

# Marac data – Key findings

## April 2020 - March 2021

### About the data

A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (Marac) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, adult social care, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (Idvas), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. Data is collected from all Maracs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and most Maracs in Scotland. It is collected at meeting level which means we have information about the cohort of cases discussed at each meeting but not data on individual cases. The data presented here represents cases heard at 293 Maracs between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. An annual summary of Marac data by Police Force Area in England and Wales is available on our [website](#).

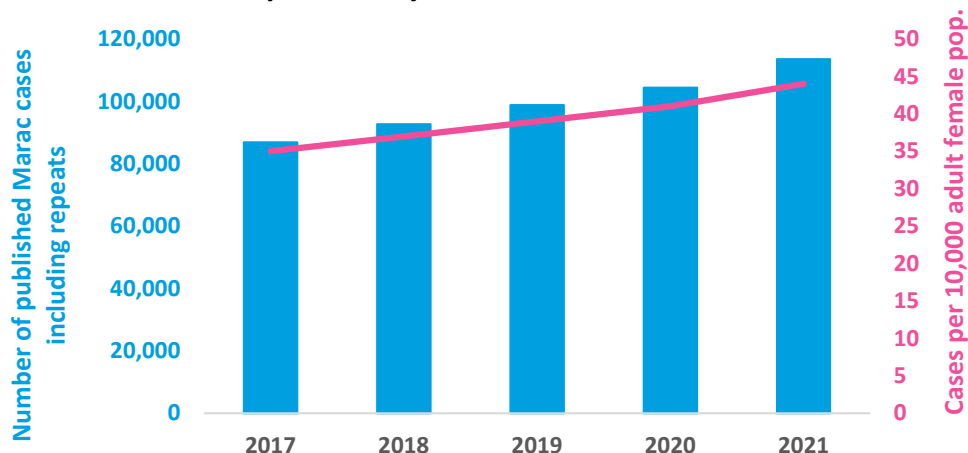
The 12-month figures below are based on the published data at the time. Sometimes Maracs fail to send us their data for a quarter, in which case we use their last quarter's data as a proxy. If a Marac does not send us data for two quarters in a row then they are removed from the dataset. Also, occasionally Maracs make corrections to the data after it is published, these corrections are not represented in this dataset.

One of the ways in which we publish the data is as an annual number of cases per 10,000 adult (16+) females. We produce this figure by dividing the number of cases (including repeats) by the adult female population covered by the Marac, as based on the 2011 census, and multiplying that figure by 10,000. There are sometimes differences in which Maracs are included in the dataset each year, for instance a Marac may not be able to send us their data one quarter. Therefore when looking at trends in cases it is more accurate to use this 'Cases per 10,000' figure, instead of the number of cases, because it takes into account Maracs not being included by removing their population figures from the calculation.

Please note that 'number of cases' includes repeats, therefore **cases do not represent the total number of individuals as a person may be referred into Marac more than once** and would be counted as more than one case.

### What trends are we seeing in Maracs across the UK?

Graph 1: Five year trend of Marac cases



**The average number of cases is above our expected rate:**

In the 12 months to March 2021, 293 Maracs discussed 113,538 cases (includes repeats), **which is an 8.7% increase from the same time period the previous year and a 31% increase compared to the same time period five years ago (2017)**. The total number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult females is 44, up from 41 a year ago and from 35 five years ago (26% increase). This is above the rate of cases SafeLives expect to see (40 cases per 10,000) based on our estimate of the prevalence of high risk domestic abuse. However, this figure is an average, with some Maracs seeing much lower and some much higher rates, meaning we need to understand more about variations in practice and recording to fully understand the implications of the higher than expected rate.

**The rate of repeat cases has remained similar to this time last year:**

We know that repeat incidents of domestic abuse are likely, so for an established Marac the expected percentage of repeat cases would be in the range of 28-40%. The UK-wide repeat rate is now 33% compared to 31% this time last year.

**The rate of police referrals remains steady:**

In the 12 months to March 2021, 65% of Marac referrals were made by the police, which remains the same as the previous year. Expected figures are between 60-75%. A full breakdown of the changes in the last 12 months for all referral agencies can be found below in table 3.








**There is an increase in the percent of victims recorded as having a disability:**

The proportion of cases involving victims with a disability in the 12 months to March 2021 was 7.5%, compared to 6.5% in 2020. However, this still remains lower than the estimated population of 19%. This figure is based on the Family Resources Survey 2018-19 which identifies that almost 1 in 5 of the working age population (16-64 years) is disabled. More information about the need to improve the response to disabled survivors of abuse can be found in our 'Spotlight' on disabled victims in 2016<sup>1</sup>.

**There has also been an increase in the percentage of cases where the victim is Black, Asian or racially minoritised:** The proportion of cases where the victim is Black, Asian or racially minoritised in the 12 months to March 2021 was 16.6%, compared to 15.2% in 2020. However, this still remains lower than the national population rate of 18.1%.

**Table 1: Changes in the last 12 months: volume of cases**








Table 1 below shows changes in key indicators in the last 12 months, comparing the time periods April 2020 to March 2021 and April 2019 to March 2020. All percentage changes are displayed as a change in percentage points (pp).

	Number of Maracs	No. of Cases	No. of Repeats	No. of Children	Cases per 10,000	% Repeats	% Police Referrals
April 20 to March 21	293	113,538	37,134	141,024	44	33%	65%
Change in last 12 months	 +1	 +9,081	 +5,009	 +9,498	 +3	 +2 pp	 -
Recommendation	-	-	-	-	40	28-40%	60-75%















<sup>1</sup> <https://safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub/spotlights/spotlight-2-disabled-people-and-domestic-abuse>

**Table 2: Changes in the last 12 months: 'hidden' victims or those with unmet need**

Table 2 below shows changes in key indicators in the last 12 months, comparing the time periods April 2020 to March 2021 and April 2019 to March 2020. All percentage changes are displayed as a change in percentage points (pp).

	% Black, Asian and racially minoritised people	% LGBT+	% Disability	% Males	Victims aged 16-17	% Victims aged 16-17	No. 17 or below perpetrating abuse
April 20 to March 21	16.6%	1.4%	7.5%	5.9%	1,320	1.2%	1,076
Change in last 12 months	 +1.4pp	 +0.1pp	 +1pp	 +0.8pp	 -126	 -0.2pp	 +48
Recommendation	18.2%	2.5%-5.8%	19%	5-10%	-	-	-

**Table 3: Changes in the last 12 months: referral agencies**

Referral agency	April 2019 to March 2020	April 2020 to March 2021	Change in last 12 months	Direction of change
Police	64.6%	65.5%	+0.8pp	
Idva/Idaa	11.8%	11.8%	+0.1pp	
Children's Social Care	3.2%	3.3%	+0.1pp	
Primary Care	2.4%	2.1%	-0.3pp	
Secondary Care/ Acute trust	2.3%	2.1%	-0.1pp	
Education	0.2%	0.1%	-0.1pp	
Housing	2.5%	1.8%	-0.6pp	
Mental Health	1.1%	1.2%	+0.1pp	
Probation	1.7%	2.1%	+0.4pp	
Voluntary Sector	4.0%	3.4%	-0.6pp	
Substance abuse	0.5%	0.5%	0.0pp	
Adult Social Care	0.8%	0.9%	+0.1pp	
Mash	0.4%	0.4%	0.0pp	
Other	4.5%	4.7%	+0.2pp	



## Focus on: Quarterly Case Changes Continued

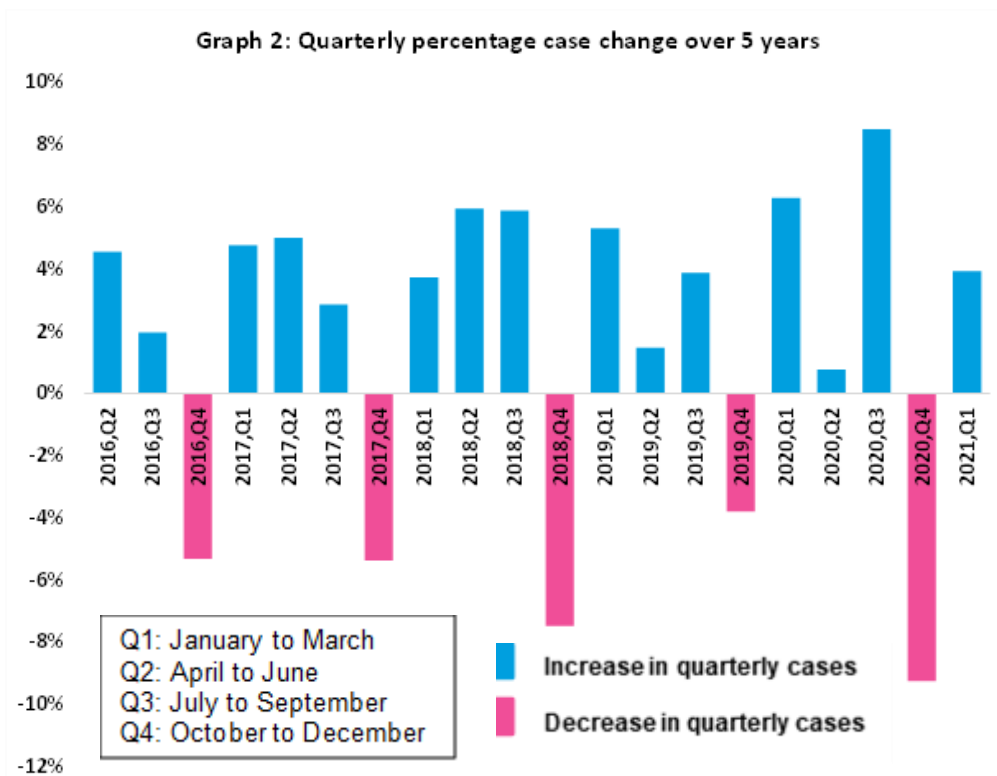
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- **What we collect and publish:** We collect data on the number of cases discussed at each Marac along with other data points such as demographics and repeats. Maracs submit data for each Marac meeting. We usually report the number of cases (including repeats) as a rolling 12-month figure. However, for this analysis we have looked at the *quarterly* difference in cases (including repeats) in order to establish trends during and after the lockdown months.
- **Data inclusion:** For data quality purposes, the quarterly five year national trend analysis (graph 2 below) only includes current Maracs in the dataset who have submitted data for at least five years. This equates to 87% of the Maracs in the current national dataset. The data therefore should not be taken as the exact case change in Maracs across the UK. Instead the purpose of this analysis is to represent the likely national trends in quarterly Marac referrals since the first national Covid-19 lockdown.
- **Quarterly case change calculation:** Quarterly case changes are calculated by subtracting each quarterly number of cases from the previous quarterly cases, then dividing this by the previous quarterly cases to get a percentage difference (%). If the percentage is above zero this means cases have *increased* from the previous quarter, if the percentage is below zero then cases have *decreased* from the previous quarter.

### What the data tells us

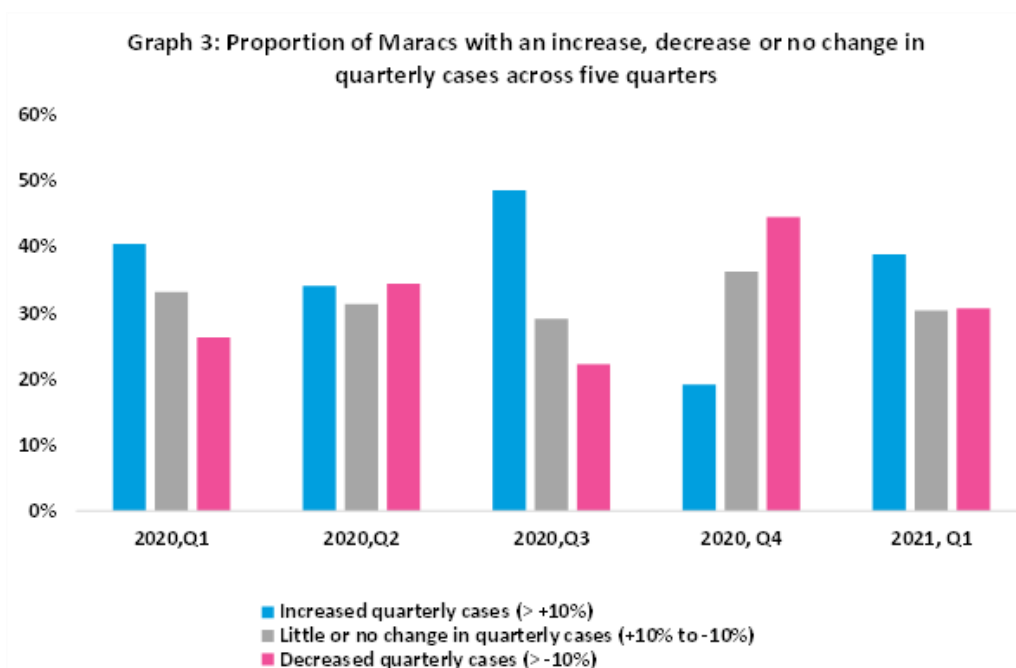
**National trends over five years:** Looking at the quarterly data over the last five years (graph 2) the usual trend is for the overall national number of cases each quarter to increase compared to the previous quarter, apart from in quarter four (October to December) where cases usually decrease (this is likely due to fewer meetings over the festive period). Key findings from the last two quarters:

- **The previous quarter (Q4: October to December 2020) saw a large decrease in quarterly cases (-9.7%)** – Q4 usually shows a decrease in quarterly cases, however this was the largest decrease over the five year time period (see below graph 2).
- **The current quarter (Q1: January to March 2021) has seen an increase in quarterly cases (+3.9%),** however this increase is expected.
- **The year on year change in cases was +8%, which is in line the pattern of previous years in which overall national number of cases is increasing.**



**Individual Maracs:** More Maracs this quarter (January to March 2021) showed a decrease in quarterly cases (>-10%) compared to the same quarter the year before (see graph 3 below):

- **Around a third of Maracs this quarter (31%)** saw a decrease in quarterly cases (>-10%), compared to 26% of Maracs in this same quarter the previous year.
- **About two in five Maracs (39%)** saw an increase in quarterly cases (>+10% increase) this quarter, which is similar to quarter one for the previous year where 40% of Marac saw an increase in cases.
- **Overall, the proportion of Maracs with an increase, decrease or no change in quarterly changes this quarter, follows a similar pattern to the same quarter's data the previous year.**



## Interpreting the quarterly data

Since March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdowns has had a significant impact on the everyday functioning of Maracs. This quarter's data completes the data collection for the last 12 months since the pandemic began, which allows us to view the impact of the pandemic on the number of cases heard at Maracs.

The usual quarterly trend is for the national number of Marac cases each quarter to increase compared to the previous quarter, except in quarter four (October to December). In Quarter 3 last year (July to September 2020) the increase was even larger than expected, with an increase of +8%, - the largest quarterly increase across the five-year time period (see graph 2). This may be due to the easing of lockdown restrictions which took place across most of the UK, from June to October 2020. This meant that schools reopened and many statutory services were once again doing home visits, which may have allowed for easier access to Marac referral routes than during lockdown and impacted the rise in cases heard.

In quarter four last year (October to December 2020), the decrease in Marac cases was even larger than usual, at a -9%, compared to -3% for the previous year's quarter four (see Graph 2). This suggests that the impact of fewer meetings during the festive period combined with local and national lockdowns towards the end of year impacted the number of cases being heard at Maracs.

This quarter's data shows that national Marac cases have increased in line with previous case increases for a quarter one (January to March). However, for most of the quarter (January to March 2021) the UK was in a national lockdown. We know from previous lockdowns that they can lead to delays in cases being referred into Marac as victims have less contact with services. We also know that national helplines for domestic abuse survivors saw large increases in calls in the early months of 2021. It is therefore likely that the +4% increase in cases this quarter does not reflect the actual number of high-risk domestic abuse cases. When the lockdown restrictions eased last year, Marac cases rose sharply. We predict that we will see a similar pattern of a large increase in cases in the coming quarters as restrictions are easing.

It is important to highlight that we are reporting here on national trends, with quarterly case changes varying widely across individual Police Force Areas and individual Maracs. We will continue to track the data over the coming months to see how the trends continue.

## What does this mean for policy-makers?

The 31% increase in Marac cases in the last five years represents a significant increase in demand and concurrent pressure on Idva services who support victims at the highest-risk of serious harm or murder including representing them through the Marac process. While we will not know the true impact of the Covid pandemic in relation to victims of domestic abuse for a number of years, our data shows us that the number of cases continues to increase. This will require increased and continued investment in frontline Idva services as well as services supporting victims at standard and medium risk. The Spending Review in 2021 represents a clear opportunity to create a sustainable settlement for the domestic abuse sector in recognition of the increased demand it faces as well as ensuring there is adequate support for victims in the post-Covid recovery period. For more information about the costs of providing domestic abuse services for the whole family – adult, teen, child and perpetrators of abuse – our report A Safe Fund<sup>2</sup> gives a detailed breakdown of what would be required.

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[https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/A%20Safe%20Fund%20costing%20domestic%20abuse%20provision%20for%20the%20whole%20family%20in%20England%20and%20Wales\\_0.pdf](https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/A%20Safe%20Fund%20costing%20domestic%20abuse%20provision%20for%20the%20whole%20family%20in%20England%20and%20Wales_0.pdf)