

Quality Assurance of the Domestic Abuse Stalking Harassment and Honour Based Violence Abuse Risk Identification Checklist (DASH RIC)

As a team leader / senior practitioner/ designated safeguarding lead within your agency we are asking that you quality assure the Domestic Abuse Stalking Harassment and Honour Based Violence Abuse Risk Identification Checklists (DASH RIC) that are classed as high risk based on professional judgement and or severity / frequency, completed by members of your team / agency.

We ask that you quality assure the completed DASH RICs that are high risk based on professional judgement and or severity / frequency within 1-2 working days of receipt of them.

Agencies may choose to quality assure all levels of risk for DASH RICs, but we ask as a minimum that the high risk DASH RICs where professional judgement of escalation in severity / frequency are quality assured.

The MARAC does NOT provide an immediate response for high risk domestic abuse referrals. It provides a risk and safety focused response with actions to reduce risk and increase safety which may take some time to implement. If an immediate response is required, contact either or all of the following: the police, Children's Services Emergency Duty Team, Adult Services and WAIS 24hr Freephone.

The Domestic Abuse Stalking Harassment and Honour Based Violence / Abuse Risk Identification Checklist (DASH RIC) is designed to enable staff to identify the risks and level of risk a survivor, children and other vulnerable adults in the household are experiencing at the time from the perpetrator(s) of domestic abuse.

The Aim of the DASH RIC is¹:

- To help front line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'- based violence.
- To decide which cases should be referred to MARAC (High Risk) and what other support might be required. A completed form becomes an active record that can be referred to in future for case management.
- To offer a common tool to agencies that are part of the MARAC process and provide a shared understanding of risk in relation to domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and 'near misses', which underpins most recognised models of risk assessment.

The following criteria determines the level of risk identified and points to consider if it is high risk:

1. Professional judgement: if a professional has serious concerns about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the

¹ Information is provided from "SafeLives Dash risk checklist for the identification of high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence." This document includes the Dash risk checklist, Severity of Abuse grid and full IDVA practice guidance.

<http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Dash%20for%20IDVAs%20FINAL.pdf>

particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence. This judgement would be based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria 2 and/or 3 below.

2. 'Visible High Risk': the number of 'ticks' on this checklist. If you have ticked 14 or more 'yes' boxes the case would meet the MARAC referral criteria.
3. Potential Escalation: the number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic violence in the past 12 months. This criterion can be used to identify cases where there is not a positive identification of a majority of the risk factors on the list, but where abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information at MARAC. Nottinghamshire Police consider 3 or more police callouts in a 6 month period.

Please pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.

Professional Judgement

Professional Judgement can be defined as:

Applying knowledge, skills and experience, in a way that is informed by professional standards / knowledge, laws and ethical principles, to develop an opinion or decision about what should be done to best serve clients / service users.

This judgement allows professionals to utilise their understanding of the context of the situation and client / service user, their professional knowledge and their training in order to identify concerns and take relevant action.

As a team leader / senior practitioner/ designated safeguarding lead within your agency quality assuring the DASH RIC, part of this will be determining if the rationale for a case being high risk has been provided and there is enough information to evidence this. If not contact the person who completed the DASH RIC to obtain more information.

Checklist:

Things to check are correct on the DASH RIC:

- **Correct level of risk box has been ticked.**
- **The (DASH RIC) if written is easy to read.**
- **If the survivor has answered yes to a question - provide relevant information to that question.**
- **If professional judgement has been used, check clear rationale has been provided clearly stating what factors make this high risk.**
- **The MARAC Referral form has been completed for referrals to the MARAC.**
- **Referrer details including agency details and contact numbers have been added to the form.**
- **Consent – Has the survivor signed the DASH RIC? High Risk cases can be referred without consent.**