

10 principles of an effective Marac

The four aims of Marac are to safeguard victims, manage perpetrators' behaviour, safeguard professionals and make links with all other safeguarding processes.

The 10 principles underpin an effective Marac and support everyone involved to deliver these aims. At the core of each principle is the safety of the victim, which needs to be considered at all stages of the process. Ensuring that the victim is supported throughout and their needs represented at the Marac is crucial to managing risk, improving and maintaining safety, and reducing repeat victimisation.

1. Identification

Professionals recognise domestic abuse, risk assess and identify high-risk cases

2. Referral to Marac and Idva

All victims who meet the Marac threshold are referred to Marac and Idva

3. Multi-agency engagement

Agencies that contribute to safeguarding high-risk victims, associated children and vulnerable adults attend the Marac

4. Independent representation and support for victims

All high-risk victims are offered the support of an Idva; their views and needs are represented at Marac

5. Information sharing

Marac representatives share relevant, proportionate, risk-focused information

6. Action planning

Multi-agency action plans address the risk to the victim, safeguard children and adults at risk, and manage perpetrator behaviour

7. Number of cases

The Marac hears the recommended volume of cases

8. Equality

The Marac addresses the unique needs of victims with protected characteristics

9. Operational support

There is sufficient support and resources to support effective functioning of the Marac

10. Governance

There is effective strategic support and leadership of the Marac and Idva response, and agencies work together effectively

10 principles of an effective Marac was updated in November 2015. Please note that the changes to the principles are for clarification and do not alter the basic advice and guidelines given by SafeLives.

Principle 1 Identification

What is the principle?

Professionals recognise domestic abuse, risk assess and identify high-risk cases

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
All agencies respond to disclosures and use the same risk assessment tool (or refer clients to a specialist domestic abuse agency)	<p>Victims, associated children, young people at risk and perpetrators are identified sooner, and interventions are based on good quality risk assessments</p> <p>Professionals have a framework to understand and assess domestic abuse risk</p>	<p>Risk assessment is outlined within policy framework and the Marac operating protocol and is implemented in practice</p> <p>Idva service policy requires risk assessment within two working days of referral</p>
Thresholds are clear and appropriate, enabling all agencies to identify high-risk cases using a range of criteria: professional judgement, actuarial assessment and escalation	<p>Agencies have a shared understanding of domestic abuse risk</p> <p>The risk of serious injury, enduring harm and murder is identified</p>	<p>Referral thresholds, which reflect recommended guidance, are outlined in the Marac operating protocol</p> <p>A wide range of agencies refer to Marac</p> <p>Dip sampling of Marac cases to identify appropriateness of Marac referral</p>
Agencies identify and refer repeat cases back to Marac	<p>All high-risk victims experiencing a repeat incident have the opportunity to re-engage with Marac and Idva</p> <p>Longer term safety is achievable through ongoing multi-agency risk management plans</p>	<p>The repeat referral rate is within SafeLives' recommendation of between 28-40%</p> <p>Dip sampling of Marac cases to identify which agencies are referring repeats</p>

Principle 2

Referral to Marac and Idva

What is the principle?

All victims who meet the Marac threshold are referred to Marac and Idva

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
Agencies inform victims of their referral to Marac and Idva (unless unsafe to)	Victims are more likely to engage and have trust in the Marac and Idva, leading to improved outcomes and longer-term safety	<p>Stated as a requirement in a multi-agency document (eg Marac operating protocol)</p> <p>Included on the Marac referral form and stated at the Marac</p> <p>Through feedback (eg a process for victim/survivor consultation exists)</p>
All high-risk victims are referred to Idva and Marac as soon as practicable (eg within 48 hours)	<p>Risks and safety of high-risk victims and associated children is managed at the earliest opportunity</p> <p>All high-risk victims have access to Marac and Idva, regardless of which service they disclose to</p>	<p>Referrals are heard at the earliest Marac meeting relative to the date high-risk is identified</p> <p>The Marac operating protocol includes referral timeframes to Marac and Idva</p>
The Idva works within a coordinated community response and the Marac process to make victims and associated children safer	The safety of high-risk victims and associated children is at the heart of the coordinated response and supported by an independent expert	<p>Marac operating protocol and Idva service protocols</p> <p>Marac minutes and representatives feedback</p> <p>Feedback from victims</p>

Principle 3

Multi-agency engagement

What is the principle?

Agencies that can contribute to safeguarding high-risk victims, associated children and vulnerable adults attend the Marac

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
Core agencies consistently attend and participate in the Marac (<i>police, Idva service, housing (statutory responsibility), children's services (statutory responsibility), National Probation Service and/or community rehabilitation company (CRC), primary health, mental health, substance misuse service</i>)	<p>The risks to high-risk victims and their families, and the management of perpetrators, are jointly and comprehensively assessed and addressed</p> <p>The impact of domestic abuse and other factors (eg substance and mental health issues), on victims and children is minimised</p>	<p>Marac operating protocol</p> <p>Marac attendance sheet/minutes</p> <p>Marac observation (ie by the governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer review)</p>
Other agencies that can increase the safety of victims, children and vulnerable adults attend (<i>examples include: adult safeguarding, youth offending services, child and adolescent mental health services (Camhs), registered social landlords, specialist services</i>)	The needs of all victims and children and adults at risk are identified and addressed, perpetrators' behaviour is managed and risk reduced	<p>Marac operating protocol</p> <p>Marac attendance sheet /minutes</p> <p>Marac observation (ie by the governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer review)</p>
Representatives are appropriately skilled and supported to effectively represent their agency	Risk assessment, action planning and decision making is effective	<p>Marac operating protocol</p> <p>Marac attendance sheet/minutes</p> <p>Marac observation (ie by the governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer reviewer)</p> <p>Agency protocols/job descriptions</p>

Principle 4

Independent representation and support for victims

What is the principle?

All high-risk victims are offered the support of an Idva; their views and needs are represented at Marac

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
An Idva proactively contacts and attempts to engage victims within 48 hours of receiving a referral	Victims are offered a specialist professional who helps with everything they need to become safe from the earliest opportunity	Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately engage victims Idva service protocol Marac minutes Feedback from victims
Each victim is represented at the Marac meeting and their safety is clearly advocated for (usually by an Idva)	Action plans respond to the victim's needs and unique insight into their situation Victims engage and have trust in the process and contribute directly to successful outcomes	Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately advocate for victims' safety Marac minutes/Marac action plans Marac observation (ie by the governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer reviewer)
Where victims' views are absent (or they are not engaged) their safety remains the focus of the meeting	Action plans remain focused on safety and respond to the unique circumstances of each victim Immediate safety is addressed and risk reduced	Marac minutes and action plans Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately challenge practice that may increase risk or vulnerability Marac observation (ie by the governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer reviewer)
Victims are updated and supported after the meeting	Each victim remains at the heart of the Marac process Longer term safety and recovery is more achievable (if also linked to a clear pathway of support)	Marac minutes and case audits Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to facilitate ongoing support Included Idva service protocol and Marac operating protocol Victim consultation/feedback

Principle 5

Information sharing

What is the principle?

Marac representatives share relevant, proportionate, risk-focused information

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
Marac representatives are supported by their agency to research and prepare for Marac	<p>Agencies are represented by skilled, prepared representatives who are equipped to share information, analyse risk, contribute expertise and offer actions</p> <p>Help is targeted in the right way; the prevalence and impact of high-risk domestic abuse on victims, and children and young people, is minimised</p>	<p>A formal induction is in place for new representatives</p> <p>The Marac representative role is embedded in job descriptions</p> <p>All relevant agencies are represented on the Marac governance group; attendance at Marac is a standing agenda item</p>
All relevant, proportionate information and risks, in relation to all parties, are succinctly shared at the Marac	<p>Information is analysed and a tailored intervention, responding to the risks and needs of the victim, is developed</p> <p>Children and young people receive help that is proportionate to risk</p> <p>Information is only shared that is relevant and proportionate to the risks identified</p>	<p>Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately challenge information that may increase risk or vulnerability</p> <p>Representatives receive a formal induction and attend Marac training in order to perform their role effectively</p> <p>Outlined in policy guidance which is accessible to and signed by all Marac partners (eg Marac information sharing protocol)</p> <p>Marac minutes</p> <p>Marac observation (ie by the Marac governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer reviewer)</p>
Agencies distribute and store information securely	Confidentiality is maintained; risk is not inadvertently escalated	<p>Marac operating and information sharing protocols are signed by all agencies and adhered to</p> <p>Marac governance group routinely reviews information sharing protocols</p> <p>Marac governance group reviews the confidentiality of the Marac process (ie through audits)</p>

Principle 6

Action planning

What is the principle?

Multi-agency action plans address the risk to the victim, safeguard children and adults at risk, and manage perpetrator behaviour

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
Actions are clear, timed and based on good quality assessment of risk and potential harm to victims, children and other vulnerable parties	<p>Risk and potential for further harm is managed, the safety of the victim is increased and children safeguarded</p> <p>The impact on children is reduced</p> <p>All vulnerable parties, including professionals, are safeguarded</p>	<p>Marac minutes and action plans</p> <p>Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately challenge actions that may increase risk or vulnerability</p> <p>Marac observation (ie by the Marac governance group, Idva service manager, domestic abuse coordinator or peer reviewer)</p> <p>Case audits</p>
Action plans routinely manage, disrupt or divert perpetrators' behaviour	<p>Perpetrators are held accountable; their abusive behaviour is managed; current and any future victims are safer</p> <p>The impact on children is reduced</p>	<p>Marac minutes and action plans</p> <p>Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately challenge actions that may increase risk or vulnerability</p> <p>Case audits</p>
Action plans reflect the needs of the victim and prioritise their safety	<p>Victims and their safety remain central to the process</p> <p>Support for victims and their children is proportionate to risk and need</p>	<p>Marac minutes and action plans</p> <p>Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately challenge actions that may increase risk or vulnerability</p> <p>Case audits</p> <p>Victim feedback</p>
Action plans routinely link to other multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to address any ongoing safeguarding concerns for any adult and any child	<p>Risks for all adults, children and families are linked and are managed based on comprehensive assessment and intelligence</p> <p>Effective joint working exists between processes that safeguard children in need of protection and Marac</p> <p>Adults with care and support needs are identified and linked to adult safeguarding processes</p>	<p>Idvas are appropriately trained and skilled to confidently and appropriately challenge practice that may increase risk or vulnerability</p> <p>Multi-agency protocols outline arrangements for linked risk assessment and response</p>

Principle 7

Number of cases

What is the principle?

The Marac hears the recommended volume of cases

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
The number of referrals is at least 80% of SafeLives' recommendation	<p>Victims at high-risk of serious harm, and associated children, are supported through the Marac Idva model</p> <p>Perpetrators are identified, held accountable and behaviours addressed</p>	<p>Marac data</p> <p>Dip sampling or observing Marac meetings to ensure cases referred are high-risk and appropriate</p> <p>The local area has specific protocols and processes in place to identify and protect high-risk victims</p>
Idva capacity is sufficient to support all victims referred to Marac	<p>All victims referred to Marac are offered independent support and representation, thereby increasing their immediate and longer-term safety</p> <p>Idvas are able to work with victims as intensively for as long as the model requires in order to improve outcomes for victims</p>	<p>The number of Idvas is in line with recommendations</p> <p>Idva service protocol</p> <p>Idva consultation and feedback to Marac governance group</p>

Principle 8

Equality

What is the principle?

The Marac addresses the unique needs of victims with protected characteristics

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
Referrals to Marac reflect the diversity of your local population	High-risk victims from all your communities, and those with protected characteristics, are identified and given access to specialist support and safety planning	<p>The percentage of referrals reflects the local population and/or national averages for victims from the following groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> B&ME LGBT community Disabled people Gender split for male and female referrals Young people <p>Case lists, minutes or local data evidence a process that is accessible to victims with specific vulnerabilities or protected characteristics</p> <p>Evidence of analysis and action taken to address any gaps in referrals to Marac</p>
The Marac is aware of characteristics and specific additional needs of victims and its response includes these	<p>Victims with protected characteristics or specific vulnerabilities are effectively supported and protected</p> <p>Risk for some of the most vulnerable members of the community is comprehensively addressed</p>	<p>Dip sampling of minutes</p> <p>Idva feedback</p> <p>An equality impact needs assessment has been undertaken</p> <p>Marac governance group can evidence analysis and action taken to address any gaps in the Marac response to vulnerable people or those with protected characteristics</p>
The Idva service (or other specialist service) is able to support and represent the needs of victims with protected characteristics	<p>All victims have their needs and views represented or advocated for at the Marac</p> <p>Specific needs and risks are recognised and addressed in Marac action plans; all victims are protected and made safer</p>	<p>Dip sampling of Marac minutes</p> <p>Idvas are appropriately trained</p> <p>Feedback from the Idva service and Marac representatives</p> <p>The Idva and Marac has access to specialist services in a timely manner to meet the needs of all victims, children, and young people</p>

Principle 9

Operational support

What is the principle?

There is sufficient support and resources to ensure effective functioning of the Marac

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
A named person oversees and coordinates operational and strategic priorities of the Marac	<p>Quality Maracs exist that enable agency participation and victim engagement</p> <p>The Marac and agencies have a clear route for addressing issues</p>	<p>There is a consistent person responsible for coordination</p> <p>The Marac process is promoted and the contribution of all relevant agencies is supported</p> <p>Performance management information is collated and provided to the governance group, at least quarterly</p>
There is effective administration of the Marac with sufficient resource (based on caseload)	<p>The Marac functions efficiently, processes are streamlined, demands on agency resources are minimised and outcomes improved</p> <p>Marac administration capacity reflects SafeLives' recommendation based on caseload</p>	<p>There is a consistent person, and suitable resources, responsible for Marac administration</p> <p>The case list and Marac minutes are circulated as specified in the Marac operating protocol</p> <p>Actions are tracked, but remain the responsibility of each individual agency and are not transferred to the Marac</p>
Marac data is consistently recorded, reported and analysed	<p>SafeLives' data analysis is provided online to the local area and police force; it is routinely reviewed by the Marac governance group to inform development</p> <p>The local, regional and national picture of Maracs is available</p>	<p>Marac data form is submitted to SafeLives on a quarterly basis</p> <p>Marac governance group minutes show performance monitoring as a standing agenda item</p>

Principle 10

Governance

What is the principle?

There is effective strategic support and leadership of the Marac and Idva response, and agencies work together effectively

What good looks like	Why it's important	How it's evidenced
<p>There is a stable, visible, governance structure in place that provides leadership for the Marac</p> <p>This includes oversight by relevant group with responsibility for safeguarding (adults and children)</p>	<p>Partnership working is more effective, issues are identified and addressed through collective, strategic responsibility for Marac</p> <p>The impact of the Marac and Idva and the quality of the local response to high-risk victims and children is understood and sustainable</p>	<p>There is a named group which meets at least quarterly, receives updates from the Marac and resolves or escalates any issues</p> <p>This is reflected within the terms of reference</p> <p>Victims are consulted about any improvements in their safety and positive outcomes</p>
<p>There is clear responsibility for measuring outcomes and the impact and effectiveness of the Marac</p> <p>The local safeguarding children and adults boards monitor outcomes and the effectiveness of the Marac to: recognise and address issues; prevent longer term harm; and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults</p>	<p>The local area knows the impact of the Marac and Idva, the quality of the response to high-risk victims and children, and how perpetrators' behaviour is managed</p> <p>Effectiveness and sustainability of the Marac is ensured</p> <p>Local safeguarding children and adults boards know the impact of the Marac and outcomes for children, young people and vulnerable adults</p>	<p>Performance is monitored on a regular basis by a nominated group and a Marac review is undertaken regularly (eg annually) under its guidance</p> <p>Data is used to drive learning and inform strategic and operational decisions</p> <p>Marac is identified as a strategic priority within relevant local strategies</p> <p>The victim's experience is captured and used to inform service delivery</p>
<p>There is a Marac operating and information sharing protocol. These are comprehensive, fit for purpose and set out how information will be shared between any multi-agency safeguarding arrangements</p>	<p>Agencies have clarity about the Marac process and expectations of their service</p> <p>Protocols support multi-agency information sharing and risk assessment; the coordinated partnership response is effective</p>	<p>Procedural guidance exists, is understood and adhered to in practice</p> <p>The Marac operating and information sharing protocol (or other multi-agency procedural guidance) is reviewed at least every second year and signed by all Marac agencies</p>