



# Community Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences

*Dealing more effectively with high risk and complex ASB Cases*

## What is a Community MARAC?

A Community MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) is primarily a multi-agency problem-solving meeting that promotes joint ownership and early resolution into how anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases are investigated.

## How did Community MARACs evolve?

A growing number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases involving complicated safeguarding and mental health elements and also a rising numbers of hate crime allegations, prompted one London borough to conduct a partnership review into how these cases were being investigated. It became clear to them that their existing ASB panels and groups were no longer fit for purpose, especially those involving high risk vulnerability and repeat victimisation. They needed a new, more effective approach.

Similarities were drawn with the Borough's local Domestic Abuse Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (DA MARAC) and particularly the way the DA MARAC managed high risk cases whilst holding local partners to account for their actions. They found that even the use of the term 'MARAC' encouraged higher levels of professionalism which enabled local agencies to better engage and improve understanding of each other's specific roles and responsibilities in relation to how cases are managed.

By changing the name of the monthly ASB Panel to a Community MARAC (C MARAC), they quickly secured the involvement of many organisations and departments which had previously been reluctant to attend meetings. Those who had seen ASB panels only as a means to justify the use of enforcement action soon appreciated this problem solving approach could successfully manage risk present on behalf of both the victim and perpetrator across a variety of cases.

This new Community MARAC approach was promoted across other London boroughs and beyond. Now, two thirds of London boroughs adopt the process or something similar including the Metropolitan Police. In particular, the Met use the approach when handling their ever-increasing number of adult mental health cases.

## What are the benefits?

The Community MARAC process has many benefits including:

- It focuses on problem solving and joint working across agencies
- It has credibility which provides reassurance at both operational and strategic levels
- It encourages creativity and innovation when resolving cases, advocates good practice and builds on the skills, specialisms and expertise of all involved
- The involvement of certain agencies such as Victim Support, mediation and other voluntary groups ensures a harm centred approach throughout
- It must link into other existing structures and some are directly connected with local Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and self-neglect/ hoarding groups
- In London another benefit is that the process allows for cross-borough working
- It considers professional judgement cases as well as referrals
- It clarifies and manages risk

## How does it support risk management?

One of the benefits of the Community MARAC approach is that throughout the process it clarifies and manages risk by providing a risk reduction plan for each case and encourages necessary information sharing across the various agencies involved.

Although the meeting has a referral system with defined parameters, agencies can submit professional judgement cases too and participants can be reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously and fully investigated by other agencies. Such cases tend to have a safeguarding or mental health element to them and usually involve vulnerable adults. The C MARAC is a great opportunity to implement an operational group answerable to the local Safeguarding Adults Board in managing high risk adult victims but it is also important that this group can undertake other types of complex cases.

The C MARAC is also an effective means to consult various partnership powers such as PSPOs and can also oversee the local community triggers process. This allows risk to be managed throughout the process and protection plans are introduced and constantly updated to ensure the safety of all concerned.

## How does it differ from a Domestic Abuse MARAC?

Although the format is similar, it does have some differences. Co-chairing with the police and council appears to be very effective and a number of Community MARACs have ASB advisors and problem-solvers attached for guidance and support.

One of the main differences is that Community MARACs consider risk management for both parties. They possess different tactics and interventions and place responsibility for each subject with the most relevant agency. Some areas have expressed that the term Community MARAC confuses partners with the local DA MARAC, so in some instances, a local decision has been made to call it by a different title but the process still underpins the principles of a Community MARAC. Community MARACs have been highlighted in the

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London Together document for transforming services for the most excluded in the capital and the Response by Revolving Doors Agency to the RSA's Metropolitan Police consultation. The process has also been identified as good practice in the latest London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding policies and procedures.

## What next?

The London ASB Advisory Service, chaired and managed by Capsticks, has developed a pan-London working group after interest was expressed by many parts of the country. Its purpose is to explore the different ways that the Community MARACs have been implemented locally and learn from their experiences. Contact Paul Dunn below further information.

## Where can I find out more?

Capsticks is hosting a training course on Community MARACs in our London office on 23 November. This one day course will give you the tools to consider implementing your own Community MARAC. The cost of the course is £189 plus VAT per person. If 3 or more people from the same organisation book this course, you'll benefit from our reduced rate of £159 plus VAT per person. Please contact Jo McLachlan for more information on [ASB@Capsticks.com](mailto:ASB@Capsticks.com) or telephone 0113 323 1068.

*Please contact Paul Dunn if there are any areas you want to discuss in more detail:*



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