

Standing Together Against Domestic Violence (STADV) MARAC Plan in response to COVID-19

We are aware that the current situation is going to continue to change, both nationally and at an agency level, for the foreseeable future.

Here at STADV we want to ensure that we continue to provide the highest level of support to continue the coordinated community response (CCR) we have all built together, and keep survivors at the heart of this and above all - safe. We have seen already, in China, reports of domestic abuse increasing three-fold and so it is paramount that survivor safety remains a top priority and we work to keep the systemic safety nets in place. MARAC is crucial to this. Now, more than ever, we need to be keeping our multi-agency ties strong and working as a CCR.

In response to more agencies working remotely, we at STADV have developed a plan which we hope will continue to facilitate effective communication and partnership working between agencies, whilst recognising additional time, and environmental constraints. **This is, and will be, an ongoing trial process.** We have mapped out 'check in' points to review how this trial is working, taking in all feedback and amending as needed.

We know MARAC is a process and not just a meeting and so people should be continuing to communicate with each other, sharing information and doing whatever they can, creatively, to engage the victim & managing the behaviour of the perpetrator to reduce risk. We hope that this plan below will help to ensure this continues and keeps information and actions clear to all.

In terms of immediate next steps:

1. We hold a conference call for a strategic, MARAC only, steering group with all our key partners ASAP to sign off the temporary protocol as a group. We need to ensure there is top level buy in so MARAC Representatives can feel supported, encouraged, and understand that domestic abuse survivors need to remain a priority. This is a joint responsibility and the MARAC Representatives, Chair, & coordinator need to have the backing of all strategic leads to move forward effectively.
 - o At this meeting we should have clarification from all agencies about how they intend to engage clients over this period, particularly DA services, and refuges. We need to be able to ensure any pathway changes are clear and disseminated to front line workers.
 - o We need to brace all agencies for an increase in DA & ask for all to share their agency's plans on how they are going to manage any increase.
 - o Establish how information is going to be safely saved and secured with increased home working to ensure GDPR compliance (encryption, password etc.)
2. This MARAC Steering Group schedules in more frequent meetings to monitor this process and review. MARAC Coordinator and Chair to provide updates regarding operational feedback.
3. The MARAC Steering Group will continually incorporate any feedback, concerns, or ideas from all partners and reach joint solutions as needed.
4. MARAC Commissioner to sit-in on the first action planning meeting.

Virtual MARAC Process	Time frame	Concern	Comments
Agencies to send referral to both MARAC coordinator, cc'Rep, and IDVA	Once high-risk is identified	Increase in IDVA referrals may mean more time before contact	Emailing referral directly to both will help referral reach IDVA sooner

Coordinators respond and send referral to local IDVA within 24 hours	24 Hours		*IDVA services to clarify referral pathways and capacity
IDVA contacts victim	*		*Need IDVA Service input
Referrals collated into an At Risk List which will be sent out to representatives	10 days before MARAC		
Representatives must send proportionate and relevant research AND proposed actions (as well as ideas for actions) for all cases to MARAC coordinator day 2 working days before 'meeting date' **See attached new research and actions template created by STADV, to be signed-off by Steering Group	12:30pm, Two working days before meeting deadline		<i>Deadline for research must be strict as it would be if a meeting were taking place so all research must be sent by the proposed 'meeting date'</i>
Document with shared information, actions, and proposed actions is circulated on MARAC Meeting date to all reps for comment and feedback and confirmation of actions.	MARAC meeting date		Any action offered by your own agency will be minuted as definite straight away and doesn't need to be discussed at the meeting unless someone thinks it's dangerous / inappropriate. Then the focus of the brief discussion can be on actions requested from other agencies and time for any further suggestions of how to reduce risk / address needs now the info has been shared.
2-hour max. conference call at 9:30AM with all core and non-core signed up MARAC Reps to discuss action planning. If all feel actions have already been offered before meeting and there is no disagreement or concern, move to next case. Chair to tightly facilitate this & STADV to produce new Chair checklist (see MARAC Plus below) All MARAC reps to attend NOT CASE DISCUSSION/INFO SHARING – ACTION FOCUSED	3 days after MARAC 'meeting date'		This is to ensure all risks are addressed appropriately. One of the key functions of MARAC is holding each other to account, and professionally challenging each other to reach the best and most creative outcomes for survivors.

Final version of minutes sent out at the start of the week after MARAC	First day of week following 'MARAC date'		
Actions are completed within deadlines agreed	2 weeks		
MARAC Coordinators record and circulate outstanding actions	2 weeks		

Confidentiality

- By accepting MARAC meeting invite you are agreeing to MOISP, confidentiality agreement will be read out per normal at the start of the meeting.
- Storing information – all agencies must ensure home workers have secured all MARAC documents and it is not accessible to any household members. When emailing, only use secure (i.e. CJSM, Egress), or password protect. **No passwords or automatic login should be saved on their home computer.**
- During the calls, all attendees MUST wear headphones if they do not live alone. They should also move to a room where no other people are present. If there are special circumstances, this should be dealt with by the Rep's manager and raised at Steering Group for approval.
- Conference call will be done via Microsoft Teams at STADV – this does not allow participants to record the meeting, nor does it upload recordings to cloud. STADV will hold people in the 'lobby' and approve members to meeting manually to ensure only relevant people are on the call.
- All normal processes should be abided by, we must have trust that all Reps will continue to act within existing protocols to the best of their ability.
- No Guest agencies will be invited, aside from specialist DA services (i.e. GALOP), only MARAC Reps to 'attend'.
- Any breaches must be IMMEDIATELY raised with MARAC Coordinator, Chair, and Steering Group. This is not to place blame or punish, but rather to ensure we are adapting policies as needed in these new times to ensure confidentiality. We will explore how breach occurred and determine if this is a one-off or systemic issue and respond accordingly. **It is vital we remain open, transparent, and reflective with each other during this time while we shape this response plan.**

Emergency MARACS

This policy will remain the same as current (in terms of criteria for escalating), however, all research/Information that will be shared must be sent 3 days BEFORE the 'meeting' to allow for circulation to all involved agencies. Any clarifications on information or additional information an agency wants needs to be requested via email BEFORE the 'meeting'. We will then have a **max. 1-hour (aim for 30 min)** conference call for action planning ONLY. The Chair will mute all agencies unless they are presenting and any comments or questions during meeting will be done by typing in the conference chat box and addressed by Chair.

Current Outstanding Actions

All agencies and their managers need to review current outstanding actions and feedback on if actions are still possible, (for example- home visit actions will need to be considered and judged against health & safety advice). If actions need amendments, send the proposed new action, or offer an alternative action to mitigate the identified risk to coordinator and relevant agency, who



will then share the updated action plan with all Reps. Actions need to reflect the requirement for increased social distancing and increased risk created by families together in isolation for greater periods of time.

We know these are unprecedented times, processes will be evolving as the situation changes. We at STADV feel it is vital we are proactive to keep survivor safety at the forefront of our work despite the new challenges arising. We want to work flexibly and openly with all our partners and will continue to adapt in order to ensure we reach the best process possible. We thank you for your consistent and crucial support, understanding, and dedication to survivors.