

# Wakefield MARAC - (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

## A guide for professionals

### What is Domestic Abuse?

Following the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, there is now a new statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just about physical abuse.

Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is domestic abuse if -  
A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

“Personally connected” is when someone is or has been in an intimate relationship with each other, are or have been married to each other, are or have been in a civil partnership, even if the agreement has been terminated. It also includes relatives or having parental relationship to the same child, which means a child under the age of 18 years.

Any reference to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who sees, hears or experiences the effects of the abuse and is related to person A or B.

### Types of Abuse

Physical abuse  
Sexual abuse  
Controlling or coercive behaviour  
Economic abuse  
Psychological or emotional abuse  
Honour based abuse, forced marriage and/or  
female genital mutilation

The behaviour can be a single incident or ongoing.

### What is MARAC?

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are meetings where agencies from the Wakefield district meet on a fortnightly basis to share information about high risk domestic abuse victims.

A risk-focused, coordinated safety plan is drawn up to help support the victim and to try to reduce the risk to them and any children. MARAC is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The victim does not attend the meeting but is represented by a Specialist Domestic Abuse Practitioner who brings the victim's thoughts, wishes and feelings to the meeting.

### Which agencies attend the Wakefield MARAC?

- West Yorkshire Police
- Wakefield District Domestic Abuse Service (WDDAS)
- NHS
- Child Health 0-19yrs
- Wakefield District Housing
- Housing Needs Service
- Adult Social Care
- Children and Young People Services
- Education Welfare
- Inspiring Recovery
- SWYPFT (Mental Health)
- Youth Offending Team
- Integrated Offender Management
- National Probation Service
- Victim Support
- Any other statutory and voluntary agencies or organisations who are working with a perpetrator, victim or child who have been invited on a case by case basis.

Everyone who attends MARAC has to sign the MARAC confidentiality declaration before the meeting begins.



## What are the aims of MARAC?

- To share information to increase the safety, health and well being of victims and their children.
- To construct jointly and implement a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and to reduce the risk of harm.
- To reduce repeat victimisation.
- To improve agency accountability
- To identify those situations that indicate a need for the Local Safeguarding Children Board to initiate child protection procedures.
- Improve support for victims involved in high risk domestic abuse cases.

The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individual agencies. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety.

## What is a DASH?

DASH stands for Domestic Abuse Stalking, Harassment and Honour based abuse. It is a risk assessment tool that practitioners who work with victims of domestic abuse use in order to establish the risk to the victim. A DASH should be used whenever a practitioner receives an initial disclosure of domestic abuse. It is essential that every question on the DASH is answered and explored with the victim in order to get a comprehensive view of the risks they may be suffering.

## Wakefield MARAC Referral Criteria

1. 'Professional judgement': if you have serious concerns about a victim's situation, then the case should be referred to MARAC. There will be occasions where you have serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose information that might highlight their risk more clearly. This judgement would be based on your experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria 2 and/or 3 below.
2. 'Visible High Risk': the number of 'ticks' on DASH. If you have ticked 14 or more 'yes' boxes the case would meet the MARAC referral criteria.
3. 'Potential Escalation': the number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic abuse in the past 12 months. A referral to Wakefield MARAC is made by police when a person has been the clear victim of six incidents graded at medium risk.

## What if the victim does not meet the criteria to refer to MARAC?

Practitioners should signpost the victim to local specialist domestic abuse service while reiterating the need to call the police in the event of a crisis.

## Victim Consent

If the incidents or reports are deemed high risk, then a referral into MARAC should be made automatically. Victims do not need to consent to be referred to MARAC.

## How to refer a victim to Wakefield MARAC

Once you have undertaken a DASH and established that the victim is high risk and needs to be referred to MARAC you will need to complete a MARAC referral form and WDDAS referral form (available from the Wakefield MARAC Coordinators). The forms need to be sent to your agency's MARAC representative who will check them and send them on to the MARAC Coordinator and WDDAS.

Agencies **should not** wait until a case has been discussed at MARAC before taking action or giving advice, or access to services. It will be far more relevant for a victim to receive help prior to a meeting. Information regarding actions and information provided can be subsequently discussed at a MARAC.

## Repeat Incidents

A repeat MARAC case is when at some point in the 12 months from the initial referral, a further incident is identified. **Any agency** may identify this further incident (regardless of whether it has been reported to the police). A further incident includes any one of the following types of behaviour, which, if reported to the police, would constitute criminal behaviour:

- Violence or threats of violence to the victim (including threats against property)
- A pattern of stalking or harassment
- Rape or sexual abuse
- Non-fatal strangulation

Where a repeat victim is identified by any MARAC agency, that agency should refer the case back to MARAC by notifying the MARAC Coordinator. If you have further concerns for a victim of a MARAC case but there has not been a specific incident, the MARAC Coordinator should be contacted to discuss this.

## Contact Information

Your MARAC Coordinators for Wakefield are:  
Rebecca Norie/Sarah Halloran  
West Yorkshire Police

Email: [wakefield.marac@westyorkshire.police.uk](mailto:wakefield.marac@westyorkshire.police.uk)  
Tel: 01924 878398

West Yorkshire Police  
Emergency - 999  
Non-emergency - 101

Online - [www.westyorkshire.police.uk/report-it](http://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/report-it)

Wakefield Adult Safeguarding Unit  
Email:

[wakefield.sguadult@westyorkshire.police.uk](mailto:wakefield.sguadult@westyorkshire.police.uk)  
Tel: 01924 898398 / 878393

Wakefield Child Safeguarding Unit  
Email: [wakefield.sguchild@westyorkshire.police.uk](mailto:wakefield.sguchild@westyorkshire.police.uk)

Wakefield District Domestic Abuse Service  
Tel: 0800 915 1561  
Email: [domesticabuse@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:domesticabuse@wakefield.gov.uk)

National Domestic Abuse Helpline  
Tel: 0808 200 0247

Men's Advice Line -  
Support for men experiencing Domestic Abuse  
Tel: 0808 801 0327  
[www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

Victim Support - Victim Care Unit  
Tel: 0300 3031971

National stalking helpline  
Tel: 0808 802 0300

Galop  
LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline  
Tel: 0800 999 5428  
[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

Women's Aid  
[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

SafeLives  
[www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)