



Children's Safeguarding and Family Help MARAC policy

Camden's Children and Learning Directorate uses relational practice as the foundation for all our work. Our integrative relational practice framework is based on our values, and is designed to help achieve the Directorate's purpose: to work with children, families and communities to make a positive, lasting difference to their futures, so they have the best start in life.

We recognise the impact of structural inequalities on the lives of the children and families we work with and as a service we will embrace inclusive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice based on our values and our mission to champion social justice.

Our practice framework centres on honest and compassionate relationships with those we serve and with each other. It is an expectation that all Directorate policies and procedures are implemented in line with our practice framework, and that any actions within policies and procedures reflect its ethics, values and practice expectations.

1 Introduction and the role of MARAC

A Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a specialist meeting where agencies share information about high-risk domestic abuse cases in order to provide a multi-agency response. At the MARAC, agencies discuss individual cases and agree a multi-agency plan to keep victims and children safe and deal effectively with perpetrators.

Because no single agency will have all the information available to make an informed judgement on the risk posed to victims and children by domestic abuse, the MARAC is a vital forum allowing agencies to share information to form a more accurate picture of the nature and severity of domestic abuse leading to better risk assessment and intervention.

Where children are living with high levels of domestic abuse, a MARAC can help social workers to co-ordinate actions with other agencies in order to ensure that any safety plan for the victim will also keep their children safe. It can also help victims engage with other agencies to gain support and reduce risk. This can be vital where victims are reluctant to co-operate with CSFH.

2 Role of CSFH

CSFH social workers' role is to:

- identify victims of domestic abuse who should be referred to MARAC
- assess levels of risk to ensure MARAC thresholds are met
- make appropriate referrals to MARAC on behalf of victims
- provide MARAC with relevant information
- implement any action plan agreed at the MARAC.

CSFH has designated an Independent Reviewing Officer for child protection as the CSFH MARAC representative whose role is to co-ordinate CSFH's contribution to MARAC by:

- advising social workers on MARAC referrals
- liaising with the MARAC co-ordinator and attending MARAC on behalf of the division and sharing information from social workers on individual cases
- checking details of cases to be discussed at the MARAC to see if CSFH has any involvement with the family
- liaising with social workers on information to be shared at the MARAC
- recording details of discussions on families referred to MARAC and any actions or recommendations for social workers agreed at MARAC on the MOSAIC case record

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- sharing professional expertise on issues involving domestic abuse and family violence with the division.

Although the MARAC is primarily focussed on the safety of the victim, it is imperative that social workers and the CSFH MARAC representative ensures that the welfare of children is paramount at all times and that the MARAC considers any risk to children so that any decisions taken are in their best interests.

3 Camden MARAC arrangements

The MARAC in Camden is a monthly meeting co-ordinated and chaired by the Camden Police and attended by representatives from the following agencies; the CSFH MAPPA representative will represent the division at MARAC.

- Police (Chair)
- CSFH
- Adult Social Care
- Camden Safety Net
- Probation
- Housing
- Mental Health Services
- Substance misuse services
- Youth Offending Service
- Integrated Early Years Service
- Early Help Service
- Camden Community Safety

Social workers may attend to provide information about a case they work with that is being discussed at the MARAC, particularly where they have made the referral, but it is not an expectation and the CSFH MARAC representative can share the information with MARAC on their behalf. A child's school may also attend the MARAC to discuss a family where they have made a referral or have important information to share.

Prior to the MARAC, the MARAC co-ordinator will draw up a list of cases to be discussed at the next MARAC and send the list to the CSFH MARAC representative. The list will include:

- cases where there has been a serious domestic abuse incident attended by the police
- cases referred to MARAC by other agencies such as CSFH, Probation, Adult Social Care

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- cases where Police have been called to 4 incidents of domestic abuse in 12 months
- cases where CSFH have received 3 referrals involving domestic abuse in 12 months.

The meeting will discuss the following:

- new cases
- cases that are being re-referred back to MARAC following a further incident
- cases that the chair has requested to be reviewed at the next available MARAC in order to track progress.

Each case on the agenda will be discussed and information shared from the referring agency will be shared with the MARAC along with any other relevant information on the family from other agencies who are represented at MARAC. The MARAC will assess risk and draw up a multi-agency plan to work with the victim, children and perpetrator to reduce risk and ensure the needs of the victim and children are met.

4 Referring cases to MARAC

4.1 Identification and risk assessment

Social workers should refer to the division's *Domestic abuse* policy for guidance on identifying victims of domestic abuse available at: [csfh-domestic-abuse-policy.pdf](#)

Social workers should consider making a referral to MARAC where:

- there are high levels of domestic abuse involving a child protection response from CSFH
- a case is being continually re-referred to CSFH because of concerns around domestic abuse and no progress is being made
- where it is likely CSFH will remain working with the family for the long-term because of unresolved domestic abuse issues.

Before making a referral, the allocated social worker should carry out a CAADA-DASH risk assessment to identify the level of risk. Where the victim is receiving a service from Camden Safety Net, the social worker should liaise with the Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisor (IDSVA) to complete the risk assessment.

The CAADA-DASH risk assessment and guidance on how to complete the assessment is available at: <https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/media/3316/caada-dash-risk-assessment-for-marac-agencies.pdf>

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Social workers should contact the CSFH MARAC representative to discuss the case before making any referral to get advice on thresholds and explore what actions MARAC could recommend in order to help reduce the risk posed to children by the domestic abuse.

MARAC considers high risk domestic abuse cases requiring a co-ordinated, multi-agency response and will accept referrals where the CAADA-DASH risk assessment indicates any of the following:

- there is a visible high risk (14 or more yes boxes on the risk assessment have been ticked)
- there is potential escalation (3 or more CSFH referrals or police call outs to domestic abuse in 12 months)
- professional judgement is that there are serious concerns for the safety of the victim due to other circumstances such as fear of disclosure.

4.2 Making a referral

All referrals should be sent to the MARAC co-ordinator based in the Metropolitan Police using the MARAC referral record This will be sent to the social workers by the CSFH MARAC representative following discussion of the referral. If the case meets the threshold for MARAC, will be included in the list of cases to be discussed at the next MARAC meeting.

The completed referral form should be uploaded onto the MOSAIC case record in the confidential section with any other MARAC documents and a copy sent to the CSFH MARAC representative.

4.3 Young people aged 16 and 17

As the legal definition of domestic abuse includes 16 and 17 year olds in abusive relationships, social workers, YOS workers, personal advisors and key workers in the Young People's Pathway are now able to make referrals to MARAC on behalf of young people they work with. For further details please refer to the division's domestic abuse guidance.

Workers need to be aware that CSFH still has a safeguarding duty to these young people and should be considering actions and interventions under the Children Act 1989.

Workers should also be aware of any indications that the abusive relationship is linked to sexual exploitation or gang involvement and should refer to the CSCP guidance on Child Exploitation for more details and should also consider whether the case should be referred to the MACE group. [CSCP-extra-familial-harm-and-child-exploitation-guidance.pdf](#)

4.5 Inter-generational violence and abuse

Social workers should be aware of and able to recognise domestic abuse and violence between family members and siblings and make appropriate referrals to MARAC. Further details are available in the CSFH domestic abuse policy and Home Office guidance available at: <http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/HO%20Information%20APVA.pdf>

5 CSFH cases discussed at MARAC

5.1 Gathering information

Prior to each MARAC meeting, the MARAC co-ordinator will send a list of cases to be discussed to the CSFH MARAC representative who will check MOSAIC to see if the family are known to CSFH.

If the case is allocated, the MARAC representative will make contact with the allocated social worker to discuss the case, decide on whether the social worker will attend or agree the information that the MARAC representative will share with the MARAC on the social worker's behalf.

The social worker and the CSFH MARAC representative should also discuss what actions they would like to see the MARAC agree on the case that would help to reduce risk and ensure the safety of children.

If the case is closed, the MARAC representative will make a decision on whether or not the case should be re-opened and will make an appropriate referral to the Contact Service.

5.2 Information to be provided

Social workers should ensure that the CSFH MARAC representative has information to share with the MARAC around what concerns are held with regard to the child and what CSFH would like to see in terms of actions from the MARAC that can keep the child safe. This could include help with alternative housing or applying for a Court order.

In particular, the following information should be provided:

- details of any current and historical child protection proceedings, and an outline of any concerns
- dates of upcoming child protection conferences, strategy meetings and core groups
- details of support for children within the child in need or child protection plan
- any information about agreements with parents regarding informal and formal contact arrangements

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- outline of support in place for the non-abusive parent and work being undertaken with the abusive parent
- any concerns about collusion between the victim and perpetrator that may raise the risk to the child, for example continued contact with the perpetrator
- any links with other families.

A record of any discussion between social workers and the CSFH MARAC representative with regards to the information to be shared at the MARAC should be noted on the MARAC meeting record by the MARAC representative.

5.3 Recording the outcome of MARAC

Following the MARAC meeting, the CSFH MARAC representative will record agreed actions on the MARAC meeting record and upload this into the confidential section of the MOSAIC case record.

If the perpetrator has links with another family known to CSFH, the MARAC meeting record will be uploaded onto that case record. Any information relating to the MARAC discussion provided by the police or other agencies will also be uploaded to the confidential section of the MOSAIC case record.

6 Confidentiality and information sharing

Information from MARAC meetings should only be shared on a need to know basis. Social workers should only share information disclosed at MARAC to third parties or include information in a formal report (such as a child protection case conference) following a discussion with the CSFH MARAC representative or the MARAC co-ordinator, and may be advised to seek permission from the MARAC chair prior to any disclosure. This is to ensure the continued safety of victims and children.

Social workers should inform families when a referral will be made to MARAC as this is good practice but their consent to the referral is not required. Social workers should request consent to information sharing with the MARAC prior to the meeting taking place. However this should only be done where it is safe to do so given the context of the case.

MARAC Meeting

Victim's details

Name Date of birth Home address (to be kept confidential) MARAC no

Children's details

Name	Date of birth	Address	School

Name of social worker:

Alleged/actual perpetrator's details

Name	Address

Details of other families known to CSFH with links to perpetrator:

Family initials	MOSAIC number

Details of professionals involved

Name	Agency/designation	Person professionals is working with	Contact details

Referral to MARAC

Date of referral
Reasons for referral

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Recommendations and outcome of MARAC meeting

Include any actions to be taken by CSFH and whether the case will be reviewed by MARAC at a later date

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Completed by