

# Ryedale Voluntary Action

## Factsheet

### MARAC

#### **What is a Domestic Abuse MARAC?**

MARAC stands for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. It is a meeting where agencies share information about the risk of serious harm, or homicide, to people experiencing domestic abuse in their area. Multi-agency safety plans are developed to support those at most risk. The aim is to increase the safety and well-being of the adults and children involved, and reduce the likelihood of repeat victimisation.

#### **What is the key element of MARAC?**

The key element of MARAC is the domestic abuse risk assessment, which will have been carried out by a practitioner from any agency supporting people affected by domestic abuse.

#### **The risk assessment has three main objectives:**

- To gather detailed and relevant information from victims, which could be shared with other agencies if the level of risk becomes high
- To identify those that need more intensive support and multi-agency action planning
- To make agencies aware of the risks posed by the most dangerous offenders

Where appropriate, information gathered during these risk assessments will be shared among relevant agencies to reduce the risk levels and promote the safety of high risk levels and promote the safety of high risk victims and their children.

#### **What is the process of MARAC?**

When a case has been put forward for discussion at a MARAC it is because the domestic abuse risk assessment indicates that the victims could be at risk of serious harm from domestic abuse. At the MARAC, agencies come together to pool their knowledge and make a multi-agency action plan to provide the victim with services to meet their needs, and to keep them and their family safe. These are high-risk cases that will have been identified by a practitioner or manager, using an evaluated risk assessment tool. **Everybody at the MARAC must sign a confidentiality agreement before the meeting begins.**

#### **Why do representatives from different agencies attend a MARAC?**

The MARAC will achieve more successful outcomes in the most complex, high risk, domestic abuse cases than each agency would achieve working with limited information on their own. Information from a range of agencies helps to clarify what is going on, the risks posed by the perpetrator, and encourages multi-agency action planning to address those risks.

#### **Referral Process**

If you identify a case that you consider is high risk you should first discuss it with your manager. If your manager is experienced in domestic abuse risk assessment, s/he will assist you to complete the MARAC risk assessment and referral or contact the Domestic Abuse Coordinator on 01723 383627.

#### **Which cases are discussed?**

Only cases which are assessed as being high risk are discussed at the MARAC. A practitioner from any agency can have identified these, using an evaluated domestic abuse risk assessment tool.

## **What information can be disclosed at a MARAC?**

Any relevant information can be shared, that high risk level of the victim and her/his family.

## **The information disclosed may cover the following areas, but this list is not exhaustive:**

- Name, date of birth, address(es), aliases and gender
- Current information relating to recent contact, meetings, sightings, phone calls. This could include attendance or non-attendance that relates to the appointments, who is present at an address and attendance at A&E or other health settings
- Information about any child protection or safeguarding procedures
- Information about court orders, injunctions, bail conditions and other legal issues
- Historic relevant information, such as previous convictions, family or relationship history, other safety options considered, substance misuse issues
- Other information relating to the risks facing the victim, or other people

## **Contact the Domestic Abuse Coordinator on 01723 383627 for more information**

### **How will the information be used?**

The information that is shared is used at a MARAC meeting to construct an individual safety plan, that will attempt to address the risks faced by the adult victim and their family. It may also cover risks faced by agency staff, neighbours or colleagues, and indeed the perpetrator.

Consideration will always be given to concerns about safeguarding any children or young people involved, and linked with child protection procedures.

Decisions about how the information is to be used must be taken within the meeting. This includes both use by the participants in the meeting and those outside the MARAC meeting.

### **What are the legal grounds for sharing information?**

Disclosures to MARAC are made with reference to the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act. Information can be shared, when necessary, to prevent a crime, protect the health or safety of the victim, and / or the rights and freedom of those who are victims of violence and / or their children.

### **Is the perpetrator informed of the meeting and the safety plans?**

No. It would defeat the purpose of the MARAC if the perpetrator was informed about the safety plan. The perpetrator may become aware of the meeting taking place but should not be informed of the safety plan.

Participants should take extraordinary care not to inadvertently inform the perpetrator of any element of the safety plan.

### **What if the victim does not give consent for the MARAC referral?**

Individuals are referred to a MARAC using strict domestic abuse risk assessment and referral processes. In some circumstances, it could increase the risk to the victim if consent were sought or given, for example if the alleged perpetrator discovered that the victim had given consent.

Information can still be shared, under the legal grounds mentioned earlier, but this must be proportionate to the level of risk of harm to a named individual or household.

The views and needs of the victim will often be represented at the MARAC by the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services (IDVAS), or Domestic Abuse Services Support Worker.

### **What happens after a MARAC?**

After a MARAC the IDVAS, or a practitioner in regular contact with the victim, will contact them to let them know about the safety plan and the support that agencies are offering.

All the MARAC contacts are expected to confirm when their agency actions have been completed.

### **How do I find out who my agency MARAC contacts are?**

These will change over time. The MARACs are administered by Scarborough and Ryedale Safer Communities Partnership.