

The Importance of the work of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)



What is MARAC?

A MARAC is a multi-agency meeting which domestic abuse victims who have been identified as at high risk of serious harm or homicide are referred to.

MARAC involves children who are now also classed as victims.

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 to be able to identify and manage the risks, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety.

UK wide there are 45 Police forces and 275 MARACs.

In the eastern region there are 5 forces and 18 MARACs. In the last quarter the Eastern region heard 6577 cases at MARAC and across the UK 92,669 were discussed.

What the above means is that 26308 cases in the Eastern region of the UK are heard every year. This includes an estimated 35,376 children.

Non-Police cases across the region make up for 30% of all referrals heard.

(Stats taken from most recent SafeLives quarterly report.)

Why is it important?

MARAC is important because some victims will not have reported to police and will be hidden victims, only working with agencies they feel safe with. Sometimes a referral to MARAC is triggered by a presentation of injuries or an appointment with a professional that leads to a disclosure at just the right moment. Without MARAC the information regarding these families is not easily shared across partnerships, joint working is more difficult to forge, and safety planning will not be as robust as it can be.

MARAC gives the opportunity for the panel to consider information, risk, and trauma around the children and for recommendations and actions to be included as part of safety planning using the referral options across the partnership which may not be known to practitioners supporting the case until it is heard at MARAC. Information will often be shared that is unknown to other agencies.

Essex MARAC looks at the contributing factors to ongoing abuse, this will include looking at complex cases and reviewing perpetrators behaviours. There is now an understanding that a full safety plan for a victim is not enough, the cases need a full overview to understand what is happening and how best to support all involved.

Who should be involved?

The MARAC should be attended by representatives from a range of agencies including police, health, child protection, housing, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation, mental health and substance misuse and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.