

# SafeLives' Marac data – Key findings

## January 2020 - December 2020

### About the data

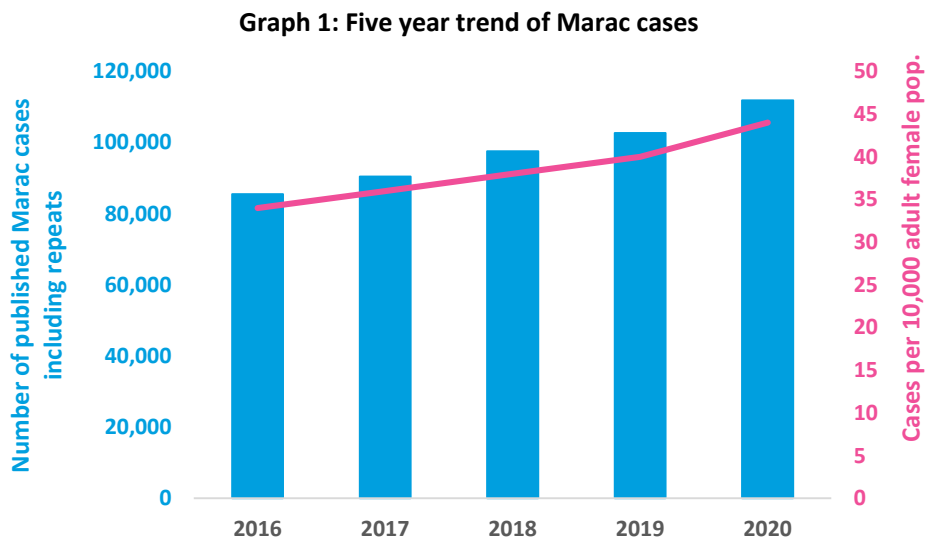
A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (Marac) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, adult social care, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (Idvas), probation and 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 Maracs between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. 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?



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

In the 12 months to December 2020, 292 Maracs discussed 111,913 cases (includes repeats), **which is a 9% increase from the previous year and a 31% increase compared to the same time period five years ago (2016)**. The total number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult females is 44, up from 40 a year ago and from 34 five years ago (29% 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 32% compared to 31% this time last year.

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

In the 12 months to December 2020, 65.5% of Marac referrals were made by the police, which remains similar to the previous year (64.7%). 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 a small 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 December 2020 was 7.2%, compared to 6.4% in 2019. 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 a small increase in the percent of victims from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic (BAME) communities:** The proportion of cases involving victims from BAME communities in the 12 months to December 2020 was 16.1%, compared to 15.0% in 2019. However, this still remains lower than the national population rate of 18.1%, and lower than two years ago when the rate was at 16.9%.

**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 January to December 2020 and January to December 2019. 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
Jan 20 to Dec 20	292	111,913	35,691	139,249	44	32%	65%
Change in last 12 months	 +7	 +9,220	 +4,184	 +9,525	 +4	 +1 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 January 2020 – December 2020 and January 2019 – December 2019. All percentage changes are displayed as a change in percentage points (pp).

	% BME	% LGBT	% Disability	% Males	Victims aged 16-17	% Victims aged 16-17	No. 17 or below perpetrating abuse
Jan 20 to Dec 20	16.1%	1.3%	7.2%	5.8%	1,337	1.2%	1,098
Change in last 12 months	 +1.1pp	 -	 +0.8pp	 +0.6pp	 -78	 -0.2pp	 +164
Recommendation	18.2%	2.5%-5.8%	19%	5-10%	-	-	-

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

Referral agency	Jan to Dec 2019	Jan to Dec 2020	Change in last 12 months	Direction of change
Police	64.7%	65.5%	0.8pp	
Idva/Idaa	11.8%	11.6%	-0.2pp	
Children's Social Care	3.3%	3.3%	0.0pp	
Primary Care	2.4%	2.2%	-0.2pp	
Secondary Care/ Acute trust	2.1%	2.2%	0.1pp	
Education	0.2%	0.1%	-0.1pp	
Housing	2.5%	2.0%	-0.5pp	
Mental Health	1.1%	1.2%	0.1pp	
Probation	1.7%	2.1%	0.4pp	
Voluntary Sector	4.2%	3.5%	-0.7pp	
Substance	0.5%	0.5%	0.0pp	
Adult Social Care	0.8%	0.9%	0.1pp	
Mash	0.4%	0.4%	0.0pp	
Other	4.4%	4.5%	0.1pp	

## Changes in Quarterly Case data

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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 88% 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

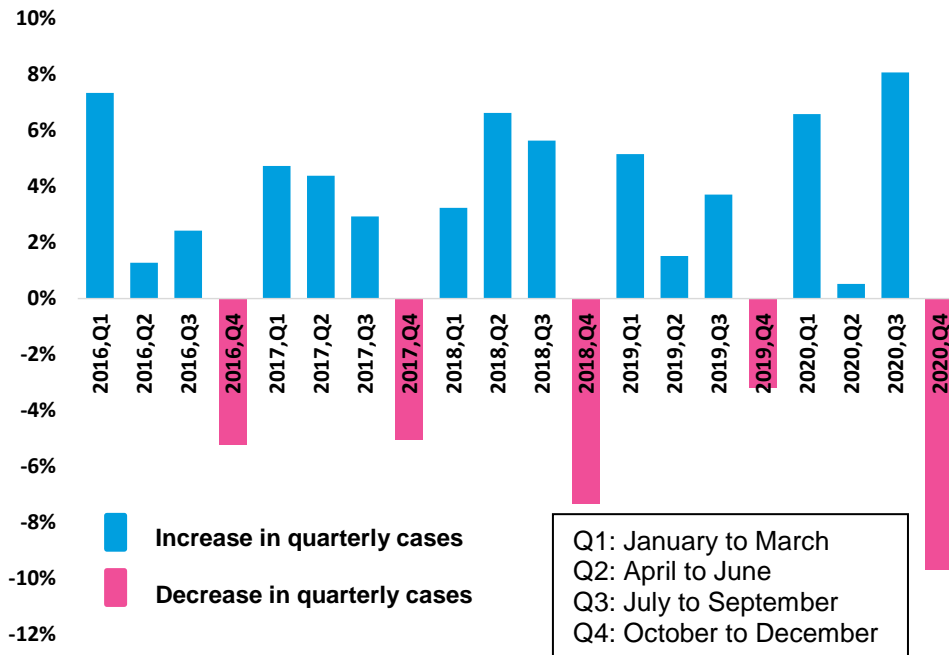
**National trends over five years:** Looking at the quarterly data over the last five years (graph 2) the usual trend is for the overall national number of cases each quarter to increase compared to the previous quarter, apart from in quarter four (October to December) where cases usually decrease (this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

- **The previous quarter (Q3: July to September 2020) saw a large increase in quarterly cases (+8.1)<sup>2</sup>** - the largest quarterly increase across the five year time period (see below graph 2).
- **The current quarter (Q4: October to December 2020), has seen a large decrease in quarterly cases (-9.7%)** – Q4 usually shows a decrease in quarterly cases, however this is the largest decrease over the five year time period
- However, **the average case change across the last three quarters was in line with previous years** - average case increase across the three quarters was 2.4%.

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<sup>2</sup> There may be differences in the data from previous published quarterly analyses due to some M.aracs submitting data corrections for previous meetings.

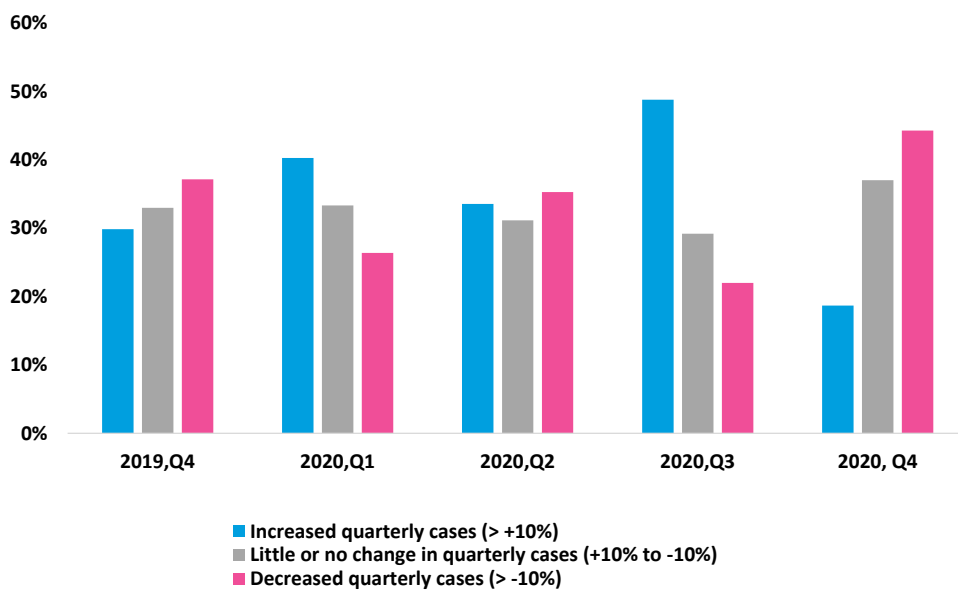
Graph 2: Quarterly percentage case change over 5 years



**Individual Maracs:** More Maracs this quarter (October to December 2020) showed a decrease (>-10% change) in quarterly cases compared to the same time period the year before (graph 3 below):

- **Almost half of Maracs (44%) saw a decrease in cases (> -10% decrease)** this quarter (Oct to Dec); a higher proportion than the previous four quarters.
- **For one in four Maracs (28%) this quarter was their largest quarterly case decrease** over the last five quarters.
- **Only one in five Maracs (19%) saw an increase in quarterly cases (> +10% increase)** this quarter; lower than the Q4 the year before where 30% of Maracs saw an increase.

Graph 3: Proportion of Maracs with an increase, decrease or no change in quarterly cases across five quarters



We take a more in depth look at Marac data across the last five years (October 2015- September 2020) in this report.<sup>3</sup>

## Interpreting the quarterly data

The usual trend is for the national number of Marac cases each quarter to increase compared to the previous quarter. However, in quarter four (October to December) national cases usually decrease compared to the previous quarter - likely due to fewer meetings happening over the festive period. This year's quarter four followed this same pattern seeing a decrease in national cases. However the decrease was larger than usual at -10% decrease in cases, compared to -3% for the previous years quarter four. This larger than usual case decrease is likely due to a number of reasons, such as the higher than expected number of cases in the previous quarter (see previous quarter analysis). It could also be a consequence of the local and national lockdowns towards the end of 2020 impacting on cases being heard at Maracs. Data from national helplines for domestic abuse survivors over the December period also showed a decline in numbers of calls over the Christmas period, but this has been followed by large increases in calls in the early months of 2021.

It is worth noting that the average case increase over the last three quarters (April to December 2020) was in line with previous years. So whilst there have been rises in Marac cases since the first lockdown, the increase has been in line with case changes in previous years. But unlike previous years, this year the case increase was more concentrated between the months of July and September (see previous 'Focus on' quarterly analysis).

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. Recommendations for Maracs around Covid-19 can be found at the end of our [Covid-19 Marac survey report](#). **National and local policy-makers, commissioners and agencies need to ensure that the increase in demand at Marac is recognised in needs assessment planning and increased long-term funding for frontline specialist services supporting those victims.**

Please contact [Marac@SafeLives.org.uk](mailto:Marac@SafeLives.org.uk) if you are a Marac Chair or Coordinator and would like help accessing your Marac data.