



Highland MARAC Annual Report 2013



Introduction

What is MARAC?

MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a new way of working to transform the lives of vulnerable victims who are assessed to be of high risk of domestic abuse.

MARACs are regular local meetings where information about high risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is represented by an Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate (IDAA), a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim.

The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim. However, the MARAC will also make links with other multi-agency meetings and processes to safeguard children, vulnerable adults and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator.

100,000

Approximately one hundred thousand individuals are currently (2011/2012) at high risk of serious harm or murder as a result of domestic abuse across the UK.

What is the Purpose of MARAC?

The aim of the MARAC is:

- to increase the safety, health and well being of victims (and their children, if they have any)
- to reduce repeat victimisation
- to improve agency coordination and accountability
- to improve safety and support for staff involved in high risk domestic abuse cases

It does this by:

- sharing information about high risk cases
- jointly constructing, implementing and coordinating a safety plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and which reduces harm
- reviewing cases and safety plans at appropriate intervals
- retaining records of activity

Police in the Highlands attended two thousand, one hundred and fifty six domestic incidents in 2013.

2156

Introduction

In 2010/2011, an average of 2 women were killed in the UK every week by a current or former partner

2

How Does MARAC Work?

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.

14%

Fourteen percent of adults in Scotland who report partner abuse have done so since the age of 16.

Which agencies are involved?

There are a number of agencies involved with MARAC. These consist of:

Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid, Inverness Women's Aid, Lochaber Women's Aid, Ross-shire Women's Aid, Albyn Housing Society, Cairn Housing Association, Pentland Housing Association, Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association, Lochaber Housing Association, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Highland Council, NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Prison Service and Victim Support Scotland.

One third of domestic abuse victims in Scotland have children living with them.

1/3

£1.6bn

Domestic abuse costs Scotland an estimated £1.6 billion.

Seven Stage Process

MARAC follows a seven stage process and the illustrative example below, based on real events, shows how the MARAC process works in practice:

Stage 1

Identification of Abuse

Referring agency: Police

Comments: Police responded to a noise complaint from neighbours on 9 October 2013 and were met by Jane Smith who was distressed and had sustained an injury to her face. John Smith was arrested for assault.

Victim name: Jane Smith

Address: 25 Main Street, Anytown, Highland

Date of birth: 17/03/1976

Perpetrator: John Smith

Address: 25 Main Street, Anytown, Highland

Date of birth: 02/10/75

Children: Jack Smith b. 01/09/2005

Joan Smith b. 15/02/2012

Stage 2

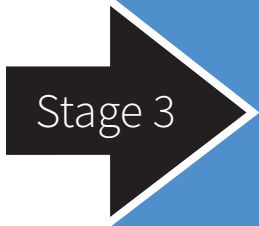
Assessment of Risk

The Police carried out a risk assessment using the Domestic Abuse Risk Identification Checklist

Jane Smith scored 15 'yes' answers.

Police, in partnership with other agencies, implemented immediate safety measures to protect the victim and children.

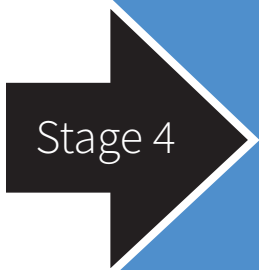
Seven Stage Process (continued)



Referral to MARAC if High Risk

The Police, having assessed Jane Smith to be at high risk of domestic abuse, referred the case to the MARAC Coordinator.

The MARAC Coordinator immediately referred the case to the Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy service (Women's Aid) to offer support to the victim and identify risks and fears.



Research

The MARAC Coordinator circulated details of the case (and others referred to MARAC) eight days prior to the MARAC meeting.

MARAC partner agencies researched their systems and databases for any relevant information to be shared at the MARAC meeting.

Agency representatives contacted relevant colleagues for information.



Meeting and information sharing

Agencies shared relevant information at the MARAC meeting. MARAC collectively identified risks to the victim, children, perpetrator or agency staff.

Women's Aid presented information on behalf of the victim.

The following diagram provides an oversight of the agencies involved at a MARAC meeting and the information shared between each organisation.

MARAC Meeting

Police Scotland: perpetrator charged with a domestically aggravated assault and pled not guilty. He has been granted bail with special conditions that he does not contact Jane Smith or enter 25 Main Street, Anytown. No further domestic incidents have been reported since. He has previous convictions for domestically aggravated offences including assault, vandalism and threatening behaviour. His criminal history includes crimes of violence and fire raising.

Four domestic incidents reported involving the couple in the past year whereby John Smith has caused a disturbance and threatened to set fire to the house however on each occasion the victim Jane Smith has declined to make a complaint or engage with the support offered by the Police.

Despite the lack of engagement, the Police have referred Jane to Women's Aid following a previous domestic incident.

Highland Council Criminal Justice Social Work: John Smith is currently subject to a Community Payback Order (CPO) whereby he is required to carry out 120 hours of unpaid work and attend the Respect programme.

His attendance at the CPO is erratic and he has not engaged meaningfully in the Respect programme.

In previous interviews with CJSW, alcohol misuse is often noted as a precursor to his offending. This most recent domestic incident has apparently increased his resolve to address his alcohol issues and is asking for help to do so.

Highland Council Social Work Children & Families: family known but not currently an open case. Jane Smith engages well with her Health Visitor who has no real concerns for her care of her daughter Joan Smith.

The Health Visitor has noticed that when she visits the house, John Smith insists on being present and appears to be controlling in his conduct towards Jane

Jane has good family support, particularly from her mother and sister.

Highland Council Education: Jack Smith attends Anytown primary school where his attendance is described as poor and is often late for school.

There are arrangements in place for the collection of Jack from school by his maternal grandmother due to a number of occasions when his dad has failed to meet him. Although Jack is not currently achieving to his full potential he is a good pupil but was noticeably withdrawn after the incident on 9 October 2013.

The school have received two Child Concern Forms in respect of Jack relating to his home circumstances.



Women's Aid: contacted the victim following previous referrals however she had declined their support. In response to this referral Jane was initially reluctant to engage however her confidence is growing and she is now working well with her support worker. She feels safer on account of the special bail conditions prohibiting John Smith approaching her but remains concerned about the historic threats to burn her house down.

She has catalogued a history of domestic abuse and has named two other previous partners of John Smith who she believed may also have been the subject of domestic abuse.

Jane is now ready to provide a statement to the Police detailing domestic and sexual abuse perpetrated by John Smith. She has no intention of resuming her relationship with John Smith and is being supported to meet with a solicitor to progress civil protective measures and child access arrangements.

Registered Social Landlord (RSL): victim is the sole tenant at 25 Main Street, Anytown.

There are significant rent arrears accruing and there have been neighbourly concern about anti social behaviour.

Within the last year two maintenance calls have been received from the victim and on the attendance of RSL staff they noted that internal walls had been holed, apparently by punching.

Highland Council Housing: perpetrator presented as homeless on 11 October 2013 and has been allocated temporary furnished accommodation.

HMO report concerns over his substance misuse and anti social behaviour.

NHS Highland: perpetrator referred on a number of occasions to the substance misuse service but has failed to keep appointments.

He was an open case to a CPNA however there has been no contact with him for a number of months. Victim referred by her GP to mental health services and is supported by a Community Psychiatric Nurse for depression.

She has confided in her CPN that John is very controlling and can be unpredictable when drinking.

Seven Stage Process (continued)

Stage 6

Action Planning

Having shared information and identified the risks, the MARAC created the following SMART safety plan and actions to minimise the risk to Jane Smith and her children:

- Police Domestic Abuse Investigation team to liaise with Women's Aid with a view to noting a statement from Jane Smith regarding historic domestic and sexual abuse. Police to also appoint a Sexual Offences Liaison Officer.
- Police to appoint a Domestic Abuse Liaison Officer to re-engage with Jane Smith
- Police Community Safety Officer and Fire Scotland to jointly offer Jane Smith a home security fire safety survey.
- Recommendations from the joint Fire/Police home security survey to be prioritised by the Registered Social Landlord
- Police Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit to research the previous partners of John Smith and investigate him as a potential serial domestic abuse offender
- Police to write to COPFS and request consideration of a Non Harassment Order against John Smith as a court disposal on conviction
- CJSW and NHSH to liaise and facilitate the referral of John Smith to the substance misuse service
- Women's Aid to appoint a Children's Services Worker to support Jack Smith
- SW C&F to review their engagement with Jane Smith and her children with a view to supporting them
- Registered Social Landlord Housing Support Officer to meet with Jane Smith and support her with rent arrears and related issues now that she has separated from John Smith
- Police to circulate a briefing note to operational officers highlighting the risks posed by John Smith to Jane Smith
- Women's Aid to continue to support Jane Smith in pursuing civil legal measures against John Smith and update the MARAC accordingly

Stage 7

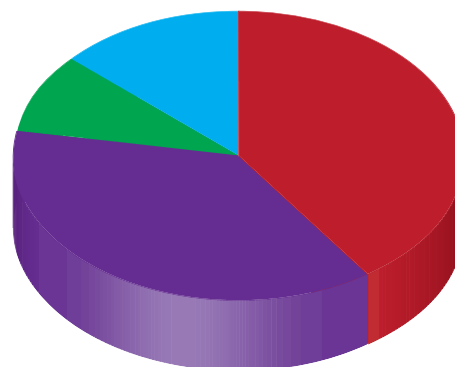
Follow Up

Agencies undertake actions within agreed timescales and confirm when they are complete with the MARAC Coordinator. Women's Aid updates the victim on the safety plan, if safe to do so.

Highland MARAC Statistics

Number of clients accessing support from Women's Aid in Highland in 2013

Women's Aid	No. of referred cases
Inverness	459
Ross-shire	429
Lochaber	150
Caithness & Sutherland	102
Total	1137



Number of 'domestic incidents' attended by police

Year	Number of incidents
2013	2156

No. of domestic abuse cases assessed to be of 'high risk' (no. of cases referred)

Year	Highland MARAC referrals
2013	436

No. of children in households where high risk domestic abuse was reported

Year	Number of children in household of referred cases
2013	504

No. of high risk domestic abuse cases per 10,000 of the adult female population

Area	Number
Inverness, Badenoch, Strathspey and Nairn	61.4
Ross, Lochaber and Skye	44.4
Caithness and Sutherland	38.3

Trends shown through diversity monitoring

Diversity	Highland MARAC total	Percentage of total referrals
Female victim	415	95%
Male victim	21	5%
Black and Minority Ethnic victim	22	5%

76% of men presenting as victims of domestic abuse are also reported to be alleged perpetrators of abuse against their current or previous partners. 2% of women reported as victims of domestic abuse are alleged perpetrators of abuse against their current or previous partners

Who to contact

MARAC Co-ordinator

Email: highland.marac@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Telephone: 01463 720 261



Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid

Email: info@caswa.org.uk

Telephone: 0845 408 0151

Website: www.caswa.org.uk



Inverness Women's Aid

Email: info@invernesswa.co.uk

Telephone: 01463 220 719

Website: www.invernesswa.org.uk



Lochaber Women's Aid

Email: info@lochaberwomensaid.org

Telephone: 01397 705 734

Website: www.lochaberwomensaid.org



Ross-shire Women's Aid

Email: info@rosswa.co.uk

Telephone: 01349 863 568

Website: www.rosswa.co.uk



Victim Support Scotland

Email: victimsupport.highland@victimsupportscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 01463 258 834

Website: www.victimsupportscotland.org.uk

Who to contact

Partner Agencies



Highland Council

Telephone: 01349 886 606
Website: www.highland.gov.uk



NHS Highland

Telephone: 01463 704 000
In an emergency dial 999
Website: www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk



Police Scotland

Telephone: 101
In an emergency dial 999
Website: www.scotland.police.uk

