



The Kingston HBV MARAC Model background

The Kingston MARAC team started a pilot hearing 'honour' based abuse (HBA) cases at a separate stand-alone MARAC in November 2021. This was due to the number of referrals to the Kingston MARAC for global majority victim survivors tripling from 2018/19 to 2020/21, with a marked increase in 'honour' based violence cases. A gap in the understanding of professionals in understanding the specific risks around HBA was also identified. Although labelled as an HBV MARAC we hear cases involving all types of harmful practices, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), gender-selective abortion, female infanticide (the intentional killing of newborn female children), dowry-related violence, and acid attacks. The majority of the HBA cases discussed have multiple perpetrators (spouses, family members, and wider community were also cited as playing a role in the HBA). This therefore makes the cases more complex and the time allocated at the monthly MARAC was not felt to be sufficient to consider all the risks involved. In addition, MARAC partners did not feel they had the specialist knowledge and skills to appropriately risk manage these types of cases. We therefore decided to use a creative commissioning approach for ad hoc consultancy from a buy and for service, to provide expert advice and guidance around risks and possible actions in the MARAC to upskill MARAC partners. We have also set up a harmful practices subgroup which leads on raising awareness and training to professionals in the borough.

Kingston HBV MARAC Model Process

- 'Honour' based abuse and forced marriage MARAC cases are identified. Kingston has a separate criteria on our MARAC referral form for 'honour' based abuse and forced marriage, making this an automatic referral. However, the MARAC Co-ordinator will also record cases as HBA if this is identified in the information on previous incidents and risks.
- The MARAC Co-ordinator contacts the MARAC chair and the specialist buy and for service for their availability for a standalone MARAC. We allocate at least 30 minutes for the case discussion so all risks and alleged perpetrators can be considered. The HBV MARAC needs to be convened within a reasonable timeframe but not within 48 hours as per the emergency MARAC protocol.
- The MARAC invite and referral details are sent out to the core MARAC panel once a time and date have been agreed.
- The HBV MARAC is held with all necessary partners attending. All risks are considered with a particular focus on impact of culture, religion and community and the specific 'honour' based abuse risks.

- The MARAC minutes and actions are disseminated to the MARAC panel following the meeting.

Case Study

Kingston MARAC received a referral from the police for a young woman of Pakistani origin who had received threats to kill from her brother following her ex-boyfriend sending sexual images of her to her family. The HBV MARAC was set up with urgency in this case as the victim/survivors' (V/S) brother and ex-boyfriend had been arrested and were in custody. The V/S was not able to return to the family home as her mother had told her she was not welcome. She had arranged to stay with a cousin in a different borough temporarily, however this was not a safe location as her family were aware of the address.

Information shared at MARAC by the police showed that there had been previous incidents involving allegations of abuse from the V/S's brother and parents which included physical abuse, controlling behaviour relating to her dressing too 'western' and having contact with boys. The V/S had also disclosed during the DASH questions that she was not allowed to go more than 20 minutes away from home and would have to be home by 7pm.

Health partners were able to share that there were more people living in the same household, which were extended family members- an uncle, aunt and their children. The probation service shared that the V/S's brother had a previous conviction of common assault against his ex-partner and was still on a community order due to this. The V/S had also told the police that her family had her passport.

During the MARAC we discussed the risks and concerns we had around not just her ex-boyfriend and brother but also the wider family and the community. We were able to put in place actions such as the police visiting the family home to get the V/S' passport, completing a HBV kit with the V/S and making a safeguarding referral for the children in the house. Following the MARAC the IDVA was able to get No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) funding from Southall Black Sisters for the V/S to go into a refuge.