

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

25 SEPTEMBER 2020

LSCSB UPDATE: MULTI-AGENCY RISK ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

Background

1. The MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is an information sharing and risk management meeting concerning high risk domestic abuse (DA) victims. It is attended by all key agencies, where cases are discussed/managed.
2. Repeat referrals to MARAC is a Board DA performance indicator. 'SaveLives' a national DA charity recommends repeat referral rates should range between 20-40%. Repeat referral rates in Leicestershire have shown a steady and consistent rise and currently sit above the SafeLives threshold.
3. This report outlines current arrangements in Leicestershire and provides an update to the Board to explain the Repeat MARAC rates.

Notable developments and challenges

The Past Year

4. The past year has seen implementation and continued development of the Daily MARAC.

Coming Year

5. Having established daily MARAC reviews, it is the intention to increase the independence of the MARAC and explore mainstreaming key MARAC roles to better support all the partners involved in the process.

Managing Repeat MARAC Referrals in Leicestershire.

6. The SafeLives definition of repeat referrals has recently changed; previously further contact required an element of violence or threat of violence to trigger repeat referral. This has changed in Leicestershire to follow SafeLives recommendations and a MARAC 'repeat' is now ANY instance of abuse between the same victim and perpetrator(s), within 12 months of the last referral to MARAC. There has as such been an increase in repeat referral numbers reflected in performance data presented to the Board.

7. There is understandably a requirement to ensure any changes to referral rates is scrutinised and defensible. Set out below is an extract of the referral process outlining the comprehensive scrutiny such referrals receive to ensure they are both appropriate and dealt with effectively;

Managing Repeat Referrals

- a) *What is the instance / incident / event of abuse and is it Domestic Abuse per the agreed **national definition**. If 'NO' then no requirement to continue, if 'YES' continue to Q2.*
 - b) *Has it happened within 12 months of the previous MARAC case between the **same** victim and perpetrator?*
 - c) *If the repeated case has been assessed as HIGH RISK then referral into MARAC required ensuring investigations and Safeguarding are the priority.*
 - d) *If the repeated case has been assessed as STANDARD or MEDIUM Risk then please look at the type of incident / event to consider appropriate referral to MARAC. Where a physical assault has taken place then this should be referred back in as a Repeat. If the incident / event is not physical assault then view this incident within the context of Coercive controlling behaviour.*
 - e) *If there is no ongoing controlling / coercive behaviour then there is no requirement to refer the case into the MARAC, where there is ongoing controlling / coercive behaviour please indicate When, where and how linking it to the definitions of either 'Safelives' or the 'Criminal Justice' criteria. (This needs to be clear in relation to what behaviour is being displayed)*
 - f) *Where it has been identified in any of the above processes that there is no requirement to refer the case to MARAC there is still a requirement to investigate and safeguard, part of this process should also include information sharing ensuring the partner agencies are aware of the ongoing incidents / events.*
 - g) *Where there is information of ongoing controlling / coercive behaviour the case should be reviewed using the 'Severity of Abuse Grid' where it is deemed to either be 'Unchanged' or 'Reduced' then partners should share the information and continue to investigate and safeguard the victim and their families, these cases would not be required to be referred back into MARAC. Where there is information / evidence that the situation is worse this should trigger a referral into the MARAC ensuring that investigations and safeguarding are the priority.*
 - h) *If there is evidence throughout this process of continued low level repeats happening then this should be reviewed and consideration to be referred to the MARAC.*
8. The above follows the guidance laid out by 'Safelives' in regard to how high demand cases should be managed, the characteristics of coercive control and

what to do if it is suspected that coercive control is taking place by referring to the 'Severity of Abuse Grid'.

9. The above process also indicates that in the absence of violence and/or threats of violence there needs to be an ability within the support process to gather information / evidence of ongoing controlling / coercive behaviour and should indicate exactly what is happening to assist decision makers with formulating effective 'Risk Management Plans'.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

10. MARAC has a significant impact for families living within High Risk Domestic Abuse situations. It is crucial that appropriate information is shared at the earliest opportunity with the MARAC to enable it to implement informed safety planning.
11. All cases of repeat incident / events within the previous 12 months of a previous MARAC being heard will have the information shared with partners whether it requires a re-referral or not. This is to ensure that those partners who have ongoing safeguarding are aware of what is happening within those family units.

Issues in local areas

12. The MARAC is designed to deliver the same service across LLR, there has been a noticeable decline in reports from Rutland and work has been completed with reviewing cases to ensure that appropriate referrals are being made. This is managed through the MOG (MARAC Operational Group)

Recommendations for the Board

13. The Board note the contents of the report.

Officers to Contact

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