



Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

Gwent Operating Protocol

Date agreed: September 2018

Date to be reviewed: September 2019

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1. Introduction

1.1 Outline

The aim of the MARAC Operating Protocol (MOP) is to comprehensively outline the processes of the Gwent Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC's). It should be read in conjunction with the MARAC Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) available at www.waspi.org, which outlines how information may be shared between agencies.

The MOP is intended to establish accountability, responsibility and reporting structures for the MARACs and to outline the process of identifying cases, referral to and risk management through MARAC meetings.

The overall intention of this protocol is to encourage greater awareness and confidence in the Gwent MARAC process, and as a consequence to improve engagement of all partner agencies in order to increase the safety of local victims of domestic abuse, and in particular of those at highest risk of future harm.

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the resources available in the SafeLives Knowledge Hub, which provides professionals with tools and resources to help the effective operation of MARACs:

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub>

1.2 What is a MARAC?

A Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a local, multi-agency victim-focussed meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies. These agencies include the police, criminal justice, health, social care, local authorities, housing providers, those supporting children and specialist domestic abuse service providers.

Sharing relevant information with other agencies is crucial in order to reduce the risk of harm to very high risk victims. The MARAC ISP exists to facilitate information sharing between all agencies, both in the statutory and voluntary sectors that have agreed to work together within the MARAC framework across Gwent.

The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. In a single meeting, the MARAC combines up to date risk information with a timely assessment of the victims needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in the domestic abuse case; victim, children, perpetrator and agency workers.

At a MARAC meeting high risk cases are discussed with a very brief and focused information sharing process. This is followed by the creation of an individualised multi-agency action plan which is put into place to support the victim and to make links with other public protection procedures, particularly those that manage perpetrators and safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

MARAC partner agencies, whether generic service providers or specialist domestic abuse service providers, are key to the success of the initiative. The early identification of domestic abuse, the risk assessment of the victim and referrals to the local MARAC and IDVA Service are essential if the outcomes for the victim are to be positive. Partners are committed to working together, providing a co-ordinated package of support to keep the victims and their children safe.

1.3 Aims of MARAC

The aims of the MARAC are to:

- Share relevant information to increase the safety, health and well-being of victims, adults and their children
- Make links with other public protection arrangements in relation to children, perpetrators and vulnerable adults
- Determine the level of risk the perpetrator poses a significant risk to the victim and associated children, and whether there is any risk to the general community
- Construct jointly and implement a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and reduces the likelihood of further harm
- Reduce repeat victimisation
- Improve agency accountability
- Improve support for and the safety of staff involved in high risk domestic abuse cases
- Contribute to the development of best practice, and
- Identify policy matters arising from cases discussed at MARACs and address these through the appropriate channels.

1.4 The Need for a Multi-agency Approach

Within the context of domestic abuse, it is recognised that no one partners holds all the information required to effectively assess the needs of victims and their children or to fully assess the risk of serious harm or murder to victims. Also, in the majority of cases, the support of more than one agency is required to ensure the longer term safety of the victims and their children.

The MARAC process enables the available information to be safely shared across relevant partner agencies and multi-agency bodies including MAPPA (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements) and both child and adult safeguarding conferences, resulting in a clearer picture of the risk level. This also supports a more comprehensive action plan to be developed to reduce the risk of harm to the victims and their children.

Agencies should not wait until a case has been discussed at MARAC before taking necessary action or giving advice or access to services. It would be far more relevant for a victim to receive help prior to the meeting and information regarding this brought to the MARAC.

2. Partner Agencies

2.1 Attendance at MARAC

The MARAC process will invite representation from all agencies which have a role to play in increasing the victims' safety including non-criminal justice agencies. The MARAC should therefore have regular attendance from the full range of statutory agencies, specialist domestic abuse services and relevant voluntary and community organisations.

Regular attendance at the MARAC is expected from all relevant statutory and voluntary agencies however the presence of a number of "core agencies" (see 2.2) is considered essential to the effective operation of the MARAC.

2.2 Core Agencies

Core partner agencies are those agencies identified by SafeLives that are required to consistently attend all meetings. The following agencies are therefore required to attend all MARAC meetings and provide an alternative representative in the event that the nominated representative is unable to attend:

- Police
- National Probation Service (NPS) and Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (Wales CRC)
- Local Authority Housing
- Housing Associations
- Children's and Adults Social Care
- Primary Care (Health)
- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse Services and
- IDVA Service.

2.3 Other MARAC Partners

The Gwent MARACs are routinely supported and attended by agencies outside of the core agencies. These agencies include but are not restricted to: Education and Early Years, YOT and specialist domestic abuse services.

There may be other agencies which are invited to attend the MARAC or to provide information where the MARAC considers this would be appropriate e.g. sexual violence services, maternity services and specialist agencies supporting people with disabilities. Such agencies would be invited to attend and/or present to the meeting where they can provide relevant information and assist in the development and execution of the risk management plan. All agencies will be required to sign the confidentiality agreement prior to attendance.

2.4 MARAC Representatives and their Role

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. Consistency of attendance is strongly encouraged to reinforce and develop practical working relationships.

Requests for a new MARAC attendee or agency to receive MARAC referral information should be made to the MARAC Administrator; the MARAC Administrator will then refer this to the MARAC Area Chair, for approval before referrals are shared with the new representative or agency.

Six monthly housekeeping of MARAC referral recipients with the MARAC Administrator and MARAC Chairs will occur, to ensure that referrals are only going to people who attend MARACs and have been approved to receive them. At the same time the list of recipients for the MARAC minutes will be checked and updated.

2.5 Induction of new MARAC Representatives

This should be completed before representing their agency at the MARAC meetings. The induction process is as follows:

- The new MARAC representative should have completed domestic abuse awareness and MARAC attendees training
- The new MARAC representative completes an induction meeting with their existing agency MARAC attendee. This should include handover of any on-going actions or cases and talking through any local operational agency MARAC protocols in place. As a minimum this should include the type of information their agency is normally able to share and the actions that the agency commonly offers at the MARAC.
- The new MARAC representative should appraise themselves of the local MARAC process, dates, times and locations of MARAC meetings, IDVA support, MARAC ISP, risk assessment and referral form.

- The new MARAC representative should visit the SafeLives website and download a copy of the relevant MARAC representative's toolkit and the agency toolkit for their area of work.
<http://www.safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub> .

3. Governance & Performance Management

3.1 Strategic Approach

The Gwent VAWDASV Board has responsibility for the delivery of local domestic abuse strategies and delivery plans across Gwent, of which MARACs are a part.

3.2 Gwent MARAC Steering Group

The MARAC Steering Group is responsible for ensuring that Gwent has effective MARACs on which all agencies are represented and which are fully compliant with all 10 of the SafeLives MARAC quality assurance principles. The Group meets 6 weekly and is chaired by a senior manager.

The group:

- Ensures that representation at MARACs is appropriate level, that attendees have the MARAC as part of their job description, have attended MARAC training and that there is a continuity of attendance
- Ensures that a fully signed up MARAC Information Sharing Protocol is in place for the Gwent MARACs
- Ensures that a MARAC Operating Protocol is in place for Gwent MARACs and that individual agency operating procedures and protocols are in place for managing referrals and providing feedback on MARAC cases
- Ensures that an effective IDVA Service is maintained in Gwent
- Ensures that training is provided for the MARAC attendees and that training on the MARAC and risk assessment is available to practitioners across Gwent
- Defines the standards for the MARAC Chairs and ensures that anyone chairing a MARAC is appropriately trained and meets local standards set
- Ensures that there is effective and sufficient administration in place to support all MARACs across Gwent and that the MARAC Administrator has attended SafeLives and other training required to be effective in the role
- Addresses operational issues including agreeing MARAC referral thresholds, the referrals process and any changes to agreed process
- Undertakes quality assurance of MARAC cases and the referral process
- Provides a point of reference from DHRs, APRs, CPRs and case audits to disseminate learning onto MARAC practice.

4. The MARAC Process

4.1 Identification of cases

A key underpinning principle of MARAC is that any agency, including those working with perpetrators of abuse, can and should identify and refer high risk cases to the process. Agencies may identify the existence of domestic abuse in a number of ways, including disclosure or direct reporting from victims, third party reporting or disclosure or as a

result of suspicions arising from the behaviour or appearance of an individual or their children. Agencies are encouraged to use direct questioning to encourage disclosure.

The MARACs will take referrals for victims aged 16 or over in intimate partner relationships. Cases where an adult parent meets the threshold for MARAC but where the perpetrator of the abuse is a child or young person¹ can also be referred to the MARAC. Cases of mutual violence i.e. relationships where both parties present as the victim and perpetrator at different times, can also be referred if one or both parties is identified as being at high risk.

So called Honour Based Violence (HBV) and forced marriage, in line with SafeLives guidance, will be heard within the MARAC unless there is an indication that doing so will put the victim at further risk of harm. In such situations, the HBV cases will be heard at a closed MARAC session at the discretion of the Chair.

4.2 Criteria for MARAC

4.2.1 Risk Assessment

The SafeLives² DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment) Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) (see Appendix 2) is used to assess risk for victims of domestic abuse. This tool has been developed following analysis of domestic abuse homicide and other serious incidents. The RIC identifies a series of risk factors which are indicative of high risk of harm or death. The top 6 risk indicators based in findings from Domestic Homicide Reviews are – pregnancy, stalking/harassment, separation/child contact, sexual abuse, escalation of abuse and isolation.

There is a clear expectation that agencies use DASH where there has been a disclosure or identification of abuse to ascertain whether a referral to MARAC is required. It is the recognised assessment tool for the MARAC process and should be used by all agencies within Gwent wherever there is a disclosure or identification of abuse. The DASH RIC should provide practitioners with a structure to inform judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.

All staff utilising the RIC should have a good understanding of domestic abuse and associated risk factors. Training is available on this via the SEWSCB website. Practitioners must be aware that the DASH is a risk identification checklist and not a full risk assessment or case management form. The DASH RIC will provide valuable information about the risks that children are living with but it is not a full risk assessment for children. The presence of children increases the wider risks of domestic abuse and step children are particularly at risk.

4.2.2 Thresholds

There are 3 criteria for referring a case to MARAC³:

1. **Visible high risk** – the stated number of yes ticks on the DASH RIC is met. The current referral threshold for referral to MARAC in Gwent is 14 ticks on the RIC.
2. **Potential escalation**⁴ – the number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic abuse in the past 12 months. This can be used to identify cases where there is not a positive identification of a majority of risk factors, but where the abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation

¹ In such cases, the child or young person is likely to be a child in need and should be referred to children's social care. This will ensure that the needs of both the adult high risk victim and their children are considered and addressed within a risk management framework and existing safeguarding procedures.

² Formerly CAADA – http://www.safelives.org.uk/marac/RIC_for_MARAC.html

³ As defined by SafeLives

⁴ The severity of abuse and therefore the likelihood of harm is known to increase over time. Thus if incidents are more frequent or there are more police call-outs, the risk of harm could be more likely.

more fully by sharing information at MARAC. The current Gwent threshold is 5 incidents and/or 3 crimes in 12 months.

3. **Professional Judgement** – if a professional has a serious concern about a victim's situation they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. Cases can be referred with less than 14 ticks on the basis of professional judgement where the practitioner is aware of additional information about the victim and their circumstances, which indicates high risk even though the tick threshold has not been met (particularly if any of the top 6 risk indicators have been recorded).

In addition, all 'right to know' and 'right to ask' disclosures under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) will automatically be regarded as MARAC cases.

4.2.3 Repeat Referrals

It is good practice that repeat cases⁵ should be referred back into the MARAC if a further incident⁶ has occurred within 12 months of the initial MARAC referral. Any agency can and should make repeat referrals regardless of the level of risk identified, unless it is within a 3 month period of the MARAC date and the victim is engaging and working with the IDVA. In these cases a referral is made back to the IDVA only, who would engage with the victim and liaise with other MARAC agencies involved in the safety plan.

The MARACs will also consider repeat referrals where there has not been a further incident, but where there has been a change in circumstances which may mean an increased risk and thus a need for MARAC agencies to reconsider the victims' safety e.g. where the perpetrator has been released from prison. Such cases would not count as a formal repeat incident.

The following do not constitute a repeat case and should be treated as a new referral to MARAC:

- where a case is reviewed at the MARAC involving the same victims' but with a different perpetrator(s)
- where a case is reviewed at the MARAC meeting involving the same perpetrator but a different victim
- Cases which were previously reviewed at MARAC more than 12 months previously.

4.2.4 Non MARAC Cases

Cases should not be referred to MARAC if there is no visible high risk from the RIC or professional judgements, in order to get access to an IDVA or to provide evidence to access Legal Aid. Where the case does not meet the risk threshold and criteria for referral to MARAC, support should be sought from local domestic abuse specialist services (see VAWDASV Services Directory – Appendix 5)

⁵ SafeLives define a repeat case at MARAC as one between the same victim and perpetrator where the victim has previously been referred to the MARAC in the last 12 months.

⁶ A further incident includes violence or threats of violence, stalking or harassment, rape or sexual abuse whether reported to the police or not.

4.3 Procedure for Referral to MARAC

Any agency can refer a victim's case to the MARAC by following the procedure below:

1. Complete the SafeLives DASH RIC – 14 ticks or more meets the MARAC threshold and the case should be referred. Cases which do not make the 14 tick threshold but where, in the professional judgement of the person undertaking the assessment, the risk is still high should also be referred (particularly if any of the top 6 risk indicators have been recorded).
2. Before making the referral, the practitioner should discuss the case with their line manager, supervisor or MARAC representative and consider what immediate actions the agency needs to undertake to support the victim and their children to increase their safety. This might include contacting the police.
3. Complete the MARAC Referral Form (see Appendix 2) fully including reference to the number of ticks on the DASH and an explanation of the reasons for referring on professional judgement, if the 14 tick threshold has not been met. Where a referral is deemed to be appropriate, then the referrer should provide an account of their assessment, stating reasons for the referral so as to inform other agencies of the risks identified. Incomplete or illegible forms or forms which do not evidence that the MARAC threshold has been met, may be rejected. Where the case involves HBV, the referrer should identify who the victim feels it safe and not safe to talk to.
4. Send the MARAC Referral Form and the completed DASH RIC by secure email to the MARAC Administrator at MARAC@gwent.pnn.police.uk. Please note that you must be sending from a secure email address and must mark the email RESTRICTED.
5. When a referral to the MARAC is made, the representative who attends the MARAC meeting for the referrers' agency should be informed.
6. The referrer will receive an acknowledgement of their referral from the MARAC Administrator; the onus is on the referrer to check the location and date of the MARAC at which the case will be heard. If the referrer is aware that the case had already been heard in MARAC in the last 12 months, it should be referred back as a repeat, irrespective of the number of ticks on the DASH. The fact it is a repeat should be clearly indicated on the MARAC Referral Form.
7. If, on completion of the RIC, the case does not meet the MARAC threshold the referrer should consider other support that may need to be given to the victim within their own agency or by signposting to other specialist services available.

4.4 Consent

Many of the Data Protection issues surrounding disclosures can be avoided if the consent of the individual has been sought and obtained. The referring agency should, where appropriate, discuss their concerns with the victim and seek to obtain their consent to share information with other agencies represented at the MARAC and this should be recorded on the MARAC Referral Form.

The key focus at each MARAC meeting should be the victim. It is therefore desirable that the victim consents to the MARAC process and as such it is vital that agencies can explain the role and purpose of the MARAC in such a way that consent is encouraged. However, the role of the MARAC is to address high risk cases of domestic abuse where a

risk of death or serious harm has been identified. Therefore it is not a requirement that consent is obtained and cases should still be referred where it has been withheld.

If consent has not been obtained either because it is unsafe to contact the victim or that the service user has refused consent for information sharing, this should be recorded and the referring agency then needs to consider whether they can satisfy the requirement under Section 115 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, which allows information sharing without consent. An information sharing without consent form is available as a checklist (see Appendix 3) and should be completed where the victim does not consent to the MARAC referral.

4.5 MARAC Case List/Agenda

The MARAC Administrator will ensure that a summary spreadsheet of case details together with an agenda and the referral forms are circulated to all MARAC attendees 5 days prior to the MARAC meeting via secure email. This allows agencies time to carry out relevant information gathering, prior to the meeting, for each MARAC case.

Should a case be discussed at MARAC where an attendee has a personal involvement with any of the mentioned parties, they should inform their manager and the MARAC Chair before the meeting, so that appropriate action can be taken depending on the circumstances.

The email sent out with the agenda has the following attached to ensure that recipients of MARAC referrals are clear about the sensitivity of the information they have received:

Please note that the information you have received in this email relates to people who have been identified as being at high risk of harm as a result of the abuse they have been subjected to. It is possible that you may personally know, know of or work with someone who has been referred to the MARAC or that you know the alleged perpetrator. You are reminded that the contents of this email are intended solely to assist in gathering information of high risk victims, the process of managing and reducing risk and for providing professional support to them. Sharing the information in this email for any other purpose is a breach of Data Protection rules and of the MARAC Information Sharing Protocol (a copy of which can be found at www.waspi.org). It could also cause distress to the individual concerned and potentially put them at further risk of harm. If you are unsure about this please speak to your agency MARAC representative, your manager or refer to the MARAC ISP for guidance.

4.6 Actions before the MARAC and Referral to the Gwent IDVA Service

On receipt of a non-police referral, the MARAC Administrator will create a record of this information on SharePoint, ensuring each case is flagged as MARAC, and will carry out background police research on all parties involved. A continuation sheet containing this information is created by the MARAC Administrator as this is relevant to the safety of the IDVAs and is also used for presentation at the MARAC meeting. The continuation sheet is then sent together with the MARAC referral papers to the IDVA Service. This is done within 24 hours or as soon as is practical after receipt of a referral.

4.7 Victim Contact before the MARAC

All high risk victims referred to MARAC are offered the support of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). IDVAs work with the victims by providing advice and support to enable them to access a range of legal and non-legal services and resources. A key feature of the role is supporting the victims as their case progresses through the

criminal justice system. IDVAs participate in the MARAC framework by attending MARAC meetings, participating in discussions at meetings on behalf of the victims and following up on any actions agreed by the MARAC partners in relations to any specific victims. Referrals to the IDVAs are made via direct contact with the relevant IDVA. (See Appendix 4).

A victim can decline the services of an IDVA and if this is the case it should be stated clearly on the MARAC Referral Form. In these instances, the referring agency will then remain responsible for presenting the views of the victims and reporting back following the meeting.

4.8 MARAC Meetings

Within Gwent, MARACs are held fortnightly within each of the local authority areas: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The MARACs are chaired by a Detective Inspector from Gwent Police or an agreed deputy who has completed the MARAC chairs training.

The role of the chair is to:

- Ensure risks are highlighted within the meeting with appropriate measures put in place to manage or mitigate those risks through the MARAC action plan
- Effectively chair MARAC meetings and drive forward action on outstanding items
- Ensure the efficient running of the MARAC meeting, including keeping to time
- Ensure relevant agency attendance at meetings to maintain confidentiality and safety
- Ensure that observers of MARAC meetings are appropriate and approved by the Chair in advance of the meeting
- Read meeting papers and prepare for meetings, ensuring they have full awareness of the cases
- Assist the MARAC Administrator to ensure that the administrator is able to accurately record all actions at the meeting
- Work within the MARAC Operating Protocol and uphold the principles of safe information sharing as outlined in the MARAC ISP, including ensuring the confidentiality agreement is signed at the start of the meeting
- Respect confidentiality of sensitive information discussed at MARAC meetings and ensure that MARAC partners do likewise
- Ensure that partners are held to account for the actions agreed at the meetings
- Ensure that all MARAC attendees are able to participate fully in MARAC meetings.

Each meeting will begin with the members present signing the confidentiality agreement read out by the Chair of the meeting. Only uncompleted actions from the previous meeting are reviewed. Agencies not present at the meeting will provide their information to the MARAC Administrator in writing before the meeting. The MARAC Chair will then read this out at the meeting.

4.9 Minutes & Administration

The MARAC Administrator will attend every MARAC meeting and record the minutes and subsequent safety plans. This information is then typed up and approved by the relevant MARAC Chair prior to secure electronic circulation to all attendees. Full minutes are only sent to agencies on the approved list of attendees. Individual case minutes will be sent to anyone who refers a case to MARAC so that the agency knows what was discussed and what actions were agreed for the victim. All agencies should ensure that all minutes and related documentation are retained in a confidential and appropriately restricted manner as detailed in the MARAC ISP. The minutes will aim to reflect that all individuals who are discussed at these meetings were treated fairly, with respect and without improper

discrimination. All work undertaken at the meetings will be informed by a commitment to equal opportunities and effective practice issues in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

4.10 Information Shared at the MARAC

Information shared at MARAC must be relevant to the risks identified. Information should be shared on the victim, alleged perpetrator and any children to assist in the process of managing and reducing the risk. It should focus on domestic abuse and child protection concerns. A clear distinction should be made between fact and professional opinion.

Each case involving children will be allocated a total of 15 minutes; each case with no children will be allocated a total of 10 minutes. Information given by agencies should relate to updates, events and actions that are not contained within the original referral.

The MARAC Chair will take notes of risks, protective factors and agreed actions, with timescales as each case is discussed using the proforma for each victim. The proforma is then passed to the MARAC Administrator and the Chair's notes are added to the minutes.

Information discussed by the agency representatives within the MARAC meeting is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties who have not signed up to the MARAC ISP, or other meetings without the agreement of the partners of the meeting and the authorisation of the MARAC Chair.

4.11 Action Planning

During a MARAC meeting and once a case has been discussed and all relevant information has been shared from each of the attending agencies, to determine whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual or to the general community, a safety plan is jointly constructed and a risk management plan implemented that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm.

Where the alleged perpetrator in a MARAC case is known to work with or around children e.g. is a social worker or teacher, the MARAC should set an action for the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to be informed, so that this can be investigated in line with local managing allegations procedures.

The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individual agencies and it is not transferred to the MARAC. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate cautions to be taken to increase public safety.

Once actions are completed, each agency should update the actions spreadsheet and return this via secure email to the MARAC Administrator who collates and updates the master document.

4.12 Emergency & Closed MARACs

Emergency MARACs are only called when a victim is assessed as very high risk and the risk of harm is so imminent that statutory agencies have a duty of care to act at once rather than waiting for the next scheduled MARAC meeting. Referrals for an emergency MARAC are agreed between the referring agency and the Chair of the MARAC.

Closed MARACs may also be called where the case is very sensitive e.g. one in which either the victim or perpetrator is employed by one of the MARAC participating agencies or in some cases of HBV. The MARAC Chair will make the decision to hold a closed MARAC and invite the agencies required to participate. In such cases, referral information will not be sent out with the other MARAC referrals.

4.13 Referral to and from other MARACs

In the event of a MARAC to MARAC referral, from a MARAC in a different area, the Chair should consider whether an emergency MARAC meeting is required or whether the case can wait to be discussed at the next scheduled meeting. Ideally contact between the referring agency from each area should be encouraged to enhance knowledge of the referral between professionals.

When referring an existing case into a MARAC from outside Gwent, the MARAC Administrator will use the MARAC to MARAC Referral Form, sending this and any relevant paperwork securely to the email address detailed on the SafeLives website, under 'Find a MARAC'. The receiving co-ordinator will be asked to confirm that the information has been received safely.

4.14 The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)

In Gwent the MARAC meetings are used as the multi-agency decision making forum for high risk 'right to know' and 'right to ask' disclosures under the DVDS. All potential disclosures are regarded as 'Disclosure Discussions' and agencies are required to research each case in the same way they would a MARAC case. The victim's name, together with any children, is included on the case list in order to carry out this research. If the decision is made to disclose, this will be recorded in the minutes. The Police will then complete their disclosure document and record it on the Gwent police system. A referral will also be made to the IDVA Service and an IDVA will accompany the relevant person identified as best placed to make the disclosure when it is made. This may be a police officer or agency worker currently working with the victim.

Where information arises during the information sharing at the MARAC meeting that suggests that the victim should be advised of their partners' previous history of abuse this will be agreed and recorded as an action in the minutes.

5. Equality

All MARACs operating in Gwent and any individuals involved with them will respect diversity and ensure that victims are not judged or discriminated against. This includes any inappropriate or insensitive comments being made about the victim, their children or their circumstances or the alleged perpetrator. All work undertaken at the meetings will be informed by a commitment to equal opportunities and effective practice issues in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

6. Complaints & Breaches

Complaints regarding individual agency responses to the MARAC process or the conduct of individuals within that agency should initially be dealt with by that organisation under its disciplinary or staff conduct processes. Breaches of this operating protocol will be taken very seriously and raised with the agency concerned in the first instance. If satisfactory resolution is not brought about by the agency, the issue should be escalated to the VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group through the Chair.

7. Review

This MARAC Operating Protocol was agreed by the MARAC Task Group following consultation with the VAWDSV Strategic Delivery Group on the 5th September and will be reviewed in September 2019 (or earlier if any national or local changes in working practice need to be included).

8. MARAC Data Collection

MARAC data will be collected by the MARAC Administrator and submitted to SafeLives after every meeting using the MARAC data template. The purpose of the data collection is to:

- Understand how the MARAC is performing – looking at key indicators of volume, multi-agency referrals and diversity of the MARAC cases
- Receive analysis from SafeLives with comparison data using most similar forces, regional and national data on a quarterly basis
- Track the impact you have on victims safety, through the repeat victimisation rate
- Look at the range of agencies making MARAC referrals, thereby promoting accountability and consistency between agencies
- Monitoring the diversity of referrals compared to the local population
- Evidence the needs of the local population to support funding applications and commissioning of services.

APPENDIX

App 1 – SafeLives DASH RIC Form –



Dash without
guidance.pdf

App 2 – Gwent MARAC Referral form



New Marac Referral
form Sept 2018.docx

App 3 – Information Sharing without Consent Form



Info Sharing
Without Consent 20

App 4 – IDVA contacts



Contact details for
agencies.docx

App 5 – Gwent VAWDASV Directory



Gwent Directory
June 2018.pdf