



**Glasgow City Council**

**Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director,  
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

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**Item 6**

**14th March 2023**

**Report from Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership on the role and function of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

**Purpose of Report:**

Report on the work of the (MARAC) as a public protection priority response to high risk victims of domestic abuse.

**Recommendations:**

1. To note the content of the report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ✓

consulted: Yes ☐ No ✓

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership (GVAWP), established in 2000, brings together a range of statutory and voluntary agencies in Glasgow with the aim of improving multi agency responses to women, children and young people who have experienced violence against women and girls (VAW&G). The GVAWP is chaired by an elected member nominated by the Administration, Councillor Holly Bruce. The GVAWP is a strategic partnership and believes improving participation will result in better service provision, improved legal protection and help to prevent further abuse to women, children and young people. This aim is in line with the Scottish Government's and COSLA's violence against women and girls strategy, [Equally Safe](#).
- 1.2 The GVAWP understands violence against women is a cause and consequence of the social inequalities that exist between men and women. It recognises that violence against women, children and young people can take many forms and that some women, children and young people may experience different and/or multiple forms of male violence over their lifetime.
- 1.3 The GVAWP sets high-level aims and corresponding objectives that provide a framework within which the working groups operate. NRS has responsibility for convening and coordinating the work of the city wide GVAWP and all of its associated working groups.
- 1.4 NRS VAW Services has responsibility for supporting the GVAWP to devise and deliver a city-wide multi-agency strategic plan to challenge the existence of VAW in the city.
- 1.5 Glasgow HSCP is shortly to launch their Domestic Abuse Strategy to improve responses across the service areas to victims, children and young people and domestic abuse offenders.
- 1.6 Police Scotland is currently drafting a strategic document highlighting their commitments to tackling all forms of violence against women and girls.

## **2. Glasgow MARAC Background Information & Context**

- 2.1 In *Equally Safe*, the Scottish Government committed to the development of a national framework for MARAC in Scotland. In 2019, the Scottish Government consulted on multi-agency risk assessment arrangements for domestic abuse/coercive control victims. This was followed up by a series of deep dive sessions between May and June 2021. More recently the Scottish Government has established a MARAC Advisory Group to develop a suite of actions from recommendations made within the deep dive report. The GVAWP is represented on this national working group.
- 2.2 Domestic abuse is a significant community and personal safety issue for women, children and young people in Glasgow. It is the single biggest cause of

homelessness of women, children and young people in the city. Women are more likely to be murdered by a current or former partner than by anyone else.<sup>3</sup> The health impacts are enormous both in individual human costs and cost to the health, criminal justice and other such services. In Glasgow, domestic abuse is a frequent feature of child protection concerns. The lifetime economic costs associated with domestic abuse are many. There is a responsibility for all services to ensure they invest in accountable multi-agency procedures and processes to identify and respond to the needs of high risk victims of domestic abuse and deliver robust actions to reduce risk and maximise the safety and wellbeing of the adult victim and any children they may have.

- 2.3 In Glasgow in 2021/22, **9,314** domestic abuse incidents were reported to Police Scotland. There is general acceptance that this is an underestimate. We know that the people who suffer from domestic abuse are usually women and girls, and evidence suggests that they can live with domestic abuse for 2-3 years and experience 50 episodes of abuse before seeking help.<sup>1 2</sup> Police Scotland record a report of domestic abuse every 9 minutes across Scotland.
- 2.4 Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is a tool used by multi-agency partners across Scotland to share vital information and safety plan for **high risk victims** of domestic abuse. There are MARACs operational in all 32 local authority areas. The MARAC in Glasgow has been operational since 2005 and was one of the first in Scotland. Until August 2021, MARAC in Glasgow was coordinated by Police Scotland, chaired on a multi-agency basis and managed by GCC NRS VAW Services. It was wholly reliant on 'in kind' support from partners, to deliver this public protection service.
- 2.5 MARAC is an evidence based approach designed to reduce risk of further harm for the highest risk cases of domestic abuse, using risk assessment, information sharing, creative action planning and mobilising partner agency resources. The commitment of partner agencies to MARAC has resulted in early identification and effective intervention for high risk victims.
- 2.6 The MARAC process is a proven procedure that works effectively. By following the process, positive outcomes can be achieved for the victim with the reductions in the level of repeat victimisation, serious harm or murder.
- 2.7 Safe Glasgow Partnership identified MARAC in Glasgow as a public protection priority response to domestic abuse. It is the only public protection process which has a focus on the adult victim.

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<sup>1</sup> SafeLives (2015), Insights Idva National Dataset 2013-14. Bristol: SafeLives

<sup>2</sup> Walby S. and Allen J. (2004) Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey. London: Home Office  
<https://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/how-long-do-people-live-domestic-abuse-and-when-do-they-get>

<sup>3</sup>. 62% of women killed by a man are killed by a partner  
<https://www.femicidecensus.org/data-matters-every-woman->

- 2.8 To support the delivery of MARAC, there is a dedicated MARAC Steering Group. This group is Chaired by NRS VAW Services, supported by the VAW Coordinator and has multi-agency representation from Police Scotland, ASSIST, GCC Education Services, Glasgow HSCP Criminal Justice, Wheatley Group, Glasgow Women's Aid and the Daisy Project. The Steering Group has developed the MARAC process in Glasgow and is fully committed to the MARAC model.
- 2.9 There are dedicated MARAC meetings for each locality in the city. These meetings discuss up to 25 cases per meeting. Additional multi-locality meetings are convened to discuss any further referrals. The MARAC regularly discusses between 85 to 100 high risk victims of domestic abuse every 4 weeks.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The GVAWP and MARAC Steering Group agreed that 'in kind' support offered by Police Scotland and NRS VAW Services was not sufficient and a more robust model to support the effective delivery of MARAC was necessary. In 2021, Glasgow HSCP Criminal Justice Services received additional Scottish Government funds and made an award to support the appointment of a dedicated MARAC Support Team. In August 2021, two part time (28 hours) MARAC Coordinators were appointed to support and coordinate MARAC. Day to day management of MARAC sits within NRS VAW Services. At the same time the MARAC Steering Group recognised a need to develop a sustainable multi-agency funding framework for MARAC and work began with partners to take this development forward.
- 3.2 Funding was awarded for 12 months and ended in August 2022. Recognising the urgent need to continue MARAC, the GVAWP agreed to allocate all its budget to sustain MARAC until a funding formula could be developed and agreed. In January 2023, Glasgow HSCP Criminal Justice and Wheatley Group committed additional funds to support the delivery of MARAC until the end of the financial year.
- 3.3 The appointment of two dedicated MARAC Coordinators has made a significant difference to the effective delivery of MARAC in Glasgow.
- 3.4 MARAC has undergone a significant restructure. All MARAC processes and procedures were subject to review and this work continues as we develop. MARAC Coordinators provide a consistent point of contact for multi-agency partners. This work has included the production of a refreshed MARAC referral form and corresponding guidance which has improved the consistency of information from referral agencies.
- 3.5 MARAC Coordinators consistent attendance at MARAC allows them to identify issues, trends and challenges. This in turn is communicated to the MARAC Steering Group, relevant partners and where appropriate SafeLives.

- 3.6 Robust communication procedures, along with any necessary guidance, have been established between MARAC Coordinator(s) and Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy Services (IDAA); MARAC Chairs; MARAC Representatives; MARAC Referring Agencies; SafeLives; MARAC Steering Group; GVAWP; other key partners, internal and external. Data information is collated on referral information. MARAC meetings are recorded, and Action Logs are available within one day of the meeting taking place for MARAC reps. These processes and procedures are all essential for the effective functioning of MARAC.
- 3.7 In 2022, **50** MARAC meetings were convened, **1,130** high risk victims of domestic abuse were discussed, with **1,065** women and **65** males. At the same time the MARAC discussed **1,588** children and young people. The multi-agency discussion that takes place seeks to share information relating to risk posed by the accused towards the victim and any children they may have and invites the representatives to undertake actions that reduce risk and enhance safety. At the heart of MARAC is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, to be able to identify and manage the risks, but all partners may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The MARAC also makes links with other multi-agency meetings and processes to safeguard children, vulnerable adults and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator.

#### **4. Summary**

- 4.1 All partners involved in GVAWP and MARAC Steering Group are fully committed to the MARAC model. This model is robustly evaluated and has a proven track record of reducing risk in relation to domestic abuse and coercive control. There is no alternative risk informed process applied by any multi-agency partner which has a focus on the adult victim of domestic abuse.
- 4.2 Further guidance is anticipated from Scottish Government who has reconvened their MARAC Advisory Group and decisions will be made in the near future regarding MARAC. This will include consideration being given to placing MARAC on a statutory footing, to ensure that it is operational in every local authority across Scotland and to compel services around the MARAC table. The Scottish Government will also consider funding arrangements for MARAC, however it is unlikely that any national funding decisions will be made within the timescale we are currently operating to.
- 4.3 There is no one single funding model which supports the delivery of MARAC. For those other local authorities where there are higher volumes of referrals, there are locally agreed multi-agency funding formulas in place. There is a recognition that no one partner has the sole responsibility to deliver MARAC and that all hold equal responsibility to ensure its sustainable operation.

## 5. Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* Yes

*Legal:* No

*Personnel:* Yes

*Procurement:* No

### Council Strategic Plan:

[Reduce Poverty and inequality in our communities.](#)

### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25*

[Outcome No. 4](#)

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?*

Please see EQIA for full detail on cessation of MARAC

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.*

Yes,

### Climate Impacts:

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:*

No

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?*

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?*

**Privacy and Data  
Protection Impacts:**

Are there any potential data  
protection impacts as a No  
result of this report

**6. Recommendations**

1. To note the content of the report