



# Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)



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### Document Control

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### Version Control

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V1	15.12.19	MARAC Steering Group	Document Created and shared for initial comments

### Background

A 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, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

The Bristol MARAC process aims to:

- Manage and increase the safety of high risk victims of domestic violence and abuse (identified through the DASH risk assessment checklist and professional judgement)
- Enable creative solutions for high risk victims of domestic violence through the combined expertise of professionals and resources from across the Bristol partnership
- Shared responsibility for delivering a multi-agency action plan
- To facilitate effective information sharing across the partnership
- Reduce risk and prevent further harm
- Enable the safeguarding of adults and children
- Reduce repeat victimisation
- Reduce crime and disorder

### Threshold for MARAC

In Bristol Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences are held to discuss victims of Domestic Abuse who are at significant risk of death or serious harm as a result of the domestic abuse they are experiencing. Practitioners in Bristol should use the Domestic Abuse Risk Indication Checklist to inform their professional assessment of risk. A MARAC should be considered for all victims who score over 16.

If a professional has concerns that a victim will be seriously harmed by the perpetrator they should also consider referring the case to MARAC under this criterion regardless of the risk assessment score. Serious harm is defined as 'A risk which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be difficult or impossible' (Home Office 2002).

When deciding if a referral should be made to a MARAC, refers should consider the number of reported serious incidents to the victim of domestic violence/abuse in the past 12 months. This criterion should be used in situations where the abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information.

Referrals should be completed on the Bristol MARAC referral form and made by secure email to the MARAC Coordinators at [dvmaracbristol@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:dvmaracbristol@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk)

Where victims do not meet the threshold of MARAC, this does not mean that multi-agency response outside the MARAC cannot be taken with the consent of the individual or through other multi-agency frameworks in line with the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Procedures.

### Safety Plan Review by Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)

It is the responsibility of agencies making referrals to the Bristol MARAC to ensure that there has also been a referral to an IDVA service in all cases (Next Link Duty Team or Victim Support IDVA). The MARAC Coordinators will check that this has happened before the victim is heard at MARAC by coordinating with the IDVA services taking into consideration previous involvement and ensuring the most appropriate service has been or is offered.

IDVAs' main responsibilities are safety planning and safeguarding women and children, support with accessing legal remedies, support with the criminal justice system, accessing safer accommodation or supporting victims to remain safely in their property. In addition they offer support to maximise their income and immigration support, support to access counselling and wellbeing services, mental health, GPs, group work or parenting support. IDVAs will ensure that all immediate safety plan actions are in place on identification of the high risk victim. If at this point it is assessed that further multi-agency coordination is required to reduce the risk to the victim the case will be heard at the subsequent MARAC.

### **Chairing MARAC: Guidance for Professionals**

Chairing of MARAC will be conducted on a rotational basis by Senior Operational Managers of the Keeping Bristol Safe Domestic Abuse Group. The MARAC Coordinator will be responsible for drawing up the rota and communicating this onward to key stakeholders. The MARAC Coordinator will support in minute taking with final sign off required by the Chair.

Safe Lives Provides guidance for Chairs of MARAC meetings which should be followed by Bristol MARAC Chairs.

### **Meeting Frequency**

Meetings will commence on the 9th January 2020 and take place every Thursday at The Bridewell Police Station in Bristol. "In the room" attendance is encouraged, however Skype software will be trialled, where possible, to maximise good attendance.

### **Meeting Process**

On Friday morning partners will be provided with a list of individuals due to be heard at the MARAC on the following Thursday. Partners should undertake relevant checks and information gathering and alert the MARAC coordinator as to whether they are known to their agency.

On Thursday morning the meeting will be held. It will last no more than 2 hours. Actions from the meeting will be circulated to partners on Thursday afternoon by the MARAC Coordinator.

Victims with children will be heard concurrently to support engagement from services focused on children.

### **Membership**

Standing members of the MARAC:

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust

BGSW Community Rehabilitation Company

Bristol City Council Public Health

Bristol City Council Safeguarding Adults

Bristol City Council Housing

Bristol City Council Children and Families' Services

Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group

Bristol Community Health/Sirona

National Probation Service

Next Link

North Bristol Trust

One25

Opoca

ROADS

Bristol City Council Safeguarding Education Team

University Hospitals Bristol (information provision)

Victim Support

Case-holding social workers (adults or children) will attend MARAC slots for individuals who they are allocated.

### **Action Plans**

A Lead Practitioner who is responsible for ensuring that actions from the MARAC are completed will be identified in every case. The MARAC Coordinator will follow up with the Lead Practitioner a fortnight after the MARAC to ensure that the actions have been completed. Exceptions will be raised at the following MARAC meeting.

### **Quality Assurance and Governance**

The Bristol MARAC is subject to a Quality Assurance process in order to identify thematic learning and areas for system development in order to improve services for victims of domestic abuse in Bristol. This will be implemented and managed locally utilising tools by Safe Lives

and locally developed processes. The Keeping Bristol Safe Communities Delivery and Performance Group will have responsibility for overseeing the quality of the MARAC process going forward including reviewing quarterly data reports and undertaking multi-agency audits of quality at least twice yearly.