

MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Guidance

Supporting professionals in Scotland to transfer MARAC cases when the victim-survivor relocates local authority areas.





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About this Guidance

SafeLives is a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse. We developed this guidance to support MARAC professionals in responding to MARAC-to-MARAC transfers.

Safer, Sooner is a SafeLives multi-agency project (funded through Delivering Equally Safe (DES) which builds on the MARAC Development Programme (MDP), supporting Scottish MARACs to embed the SafeLives evaluated model and improve practice to offer a more effective response to victim-survivors and their families who are at risk from domestic abuse. We want to improve multi-agency capability, consistency, and capacity across Scotland, making it everyone's business to keep women and children safer, sooner by:

- Finding safe ways for victim-survivors to be an active part of the process
- Improving the understanding of domestic abuse across frontline, multi-agency practice
- Strengthening opportunities for coordination

We want to embed a system that directs every victim-survivor of domestic abuse in Scotland, whatever their risk and whatever first step they take, to the right support to make them safer, sooner.

Contact Us

Please contact Scotland@SafeLives.org.uk for further information or questions in relation to this guidance.

Visit the SafeLives website to find out more about our work, access a range of resources for professionals, and explore our training and support.



This toolkit responds to a lack of consistency in MARAC-to-MARAC transfers, as reported by MARAC professionals. Its purpose is to offer a basic template that each MARAC can integrate as is, or customise to fit local practices, ensuring that victims-survivors experiencing high-risk domestic abuse receive continued support wherever they move.

MARACs are encouraged to use this toolkit in conjunction with their existing MARAC Operating Protocols (MOP) and Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) to ensure alignment of this toolkit with local practices.



We set out to answer the following questions when developing this guidance.

1. What is the current practice for MARAC-to-MARAC transfers?
2. What are the MARAC transfer priorities for MARAC Steering Groups, Coordinators, Representatives, IDAAs* and Chairs?
3. What guidance and tools are needed to achieve the best outcomes for MARAC-to-MARAC transfers?
4. What are the key considerations we need to be mindful of, to ensure the guidance is safe, effective, and inclusive?

Through a workshop held in 2023, we engaged with 15 professionals from various MARAC roles and areas, to consider; best practice, priorities, considerations and needs for MARAC professionals when it comes to MARAC-to-MARAC transfers.

We Found...

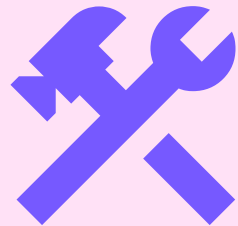
Professionals often don't know who is responsible for making a transfer and how to contact them.	Some local MARAC Operating Protocols (MOP) do not specifically address the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process.	There is an absence of a formal, consistent process for notifying MARAC when a victim has or will move to a different local authority area.	Some local Information Sharing Protocols (ISP) do not specifically address the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process.
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*Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate

MARAC-to-MARAC transfer overview

When a victim-survivor experiencing high-risk domestic abuse relocates permanently to another local authority area within the UK, MARAC-to-MARAC transfers help maintain continuity of support and protection. This guidance provides a four-stage process that MARACs in Scotland can adapt to meet their individual needs and capacities, based on the [10 principles of an effective MARAC](#).

MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Tools



MARAC Case Change of Address Form

This is a form for multi-agency frontline professionals to notify their local MARAC Coordinator when a victim-survivor is relocating to another local authority area. This ensures that the transferring MARAC is aware and can initiate the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process.

MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Form

This form is used by MARAC Coordinators to formally notify the receiving MARAC area that a case transfer is taking place. It ensures clear communication and continuity of risk management for the victim-survivor.



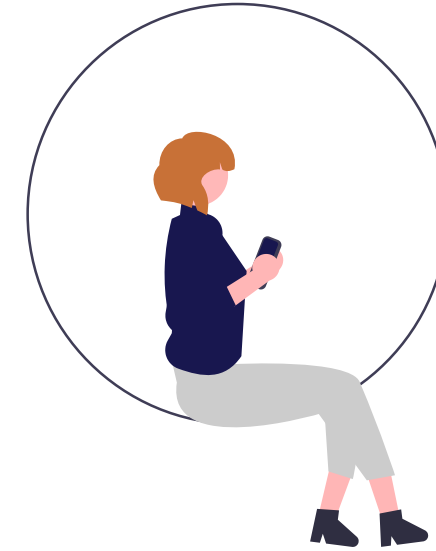
Key Terminology

Transferring MARAC

The transferring MARAC is the local MARAC in the area the victim-survivor is leaving.

Receiving MARAC

The receiving MARAC is the local MARAC in the area the victim-survivor is moving to.



MARAC Case Status

Open (Not yet heard)

A MARAC referral that has been made but the case has not yet been heard at the MARAC meeting.

Open (Already heard)

A MARAC referral that has been made and the case has been heard at the MARAC meeting.

Closed

More than 12 months have passed since the last MARAC referral.



Associated Risks and Additional Considerations

Managing MARAC-to-MARAC transfers involves balancing the need for safety with the complexities of individual circumstances. It is important to recognise the following risks and considerations that may arise during the transfer process:

Frequent Relocations

- Victims-survivors who frequently move between areas can present unique challenges. To ensure continuity of support, the MARAC in the area where the victim-survivor accesses the most services should take lead responsibility.
- Review the safety plan to ensure it accounts for the victim-survivor's mobility and remains adaptable to their needs.

Temporary Moves

Not all relocations require a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer. Temporary moves (e.g., staying with family or friends for a short period) should not trigger a formal transfer. Instead:

- Notify relevant agencies in the new area to ensure support networks are in place.
- Monitor any emerging risks and reassess if the move becomes permanent.

Housing Inequalities

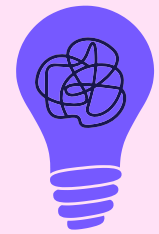
- Victim-survivors may face barriers such as poor-quality housing or lack of availability in the new area, which can undermine their safety and stability.
- Collaborate with housing providers to address these challenges and ensure the victim-survivor has secure and safe accommodation.

Re-traumatisation

- The MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process can be overwhelming or distressing for some victim-survivors. Ensure their voice is central to decision-making and explain the process clearly to reduce anxiety.
- Use professional judgment to determine whether a formal transfer is necessary, particularly if the victim-survivor expresses concerns about the process.

Stages of the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process

Practice Points



Stage	Action Required	Who is Responsible?	Key Considerations
Identification of New Address/Area	When a professional learns that a victim-survivor is relocating, they should promptly (within 48 hours) notify the transferring MARAC Coordinator using the Scottish MARAC Case Change of Address Form.	Professional Notified	Ensure timely notification to avoid delays in support.
Transferring a MARAC Case	Complete the Scottish MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Form and share with the receiving MARAC. Attach relevant case documents, including referral forms and action plans.	Transferring MARAC Coordinator	<p>Open (Not yet heard): If on an upcoming agenda, discuss and then transfer.</p> <p>Open (Already heard): Transfer immediately.</p>
Receiving a MARAC Case	Add the case to the next scheduled meeting agenda, marking it as a transfer case, to prepare local professionals for pre-meeting preparations.	Receiving MARAC Coordinator	Notify all MARAC professionals of the case's arrival and ensure pre-meeting research is conducted.
Liaison Between MARACs	<p>Ensure agency representatives from both MARACs collaborate to exchange relevant and proportionate information and manage a smooth handover.</p> <p>This should be carried out ahead of the MARAC meeting when the case will be discussed so that professionals are fully prepared ahead of case discussions.</p>	Agency Representatives	Collaboration between MARAC areas is essential for continuity of support and risk management.

When transferring a MARAC case between local authorities, best practice is for the referring agency to present the case at the receiving MARAC. Since most MARAC meetings in Scotland operate online, cross-local authority attendance is possible. The referring agency holds key risk assessment insights and background knowledge, making them the most appropriate to present the case, even if that means attending a MARAC meeting outside of their local area.

As part of the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process, agency representatives from both local authorities must liaise with their counterpart ahead of the MARAC meeting to ensure a thorough handover. The MARAC Chair or Coordinator may wish to confirm this has taken place during the MARAC meeting. If a pattern emerges where handovers are not happening, this should be raised with the local steering group who governs the MARAC.

MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Case Examples

The following case studies illustrate possible MARAC-to-MARAC transfer scenarios. They serve as practical examples that MARACs can adapt as needed to fit local circumstances.

(Open) Already heard MARAC Case Example

A victim-survivor relocates shortly after being discussed at a MARAC meeting.

The professional that learns a victim-survivor is relocating notifies the transferring MARAC by completing the Scottish MARAC Case Change of Address Form. The Transferring MARAC Coordinator completes the Scottish MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Form and shares it with the receiving MARAC Coordinator, which adds the case to their agenda for follow-up. Agency representatives liaise to ensure a proper handover.



(Open) Not yet heard MARAC Case Example (Agenda Circulated)

A referral is made, but the victim-survivor moves before the MARAC discussion, with the agenda already circulated.

The professional that learns a victim-survivor is relocating notifies the transferring MARAC by completing the Scottish MARAC Case Change of Address Form. The case is discussed at the transferring MARAC. Immediately after, the transferring MARAC Coordinator completes the Scottish MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Form and shares it with the receiving MARAC Coordinator, which adds the case to their agenda for follow-up. Agency representatives liaise to ensure a proper handover.



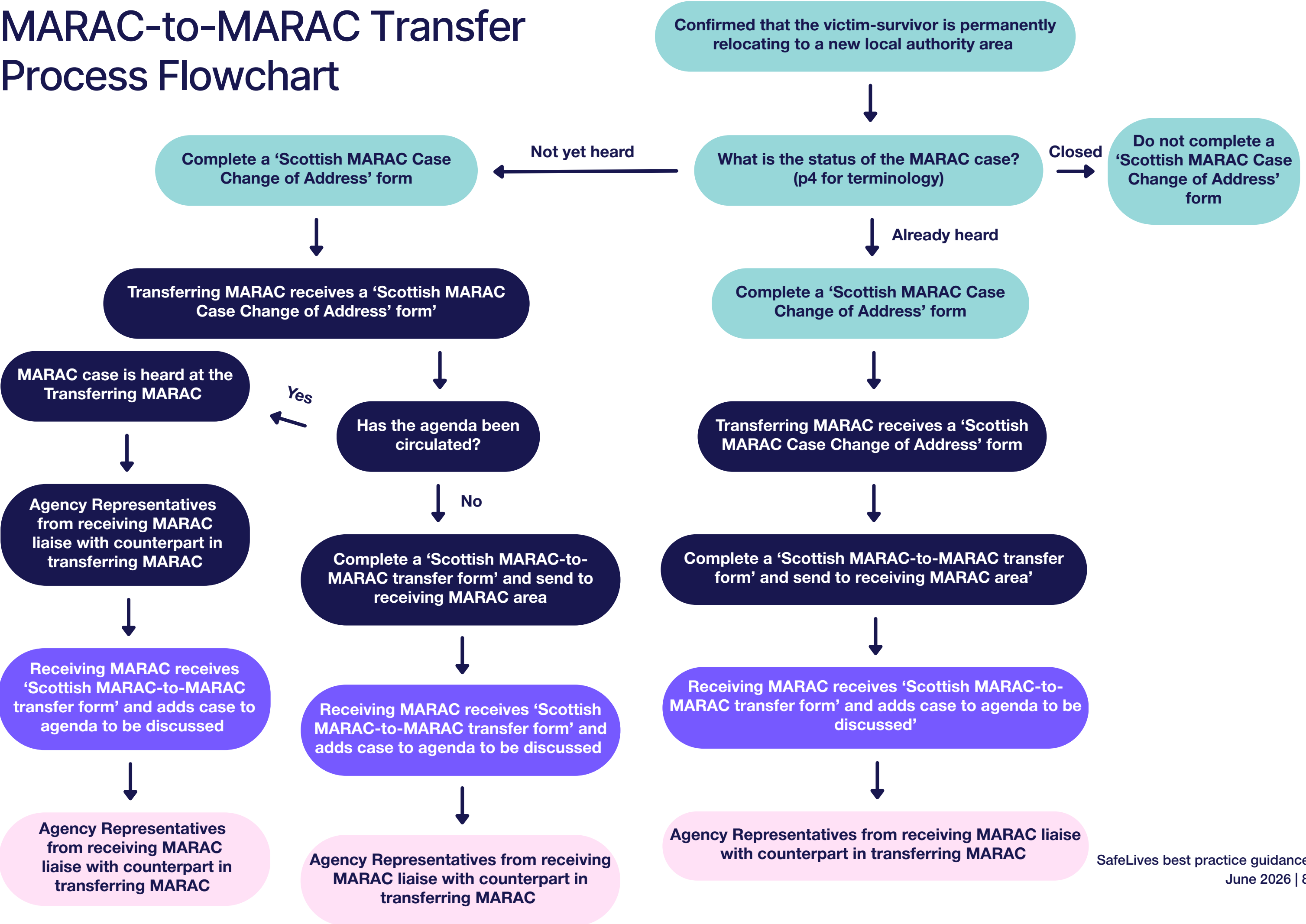
(Open) Not yet heard MARAC Case Example (Agenda Not Circulated)

A referral is made, but the victim-survivor moves before the MARAC discussion, and the agenda has not yet been circulated.

The professional that learns a victim-survivor is relocating notifies the transferring MARAC by completing the Scottish MARAC Case Change of Address Form. The transferring MARAC Coordinator completes the Scottish MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Form and shares it with the receiving MARAC Coordinator, which adds the case to their agenda for follow-up. Agency representatives liaise to ensure a proper handover.



MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Process Flowchart



Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if risk has been (re)assessed during the period after the MARAC and is now low?

All victim-survivors referred to MARAC have been assessed as at high-risk of serious harm or homicide because of domestic abuse. However, in the 12 months following, in which a transfer could occur, the picture of risk can change.

Every MARAC-to-MARAC transfer decision should be based on professional judgment and the outcome of a thorough risk assessment i.e. evidenced based. It is therefore essential to consider the unique circumstances of each case and work collaboratively with the victim-survivor and local agencies to determine the most appropriate course of action, recompleting a DASH Risk checklist if possible.

If a new risk assessment indicates that the risk is now low (e.g., the risks are now significantly lower than they were at the time of the original MARAC referral), SafeLives recommend that a formal transfer may not be necessary or in fact legal given the risk is now low. However, in all cases the receiving MARAC Coordinator should be notified of the change in address so agencies in the new area (in line with their own policies) have the opportunity to be aware of the victim-survivor's circumstances and can monitor for any emerging risks.

If a new DASH Risk checklist has not been able to be completed SafeLives recommend a transfer still take place, given that within the last 12 months the most recent DASH Risk checklist evidenced the victim-survivor is at high-risk of serious harm or homicide.

When is the right time to start a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer?

As soon as the agency professional is made aware of the victim-survivor's intention to permanently live in a new local authority area.

A MARAC-to-MARAC transfer should not be required when the victim-survivor's new address is only temporary: for example, if they're staying with family/friends for a few weeks with the intention of returning.

What if the MARAC case is closed but high-risk domestic abuse has been identified?

If 12 months has passed since the last MARAC referral, then the case cannot be transferred. Instead, where high-risk is identified, a new MARAC referral should be made directly to the MARAC in the area the victim-survivor now resides on a permanent basis.

In such cases, it is the responsibility of the agency or organisation that identified the high-risk abuse to make the new referral. It is crucial that this agency takes appropriate action to ensure risk is effectively managed.

Does the receiving MARAC have to accept the referral?

A transferred case should always be heard at the receiving MARAC, regardless of the previous discussion at the transferring MARAC.



Frequently Asked Questions

Does a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer require victim-survivor's consent?

As with MARAC referrals, the victim-survivor's consent is not required for a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer.

Asking someone if they consent, implies that they can say no and that you will respect their wishes. If you would share personal information in order to protect an individual from harm, even if the person did not want you to, asking their consent is misleading, unfair, and confusing. It is important that professionals feel confident in giving clear and sensitive explanation to service users about their decision to share their personal information.

Consent is unlikely to be to be the appropriate lawful basis for sharing information in a MARAC setting. The GDPR sets a high standard for consent, making it difficult to meet the standard of true consent within a setting like MARAC. If you would share information even without the client's consent (e.g., due to the risk posed, i.e. meeting the MARAC threshold) then asking for consent can be misleading.

Rather than talking about consent, which implies the victim-survivor has true choice about whether or not their case is transferred, we should be talking about awareness, ensuring that victim-survivors are aware of their case being transferred.

For transparency, we suggest that you record your decision-making process. At all times, consider what information is necessary to be shared for the purpose you hope to achieve, what is proportionate, relevant and can you justify sharing that information.

What should we do if a victim-survivor is regularly relocating between the same areas?

When a victim-survivor regularly moves between two or more areas (e.g., between their home/area and a family member's), one area should take 'lead' responsibility, ideally the area where the most significant risk is identified, or where the victim-survivor accesses the most support.

Should a DASH Risk Checklist be completed or revisited when there is a change of address?

Moving address or relocating is a significant change in a victim-survivor's circumstances that warrants reviewing or completing a new DASH Risk Checklist. Offering reassessment ensures new or evolving risks can be identified and managed appropriately. Who is best placed to carry out the DASH Risk Checklist depends on the circumstances.

While completing a DASH Risk Checklist is considered best practice in these circumstances, it may not always be possible (e.g., if the victim-survivor does not wish to engage). In such circumstances, it is essential to use professional judgement in the absence of this risk assessment to make informed decisions to manage the identified risks, and to note what that decision making was.

How does a Transferring MARAC determine the correct local authority of the Receiving MARAC?

The [Find a MARAC](#) online tool helps locate the correct MARAC contact details for different geographical regions.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I notify the transferring MARAC that a victim-survivor at high-risk of serious harm or murder is relocating?

SafeLives have developed a Scottish MARAC Case Change of Address Form for frontline professionals which should be used for this purpose.

How does a transferring MARAC notify the receiving MARAC that a victim-survivor is relocating to their area?

The [Scottish MARAC-to-MARAC transfer Form](#) is used to transfer a MARAC case to a different local authority area. It includes prompts for contact details for all agency representatives to facilitate communication. Completed forms need to be sent to the receiving MARAC along with the latest MARAC referral form, previous minutes, action plan, and any other relevant information should also be sent to the receiving MARAC.

What are the regulatory requirements for sharing information during a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer?

[A Practitioner's Guide to GDPR](#) - Helps practitioners reduce harm caused by domestic abuse while sharing information lawfully.

[Information Sharing Guidance](#) - Assists practitioners in sharing information in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.



How are MARAC representatives notified of a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer?

The MARAC Coordinator in both the transferring and receiving area must ensure the case is clearly marked on the agenda as a MARAC-to-MARAC transfer to notify agency representatives that they need to liaise with their counterpart in the transferring/receiving MARAC so that a sufficient handover takes place before the meeting.

How is the local repeat referral rate affected?

Once a case is referred to a MARAC, it's flagged as one distinct case for 12 months. If transferred, any new incidents or referrals within 12 months of the original MARAC meeting should be recorded as a repeat referral, irrespective of where the initial incident occurred. Local areas may have different references for cases, and it would be pertinent to share the case reference for the receiving and transferring MARAC for records. Not recording a transfer as a repeat would lead to one case (and by extension a victim-survivor and perpetrator) being recorded twice, and data both locally and nationally being less accurate.

What if the MARAC case is closed and high-risk domestic abuse has not been identified?

If it has been determined that there is no ongoing high-risk, and a new referral is not required, no formal MARAC transfer or information sharing via the MARAC Coordinator is appropriate in this instance. However, individual services or agencies may transfer their own information in line with their policies and procedures. For example, housing services may share case notes related to domestic abuse as a tenant moves from one area to another.

It is crucial to ensure that any information shared adheres to legal frameworks, such as data protection regulations, and that the transfer of information is both proportionate and necessary to meet the needs of the victim-survivor.

Recommendations for Steering Groups

Steering groups play a critical role in supporting the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process. The following are recommended actions:

Strategic support and leadership

Steering groups should regularly review and update the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process locally to address any challenges or improvements needed.

Ongoing Review

Add a MARAC transfer review to the steering group's agenda every six months to share best practices and address challenges.



Information for Victim-survivors

Update or develop informational materials on MARAC-to-MARAC transfers for victim-survivors, detailing the transfer process and points of contact.

Awareness Raising

Consider ways to raise awareness and understanding of the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process for all involved in the local MARAC, including guidance on using the Scottish MARAC Case Change of Address Form and the Scottish MARAC-to-MARAC Transfer Form.

MARAC Operating Protocol (MOP) and Information Sharing Protocol (ISP)

Ensure that the MARAC-to-MARAC transfer process is included in the local MOP and ISP, keeping protocols robust and up to date.