

Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Steering Group

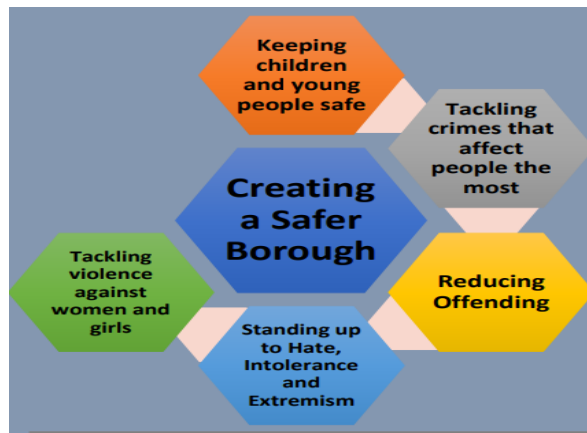
Terms of Reference

Introduction

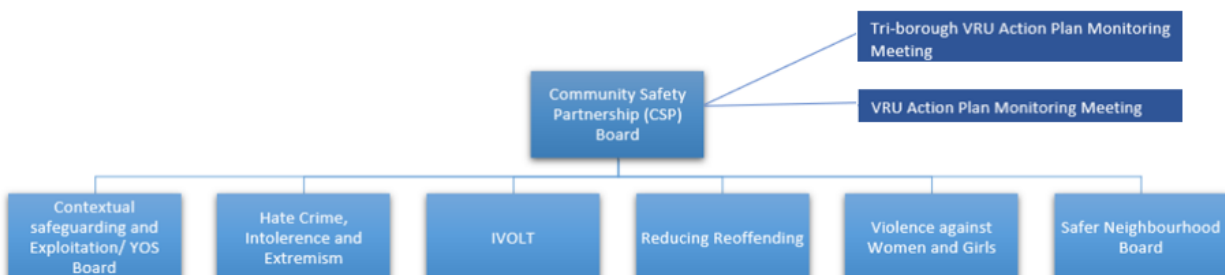
This document sets out the ways in which the partner agencies that comprise the Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership (BDCSP) Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Steering Group (MARACSG) work together to achieve aims.

BDCSP Priorities

The BDCSP works together to strategically oversee the delivery of the priorities identified and detailed in the BDCSP Community Safety Plan 2019-22. The priorities of the BDCSP were stated in the 2021 refresh of the plan, as follows:



The CSP Board holds overall responsibility for delivering the priorities outlined in the Community Safety Partnership Plan and other local strategies such as the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy. This requires partner organisations to work together at a strategic and operational level to share the skills, powers and resources that are available to them. The BDCSP has established a structure consisting of five priority sub-groups:



The composition of the BDSCP recognises the need for a coordinated, partnership approach to delivering the priorities and addressing community safety concerns across the borough, as well as ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

Violence Against Women and Girls

The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Group (VAWGSG) is the BDCSP's subgroup to tackle violence against women and girls in Barking and Dagenham, in line with the priorities of the BDCSP Community Safety Plan. The VAWGSG ensures effective strategic planning and use of resource (including commissioning), a coordinated approach to meeting statutory requirements and timely delivery of activity to deliver priority outcomes.

Violence Against Women and Girls is an umbrella term which includes the following types of abuse:

- Domestic abuse, including coercion and control
- Sexual violence, abuse and exploitation including rape and forced prostitution
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Crimes committed in the name of 'honour'
- Harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Gendered gang violence

The VAWGSG and MARACSG recognise that across all forms of VAWG, victim/survivors are disproportionately women/girls, and the perpetrators are disproportionately men/boys. The use of the term disproportionately means that men/boys are not excluded as possible victim/survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage etc., and it is also recognised that some perpetrators are women.

The MARACSG is a subgroup of the VAWGSG. The MARAC reports to the MARACSG.

MARAC

The MARAC is part of a broader commitment and response to reducing high risk Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls in Barking and Dagenham.

The MARAC is a regular meeting where local agencies share information about high-risk domestic abuse victims and families. The MARAC helps to ensure that high risk victims are supported and better protected from further abuse by a coordinated effort from all agencies and organisation. The MARAC provides an opportunity to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing between agencies to ensure that appropriate actions are being taken to reduce the risk of further abuse. The MARAC aims to develop risk focused, co-ordinated safety plans to support victims and their children. This can only be achieved if the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator is addressed effectively. MARAC therefore shares information about perpetrators to increase safety for victims and children, develop ways to hold perpetrators accountable and offer appropriate services to them where safe to do so.

The MARAC **does not** replace professional responsibility to take action to improve victim safety. Agencies have a responsibility to take steps to protect victims of domestic abuse and/or their children and **should not** wait for the MARAC meeting before taking action to prevent further abuse.

The purpose of a MARAC is to:

- Assess the needs of high-risk victims and their families through effective information sharing
- Manage risk and increase safety by developing a holistic action plan to address any unmet risks to the safety of victims and/or their children
- Manage risk and increase safety by sharing information about perpetrators of domestic abuse and develop ways to address perpetrator behaviour safely – including determining whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to the victim, other individuals or to the wider community and to refer appropriately

- Improve partnership working by facilitating information sharing and overseeing the joint implementation of multi-agency risk management plans
- Improve support for staff who are involved in high-risk cases
- Reduce repeat victimization levels

An Information Sharing Agreement is in place for all MARAC member agencies (see Appendix 2). A separate operating protocol for the MARAC is being updated (see Appendix x).

MARACSG

One of the ten principles of an effective MARAC is defined in the Safe Lives Guidance as 'Effective Governance'.

The MARACSG has responsibility to:

- Oversee the effective functioning, performance, and accountability of the MARAC, in line with the SafeLives '10 Principles of an Effective MARAC' and ensuring continuous improvement
- Ensure the delivery of all actions relating to the MARAC as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Commission (DAC) and the Domestic Abuse Improvement Programme (DAIP), and any other relevant strategy or plan
- Address the practical and resource implications of MARAC
- Develop and maintain operating protocols and procedures – supporting awareness, shared understanding of risk and correct processes
- Ensure that effective partnerships are maintained with other safeguarding and public protection bodies and other MARAC areas e.g., interfaces with MASH, MAPPA
- Ensure awareness raising and effective training in relation to the MARAC across partners
- Conduct/participate in Domestic Homicide Reviews where required
- Ensure that the MARAC operates in line with legal responsibilities and keeps up to date with changes to legislation national guidance
- Report quarterly to the VAWGSG, with relevant reports made to the BDCSP as required

MARACSG Membership

The following organisations/departments/roles are represented as the core membership:

Organisation / group	Position / detail
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	Lead Commissioner(s), People and Resilience
	MARAC Co-ordinator
	Head of Service, MASH
	Head of Support Lifecycle, Community Solutions
	Lead Social Worker, Adults
Police	Detective Chief Inspector, Public Protection Investigations, East Area BCU (Chair)
Probation	
NHS North East London Clinical Commissioning Group, Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Integrated Care Partnership and North East London Health and Care Partnership	Designated Nurse Safeguarding, CCG
	Head of Universal Children's Services Barking & Dagenham, NELFT
	Mental health, NELFT
	Maternity, A&E BHRUT
Service provider / user representation	Senior Operations Manager, Refuge (Vice Chair)
	Victim Support MOPAC Service Senior Manager
	Sexual Health Services
	Service Manager, Subwise

Each member has one vote. The Chair has the casting vote.

There will be a wider invitation list to the meetings of the BDCSP MARACSG at times, for example other local authority representatives. These attendees will not have a vote.

Individuals and organisations with known expertise and knowledge may be requested to attend meetings as observers. Observers may participate in meetings but shall have no decision-making powers. If a member would like an observer to attend a meeting, they should seek the permission of the Chair.

Each MARACSG member will be assigned a high risk domestic abuse theme to champion into the wider partnership and organisational environment.

Quorum

A valid quorum for meetings is half of the members with the right to be heard. This is the minimum requirement for a decision to be taken. No decision shall be taken without:

- One local authority representative
- One CSP statutory partner representative
- One service provider / user representative

Membership expectations

- To attend the meetings of the BDCSP MARACSG and when they cannot attend to send a named deputy who has been briefed prior to their attendance. The named deputy will have full voting rights
- To have authority to be able to act and make decisions as required
- To commit to developing an appropriate level of understanding around violence against women and girls' issues, policy and practice as required
- To work together productively to overcome any cross-organisational barriers
- To take the lead on the delivery of specific priorities, projects or actions as required

Chair

The role of the Chair is to ensure:

- The BDCSP MARACSG is delivering agreed activity as outlined in agreed strategies and plans, with quarterly performance reporting by exception and an annual performance report produced
- Priorities are reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis
- Governance, including the delivery groups and related action plans, is annually reviewed

Confidentiality

All attendees have a duty of confidentiality regarding all information disclosed, shared, and discussed between and during BDCSP MARACSG meetings.

An Information Sharing Agreement is in place for the MARAC and all attendees at the MARACSG will sign this agreement.

Administrative support

The administration of the MARACSG shall be managed by the Council.

Subgroups

The MARAC is a subgroup of the MARAC Steering Group (MARACSG).

Further subgroups can be established as required at the discretion of the Chair.

Meeting frequency

The MARACSG will meet at least four times per annum, in advance of the scheduled VAWGSG.

Performance indicators

The MARACSG will agree outcome indicators related to improvement action plans. These will provide a performance framework to capture progress and to identify and tackle emerging issues. They will be reported on by exception at each VAWGSG meeting and an annual performance report shall be produced.

Urgent matters

Decisions may be made about urgent matters without a group meeting providing the written consent of the Chair is sought and given. In this case the Chair must ensure that every effort has been made to consult informally with members and report any decisions taken at the next meeting.

Representation at BDCSP

The Chair or lead officer of the MARACSG will attend meetings of the VAWGSG and it is their role to ensure a two-way flow of information between the fora.

Appendix 1



Partnership environment

The BDCSP, the VAWGSG and the MARACSG, sits within a wider framework of partnerships. The VAWGSG is part of the BDCSP, but also has responsibility to the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP) Executive.