



Guidance for multi-agency forums: Addressing the abusive behaviour of perpetrators

About this guidance

This guidance has been created by two national scrutiny panels; the panels gather together experts from all core agencies required for an effective Marac to reflect on anonymised cases, with the aim of troubleshooting common issues. The national scrutiny panel is held at the Home Office.

SafeLives would like to thank those who attended the panels for their help and advice in developing this guidance

“The most important message from [the family] was that the [professionals] should focus less on the victim as just the mother of the children but see the picture as a whole and focus their work on controlling the perpetrators of violence and abuse...” (B-DHR2012/13-04)

This guidance will support the Marac process to address the abusive behaviour of perpetrators. While the central purpose of the Marac is to improve safety of the victim and children, this can only be achieved if the behaviour of the perpetrator is addressed effectively.

It is essential that the Marac considers information about the perpetrator, and that there are actions within the safety plan that directly addresses their abusive behaviour. This guidance aims to reinforce our current advice on support for victims and children.¹ at Marac and should be read by both the Chair and Marac representatives. It is also useful Guidance for those involved in other multi-agency arrangements such as MAPPA; MATAAC and IOM. We also recommend that you read this with our recently updated [Guidance: Managing Cases involving Substance Misuse & other Complex Needs](#)

A Note about GDPR & Information Sharing

Since 25 May 2018 all agencies who process or hold personal data are required to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We recommend that all those working within the Marac Process including Chairs and representatives have a good working knowledge of the GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, of their own agency's policies on information sharing, storage & retention and of the agreed Marac Operating Protocol in their area. The Marac Steering Group is responsible for the reviewing and updating of the Marac Operating and Information Sharing Protocols which will include details about the relevant lawful basis for sharing information.

[GDPR Briefing for Marac](#)

[GDPR \(ICO Website\)](#)

[Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Managing perpetrators at Marac

The role of representatives: Sharing relevant, proportionate risk focused information that is necessary to fully assess the risk the perpetrator poses (or may be at)

It is the role of **representatives** at Marac to bring information about the alleged perpetrator's circumstances and their behaviour for every case, as well as information about the victim and any children.²

Marac representatives (including the police) should research and share information such as:

- Accurate, up to date personal details, including any aliases (if incorrect on the agenda, Marac administrator must be informed to correct & distribute to other representatives)
- Whether the person is a known serial perpetrator
- Any safeguarding concerns – for adults at risk or children
- All known relationships and children they have contact with
- Offending behaviour, police markers and intelligence relevant to domestic abuse including arson, threats to kill, sexual violence, extreme levels of control, or stalking
- Any employment, interests or activities which involve physical ability, weapons, or access to specialist detective or IT skills.
- Any vehicles, premises and IT systems the perpetrator has access to.
- Concerns from digital footprint (e.g. new relationship, threats, weapons, worrying ideology etc.)
- Drug or alcohol misuse and/or mental ill health issues – including details of what substances used, any known effect, any diagnoses & treatment plans, suicidal thoughts etc.)
- Risks to professionals.
- Health or wellbeing issues which affect their likelihood of further perpetration (e.g. financial strains, dementia, homelessness, ill health, capacity)
- Other relevant information, e.g. animal abuse, cultural practices, fire setter status
- Information from their digital footprint (e.g. new relationship, location, job etc.)
- Information shared at other multi agency meetings such as MAPPA, MATAC, IOM, CSE Panels etc.

The role of the Chair: Identifying the risks and action planning

The **Chair** should ensure that all information relevant to the perpetrator and factors that are likely to increase the risk of re-abuse to the victim, harm to children, other vulnerable parties and risk that agency staff could be harmed, is heard at the meeting. This would be in addition to the usual proportionate and relevant information shared on the victim and any children. It is essential that the Chair outline the risks identified from this information and invites other **representatives** to highlight any additional concerns that may have been overlooked.

Some examples of triggers that could increase risks specifically relating to the perpetrator may include:

- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Escalation in coercive & controlling behaviour (take the perception of the victim seriously)
- Self-harming or threatening suicide – mental health representative can provide expertise to assess risk
- Misusing drugs or alcohol – substance misuse representative can share expertise to assess risk
- Demonstrating behaviours which suggest they may be suffering from a mental illness, and these which may be exacerbating the risk of continued abuse of the victim and any children – mental health representative can provide expertise to assess risk
- History of ignoring or breaching bail conditions or court orders or offending whilst released under investigation
- Stalking and harassing the victim or their friends/family/colleagues or history of obsessive behaviour
- Threatening the victim or their friends/family/colleagues
- Warning markers or use of weapons including household objects to harm victim

Clearly there will be other risks that need to be identified relating to the victim, children and any other vulnerable parties at this stage.

Once the Chair has outlined all risks associated with the victim, children and perpetrator, it is important to encourage actions from the representatives which address victim safety by also addressing the perpetrator's behaviour.

Actions to address these risks and behaviours in relation to the alleged perpetrator fall under 4 main headings:



We have included some examples relating to the perpetrator below, but representatives need to be *creative* in the actions they offer, and this list is not comprehensive. Agree that actions or potential actions are safe for the victim & children. The Idva will provide their expertise here.

- Arresting and charging the perpetrator for a criminal offence
- Proactive evidence gathering in current investigations or in future investigations to ensure reliance is not put on obtaining victim statement for successful prosecution
- A disruption plan managed by a single point of contact within the police or probation services, using surveillance, overt targeting, ANPR systems, flagging, uniform patrols etc.
- Consideration by the police for Potentially Dangerous Person status where there is no previous criminal conviction.
- Positive action taken if breach of any order or bail reported – do not look at every incident in isolation, understand the bigger picture
- Consideration for MAPPA Management or Integrated Offender Management or other perpetrator management arrangements locally, such as MATAC
- Review of MAPPA 3 status after expiry of licence conditions
- Address serial perpetrators in line with local procedures
- Community mental health assessment or flag to assess in custody
- Inform Perpetrator's GP of relevant & proportionate information that will provide a clear picture of risks posed by perpetrator
- Consideration for an anti-social behaviour order or other order to manage, restrict & monitor behaviour
- Housing consider eviction/not evicting as part of safety management
- Housing consider occupation orders or other orders to restrict perpetrator
- Housing consider housing the perpetrator & providing tenancy support
- Safe referral to substance misuse services or proactive contact from a previously accessed service
- Ensuring links are made with Child Protection work and Family Court hearings
- Offer community perpetrator programme, where appropriate and available
- Referral to Respect, Samaritans or other support network.
- Children's Social Care engage the perpetrator and ensure they are held accountable for the abuse (not the victim). Consider what services/support can be offered to them
- Ensure that adequate safeguards are in place for Child Protection Conferences; Core Groups etc. i.e separate meetings where domestic abuse is a factor
- Adult Social Care undertake carers assessment where perpetrator is providing care to victim
- Where abuse to victim is a young person (under 18) Children's Social Care consider their role in supporting that YP (Child in Need/Child Protection).
- CAMHS offer service to YP if relevant
- All agencies consider how they can work **collaboratively** to address the needs & risks of the perpetrator to reduce risks, safeguard victims, children and any other person who may be at risk
- Identify & hear **all** Repeat cases (see 2018 Definition of Repeat [here](#)) and consider whether engagement of perpetrator is effective. Agencies may need to be persistent, creative, tenacious and flexible in how they engage those perpetrators who may have complex needs, be in crisis. Most agencies will be in a position to provide motivation for engagement (e.g. maintaining a license/tenancy agreement; parenting)

Perpetrators can go to extreme lengths to facilitate their abuse; all multi agency teams need to keep one step ahead of the perpetrator and make continuing abusive behaviour difficult, if not impossible. If the Idva is engaged with the victim and coordinating a safety plan it is essential that they be involved in/ kept informed of any work that is being done to manage, disrupt, divert or prosecute the perpetrator.

Additional information and guidance

Respect (<http://www.respect.uk.net> / 0808 802 4040) develops, delivers and supports effective services for male and female perpetrators of domestic violence and young people who use violence and abuse at home and in relationships.

Guidance on Integrated Offender Management (IOM). Information about IOM, which allows local and partner agencies to co-ordinate the management of offenders, including details of the Choices programme. <https://www.gov.uk/integrated-offender-management-iom>

Guidance on MAPPA Category 3 Offender status and licence conditions. National MAPPA Team. (2012). MAPPA Guidance 2012: Version 4. p37. <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/mappa/mappa-guidance-2012-part1.pdf>

Guidance on Potentially Dangerous Persons. National Policing Improvement Agency. (2010). 'Identifying and Managing Potentially Dangerous Persons'. In Guidance on Protecting the Public:

Managing Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders 2010 (pp103-116). London: Association of Chief Police Officers. ([http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/20110301_CBA_ACPO_\(2010\)_Guidance_on_Protecting_the_Public_v2_main_version.pdf](http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/20110301_CBA_ACPO_(2010)_Guidance_on_Protecting_the_Public_v2_main_version.pdf))

SafeLives Spotlight #3: Young people and domestic abuse (<http://www.safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub/spotlights/spotlight-3-young-people-and-domestic-abuse>)

¹ To view these resources in full, visit: http://www.safelives.org.uk/marac/Resources_for_people_involved_in_MARACs.html

² While we refer to a single perpetrator, it is crucial to confirm if there is more than one perpetrator in a case.