

Domestic Abuse: Edinburgh Support Structures



A briefing for professionals by the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee

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Introduction

There are support structures in Edinburgh that can help identify and manage the risk of domestic abuse on adults and children. These are listed below, and all include a degree of information sharing between agencies or between agencies and victims/survivors. There is very helpful guidance on information sharing available through SafeLives, and it can be found [here](#).

Please bear in mind that the DSDAS and the MARAC are **processes, and not services**. They may not be the most appropriate pathway for every victim/survivor.

If you are looking for specialist support services in Edinburgh rather than processes, please see the document titled 'Responding to Domestic Abuse: Trauma-Informed Practice'. Alternatively, see the [Domestic Abuse pages](#) on the City of Edinburgh Council website.

If you are concerned about a victim/survivor then refer to the previous documents titled 'Responding to a Disclosure' and 'Risk Assessment and Safety Planning' to help guide your decision around making the appropriate referrals and signposting.

Always be mindful in the advice provided in the [DASH Risk Indicator Checklist](#) and look out for indicators of high risk. If the risk is high or escalating, make the appropriate referrals and signposting. If the risk is not high or escalating, use the advice provided in the [Domestic Abuse Safety Planning Booklet](#).

DSDAS: Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland

The DSDAS gives people the right to ask if someone's partner has been abusive in the past.

DSDAS also gives Police Scotland the power to tell people that they may be at risk. This information can be given even if it is not asked for.

Where Police Scotland have information that a person may be at risk of harm from domestic abuse by their partner, they have the power to tell them.

Referring into the DSDAS

You can [click here](#) to find more information on the DSDAS process on the Police Scotland website. You can also [click here](#) to go to the DSDAS application form.

All applications for disclosure go to a Decision-Making Forum (DMF). This is a multi-agency meeting between Police Scotland and relevant agencies (for example domestic abuse services). At this meeting, professionals discuss the application. They share any prior information about the person in the application and any new information that might come to light.

A decision to disclose is then made on the basis of whether the disclosure is:

- 1. Lawful**
- 2. Necessary**
- 3. Proportional**

If the DMF decide to disclose the information, there is a discussion to decide:

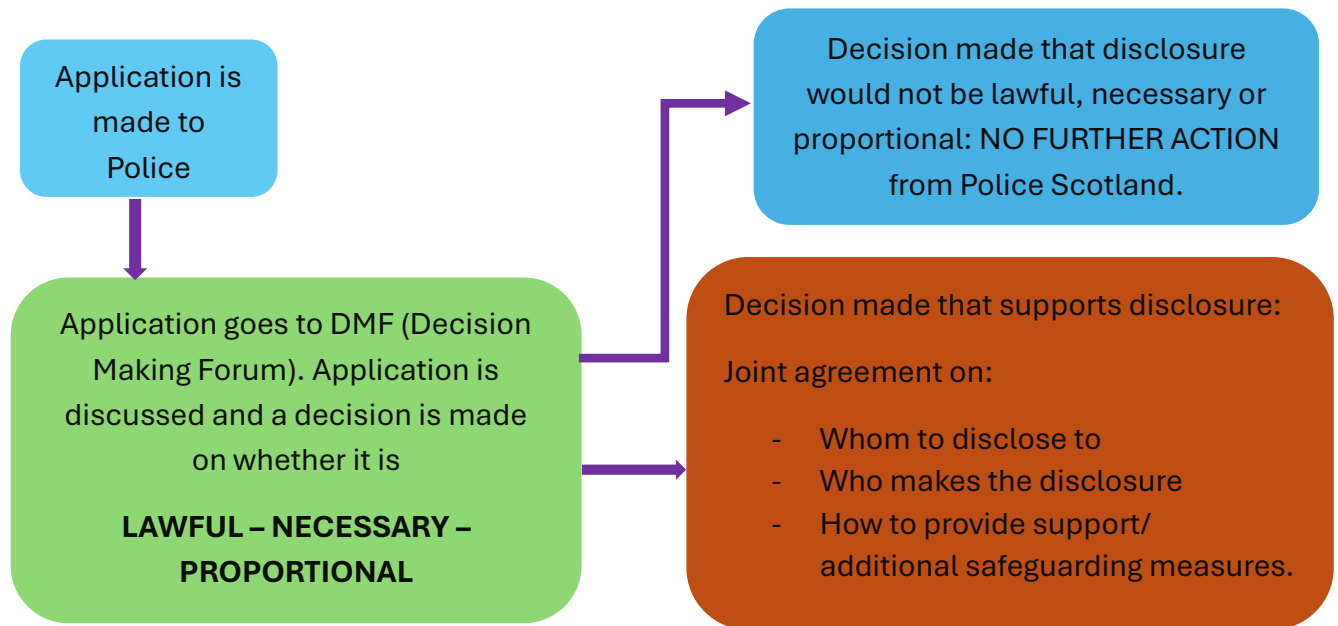
- who will make the disclosure
- to whom they will disclose information

This is important to ensure the safety of the victim and how the topic will be approached.

The aim of the scheme is to ensure that anyone who might be at risk of domestic abuse (including their children) are safe from harm.

Summary of the DSDAS Process

A short summary of the process:



MARAC: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

A MARAC is a local meeting of representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies. They meet to discuss **individuals at high risk of serious harm or murder from domestic abuse**. The meeting provides a safe environment for agencies to share relevant and proportionate information about **current risks**. After the discussion, the Chair will summarise the risks. They will ask agencies to volunteer actions to reduce risk and increase safety. These will help to develop of a tailor-made action plan.

The MARAC operates on one working assumption that no single agency or professional has a complete picture of the life of a victim. Yet, all agencies may have insights that are crucial to the victim's safety.

It is crucial to make sure that the victim is supported and their needs represented at the MARAC. This helps us to:

- manage risk
- improve and maintain their safety and
- reduce repeat victimisation.

The MARAC is an information sharing and action planning process. It must not be confused for a service or intervention.

MARAC Process and Membership

Once a case has been heard at a meeting, it will not be revisited at future MARACs unless a repeat referral is made. It is the responsibility of the agency that has taken the action to ensure that the action is completed.

In Edinburgh, the following organisations and services attend the MARAC:

- Edinburgh Women's Aid: Women's Service
- Edinburgh Women's Aid: EDDACS (Edinburgh Domestic Abuse Court Support Service)
- Shakti Women's Aid
- Police Scotland
- City of Edinburgh Council:
 - Community Justice, including Domestic Abuse Services
 - Locality Adult Services
 - Communities and Families
 - Education
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Family and Household Support Service
- NHS Lothian:
 - Accident and Emergency
 - Health Visitors
 - School Nurses