

4) Repeat Cases

Agencies need to refer any repeat DVA incidents, within 12 months of the first MARAC meeting being held, back to the MARAC. A repeat incident is defined as one where any of the following types of behaviour have taken place:-

- Violence or threats of violence to the victim
 - A pattern of stalking or harassment
 - Where rape or sexual abuse is disclosed
- These cases are initially discussed within a Pre MARAC meeting.

What happens when the referral has been made to the MARAC?

The victim will be referred to a specialist IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) who will represent the victim's views at the MARAC. The MARAC Coordinator sends the details of those concerned by secure email to all agencies that have signed a confidentiality agreement, and asks them to search their records for any relevant information to bring to the MARAC. Other information that does not directly relate to the DVA or the victims' safety should not be shared at the MARAC.

Does the survivor/victim have to give consent to this sharing of information?

No, but safety planning will be more effective if s/he agrees to work with the IDVA. The referring agency should inform the survivor/victim in advance that information will be shared and encourage them to engage with the IDVA involved.

What happens at the MARAC meeting?

A senior manager or a nominated person from each agency attends, to share any information relating to DVA and to make a note of anything new they learn to help them to safety plan within their agency for their client. Information brought to MARAC could include names, dates of birth, summary of events and/or injuries, including emotional/psychological abuse or intimidation and impact, and what relevant services have been accessed. This usually results in a much broader picture of what is going on for those victims, including any children involved.

Confidentiality – Things to be aware of:-

- 1) Perpetrators should not be informed of MARAC and professionals need to be careful not to warn them of involvement as this may put the victim at even greater risk.
- 2) Perpetrators are in every walk of life, including your own agency. Therefore MARAC information has to be kept safely.
- 3) Information requested by third parties, including Courts, solicitors and Freedom of Information requests, can only be shared in specific circumstances. You may only share information from MARAC with permission from the MARAC chair.

What happens after a MARAC?

Practitioners in regular contact with the survivor/victim, usually the IDVA, will let them know about the safety measures and the support each agency is offering. All agencies action anything allocated to them and inform the DVA MARAC Coordinator if for any reason they can not.

Bristol Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) MARAC



Information Leaflet for Professionals

What is a DVA MARAC?

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC's) are meetings

where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, a risk focused, coordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. Twice monthly MARAC meetings are held in Bristol and include representatives from most statutory and some voluntary agencies.

Why MARAC?

It is estimated that 10% of all DVA cases can be described as high risk. Where MARAC's have been independently evaluated they have been shown to reduce murders and serious risks from DVA in a significant number of cases.

How does someone get referred to MARAC?

Any agency can make a referral to MARAC. The practitioner must complete a risk assessment form, preferably with the survivor/victim, and send it with a referral form to the MARAC Coordinator. Because sensitive personal information can get lost in an ordinary email, this MUST ONLY be sent by secure email, fax or recorded delivery. To download a MARAC referral form and risk assessment please visit <http://www.bava.org.uk/resources/> -

Secure Email: –

dvmarac@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

Are all cases referred discussed at MARAC?

Due to the high number of referrals in Bristol we are not able to discuss every high risk referral at a MARAC meeting. Some referrals are therefore discussed at a Pre MARAC Meeting.

These are the criteria for referral into MARAC – Professionals are asked to always circle on the referral form which criteria they are referring under:-

High Risk Assessment	Y / N	Professional Judgement	Y / N
Potential Escalation	Y / N	MARAC Repeat	Y / N

Explanations of the criteria:-

1) High Risk Assessment

DVA experts have devised a risk indication checklist (known as DASH) which is used across the country by professionals to assess the level of risk in DVA cases. The Risk Assessment is a list of 24 questions preferably completed with the survivor/victim. If the survivor/victim answers yes to 14 or more questions the case is deemed high risk and a referral to MARAC should be made.

In Bristol any cases that score 14-15 ticks on the risk assessment are discussed at a Pre MARAC meeting.

Pre MARAC Meetings are attended by the MARAC Chair, Coordinator and a specialist DVA worker (IDVA). The safety plan already in place is looked at and a decision is made around whether a full MARAC discussion is necessary, to further ensure

the victims safety. Basic information is also provided by Children's Social Care for cases involving children. If further actions are deemed necessary, but it is not felt the case needs to be discussed further, there maybe actions allocated to agencies from the Pre MARAC Meeting. All agencies in Bristol received a MARAC and a Pre MARAC case list and are asked to flag Pre MARAC cases on their systems as the victim is still deemed to be at high risk from the perpetrator.

2) Professional Judgement

If a professional has concerns that a victim will be seriously harmed by the perpetrator they should refer 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) All cases referred under this criterion will automatically be discussed at a full MARAC Meeting.

3) Potential Escalation

A referral can be made based on the number of reported serious incidents to the victim of domestic violence/abuse in the past 12 months. This criterion is used in situations where the abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information. These cases will be initially discussed at a Pre MARAC meeting.