the MARAC. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with prior agreement with the IDVA Service, will the IDVA present referrals made by other agencies on their behalf.

The IDVA will normally advise MARAC partners on the work undertaken by IDVA to reduce the risk posed to the victim, request the involvement of agencies that need to be involved in the case (where this has not been achieved prior to the MARAC) and advise MARAC on the victim’s wishes. In some cases where the victim is adequately supported by another worker within another agency, and IDVA had little or no role, the MARAC representative will present information. The IDVA will advise why they have not played an active role in the case.

All other agencies who have had contact with the victim, alleged perpetrator or dependent children then share any relevant information. Once all relevant information is shared, the MARAC Chair will request agencies volunteer actions to reduce the risks posed to the victim. MARAC representatives must have sufficient autonomy to volunteer realistic actions on behalf of their agency. Core agency representatives are required to remain for the entire meeting to ensure the MARAC remains effective.

After the MARAC, the IDVA will normally provide feedback to the victim. If the IDVA is not supporting the victim, the MARAC Chair will identify the appropriate agency to feed back to the victim.

Actions agreed by the MARAC Chair and agencies attending MARAC need to be completed within the time agreed by MARAC, and where no time has been agreed at MARAC, within 10 working days of the MARAC (in line with the Sheffield MARAC Operating Protocol). MARAC representatives are required to inform the MARAC Administrators on the completion of actions prior to the next meeting, or advise MARAC at the next meeting why the actions have not been completed.

**Guidance for handover**

To ensure continuity of representation at the MARAC, when an agency MARAC representative changes, it is considered best practice for the outgoing representative or their manager to prepare the incoming representative with what is expected in the role of MARAC representative. Below is the guidance and handover information to be completed by the relevant parties. Please provide information re. the replacement to the MARAC Administrator. Once the information is received, the MARAC Administrator will inform the MARAC Chairs, the SYP MARAC Coordinator and the IDVA service. The MARAC Administrator will also ensure the incoming representative receives a copy of the MARAC Induction pack and the MARAC protocol and will need to know:

* Agency:
* Name of former representative (who should advise of the change):
* Name of new representative:
* Contact details of new representative including their secure email address
* Date of change over

Safelives suggest that the outgoing MARAC representative (or their manager) ensures the following checklist is discussed in the meeting with the incoming MARAC representative:

1. What is the agency process for identifying and risk assessing domestic abuse and making referrals to MARAC?

2. How does the agency ensure that, wherever possible, all victims are safely informed of their referral to MARAC? Is there any guidance for frontline practitioners on how to check that informing the victim is safe and what to tell them? Is there a leaflet which can be handed to the victim, when it is safe to do so?

3. How is research for the MARAC completed prior to the meeting? What information systems are searched?

4. How is information from the MARAC shared with colleagues within the agency? Is there any guidance for frontline practitioners about the use of MARAC information?

5. What sort of actions does the agency routinely offer at the MARAC?

6. How are actions from the MARAC fed back to frontline line practitioners? How do these practitioners report on action completion to the representative and how is this fed back to the MARAC Co-ordinator?

7. How are MARAC cases flagged, de-flagged and tagged? Is there guidance on the identification of further incidents?

**Appendices – Additional Information:**

1. **MARAC Information Sharing Agreement (ISA).**

The MARAC partners are all signed up to the Sheffield MARAC Information Sharing Protocol. A copy of this protocol is contained as an appendix to the MARAC Operating Protocol which can be found here: <http://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/resources/marac-information-and-forms/> A local record of signatories can be obtained by emailing [marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk)

This document evidences that:

* The signatories have, on behalf of their agency, agreed to share information
* Describes the roles and structures that will support the exchange of information between agencies
* Sets out the legal framework within which the information is shared
* Describes the security procedures necessary to ensure compliance with responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and agency specific security requirements.

1. **Sheffield MARAC Operational Protocol (SMOP).**

<http://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/resources/marac-information-and-forms/>

This protocol serves as the terms of reference and guidance for MARAC members during the course of agreed information sharing between multi-agency partners during MARAC meetings.

1. **The principles of an effective MARAC.**

Safelives has produced the following principles which the Sheffield MARAC adheres to. At the core of each principle is the safety of the victim, which needs to be considered at all stages of the process from identification to information sharing, and from action planning to governance. Ensuring that the victim is supported throughout the process and represented at the MARAC is crucial to managing risk, improving safety and reducing repeat victimisation.

The core principles are:

1. Identification

All agencies and services identify high risk victims through completing a risk assessment and/or referral to a specialist agency within safe timeframes once domestic abuse is disclosed.

2. Referral to the MARAC

All high risk victims who meet MARAC referral criteria are referred to the MARAC by a range of agencies within safe timeframes.

3. Multi-agency engagement

All relevant agencies are appropriately and consistently represented at the MARAC.

4. Independent representation and support for victims

All high risk victims are consistently supported and represented by an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) or other independent representative who prioritises safety throughout the MARAC process.

5. Research and information sharing

MARAC representatives research cases and share relevant and proportionate information that identifies risk and informs safety planning. Procedures are followed to ensure that safety and confidentiality are maintained at all times.

6. Action planning

Action plans are developed which address the risks identified.

7. Number of cases and capacity

The MARAC has the number of referrals and capacity to ensure that all high risk victims who meet the MARAC threshold can receive support from their local MARAC.

8. Equality

The MARAC is committed to delivering equality of outcome to all.

9. Operational support

Consistent coordination and administration support the effective functioning of the MARAC.

10. Governance

Effective governance oversees the performance, sustainability and accountability of the MARAC. The 10 Principles and the sub-principles were updated in October 2011.

**(iv) Research for MARAC (and feed back to your agency)**

The following will need to be researched on your system prior to attending MARAC, once the case summary is received:

* Names, addresses and dates of birth for all parties named on the list
* Current involvement
* Recent involvement (i.e. involvement of your agency within the last 3 months)
* Historic involvement (please note: for MARAC purposes, this relates to involvement within the last 12 month period)

Please note a summary of information is required for MARAC.

Please ensure that at the MARAC you share any differences in dates of birth or any aliases you may hold on record so that partners can update their records.

At the MARAC, don’t forget to record actions assigned to or volunteered by your agency – and feed this back to operational and/front line staff. These will be included in the minutes but if you need to take urgent action, your own record of actions offered is essential.

(v) **Dates of MARAC meetings and deadline for referrals (2016)**

Please see below for the MARAC dates and deadlines for referrals to MARAC. Don’t forget to send referrals to IDVA at the same time as you send them to MARAC. If you can’t attend, please advise MARAC of your apologies, and send an update to MARAC prior to the meeting so this can be shared at the MARAC. If you are representing a core MARAC partner, please ensure your deputy is fully briefed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DEADLINE FOR REFERRALS** | **MARAC DATE** | **AREA** | **VENUE** | **MARACSTART TIME** |
| 15/12/2015 | 05/01/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 22/12/2015 | 12/01/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 05/01/2016 | 19/01/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 19/01/2016 | 02/02/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 26/01/2016 | 09/02/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 02/02/2016 | 16/02/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 16/02/2016 | 01/03/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 23/02/2016 | 08/03/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 01/03/2016 | 15/03/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 22/03/2016 | 05/04/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 29/03/2016 | 12/04/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 05/04/2016 | 19/04/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 19/04/2016 | 03/05/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 26/04/2016 | 10/05/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 03/05/2016 | 17/05/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 24/05/2016 | 07/06/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 31/05/2016 | 14/06/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 07/06/2016 | 21/06/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 21/06/2016 | 05/07/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 28/06/2016 | 12/07/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3 RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 05/07/2016 | 19/07/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 19/07/2016 | 02/08/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 26/07/2016 | 09/08/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 02/08/2016 | 16/08/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 23/08/2016 | 06/09/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 30/08/2016 | 13/09/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 06/09/2016 | 20/09/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 20/09/2016 | 04/10/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 27/09/2016 | 11/10/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 04/10/2016 | 18/10/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 18/10/2016 | 01/11/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 25/10/2016 | 08/11/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 01/11/2016 | 15/11/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 22/11/2016 | 06/12/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 29/11/2016 | 13/12/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |
| 06/12/2016 | 20/12/2016 | SHEFFIELD | SYP HQ - 3RD FLOOR | 9AM |

SafeLives produces toolkits and other resources for people attending MARACs here:

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings/resources-people-attending>

(vi) For further information, please contact:

Alison Higgins, Domestic Abuse Strategy Manager, DACT, [alison.higgins@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:alison.higgins@sheffield.gov.uk)

MARAC Administrator, DACT, [marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:marac@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk)

South Yorkshire Police MARAC Coordinator c/o PPU

1. http://www.safelives.org.uk/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)