

# Marac-to-Marac Transfer Toolkit

for Professionals in Scotland

February 2025



Joining the dots  
for an effective  
multi-agency  
response.



## About this toolkit

SafeLives<sup>1</sup> is a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse. We developed this toolkit to support safe, consistent transfers of Marac<sup>2</sup> cases for victims/survivors who relocate between local authority areas.

**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 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.**

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.

Please contact [Scotland@SafeLives.org.uk](mailto:Scotland@SafeLives.org.uk) for further information or questions in relation to this toolkit.

## Background

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

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<sup>3</sup> 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.



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 Marac Operating Protocols (MOP) do not specifically address the Marac-to-Marac transfer process.



Some local Information Sharing Protocols (ISP) do not specifically address the Marac-to-Marac transfer process.

<sup>1</sup> Read more about the work of SafeLives [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> See [SafeLives Marac Scotland Overview](#) for more information on the Marac process.

<sup>3</sup> Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate

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# 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 toolkit 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**.

## Key Terminology

**Victim/Survivor** – At SafeLives, if a person is currently living in danger, we talk about them as a ‘victim of domestic abuse’ but from the moment they start to receive support/move on from the abuse, they are a ‘survivor’. If a victim/survivor has expressed how they would like to be referred to, you should always follow their wishes.

**Transferring Marac** – The Marac in the area the victim/survivor is leaving.

**Receiving Marac** – The Marac in the area the victim/survivor is moving to.

**Open (Not yet heard)** – A Marac referral that has been made but the case has not yet been heard.

**Open (Already Heard)** – A Marac referral that has been made and the case has already been discussed.

**Closed** – More than 12 months have passed since the last Marac referral.



### 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.

# 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

- Victims/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 victims/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.

If in doubt, seek advice from experienced Marac colleagues or contact [scotland@safelives.org.uk](mailto:scotland@safelives.org.uk)

# Stages of the Marac-to-Marac transfer process

Stage	Action Required	Who is responsible	Key Considerations
<b>Identification of New Address/Area</b>	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.
<b>Transferring a Marac Case</b>	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	<b>Open (Not yet heard):</b> If on an upcoming agenda, discuss and then transfer.  <b>Open (Already heard):</b> Transfer immediately.
<b>Receiving a Marac Case</b>	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.
<b>Liaison Between Maracs</b>	Ensure agency representatives from both Maracs collaborate to exchange relevant and proportionate information and manage a smooth handover.  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.	Agency Representatives	Collaboration between Marac areas is essential for continuity of support and risk management.



## Practice Point

When transferring a Marac case between local authorities, **best practice is for the referring agency to present the case at 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 their area.



## Practice Point

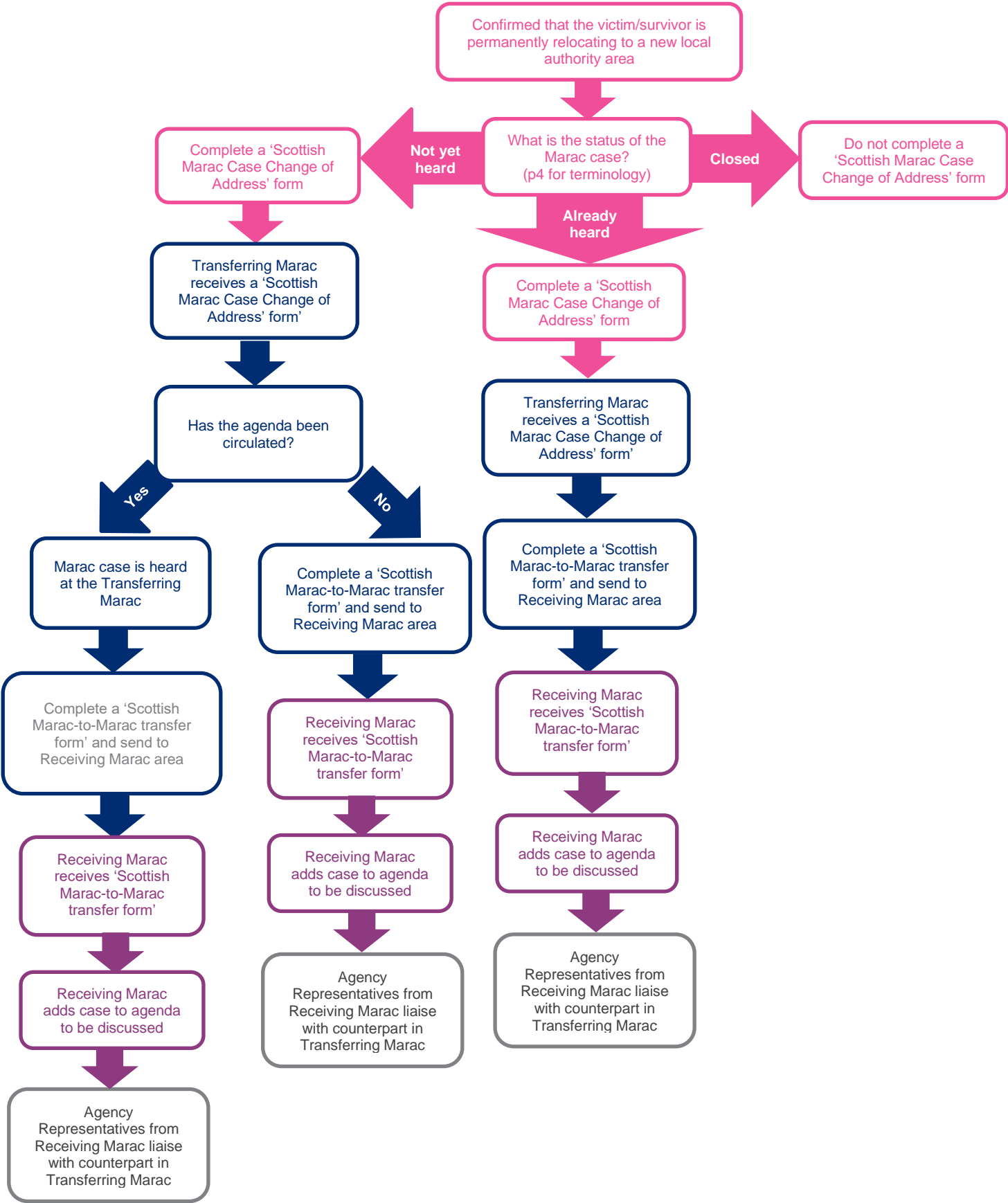
As part of the Marac-to-Marac transfer process, agency representatives from both local authorities must liaise with their counterpart ahead of the Marac meeting to ensure a thorough handover. The Marac Chair or Coordinator may wish to confirm this has taken place during the Marac meeting. **If a pattern 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.

	Scenario	Response
<b>(Open) Already heard Marac Case Example</b>	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.
<b>(Open) Not yet heard Marac Case Example (Agenda Circulated)</b>	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.
<b>(Open) Not yet heard Marac Case Example (Agenda Not Circulated)</b>	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

**How long after a Marac meeting can a Marac-to-Marac transfer take place?**  
A Marac-to-Marac transfer should take place if the victim/survivor relocates on a permanent basis at any time in the 12 months following the Marac meeting where their case was heard.

SafeLives considers all Marac victims/survivors to be at high risk of further harm or homicide for 12 months from the initial Marac meeting. Transfers are an essential part of the Marac process and are not optional. Failure to transfer cases when required can result in risk of serious harm going unaddressed. The transfer ensures the Marac Process continues seamlessly, regardless of relocation to a new area.

**What happens if the victim/survivor does not agree to the Marac-to-Marac transfer?**  
The Idaa service in the new area, or the agency professional supporting the victim/survivor should explore the reasons for this and address any concerns, such as fear of re-traumatisation or confidentiality.

If the risk remains high despite the victim/survivor's disagreement, Marac professionals should carefully consider whether a transfer is still in the victim/survivor's best interest, while ensuring the victim/survivor is informed in the decision-making process.

Where possible, a notification to key Marac partners about the victim/survivor's relocation may be an alternative solution, ensuring safety without causing unnecessary disruption or re-traumatisation.

**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 appropriate 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 and in 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.

### ? **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.

### ? **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.

### ? **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.

### ? **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.

? **Should a Dash Risk Checklist<sup>4</sup> 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 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.

? **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.

? **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.

? **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.

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<sup>4</sup> **SafeLives Dash Risk Checklist Scottish Version** - This tool helps practitioners identify victim/survivors at high risk of harm and decide which cases should be referred to Marac.

# 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.

## 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.

## 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<sup>5</sup>

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

## Marac Operating Protocol (MOP) and Information Sharing Protocol (ISP)<sup>6</sup>

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

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<sup>5</sup> The **Producing Information for victims referred to Marac- Scottish Guidance** helps Maracs in Scotland to produce information for victim/survivors referred to Marac.

<sup>6</sup> The **Marac Information Sharing and Operating Protocol Checklist** contains Information Sharing and Marac Operating protocol templates.

# About SafeLives

We are SafeLives, a UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.



We work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. We listen to survivors, putting their voices at the heart of our thinking. We look at the whole picture for each individual and family to get the right help at the right time to make families everywhere safe and well. And we challenge perpetrators to change, asking ‘why doesn’t he stop?’ rather than ‘why doesn’t she leave?’ This applies whatever the gender of the victim or perpetrator and whatever the nature of their relationship.

Our Scottish publication **Whole Lives** highlighted that every year, nearly 130,000 people in Scotland experience domestic abuse. There are over 9,000 people at risk of being murdered or seriously harmed; over 12,000 children live in these households. For every person being abused, there is someone else responsible for that abuse: the perpetrator. And all too often, children are in the home and living with the impact. Domestic abuse affects us all; it thrives on being hidden behind closed doors.

**We must make it everybody’s business**

## Contact

Please contact [scotland@safelives.org.uk](mailto:scotland@safelives.org.uk) for further information or questions in relation to this report.