



## **East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee**

### **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Operating Protocol**

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## 1) Introduction and definitions

East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection arrangements include agreement to operate Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) in Midlothian and East Lothian as part of our approach to improving the safety of survivors of domestic abuse and their families.

This document sets out the operation of our MARACs in accordance with the '10 principles of an effective MARAC' and the Toolkit for MARAC Scotland from SafeLives, which is recognised as the lead agency for domestic abuse risk assessment.<sup>1</sup>

### What is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference?

Please note this is quoted from the SafeLives MARAC Overview Scotland, February 2019, with our additions shown in italics.<sup>2</sup>

*'A MARAC is a multi-agency meeting where information is shared about the victims who are at the highest risk of serious harm or murder due to domestic abuse. The meeting provides a safe environment for agencies to share relevant and proportionate information about current risk, after which the Chair will summarise risks and ask agencies to volunteer actions to reduce risk and increase safety. Each case should take between 12 and 15 minutes from start to finish, however depending on complexity cases may take considerably longer and in exceptional circumstances (such as the subject of multiple referrals or extremely high risk which cannot be managed in the standard way), an individual meeting may be convened.*

*The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim and their children. The MARAC will also make links with other fora in relation to child protection, adult support and protection, criminal justice and the disruption of perpetrator behaviour. **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.'***

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<sup>1</sup> 10 Principles of an Effective MARAC:

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/The%20principles%20of%20an%20effective%20MARAC%20FINAL.pdf>

Toolkit for MARAC Scotland:

[www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SafeLives%27%20Marac%20Toolkit%20%E2%80%93%20Scottish%20Version.pdf](http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SafeLives%27%20Marac%20Toolkit%20%E2%80%93%20Scottish%20Version.pdf)

SafeLives now a UK charity, formerly known as CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse), was the Home Office, HM Government lead agency for MARAC in England and Wales; see [www.safelives.org.uk/](http://www.safelives.org.uk/)

<sup>2</sup> MARAC Overview for Scotland

[www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SafeLives%27%20Marac%20overview%20Scotland.pdf](http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SafeLives%27%20Marac%20overview%20Scotland.pdf).

The victim does not attend the MARAC meeting but is represented by an independent Domestic Abuse Worker who speaks on their behalf. The MARAC requires the understanding and participation of all identified key agencies who may be involved in supporting victims of domestic abuse.

### **What is Domestic Abuse?**

We are using the most recent definition of domestic abuse from the National Strategy for Domestic Abuse in Scotland (2000):

*‘Domestic 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 threat, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends).’*

*‘Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. The existence of violence against men is not denied, nor is the existence of violence in same sex relationships, nor other forms of abuse, but domestic abuse requires a response which takes account of the broader gender inequalities which women face.’*

Coercive Control is at the centre of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act (2018) and this definition is provided by Scottish Women’s Aid:

*‘Domestic abuse isn’t always physical. Coercive control 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 the victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make the person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour.’<sup>3</sup>*

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act (2018), which enables behaviours that we commonly know as coercive control to be included in this Section 1 Domestic Abuse offence. Under this Act, it is an offence for someone to engage in a course of behaviour, which is abusive to their partner or ex-partner, and which is likely to cause the partner/ex-partner physical or psychological harm. This includes fear, alarm and distress, and is either intended to cause their partner/ex-partner harm or the perpetrator is reckless as to whether it causes the partner/ex-partner to suffer harm.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/>

<sup>4</sup> The Act defines Abusive behaviour in two ways: a) behaviour towards the partner/ex-partner in a violent (physically or sexually), threatening or intimidating manner or b) behaviour directed at their partner/ex-partner, at a child of their partner/ex-partner or at another person, which either has as its purpose or would be considered by a reasonable person to be likely to have any of the relevant effects listed below: Making the

## **Purpose of the MARAC Operating Protocol**

The purpose of this Protocol is to:

- Establish accountability; responsibility and reporting structures for MARAC
- Outline the process for the MARAC
- Enhance existing safeguarding, public protection and information sharing protocols and arrangements, rather than replace them
- Support existing policies and procedures regarding multi-agency working on domestic abuse

The principles of this Protocol will be applied fairly regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (in accordance with the UK Equality Act 2010).

## **2) Aims of the MARAC**

Our MARAC aims to:

- Work with survivors of domestic abuse to help keep them safer and respond to their needs
- Manage perpetrators' behaviour to reduce risk
- Ensure that risk and support needs attached to family members or extended networks are identified
- Maintain the safety and welfare of professionals
- Make links with other protection processes (such as child protection, adult support and protection, Multi-Agency Task and Coordination groups, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)

## **3) MARAC partner agencies**

Our participating services are set out below. We may also request additional professional support from other specialist agencies as appropriate to MARAC needs i.e. Third sector organisations and Housing Associations.

MARAC representatives need to be of an appropriate level of seniority or have delegated authority e.g. Team Leader level, so that they can commit to actions on behalf of their agency which in certain circumstances will involve the use of resources. It is best practice for the agency/service to have a named representative and depute representative to support

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victim dependant on or subordinate to them / Isolating the victim from friends, relatives or other sources of support / Controlling, regulating or monitoring the victim's day to day activities / Depriving or restricting the victim's freedom of action / Frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing the victim.

consistency of attendance. This will reinforce the practical working relationship within MARAC.

Agencies are asked to update their MARAC representatives and deputy representatives annually, or as required, by submitting their MARAC representatives form to the MARAC Co-ordinator. Agencies are asked to ensure representatives have the MARAC Operating Protocol and the MARAC representatives Toolkit and that they attend the Risk Assessment and MARAC training provided by EMPPO.

Agreed Midlothian representatives

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Team Leader Midlothian	Women's Aid East and Midlothian
Service Manager, Children Services	Midlothian Council
Team Leader, Adult Support and Protection	Midlothian Council
Team Leader, Housing Services	Midlothian Council
12+ Early Intervention and Prevention Development Officer as temporary link for Education	Midlothian Council
Team Leader, Criminal Justice	Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Team Manager, Health Visiting	Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Clinical Service Development Manager, Mental Health & Substance Misuse	Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Team Leader, Community Midwives	Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Domestic Abuse Support Worker	East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
MARAC Co-ordinator	East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordinator	East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
Gender Based Violence Service Manager	SACRO
Sergeant, Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit	Police Scotland
Local Area Liaison Officer	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
	Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Service (EDDACS)

## Agreed East Lothian representatives

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Team Leader East Lothian	Women's Aid East and Midlothian
Team Leader, Children's Services	East Lothian Council
Team Leader, Anti-Social Behaviour	East Lothian Council
Team Leader, Housing Options	East Lothian Council
Team Leader, Rent Income	East Lothian Council
Education Support Officer (GIRFEC), Education	East Lothian Council
Team Leader, Criminal Justice	East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Health Visitor	East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Family Nurse Supervisor Team B	East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Service Manager, Mental Health & Substance Misuse	East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Charge Midwife	East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership
Domestic Abuse Support Worker	East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
MARAC Co-ordinator	East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
Violence Against Women and Girls Co- ordinator	East Lothian & Midlothian Public Protection Office
Sergeant, Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit	Police Scotland
Gender Based Violence Service Manager	SACRO
Local Area Liaison Officer	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
	Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Service (EDDACS)

## **4) Governance and performance management**

The principle line of accountability for MARAC is the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee (EMPPC) through the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Delivery sub-group, which assumed the functions of the MARAC Steering Group in 2018. The VAWG Delivery sub-group reviews reports on MARAC performance and improvement actions at each quarterly meeting.

The EMPPC is the key strategic group for public protection matters in East Lothian and Midlothian. All key plans and any changes in strategy or policy are approved by the EMPPC. Reporting on performance activity and trends is undertaken through the EMPPC

Performance Framework, which allows the committee to fulfil its role of scrutinising and monitoring local practices.

## 5) Process of the MARAC

### 5.1) Cycle and coordination

The MARAC cycle is shown below, which is coordinated by the MARAC co-ordinator (contact [MARAC@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:MARAC@eastlothian.gov.uk)). Our MARACs are scheduled every 4 weeks (13 per year for each local authority area) and normally take place in the Brunton Hall meeting rooms, Musselburgh. All MARAC representatives will be sent calendar dates for the year ahead.

<b>MARAC Cycle and timeline</b>		<b>Who</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Identification of cases	All agencies
	Referral to MARAC and for specialist support	
	Completion of MARAC actions and report to MARAC mailbox	All agencies
	Checking and allocating referred cases	Marac Coord
	Support work with referred cases and coordination with agencies	Specialist service
<b>Week 2</b>	Identification of cases	All agencies
	Referral to MARAC and for specialist local VAWG support	
	Completion of MARAC actions and report to MARAC mailbox	All agencies
	Checking and allocating referred cases	Marac Coord
	Support work with referred cases and coordination with agencies	Specialist service
	FINAL CALL for MARAC referrals for the agenda Reminder for reports on completed actions	Marac Coord
<b>Week 3</b>	Referrals closed	Marac Coord
	MARAC agenda published	Marac Coord
	Preparation and case research	All agencies
	Identification of cases	All agencies
	Referral to MARAC and for specialist local VAWG support	
	Checking and allocating referred cases	Marac Coord
<b>Week 4</b>	MARAC meeting held	All services
	MARAC Action Log emailed to all agencies (same day)	Marac Coord
	Completion of MARAC actions and report to MARAC mailbox	All agencies
	Identification of cases	All agencies
	Referral to MARAC and for specialist local VAWG support	
		Checking and allocating referred cases
	Support work with referred cases and coordination with agencies	Specialist service

## 5.2) Identification

Any frontline service that undertakes a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) or the Police Domestic Abuse Questionnaire (DAQ) risk assessment with a victim and finds that their case meets the high-risk threshold can refer a victim to MARAC - referral can also be based on professional judgement.<sup>5</sup>

We know many victims will never report abuse to police or seek support from a specialist agency and that the majority will come into contact with a health professional, housing officer, school, etc., therefore it is essential that domestic abuse is seen as ‘everyone’s business’ and that MARAC referrals are made by a wide range of agencies.

Agencies should be able to identify domestic abuse through their organisation’s policies; some organisations already have specific gender based violence or domestic abuse policies. Agencies should also refer to East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection policies such as those for child protection and adult support and protection.<sup>6</sup>

## 5.3) Consent and information sharing

It is best practice to obtain client consent before making a referral to MARAC, however this is not always safe or possible. There is legislation in place to allow information sharing without consent by virtue of Public Task (the task is carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority) or Vital Interests (the processing is necessary to protect someone from serious harm or death). Consent should not be sought if the information will be shared regardless.

Further information in relation to consent can be found in on the Information Commissioner’s Office website. Each agency representative should seek advice and guidance from their manager or designated officer for public protection if they have concerns about sharing information without consent. This will be set out in the East Lothian

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<sup>5</sup> The key tool to help staff identify individuals at risk is the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Checklist – Scottish version (SafeLives). We have adopted the DASH by adding a number of Safe and Together sub questions as our tool for assessing risks (request from: MARAC@eastlothian.gov.uk). The Police use a similar risk assessment tool: the Domestic Abuse Questionnaire (DAQ). The DASH Risk Checklist will assist front line practitioners and agencies to: identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence; Identify which cases should be referred to MARAC and what other support might be required; offer a common tool to agencies that are part of the MARAC process and provide a shared understanding of risk in relation to domestic abuse, stalking and ‘honour’ based violence; to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research cases, including domestic homicides and “near misses” which underpin most recognised models of risk assessment.

<sup>6</sup> EMPPPO provides training in assessing risk and referring to MARAC and on Violence Against Women and Girls/domestic abuse which are open to all local services; these are required training for MARAC representatives.

and Midlothian Public Protection Information Sharing Protocol 2019, which is currently under development in consultation with inter-agency partners.

#### 5.4) MARAC referral criteria

Both the victim and perpetrator must be aged 16 and over to meet the MARAC referral threshold. Referral to MARAC is based on a comprehensive assessment of the perceived risk of further harm to a survivor of domestic abuse. The referral criteria are as recommended by SafeLives:

- **Visible High Risk:** This is the number of positive indicators in the DASH Risk Checklist. Using the SafeLives recommendation this is cases with 14 or more positive ticks.
- **Potential Escalation:** One of the ways to identify escalation is the number of police calls to the client in the previous 12 months. This is used to identify cases where there may not be the 14 positive indicators on the Risk Checklist but the number of police call outs suggest that the abuse is escalating. In accordance with the SafeLives recommendation, where there are 3 domestic abuse occurrences in a 12-month period. However, this will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is commensurate with local trends.
- **Professional Judgement:** If a case does not meet any of the above criteria but the professional involved in the referral considers that there are serious concerns about a client's safety they should refer the case to MARAC. This can also be based on the client's own perceptions of their risk. This may feature more in cases where there are cultural barriers to disclosure, honour based violence cases and extreme fear by the client. The rationale for any referral using this criterion must be recorded by the professional on the referral form.
- **Repeat MARAC referral:** In accordance with the SafeLives briefing for MARACs on repeat cases 2018<sup>7</sup>, if a case involving a client and perpetrator has already been reviewed at MARAC it can be referred again if there has been 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. This might include but is 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

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<sup>7</sup> Briefing for MARACs- repeat cases:

[www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Repeat%20Definition%20-%20A%20Briefing%20for%20Maracs%202018.pdf](http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Repeat%20Definition%20-%20A%20Briefing%20for%20Maracs%202018.pdf)

- 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.

### **5.5) Making a referral to MARAC**

Each agency will complete the risk assessment with the client; if the result is 14+ or on the basis of the MARAC referral criteria in 5.3) they will complete the MARAC referral form and send it to their agency MARAC Representative for approval as soon as possible after identification.<sup>8</sup>

The agency MARAC representative is responsible for submitting the referral to the MARAC mailbox as soon as possible.

All MARAC referrals must be received in the MARAC mailbox as soon as possible and no later than 8 calendar days prior to the MARAC meeting.

All MARAC referrals must be sent securely to [MARAC@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:MARAC@eastlothian.gov.uk). If your agency does not have secure email you should arrange delivery in person.

The referring agency will present the case at MARAC, however if a local specialist service has been able to engage with the person, they will present the case.

The MARAC Co-ordinator will email all MARAC representatives requesting referrals at least 14 calendar days prior to the meeting, attaching the MARAC Referral form.

### **5.6) MARAC list / agenda**

The MARAC Co-ordinator will send the MARAC meeting Agenda/case list to all agency representatives by secure email 7 calendar days before the meeting along with the MARAC Research form to assist agencies in their research on each case.

The meeting agenda includes: meeting details; introductions; SafeLives process for case discussion; actions incomplete from the previous meeting; case list, evaluation of cases, any other business and date of next meeting. The case list presents those with children first so that children's agencies can leave thereafter.

All representatives will check their agency systems for relevant information on each case to bring to MARAC using the MARAC research form.

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<sup>8</sup> For a copy of the data protection compliant Marac referral form email: [marac@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:marac@eastlothian.gov.uk)

Each MARAC representative is responsible for all documents printed in connection with the MARAC.

### **5.7) Actions before MARAC and post MARAC**

The MARAC Co-ordinator will allocate MARAC referrals which come from non-specialist VAWG agencies for support by a local specialist VAWG service if a) the victim has given consent and b) if there is sufficient time prior to the MARAC meeting for the specialist VAWG service to engage with them.

If there is no prior involvement from Women's Aid East and Midlothian or the Caledonian System, the case will be allocated to the Domestic Abuse Service (Domestic Abuse Support Worker).

If there has been sufficient time to engage, the local specialist VAWG service will complete the referral to MARAC.

The MARAC Co-ordinator will seek to obtain information about a perpetrator's involvement with services when they are from a different local authority area to bring essential information to the meeting.

On receipt of the MARAC agenda, it is important that each agency carries out research on all cases using the MARAC research form, so they can bring relevant and appropriate information to share at the meeting and inform discussion and also take any required action to improve safety given the high level of risk.

When there is a referral and there is no specialist Domestic Abuse support in place, the Domestic Abuse Service (Domestic Abuse Support Worker) will seek to make contact with the professional referring the case as well as the client. All relevant information the Domestic Abuse Service collects will be registered on the recording system.

The client should be made aware that the case is being reviewed at MARAC by the referring agency or the allocated specialist VAWG service: this is recorded on the MARAC agenda.

The referring agency or the allocated support service should seek to contact other agencies to put in place appropriate actions to improve safety prior to the MARAC meeting.

Any major concerns due to the higher level of risk to the client or their immediate family should be brought to the attention of the Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordinator and the MARAC Representative of the referring agency so that immediate safeguarding measures can be implemented prior to the meeting e.g. refuge placement, family court applications, proactive targeting of outstanding criminal matters, etc.

All agencies will complete their agreed actions from the MARAC meeting as soon as possible and within 21 calendar days. It is imperative that each agency reports the completion of their actions, on the meeting Action Log, to the MARAC Mailbox.

The MARAC Co-ordinator will log completed actions on the recording system and report actions not completed at the following MARAC.

### **5.8) MARAC meeting**

MARACs are held on a Wednesday (Midlothian) and Thursday (East Lothian) morning every four weeks and allow at least 3 hours per meeting; meetings may be longer depending on the number of cases and the level of complexity.

It is crucial to the success of the MARAC meeting that all agencies are present so they can contribute to the risk assessment as well as actions for safety planning. Agencies should ensure their named representative or deputy have reserved the dates in their diaries.

In exceptional circumstances where the agency representative or deputy are unable to attend the meeting they will send their report to the MARAC Co-ordinator and after the meeting check for proposed actions for their service on the Action Log.

The MARAC meeting is chaired by one of our chairs who all have a good understanding of MARAC and Public Protection: our chairs are from Police Scotland, Women's Aid East and Midlothian, NHS Lothian and East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office. The MARAC chair will follow the agenda of the MARAC, which is based on the SafeLives MARAC process.

Each case discussion is structured as follows:

1. The referring agency or lead agency, succinctly presents the case giving: a brief outline of recent incidents (last 3 months); risks to all concerned; protective factors (strengths); safety actions in place and the victim's priorities from MARAC.
2. The lead agency working with the victim provides additional information, including any other protection processes in place (such as Child Protection or Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences).
3. Around the table all agencies are asked to offer relevant and appropriate information.
4. The chair sums up the risks, protective factors, safety actions in place and the victim's priorities.
5. Round the table all agencies are asked to offer creative actions to reduce the remaining risks and meet the victim's priorities.
6. The chair checks that all the risks and the victim's priorities have been addressed.
7. The MARAC Co-ordinator notes discussion and reads out the agreed actions, checking for clarity.

### **5.9) The role of the MARAC chair:**

The aim of Chair is to establish a process that addresses the safety of the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in the area in partnership with other agencies.

The Chair is not responsible for the actions of each attendee, but equally an ethos of accountability and responsibility to partner agencies must be developed from the start. This relates to: attendance, understanding of the confidentiality statement, understanding of the case discussion process, completion of actions and recording of data in relation to the MARAC.

The MARAC is designed to take responsibility for addressing these high risk cases of domestic violence from one or two agencies and share it between all relevant agencies. Encouraging participation from all agencies is therefore a key task for the Chair is to help create a proactive safety plan where the risks and needs of victim, children, perpetrator and staff are addressed appropriately by the MARAC.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring each case is discussed fully, the risks are identified and the victim's priorities are understood, the actions address these and are taken forward in a timely manner.

### **5.10) Administration**

The MARAC chair will be supported by the MARAC co-ordinator who will take an action note of the meeting.

The chair, as part of the MARAC agenda, will read the confidentiality agreement statement reminding all attendees of the confidentiality protocols in place regarding shared information that is about to be disclosed. All attendees will sign the confidentiality agreement/attendance document, confirming that they have read and agree to the statement as part of the recording process.

A record of each meeting, including the signed confidentiality agreement/attendance sheet, minutes and actions will be retained by the MARAC co-ordinator and logged on the MARAC recording system for accountability purposes.

The MARAC co-ordinator will email the agreed actions from the meeting within 4 working days of the MARAC meeting.

Agency representatives will complete their actions and report completion to the MARAC Co-ordinator, as soon as possible and at latest within 21 calendar days of the meeting.

The MARAC Co-ordinator will log completed actions on the recording system and report actions not completed at the following MARAC.

### **5.11) Information shared at MARAC**

When working with clients, perpetrators and other members of the public, all agencies have agreed boundaries of confidentiality. MARAC meetings will respect these boundaries, which are documented within the MARAC Confidentiality Statement.

Information shared at MARAC is governed by Public Task (the task is carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority) or Vital Interests (the processing is necessary to protect someone from serious harm or death). A copy of the Public Protection Privacy Notice is available on the EMPPC website ([www.emppc.org.uk](http://www.emppc.org.uk)).

This will be further clarified in the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Information Sharing Protocol 2019, which is currently under development in consultation with inter-agency partners.

Any information shared at MARAC is confidential, therefore each agency representative should take responsibility for the appropriate sharing of MARAC information out with the meeting.

### **5.12) Action planning and recording**

Creative multi-agency Action Plans will be developed at MARAC to address the risk to the victim and their priorities, to safeguard children and adults at risk and to manage perpetrator behaviour.

Actions should be SMART, designed to prioritise agency resources to MARAC cases i.e. beyond usual business, and volunteered by the range of agencies.

Agencies must complete all their actions as quickly as possible, preferably within 7 calendar days and at latest within 21 calendar days of the meeting, and they must report completion to the MARAC mailbox using the Action Log form.

All actions completed are recorded by the MARAC co-ordinator and are available on request. Outstanding actions will be reviewed as an agenda item at the next MARAC.

The lead for each case (or the referring agency in the absence of a lead) will inform the victim of the actions from the meeting, if they are aware that their case has been to MARAC.

MARAC Actions will be posted on the client's case file on the Domestic Abuse Service recording system and also on the Council social work recording systems by the MARAC Co-ordinator.

Representatives should update case files on their own recording systems with actions and updates / outcomes.

### **5.13) MARAC to MARAC transfers**

Where it is known that the survivor is no longer living in East Lothian or Midlothian and the risk is assessed as HIGH the chair should ensure that there is a MARAC action to transfer the case to the MARAC or Domestic Abuse Service of the area where the survivor has relocated.

The survivor should be informed of the referral where possible. It is the role of the specialist support worker to make the referral. The referral will be recorded as an action in the minutes and updated on the Domestic Abuse Service recording system and MOSAIC when done. Any information shared must be accurate and proportionate to the risk.

Referrals from another MARAC will be made to the MARAC co-ordinator in the same way as previously stated in this Protocol. The case will be allocated to the appropriate specialist support worker, who will contact the survivor to complete an assessment of current risks.

In the unlikely event that the case does not meet the MARAC threshold, the specialist support worker and the referring agency will discuss and agree a safety plan to meet the risks identified.

### **5.14) Repeat cases escalating concerns / professionals meetings**

Safelives defines a “repeat” as ANY instance of abuse between the same victim and the 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.

The re-referring agency will present a brief update on the case, identifying how the case meets the repeat threshold and share what they have done since they identified the ongoing abuse to reduce risk.

The MARAC Co-ordinator will provide previous actions plans which the Chair should consider and seek to satisfy themselves and partners that the actions were completed. After new information and expertise is shared (no need to repeat information shared at previous meetings) partners will identify further action to reduce current risks.

When there are more than 3 re-referrals within 12 months, MARAC will consider whether a professionals’ meeting would provide solutions to the challenges, particularly around complex needs, and which service should call and lead that meeting.

MARAC will consider if it may be safe, appropriate and necessary to hold a joint or professionals meeting with the victim or perpetrator present. Decisions should be made on a case by case basis and by all relevant agencies with a focus on the safety of all.

## 6) Equality

All member agencies have a responsibility to adhere to the UK Equality Act 2010. Additional advice and support can be accessed for cases identified as being from diverse communities through the following services:

- Shakti Women's Aid.
- Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre.
- Fearless, SACRO.
- LGBT Youth Scotland.

The MARAC Co-ordinator collects information on the profile of the local population referred to the MARAC in order to monitor equality of outcome to all. This information is reported to the Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery sub-group and to SafeLives.

An Integrated Impact Assessment will be conducted on MARAC strategic reports and protocols to identify the needs of the local population based on all the protected characteristics identified in the UK Equality Act 2010.

## 7) Evaluation and reporting

The MARAC is self-evaluated annually by the Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Group within the East Lothian and Midlothian Equally Safe Quality Standards return; improvements are taken forward through the subsequent action plan.

MARAC service and performance data is collated by the MARAC Co-ordinator. Data is reported quarterly to SafeLives and quarterly and annually to the Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery sub-group, which has the function of the MARAC Steering Group.

The Delivery sub-group reviews the data and annual report and agrees improvement actions, which are taken forward by the relevant agencies.

Key performance data is also reported to East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee quarterly and annually by the Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordinator.

## 8) Compliments and complaints

If you would like to feedback a compliment or complaint about the MARAC process please refer to the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Compliments and Complaints Protocol – see hyperlink in the footnote.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [https://emppc.org.uk/file/Public\\_Protection\\_front\\_page/EMPPC\\_-\\_Compliments\\_and\\_Complaints\\_Protocol\\_-\\_12-09-17\\_v1.pdf](https://emppc.org.uk/file/Public_Protection_front_page/EMPPC_-_Compliments_and_Complaints_Protocol_-_12-09-17_v1.pdf)

## 9) Breaches

Any breach of this protocol may have a significant impact in the safety of a high risk service user therefore it is important that all agencies familiarise themselves with this Protocol and the related Information Sharing Agreement.

## 10) Review

This protocol will be reviewed annually and changed to meet the needs of the MARAC function in consultation with MARAC representatives and the Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery sub-group.

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