



**WEST MIDLANDS**

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

***PARTNERSHIP OPERATING PROTOCOL***

This protocol applies to the West Midlands Metropolitan Area:

- Birmingham
- Coventry
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Walsall
- Wolverhampton

## Table of Contents

1. Definition of Domestic Abuse .....	3
2. Introduction .....	3
3. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).....	3
4. The MARAC Chair .....	4
5. MARAC Meetings .....	4
6. Co-ordination of MARAC.....	5
7. Administration of MARAC .....	6
8. MARAC Representative’s Role and Responsibilities .....	6
9. MARAC Process .....	7
Identification of MARAC Cases .....	7
MARAC Qualifying Criteria.....	7
Referrals Where MARAC Threshold is not Met .....	8
Repeat Victims.....	8
MARAC Criteria for 16-17 year old victims .....	8
MARAC Referral Process.....	8
MARAC List and Agenda .....	9
Actions Prior to MARAC .....	9
Victim Contact Prior to MARAC.....	9
Male Victims of Domestic Abuse .....	10
10. MARAC Meeting.....	10
Observers at MARAC.....	10
11. Information Sharing at MARAC.....	10
12. Action Planning.....	11
13. Emergency MARAC.....	11
14. MARAC Escalation Process .....	11
15. Death of MARAC Subjects.....	12
Domestic Homicide Review Definition .....	12
Safeguarding Adult Review Definition .....	12
16. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) .....	13
17. One Day One Conversation (ODOC).....	13
18. Referrals to and from other MARACs .....	13
19. Equality.....	13
20. Evaluation and Performance Management .....	14
21. Complaints and Accountability .....	14
22. Breaches .....	14
23. Withdrawal from MARAC.....	14
24. Governance.....	14
25. Review .....	15
26. Training and Induction Process .....	15
27. Clare’s Law – Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme.....	15
28. List of Appendices .....	15
29. Signatories .....	156

## 1. Definition of Domestic Abuse

The Government definition of domestic abuse is:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Economic
- Emotional

'Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

## 2. Introduction

A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a local, multi agency victim-focused meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

In April 2019, a regional model was implemented which replaced seven different sets of MARAC administrative and co-ordination functions from across the seven local authority areas and replaced it with a single team, employed and managed through West Midlands Police.

This Protocol, which has been based on those previously in place across the seven local authority areas, underpins the working arrangements for the eight MARACs operating across the seven West Midlands Metropolitan Areas and is designed to create a consistent and effective response to high risk victims of domestic abuse by:

- establishing accountability
- determining a reporting and governance structure
- establishing a stable MARAC process
- clarifying referral pathways
- ensuring MARACs operate in accordance with the [Safe Lives 10 Principles to Effective Practice](#)

## 3. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

MARAC is a multi-agency meeting focusing on the safety of victims of domestic abuse assessed as high risk of serious harm or homicide. The aims of the MARAC are to:

- safeguard victims;
- address the behaviour of the perpetrator;

- make links with other public protection arrangements in relation to children, perpetrators and adults at risk;
- safeguard agency staff.

MARAC will do this by:

- sharing information to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of the domestic abuse victims at high risk of serious harm or homicide and their children;
- determining whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual or to the general community;
- jointly constructing and implementing a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk that reduces the risk of serious harm;
- tracking actions and where necessary, follow up at the next meeting;
- reducing repeat victimisation;
- improving agency accountability; and
- improving support for staff involved in high risk domestic abuse cases by sharing the burden of risk.

***The primary role of MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing that enables appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. The responsibility to take appropriate action rests with individual agencies; the responsibility is not transferred to MARAC.***

## 4. The MARAC Chair

All MARACs are chaired by trained Senior West Midlands Police Public Protection Officers.

All MARACs will have at least two other individuals from different agencies nominated and trained as Vice Chairs in order to ensure resilience and continuity. The [Safe Lives Chair's Guidance](#) will support the training and development of MARAC Chairs.

The name of the Chair and the Vice Chairs will be detailed in the individual MARAC terms of reference (**Appendix 1**).

The role of the MARAC Chair is to:

- read out the [Confidentiality Statement](#) at the start of each meeting and to ensure that it is signed by everybody in attendance
- review any actions that may be outstanding from the previous meeting and to ensure that they are clearly noted in the minutes
- structure the MARAC meetings and prioritise cases in such a way that all those attending are able to use the time available as efficiently as possible
- ensure that the meeting runs in accordance with this protocol
- provide a platform to ensure all agencies share proportionate and relevant information;
- facilitate the development of a multi-agency support plan;
- ensure that all agency representatives understand their agreed actions.

## 5. MARAC Meetings

There are eight MARAC meetings across the West Midlands Police Force area. The volume of referrals will dictate how often the individual MARACs meet. The table below sets out the current frequency of meetings:

<b>MARAC</b>	<b>Frequency of Meeting</b>
Birmingham East	Fortnightly
Birmingham West	Weekly
Coventry	Fortnightly
Dudley	Fortnightly
Sandwell	Fortnightly
Solihull	Monthly
Walsall	Fortnightly
Wolverhampton	Weekly

## 6. Co-ordination of MARAC

There is a single team of three MARAC Coordinators, managed by a Senior MARAC Coordinator, employed and managed through West Midlands Police. The role of the MARAC Coordinators is to:

- Develop, maintain and review the MARAC Operating Policies and Protocols including the establishment of an agreed referral threshold to ensure that appropriate cases are being discussed at MARAC.
- Deliver MARAC training across partner agencies to ensure that all relevant members of staff are familiar with the MARAC process, and their role and responsibilities within it and receive appropriate training as necessary.
- Deliver information re. MARAC as part of individual organisation's induction processes.
- Develop and maintain the necessary documentation to ensure the smooth running of the MARAC, including referral forms, template research forms and minutes.
- Develop information packs which will support the delivery of training and in addition, information packs that where appropriate, can be available to victims re. the MARAC process.
- Regularly analyse MARAC data to ensure that individual organisations are regularly attending meetings; there is a focus on increasing non-police referrals; local strategic forums can be kept up to date on trends and general performance of individual MARACs.
- Where appropriate, develop and oversee the implementation of a regional/local MARAC improvement plan.
- Ensure effective links are in place between the MARAC and local domestic abuse offender management forums/process including one day one conversation (ODOC) and multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), as outlined in paras 15 and 16.
- Ensure that the MARAC performance management framework effectively supports the production of relevant and timely data which is used to continuously improve the MARAC process and understand the pattern and trends of DV across the West Midlands Police force area.
- Prepare and present reports for the local MARAC Steering Group and other key local partnership groups as appropriate, ensuring that they contain clear recommendations that will facilitate continuous improvement of the MARAC process.

- Liaise with the full range of potential referral agencies, in particular those working with minority or hard to reach groups to ensure that the needs of all victims are met.

## 7. Administration of MARAC

There is a single team of six MARAC Administrators managed by a Senior MARAC Coordinator, employed through West Midlands Police. The role of the MARAC Administrators is to:

- To facilitate and ensure consistency in referral of cases from the full range of potential referring agencies based on the use of a common risk identification tool and referral form for victims.
- Prepare and circulate a MARAC list to all relevant attendees via secure means within 5-8 working days prior to the MARAC meeting.
- Prepare the MARAC agenda to ensure that cases are reviewed in the most time-effective manner and that any specialist attendees are present.
- Prepare accurate minutes of the meeting, which differentiate between fact and professional opinion, and include agreed actions in accordance with the MARAC guidelines.
- Maintain an action list following each meeting and ensure there is a process in place for tracking actions and contacting agencies where updates have not been provided.
- Ensure that there is effective information sharing processes in place with the relevant local offender management forums ie. ODOC/MAPPA.
- Maintain a tracking system of MARAC cases which have been flagged for twelve months following the last incident.
- Ensure that the relevant data is collected so that the outputs and outcomes from MARAC can be recorded to support the effective management and development of MARACs and inform the submission of data to Safelives.
- Ensure that any information shared in the conduct of these duties is in line with the MARAC Information Sharing Protocol.
- Support the work of the Chair of the MARAC in whatever way may be reasonably required.
- Undertake these duties in line with the MARAC Operating Protocol and other relevant policies and procedures.

## 8. MARAC Representative's Role and Responsibilities

**All relevant agencies are expected to consistently attend MARAC and all staff representing their agency at MARAC will be required to undertake an induction session prior to attending or as soon as possible after they have become a member of MARAC. All MARAC attendees are required to sign a confidentiality statement at each meeting.**

The MARAC representative is the key link between the MARAC and their agency, acting as a **single point of contact** for relevant advice for their agency about MARAC. All participating agencies should have a named MARAC representative who should be of an appropriate level of seniority to commit to actions on behalf of their agency. The named MARAC representative has a

key role in quality assuring MARAC referrals from their agency. Please refer to [MARAC Representative Toolkit](#) for further details.

**Core Agencies for MARAC include:**

MARAC Coordinator or Administrator  
Local Authority (minimum representation: Children's Services and Adult Social Care)  
Housing  
Community Rehabilitation Company  
National Probation Service  
IDVA(s)  
Domestic Abuse Support Service(s)  
Primary Healthcare  
Hospital Safeguarding Representative  
Mental Health Service Provider(s)  
Substance Misuse Service  
Education

***This list is the proposed core membership. Local areas will include additional representatives who are providing services in their local authority area.***

If the core MARAC representative is unable to attend and an alternative representative is not available, written information should be provided identifying any risks and proposed actions, based on all the cases on the agenda.

The role of the MARAC representative is to:

- Make links with frontline colleagues to enable domestic abuse to be identified and provide support and information if required.
- Support frontline professionals to establish level of risk and to refer appropriately.
- Ensure the agency they are representing have robust internal processes for ensuring good quality and appropriate referrals into MARAC.
- Gather all relevant information before the meeting on each case where appropriate.
- Share relevant, necessary and proportionate information at the MARAC meeting.
- Present identified MARAC cases from their own organisation at the MARAC meeting.
- Offer SMART actions on behalf of their agency for all vulnerable parties and the offender.
- Ensure actions are implemented and to liaise with colleagues to keep them updated about the actions agreed and any information that has been shared.
- Ensure confirmation is sent to the MARAC Administrator re. completion of their agency action(s).
- It is the responsibility of the MARAC attendees to safely store, appropriately share and safely dispose of MARAC paperwork, in line with their own organisational policies and procedures.

## 9. MARAC Process

Any agency or organisation can refer a case to MARAC.

### Identification of MARAC Cases

The [Safe Lives DASH Risk Indicator Guidance and Checklist](#) or other recognised risk assessments will be used by agencies to assess the level of risk to the victim and any children following disclosure or identification of domestic abuse. Those cases that are assessed as at high risk of serious harm or homicide should then be referred to MARAC.

### MARAC Qualifying Criteria

Any agency should refer cases to MARAC where any of the following apply:



- 14 or more risks are identified on the Safe Lives DASH Risk Indicator Checklist
- Escalation of incidents (increasing severity and/or frequency of control and/or abuse)
- Where professional judgement warrants a MARAC referral (if the Safe Lives DASH Risk Indicator Checklist score is below 14 but the referring professional feels it is high risk and warrants the referral)
- Repeats victims (see below)
- MARAC to MARAC transfer

The risk factors and concerns must be documented clearly on the referral form.

### Referrals Where MARAC Threshold is not met

In cases where the referral threshold has not been met, the MARAC Administrator will forward all relevant information to the MARAC Coordinator and MARAC Chair/Vice Chair, who will make the final decision if the case will be discussed at MARAC.

Incomplete forms and/or forms that do not evidence that the MARAC threshold has been met will be returned to the referrer to amend for re-submission, with guidance where necessary from the MARAC Coordinator.

### Repeat Victims

SafeLives defines 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:

- Unwanted direct or indirect contact from the perpetrator and/or their friends or family
- A breach of police or court bail conditions
- A breach of any civil court order between the victim and perpetrator
- Any dispute between the victim and perpetrator(s) including over child contact, property, divorce/ separation proceedings etc.

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.

### MARAC Criteria for 16-17 year old victims

Child protection processes/procedures will always take precedence for safeguarding concerns relating to 16-17 year old domestic abuse victims. A discussion will take place between children's services and adult services to agree the most appropriate actions and these will be delivered in partnership. Referral to MARAC of a 16-17 year old can be made if the case meets the MARAC threshold.

There is a [Young Persons DASH Risk Indicator Checklist](#) available to assess the level of risk for those aged 16-17.

### MARAC Referral Process

The MARAC Referral Form (**Appendix 2**) will be used by all agencies referring cases to MARAC.



Both Police and non-Police agencies will use the same type of form to make MARAC referrals; however will use two different referral routes due to system limitations. The formatting and information collected is the same on both forms.

- West Midlands Police employees must access the MARAC referral form on Share Point to input and upload all MARAC referral forms for review.
- All non-Police agencies must complete the Microsoft Word referral form (Appendix 2) and submit securely to [marac\\_referrals@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:marac_referrals@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk) for review.

MARAC operates on a rolling referral system and cases are listed for the next available meeting. Referrals will be processed and where threshold is met, they will be directly referred to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor within one working day by the MARAC Administration team.

All referring agencies should consider discussing consent and explain the MARAC process to the victim. Where consent from the victim is not obtained, the case should still be referred with the reason recorded on the MARAC referral form, in accordance with the approach outlined under Information Sharing at MARAC.

## MARAC List and Agenda

The MARAC agenda (**Appendix 3**) will be circulated within five-eight working days prior to the MARAC meeting. All agencies will be expected to research each case in order to ensure that all relevant and appropriate information is shared at the meeting.

## Actions Prior to MARAC

***Any safeguarding needs must be dealt with immediately and should not wait for the next MARAC meeting.***

Referring agencies are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately in line with their agency's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Core MARAC partners are expected to systematically 'flag and tag' MARAC family subject files and to remove flags after a twelve month period if there have been no repeat incidents, or in line with internal policies and procedures.

The MARAC Administrator will refer all cases to an appropriate Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) as soon as they are uploaded onto the MARAC agenda. IDVAs provide specialist crisis interventions and safety planning to high risk domestic abuse victims and their families prior to MARAC. Where there is reciprocal abuse, the MARAC Administrator will refer the parties to separate IDVAs.

Details of local IDVAs can be found in your local MARAC terms of reference.

## Victim Contact Prior to MARAC

The IDVA will contact the victim prior to the MARAC meeting where possible and safe to do so in order to:

- inform the victim that their information is being shared at MARAC and on what basis and offer MARAC information;
- represent the victim's view at MARAC;
- complete the Safe Lives DASHH Risk Indicator Checklist;

- begin safety planning.

Although all reasonable attempts will be made to inform the victim that their information will be shared at MARAC, if it is not safe to contact the victim, the case will be presented and the reason why the victim has not been informed will be recorded on the MARAC referral form and the MARAC agenda for the purposes laid out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Male Victims of Domestic Abuse

Where a male domestic abuse victim has been listed at MARAC, a trained support worker will make contact with the victim and complete an assessment using the Respect toolkit for working with male victims of domestic abuse. There will be different support arrangements within each locality available to support male victims and these should be accessed and expected to attend MARAC to present the voice of the victim on those cases as in the same way an IDVA would for female victims.

## 10. MARAC Meeting

The frequency of the MARAC meeting will depend on the volume of MARAC referrals. The meetings will be scheduled twelve months in advance. The length of the meeting will vary according to the number of cases being discussed therefore, representatives should ensure that they have sufficient flexibility on the day to remain at the meeting until all of the cases have been heard. No more than 25 cases should be heard at each meeting in order to ensure that there is sufficient time allowed for each case. If there are more than 25 referrals, cases will be risk assessed and prioritised by the MARAC Coordinator, in conjunction with the MARAC Chair.

### Observers at MARAC

Due to the highly sensitive information that is shared at MARAC, it is at the discretion of the MARAC Chair for observers to attend.

## 11. Information Sharing at MARAC

MARAC is predicated on the need to share only accurate information that is directly relevant to the safety of victims. Information is shared under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Children Act 2004, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018 for the purposes of prevention and detection of crime, for serious harm or death. Information will be shared in line with Caldicott Principles.

Information shared falls into four main categories:

- Demographic information including victims' and perpetrators' names, dates of birth, addresses and any pseudonyms used and the names and dates of birth of any children.
- Information on key risk indicators including where appropriate, professional opinion on the risk faced. See **Appendix 4** for examples of risks and triggers.
- Relevant history of domestic abuse or associated issues (child abuse, sexual assault) for the perpetrator or victim.
- Views of the victim.

At the start of each MARAC meeting, the Chair will read out the confidentiality statement which partners will sign. All information will be shared securely via secure or encrypted email and protectively marked as 'OFFICIAL SENSITIVE'.

It is the responsibility of each organisation represented at MARAC to ensure that their data management and sharing practices have been reviewed and updated in response to changes introduced by the General Data Protection Regulation.

The Information Sharing Protocol and Information Sharing Agreement is attached at **Appendix 5 and 6**.

## 12. Action Planning

A tailored action plan will be developed at MARAC to increase the safety of the victims, children, other vulnerable parties and any staff. Actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

If victims and their children are at high risk of being severely hurt or killed, agencies must agree to prioritise the actions assigned and deliver them on the day of the MARAC or as soon as possible thereafter. The MARAC Administrator will follow-up actions where agencies have not provided an update on their respective MARAC actions within seven days of the MARAC meeting.

The following types of actions will be agreed:

- flagging and tagging of files;
- referral to other appropriate multi-agency meetings; and
- prioritising of agency resources, tools and powers.

It is the responsibility of all agencies attending MARAC to volunteer appropriate actions using their organisation's powers and resources.

If actions are incomplete, the responsibility and accountability remains with the named agency and not the MARAC Chair. If an agency is unable to complete an action within the allocated timeframe, they should inform the MARAC Administrator.

## 13. Emergency MARAC

Requests for emergency MARACs or for cases to be heard at the next available MARAC when the cut-off date has passed will be considered by the MARAC Coordinator and MARAC Chair.

This will determine whether the case will be accepted at short notice or whether an Emergency MARAC or Strategy meeting will be convened.

## 14. MARAC Escalation Process

There is a responsibility on all MARAC attendees to escalate intransigent cases to their Line Managers for further review. There are two pathways for escalation:

### ***Professionals' Meeting:***

The MARAC Chair and any partner agency can nominate a case to be escalated and a majority decision by MARAC attendees will initiate the process. There will be no set criteria for a case to be escalated, these will be judged on an individual basis.

A lead practitioner will be identified to arrange a separate meeting within ten days of MARAC with other named organisations. This will facilitate more time to focus on the case and produce a bespoke plan to reduce risk and increase safety. A copy of the professional's meeting minutes and action plan will be distributed amongst attending agencies and the MARAC Chair, Coordinator and Administrator. These minutes will be embedded into the MARAC case minutes.

Professionals' meetings can also take place where there is no escalation but where it has been identified that the case would take too long to be discussed in a MARAC meeting.

### **Complex Case Review:**

Cases that are discussed at MARAC four times or more within a six month period will trigger a complex case review. The MARAC Chair, MARAC Coordinator, allocated IDVA and any other professionals deemed necessary, will meet to review such cases and further necessary actions.

This process allows learning lessons from repeat cases to be identified and embedded as business as usual practice for MARAC and associated professional's meetings.

General findings from these cases will be shared across the eight MARACs to ensure the learning informs practice across the region.

## **15. Death of MARAC Subjects**

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's) and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's) are processes that look to learn from such deaths. The following are definitions of when these reviews are undertaken;

### **Domestic Homicide Review Definition**

A review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:

- A person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or
- A member of the same household as held with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

*(Home Office definition)*

### **Safeguarding Adult Review Definition**

The Care Act 2014 requires Safeguarding Adults Boards to arrange Safeguarding Adults Reviews (previously known as Serious Case Reviews) if there are concerns that agencies could have worked more effectively to protect an adult from serious harm or abuse; whether the adult has died or not.

The purpose of a Safeguarding Adults review is not to reinvestigate or apportion blame but to establish whether lessons can be learnt from the circumstances of a case that may improve practice or the way in which agencies and professionals work together to safeguard vulnerable adults.

The focus of serious adult reviews, in line with both multi-agency policy and national guidance is to:

- Learn from past experiences and the specific event examined.
- Improve future practice and outcomes by acting on learning identified by the review. Safeguarding Adults Board will develop an Action Plan for Board Partners when a Safeguarding Adults Review has been completed.

- Improve multi-agency working and compliance with any other multi-agency or single agency procedures, including regulated care services.

## 16. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Where the victim is subject of MARAC and the offender is managed at a level 2 or 3 MAPPA meeting, the MAPPA meeting will take priority and the IDVA must be invited to attend the MAPPA meeting. The MAPPA meeting will ensure that the risk management plan effectively identifies and puts into place actions to protect the victim and where appropriate, their children. The IDVA will provide feedback to MARAC, where appropriate.

## 17. One Day One Conversation (ODOC)

MARAC Coordinators will ensure that there are links in place between ODOC and MARAC processes in each of the local areas. There needs to be clarity on what actions are being taken in response to both the perpetrator and the victim in order to ensure that risk is effectively managed.

## 18. Referrals to and from other MARACs

There will be occasions when a high risk victim needs to be referred or transferred to MARAC from another MARAC inside the West Midlands Police Force area. This is not an exhaustive list but situations may include:

- change in circumstances to the victim (relocation permanently or temporary)
- where the risk to the victim is in a local authority which is not their home local authority
- forced marriage and so-called honour based violence

Any information to be shared with another MARAC will be agreed within the MARAC meeting and highlighted as a specific item on the agenda. The MARAC administrator will be responsible for ensuring this information is shared with the relevant MARAC lead.

If a victim has re-located outside of the MARAC local area, agencies should still make the referral as normal with all the necessary information and clearly state the re-location address and date of move.

The MARAC Administrator will make the MARAC to MARAC transfer within 3 working days of notification that the victim has moved to another area. Information will be shared securely via secure or encrypted email that is protectively marked as Protected.

Referring agencies are also responsible for ensuring that their counterparts in the appropriate re-located area have received the relevant referral.

When a MARAC referral is received from another area, the MARAC Administrator will refer to an IDVA and West Midlands Police and the case will be heard at the next MARAC meeting.

## 19. Equality

Due and proper consideration should be given at MARAC meetings to all diversity issues in every case.

The MARAC will collect information on the ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability and gender of victims referred to MARAC and partner agencies are required to obtain this information and include it on the referral form.

If a victim is unwilling to co-operate or volunteer equality and diversity information, this should be noted on the referral form rather than leaving it blank.

All agencies will ensure that a MARAC referral is available to all victims of domestic abuse who meet the MARAC threshold.

## 20. Evaluation and Performance Management

The MARAC performance management framework (**Appendix 7**) sets out the qualitative and quantitative data that will be collected to inform local and regional understanding of the effectiveness of MARACs. This information will be collected quarterly and analysed by the MARAC Coordinators who will report to the relevant local and regional strategic forums and partnerships. Relevant information will be submitted to the Home Office and Safe Lives.

## 21. Complaints and Accountability

Complaints about how a professional or agency is working within the MARAC process should be submitted in writing to the Senior MARAC Coordinator in the first instance who will discuss the content and nature of the complaint with the Chair of the local Domestic Abuse Strategic Forum. If the complaint cannot be resolved, this will be escalated to the local Community Safety Partnership. If it is a complaint that relates to more than one geographical area, it will be considered by the Chair of the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership.

## 22. Breaches

Breaches of this MARAC Operating Protocol may increase the risk of harm to a high risk victim of domestic abuse. Breaches of this protocol should be referred to the MARAC Chair and MARAC Coordinator who will ensure that appropriate action is taken.

## 23. Withdrawal from MARAC

The strategic lead for any agency who wishes to withdraw from the MARAC process must inform the MARAC Chair in writing of their intention and the reason for withdrawal. All information shared at MARAC that is no longer relevant should be destroyed in accordance with individual agency guidelines in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

## 24. Governance

The MARAC Coordinator will provide quarterly updates on the performance and effectiveness of MARAC through the provision of local MARAC performance data and attendance at the relevant strategic domestic abuse/community safety partnership/forum. Local agencies will determine where the reporting lines will be for their area and these will be outlined in the local MARAC Terms of Reference. The Senior MARAC Coordinator will be responsible for quarterly reporting to the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership who will be responsible for oversight of the effectiveness of the regional MARAC model.

Frequency of meetings and MARAC attendees will also be included in the local MARAC terms of reference.

## 25. Review

This protocol will be reviewed quarterly for the first twelve months from implementation of the regional MARAC model and twelve monthly thereafter.

## 26. Training and Induction Process

MARAC Coordinators will be responsible for developing and delivering the MARAC Training Plan and MARAC Induction Process.

All new representatives to MARAC will receive a MARAC Information Pack and the opportunity to observe a MARAC meeting.

## 27. Clare's Law – Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme

The Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme was implemented in March 2014 following a domestic murder in 2009. The scheme makes provision for an individual in a relationship with a partner who has a history of abuse the 'right to know' and the 'right to ask' about the history of violence and abuse of that partner.

Appropriate requests that fit the criteria for disclosure will be listed and discussed at the next available MARAC meeting. These cases will be listed at the end of the agenda and clearly labeled as a Clare's Law request. Only relevant agencies need to be present for this discussion. A decision to disclose or not will be actioned by West Midlands Police, who will provide feedback directly to the applicant.

More information can be found in Safe Lives MARAC [Guidance Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme](#).

## 28. List of Appendices

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>Appendix 2</b>	West Midlands MARAC Referral Form
<b>Appendix 3</b>	West Midlands MARAC Agenda
<b>Appendix 4</b>	Risks and Triggers
<b>Appendix 5 and 6</b>	Information Sharing Protocol / Agreement ( <i>one document</i> )
<b>Appendix 7</b>	Performance Management Framework



## 29. Signatories

By signing this document, you confirm that you are the responsible individual within your agency and agree to the terms of this Operating Protocol on behalf of your Local Authority MARAC partners.

Signatory Name	Signatory Agency	Date Signed	Signature