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**Terms of Reference Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

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<b>Information</b>	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Designation:</b> Edinburgh MARAC Chair
<b>Lead Service Area</b>	MARAC Steering Group
<b>Date Agreed</b>	5 June 2013
<b>Last Review Date</b>	13 December 2018
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<b>Agreed by</b>	Edinburgh Violence Against Women Partnership

6/10/2021

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**1. PURPOSE**

This terms of reference describes the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

**2. SCOPE**

This terms of reference should be read in conjunction with agency procedures in respect of adult and child protection.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, community justice and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. During the meeting relevant and proportionate information is shared about the current risks, enabling representatives to identify options to increase the safety of the victim and any other vulnerable parties such as children. The MARAC then creates a multi-agency action plan to address the identified risks and increase the safety and wellbeing of all those at risk. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim. However, taking in to account the UK law which priorities the safety of children, the MARAC will also make links with other multi-agency meetings and processes to safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator At the heart of a MARAC is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety.
10 Principles of and effective MARAC	Please see associated document.
Domestic Abuse	Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends). (Scottish Executive 2003, page 3)
Domestic Abuse Court	Court offering fast-track system for victims for domestic abuse to ensure a prompt and appropriate community justice response to domestic abuse crimes.
SPOC	Single Point of Contact. The SPOC should have sufficient seniority to access information on individual cases and have the authority to make decisions about allocation of resources. On occasions where the SPOC is unable to attend a suitable deputy should attend.

<p>MARAC Referral Criteria</p>	<p><b>Visible High Risk</b>                  This is an assessment based on actuarial data, involving the use of risk indicators to assess the probability of serious harm or homicide. For domestic abuse cases, the number or 'yes' answers on the DASH usually determines the level of risk. 14 'yes' answers on the Dash should result in a referral to Marac.</p> <p><b>Professional Judgement</b>                  Involves an assessment of dangerousness based on an individual practitioner's consideration of a situation but will naturally use the information from the DASH checklist to inform this judgement. However, in addition to using the DASH it is crucial that professionals use their full range of knowledge to make an assessment; this knowledge will usually be gained through experience, reflection and deliberation. This form of assessment relies heavily on the skill and experience of the practitioner in order to make an informed decision of likely risk.</p> <p>In domestic abuse settings, professional judgement will be informed by the practitioner's knowledge of domestic abuse and its manifestations. Referrals to Marac can be made based solely on professional judgement. However, it is the practitioner's responsibility to articulate what their concerns are and the reasons for the referral.</p> <p><b>Potential Escalation</b>                  The potential for escalation can be assessed by looking at the frequency and/or severity of abuse. It is common practice for services to determine there is a potential for serious harm or homicide when three domestic abuse events have been identified in a 12-month period. For example, three attendances at A&amp;E, three police call outs or three calls to make housing repairs. This should alert professionals to the need to consider a referral to Marac.</p> <p><b>Repeat Referral</b>                  A 'repeat' as ANY instance of abuse between the same victim and perpetrator(s), within 12 months of the last referral to Marac. The individual act of abuse does not need to be 'criminal', violent or threatening but should be viewed within the context of a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. Some events that might be considered a 'repeat' incident may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwanted direct or indirect contact from the perpetrator and/or their friends or family</li> <li>• A breach of police or court bail conditions</li> <li>• A breach of any civil court order between the victim and perpetrator</li> <li>• Any dispute between the victim and perpetrator(s) including over child contact, property, divorce/ separation proceedings etc.</li> </ul> <p>These events could be disclosed to any service or agency including, but not exclusive to, health care practitioners (including mental health), domestic abuse specialists, police, substance misuse services, housing providers etc.</p>
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EDDACS	Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Support
EWA	Edinburgh Women's Aid
Consent	When a person is assessed to be at high risk of serious harm or homicide (Marac threshold) information can be shared without consent. The agency referrer needs to be explicit why information is being shared without consent.
Confidentiality	Information discussed by the agency representatives, within the ambit of MARAC, is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties who have not signed up to the MARAC ISP, without the agreement of the partners of the meeting.
Partnership Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edinburgh Women's Aid</li> <li>• Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Support (EDDACS) (EWA)</li> <li>• Police Scotland)</li> <li>• Community Justice Social Work</li> <li>• Communities &amp; Families</li> <li>• Adult Social Care</li> <li>• NHS Lothian Child &amp; Adult Services</li> <li>• Family and Household Support</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Shakti</li> <li>• Substance Misuse Services</li> </ul>
DASH-RIC	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harrassment and 'Honour'-Based Violence (Risk Indicator Checklist)
EVAWP	Edinburgh Violence Against Women Partnership
COG	Chief Officers Group. EVAWP reports to the COG.
MARAC Steering Group	<p>Reports to the EVAWP on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance (consistency &amp; representation)</li> <li>• Training for MARAC SPOCs</li> <li>• Volume</li> <li>• Repeat victimisation levels</li> <li>• Referrals to other fora</li> <li>• Equality of access</li> <li>• Quality of information shared</li> </ul>
MARAC Chair	<p>Provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EWA</li> <li>• Police Scotland</li> <li>• CJSW</li> </ul>
MARAC Co-ordinator	Provided by EWA (EDDACS)

Minimum age	Victims from age 16 years and above can be referred to MARAC.
'Honour'- based violence (HBV)	High risk victims experiencing HBV should be referred to MARAC in order to effectively identify and manage the risks, which may be more complex and/or involve multiple perpetrators. These cases should go to MARAC as long as specialist support s available for the victim to ensure that action plans remain safe.
ISP	Information Sharing Protocol
SCD	Social Care Direct
Conflict of interests	Where the SPOC has competing loyalties or interests.
Observers	<p>MARAC supports observers of the meeting in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In preparation of becoming a MARAC agency SPOC</li><li>• If you are working with victims and/or perpetrators of domestic abuse.</li></ul> <p>All observer requests should be submitted to <a href="mailto:jenny.miller@eddacs.cjsm.net">jenny.miller@eddacs.cjsm.net</a></p>
Cultural perspective	In cases with specific cultural perspective such as race, nationality, gender or faith, then SPOCs with relevant background or experiences should attend to ensure adequate representation.

## 4. ACTIONS

### 4.1 Identification

All MARAC agencies should have clear procedures for identifying victims of domestic abuse. This proactive identification will then lead to a full risk assessment as this is the main factor that underpins MARAC.

### 4.2 Risk Assessment

4.2.1 The MARAC meeting is only for those victims identified as at the highest risk of serious harm or homicide as a result of domestic abuse.

4.2.2 The risk assessment is normally carried out by the agency that receives the initial referral or notification of the domestic abuse incident.

4.2.3 The threshold for establishing the risk level, using the DASH RIC is as follows:

- Professional judgement. Where professional judgement is being applied, the referrer should be clear what this is. If it is not clear, the referral will be returned for clarification.
- Actuarial High Risk – If 14 or more ‘yes’ boxes for questions 1-9 and 13-37 have been ticked, the case would normally meet the MARAC referral criteria.
- Potential escalation
- Repeat referral

### 4.3 Referrals

4.3.1 Any frontline agency representative that undertakes a risk assessment with a victim, and thereby determines that their case meets the high-risk threshold, can refer a victim’s case to a local MARAC.

4.3.2 The referring agency should inform the victim of the MARAC referral where it is safe to do so. This would also include information about the purpose of MARAC, which agencies attend and how the victim will be represented. When a victim is assessed to be at high risk of serious harm or homicide information can be shared without consent. The Sharing Information Without Consent template should be completed and forwarded to the MARAC co-ordinator.

4.3.3 EWA Chief Executive, High Risk Senior Practitioner and EDDACS Manager consider which cases should be discussed at MARAC in line with the MAPPA Referral Criteria.

### 4.4 Agency Records Research

4.4.1 The MARAC co-ordinator will collate the list of cases to be heard and send these to SCD to scrutinise SWIFT and populate the template with key information such as last known addresses Key Team/Key Worker (if an open case) for both victims and perpetrators, medical practice, children’s details etc.

4.4.2 All agency MARAC SPOCs receive list of case name from SCD and research each case in advance of attending MARAC.

#### **4.5 Conflicts of interests**

Must be declared to the MARAC Co-ordinator in advance of the MARAC Meeting, or to the MARAC Chair (observers).

#### **4.6 MARAC Meeting and Information Sharing**

4.6.1 The MARAC Chair will explain the confidentiality statement and ask SPOCs and observers to sign this statement at the start of the meeting.

4.6.2 The SPOCs will present relevant and proportionate information on behalf of their agency. The designated SPOC will have to decide whether information should be shared as per the consent guidelines.

4.6.3 The referring agency will present information on the victims' behalf.

4.6.4 Where an agency makes a MARAC referral, the referrer should attend to present the information.

4.6.5 The MARAC Chair should identify the risks for the victim, children, perpetrator and agency staff.

#### **4.7 Action Planning**

4.7.1 The SPOCs volunteer actions on behalf of their agencies, offer what they can do to increase safety, mitigate against the risks and identify opportunities to co-ordinate work with other partners.

4.7.2 SPOCs inform colleagues within their agencies of agreed actions and timescales for completion.

4.7.3 SPOC to confirm to the MARAC administrator within 5 working days of the MARAC meeting, that the actions have been completed.

#### **4.8 Victim Updates**

It is the responsibility of the referring agency to keep the victim informed at each stage of the MARAC process.

#### **4.9 MARAC to MARAC Referrals**

4.9.1 A Marac to Marac referral should be made as soon as it becomes known that a Marac victim has moved between areas, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

4.9.2 The referral should be made on the MARAC to MARAC referral form.

4.9.3 The victim does not need to consent to the MARAC to MARAC referral when they are assessed to be at high risk of serious injury or homicide.

#### **4.10 Governance and Performance Management**

4.10.1 The purpose of a governance structure for MARAC is to ensure proper accountability on the part of the participating agencies through their representative, to one another and to victims.

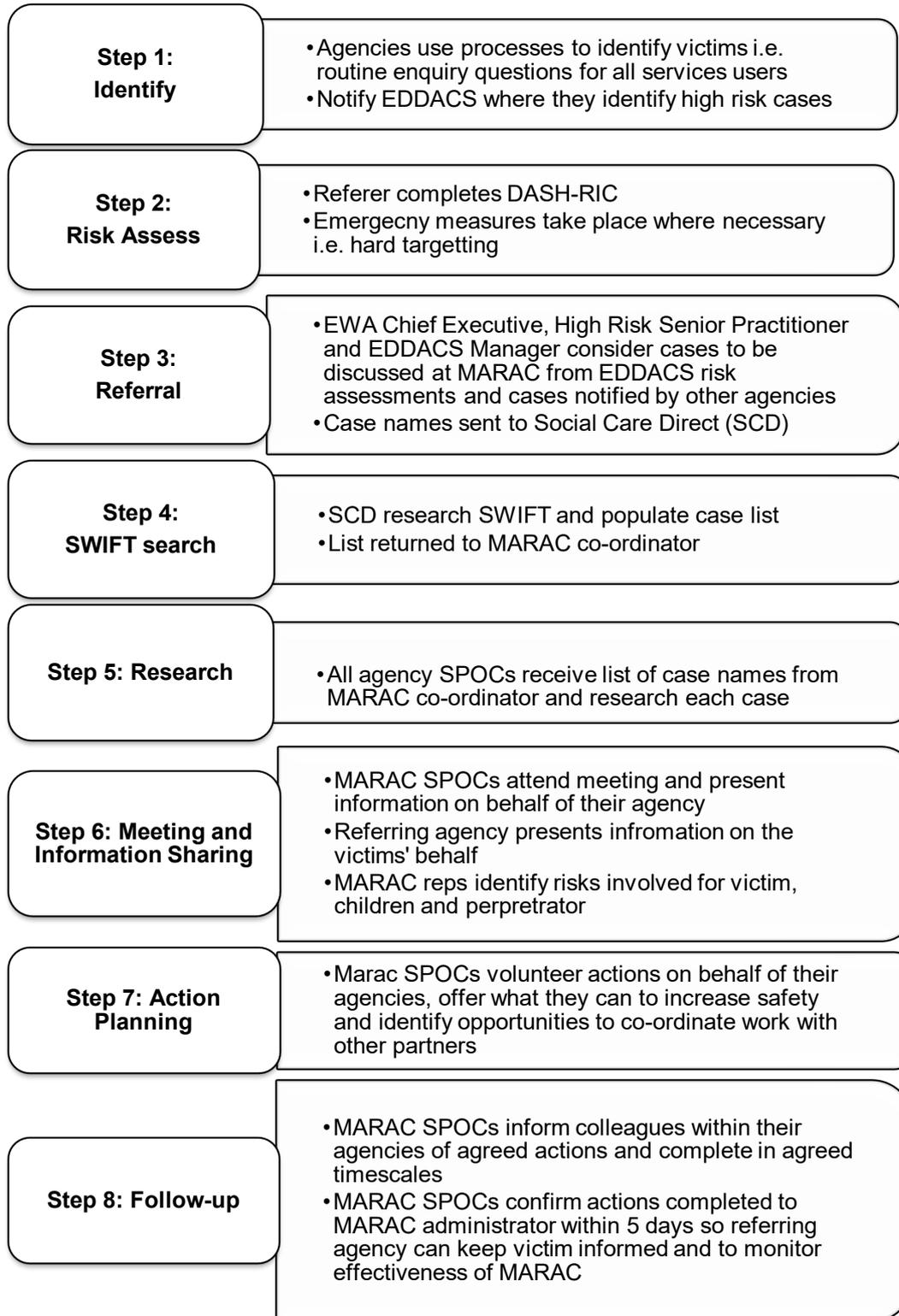
4.10.2 In Edinburgh, governance is undertaken by the MARAC Steering Group, reporting to the Edinburgh Violence Against Women Partnership.

4.10.3 The MARAC Steering Group includes representatives from all key agencies that attend MARAC with the authority to make decisions around the MARAC, implement change and amend policy. Should the MARAC Steering Group become aware of agencies failure to adhere to this terms of reference with consequences for the effectiveness of MARAC, they will be responsible for taking appropriate steps to address this matter.

4.10.4 The objectives of this monitoring are:

- Oversee awareness raising with local practitioners about MARAC
- Identify and respond to operational issues
- Ensure MARAC operates within the 10 principles of an effective MARAC
- Maintain effective partnerships with other Public Protection structure and MARAC areas
- Monitor and evaluate the data from MARAC
- Ensure operation is within legal responsibilities and up to date with the changes to legislation and national guidance
- Reviewing effectiveness and making suggestions for improvements

4.11 MARAC Process Flowchart



## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

This procedure will be maintained by the MARAC Steering Group Chair.  
All relevant members of MARAC are responsible for complying with this procedure.

## 6. POLICY BASE

[Whole Lives: Improving the Response to Domestic Abuse in Scotland](#)

## 7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

MARAC Information Sharing Protocol

[10 Principles of an Effective MARAC](#)

[MARAC Confidentiality Statement](#)

[MARAC Referral Form](#)

[MARAC to MARAC Referral Form](#)

[Effective Chairing](#)

[Aide Memoire for Chairs](#)

[Information Sharing Without Consent Form](#)

[DASH Risk Checklist](#)

[MARAC FAQ](#)

[MARAC Process Quick Guide](#)

[MARAC Toolkit for Representatives](#)

[MARAC Toolkit for Chairs](#)

## 8. RECORD KEEPING

Each agency will be responsible for managing and storing information generated/shared through MARAC (Data Privacy Impact Assessment and Information Sharing Protocol).