

Sefton Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Domestic Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or financial and committed by an intimate partner or family member.

If someone is forced to alter their behaviour because they are frightened of their partner or family member's reaction, they are being abused.

What is a MARAC?

MARAC is a multi-agency meeting through which high risk victims of domestic (or sexual) violence are identified, relevant information in relation to the current identified risks is shared between partners and a multi-agency action plan is created to address these identified risks and increase the safety and well being of victims and their families.

MARAC is not statutory, although it is considered to be good practice, and there are currently over 270 MARACs operating in England, Wales and Scotland.

Sefton MARAC

Sefton MARAC has been in place since June 2007, it meets on a fortnightly basis on a Thursday.

Merseyside Police have had responsibility for chairing the meeting since February 2012; Sefton MBC has responsibility for all co-ordination and administration responsibilities.

Membership

MARAC is a multi-agency meeting with attendance from a wide range of partners including:

- Merseyside Police
- Sefton IDVA Service
- SWACA
- RASA
- Venus
- Liverpool Community Health
- Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust
- Aintree Hospital NHS Trust
- Children's Services Safeguarding Team
- Adult Services Safeguarding Team
- Sefton Housing Options Team
- One Vision Housing
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- Merseycare NHS Trust (Mental Health)
- Lifeline (Drug and Alcohol Service) >>

Risk Tools and MARAC Threshold

In Sefton 2 different risk tools are used to identify high risk cases of domestic violence.

MERIT

Used by Merseyside Police which scores victims as Gold, Silver or Bronze.

- All new Gold's and any existing Gold's where there has been a further significant incident are referred to MARAC.

Sefton MARAC Risk Tool

Is used by all other agencies.

- 14 or more 'yes' boxes ticked then the case should automatically be referred to MARAC.
- Professional judgement: If there are serious concerns about a victim's situation but scores less than 14 on the risk tool, then the case should be referred to MARAC.

Repeat Cases

A repeat MARAC case is one which has previously been referred to MARAC and a further significant incident has then taken place within twelve months of this. Any agency may identify a further incident regardless of whether or not it has been reported to the police.

A further incident includes any one of the following, which, if reported to the police, would constitute criminal behaviour:

- Significant violence or threats of violence to the victim (including threats against property).
- A pattern of stalking or harassment.
- Rape or sexual abuse.

Referring a case to the MARAC will automatically mean that the case will be referred to the Sefton IDVA team for further support.

Consent for Referrals

It is good practice for the agencies to gain consent from the victim before referring their case to MARAC. However in cases where the victim refuses consent or cannot be contacted to gain consent, there are a number of Acts and Orders, which can override consent. This would be done in order to safeguard the victim and their children. The Acts and orders include:

- Crime and disorder Act 1998
- In accordance with a Court Order
- Overriding Public Interest
- Human Rights Acts 2001

MARAC Process

- A referral and risk assessment tool should be completed and returned to the MARAC coordinator.
- If the case meets the MARAC threshold then it will be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next available meeting.
- Each case will be discussed individually, all relevant information is shared and an action plan is put in place to try and reduce the level of risk posed. MARAC representatives volunteer to complete actions on behalf of their agency.
- > For copies of the referral and risk assessment forms and for more information on MARAC or training for your agency please contact:
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