

Domestic Abuse Procedure 2022

Introduction

This procedure should be followed by all Irwell Valley colleagues who have a responsibility to log and investigate all complaints of domestic abuse and violence (DAV).

Types of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional
- Financial abuse and economic
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Using coercion and control
- Intimidation
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Honour-based violence
- Online or digital abuse

When working in our neighbourhoods it is the responsibility of all our Irwell Valley colleagues and our contractors to understand, recognise and report Domestic Abuse. When we are dealing with reports of Domestic abuse, it should be done sensitively and with the safety and support of the victim placed at the centre of our approach. In the first instance any suspicions or concerns of domestic abuse should be reported to the Community Safety Officer (DAV Case Managers). This can be done directly via a ASB1ST action raised on QL. In an emergency the first responder must contact 999 and request the appropriate emergency services without delay.

Below is a list of steps to be taken by the Case Manager (“CM”) they should follow these when they receive a report of Domestic Abuse. These are guidelines and should be followed where possible, but each case should be taken on its own merit and in line with our other policies and procedures, ensuring all safeguarding concerns are met. Within our general-let properties the Case Manager will be the Community Safety Officer for that area. Within our 50Plus and supported schemes the Case Manager will be the Independent Living Manager.

This procedure has been specifically designed into sections to allow the user to refer to relevant sections as and when required.

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1.0 Initial response

- 1.1 The victim's safety and wellbeing should be the immediate priority. Where there is an immediate risk to harm to the victim, family, or others, the appropriate emergency services MUST be contacted without delay to request immediate assistance for the victim.
- 1.2 Initial responses to DAV cases are approached from a risk management, safety planning perspective. Victim safety is paramount to how we make initial contact with a victim. We use a range of approaches and tools to ensure we can safely approach and support all victims of DAV.
- 1.3 When a report of DAV is received, a log should be made on the QL contact management system under ASB1ST, and the tree category DOM_ABUSE, 1ST_A. An action will be sent to the relevant Case Manager ("CM")
- 1.4 An email will be generated and will need to be sent to the Case Manager (CM)
- 1.5 All reports of Domestic Abuse should be logged as category A ASB and response times should fall in line with our ASB procedure for dealing with Category A ASB Cases.
- 1.6 In all reports of Domestic Abuse, the victim should (where possible) be contacted and full details of the case should be taken within one working day of the report being made to the association.
- 1.7 The victim will be appointed a single point of contact. This will be the CM. The CM will provide the victim with their direct contact details during the initial contact.
- 1.8 If the victim requests a same sex colleague as their CM, this request will be met without any unnecessary delays.
- 1.9 Initial complaints of domestic abuse maybe 'disguised' and reported as other forms of ASB, in the first instance. When dealing with ASB complaints it is the responsibility of the CM to consider during case supervisions with Community Co-ordinators (CC) if concerns exist that may require further investigation relating to potential DAV. If required, the response should be changed in accordance with this.
- 1.10 Some cases of domestic abuse will come to our attention via MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) where an external service such as the police or social services have made a referral on behalf of the victim.

2.0 Safety Planning

- 2.1 CM's work in partnership with statutory agencies and specialist DAV support services, to ensure the victim receives specialist advice and support without any unnecessary delay. The multi-disciplinary team should have clear roles and actions that they are responsible for ensuring are completed. The victim's voice should be central to their support to ensure they are empowered to make decisions in their best interests.
- 2.2 Child Protection – All DAV cases involving children MUST be referred into the local authority's Children Safeguarding team. When a child or vulnerable adult is at risk an appropriate referral should be made to Social Services or Adult Services.

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2.3 A DASH-RIC (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Indicator Checklist **MUST** be completed with every victim) ‘The First Time, Right Time’ approach is key to risk identification and victims receiving the appropriate safety planning and support:

DASH https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/gm_marac_ref.pdf

Score of 14+ ‘Yes’ responses	= MARAC referral
Score of 10 – 14 ‘Yes’ responses	= Referral to local specialist DAV service
Score of less than 10 ‘Yes’ responses	= Victim advised of local specialist DAV support and encouraged to access these services.

In addition to the standard DASH screening form, IVH follow the ‘Safe Lives’ approach to using 2 additional DASH screening tools where it is appropriate to do so:

1. S-DASH - Stalking DASH further screening form
2. H-DASH - Honour based violence further screen form

S-DASH <https://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/stalking-advice/>

H-DASH <https://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/honour-based-abuse/>

A DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence) **Risk** Identification form should be completed and emailed to MARAC@gmp.pnn.police.uk or uploaded on GM MARAC SharePoint (Case Manager’s should be registered and have access to GM MARAC SharePoint – if not please contact your manager)

IVH recognises that that the standard DASH-RIC form does not always meet the needs of all our customers and the outcome scores can appear lower for victims within the LGBTQI+ community. LGBTQI+ victims are less likely to score 14+ as the DASH form contains questions that are specifically designed to be used to support cis heterosexual women.

The Case Manager **MUST** use ‘appendix 1’ ‘ROAR’ – LGBT Professional judgement specialist considerations checklist’ with LGBTQI+ DAV victims. LGBTQI+ victims must be given additional information in relation to specific DAV LGBTQI+ support with Greater Manchester (GM) dasupport@lgbt.foundation. Within GM there is a specialist LGBT+ IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate) who works with Independent Choices <http://www.domesticabusehelpline.co.uk/> All LGBTQI+ DAV victims must be asked if they would prefer to be referred to the specialist IDVA. The LGBT+ IDVA accepts referrals from all GM locality area.

2.4 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 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

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based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk regardless of the DASH score.

- 2.5 A referral to the local MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) should be made following the above DASH-RIC guidance but by also applying Professional judgement (see above). Before referring into MARAC, the Case Manager will check if there is a current MARAC already in place for the victim.

The aims of MARAC are.

- To safeguard victims of domestic abuse
- To manage perpetrators behaviour
- Information sharing and action planning
- Make links with all other safeguarding processes i.e.) Children's services
- Representation of victim's voice and views
- Safeguard professionals

The Case Manager will attend the MARAC meeting. For further information regarding the MARAC please use the following Safe Lives link

<https://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings>

- 2.6 Target Hardening – IVH take a victim centred approach to supporting victims to remain living in their home, where it is safe to do so. The Case Manager will arrange a 'target hardening' property assessment to ensure the property is made safer and deters any adverse perpetrator behaviour. These may include sash jammers, security lights, extra bolts, chain locks, window alarms, window locks and fire-proof letter boxes.
- 2.7 Where there is an identified risk to staff safely working with the victim then appropriate safety measures must be implemented i.e.) paired visits, visit with police, visit away from the property etc.
- 2.8 The Case Manager may also request a property marker via GMP, so that the DAV risks are clear to the police in an emergency and may result in a quicker emergency response time. Property markers are requested via the Public Protection Unit.

3.0 SUPPORT

- 3.1 IVH take a victim focused approach to supporting our customers who experience DAV. IVH use a harm reduction, person centred, trauma-informed approach to support all victims of DAV. IVH work within wider Community Safety Partnerships across GM to ensure appropriate support is offered to all victims, whilst risks are identified, understood, and managed.

- 3.2 Services that can provide support include:

- In-house Tenancy Sustainment Team
- In-house Rent Support Team
- In-house Community Co-ordinators
- Local Authorities

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- Independent organisations including charities and specialist support groups, i.e.) Karma Nirvana – Honour based violence and forced marriage, Women’s Aid
- Health & Social care teams
- Other housing providers
- Police (including victim support)
- Refuges and outreach services, i.e.) Fort Alice

3.3 All victims of DAV should be given information for their local specialist DAV support agencies and understand how when and how they can contact these services. Referrals into specialist DAV support services should be made with the consent of the victim or in accordance with the above DASH-RIC/MARAC referral process.

3.4 All high-risk DAV victims will be allocated an IDVA via the MARAC process.

3.5 Children are victims of DAV regardless of whether they experience the abuse directly or indirectly. All DAV cases involving children should be referred into the local authority Children’s Safeguarding team, regardless of consent.

3.6 IVH Tenancy Sustainment Team

Where a victim of domestic abuse requires additional tenancy support and gives consent, a referral to the IVH Tenancy Sustainment Team will be made raising a referral via action code TEN-1STSUS via QL. This will generate into a referral for a Tenancy Sustainment Coach who will open a Tenancy Sustainment case.

3.7 Support with Joint Tenancies

If any tenancy is a joint tenancy, then both the tenants will have joint responsibility to adhere to the terms of the tenancy and will be liable for rent and any incurred rent arrears. Both the victim and perpetrator should be advised to seek independent legal advice in relation to their tenancy. They will also be given the contact details of their local Citizens Advice, Welfare Rights, and the local authority housing options team. IVH will support the victim to retain possession of the tenancy where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Any amendments to any tenancy should be victim focused and should ensure the safety of all involved all amendments are done in line with other policies and procedures set out by the association.

Financial Support

Further financial support is available to DAV victims in relation to managing household finances, applying for benefits, and accessing specialist debt advice, if appropriate. If a victim needs to temporarily live away from their home, the Case Manager will inform the Rent Support Officer and seek specific tenancy advice/support in relation to rent payments. It may require support to make an application for housing benefit, discretionary housing payments, Council Tax Support, Universal Credit, Child Benefit etc. External grant funding may be sought dependent upon the victim’s individual circumstances. Each case will be assessed on its own merit with appropriate additional finances support offered.

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3.8 IVH work with victims from diverse backgrounds. We recognise that some victims will require additional support to overcome barriers for us to effectively support them.

3.9 Language & Culture

All IVH employees have access to Language Line & NRCPD registered sign language interpreters.

Language translation, braille and sign language support will be provided to ensure there is effective communication and understanding.

<https://signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/domestic-abuse/> - BSL video toolkits

<https://www.nrcpd.org.uk/> - Find a registered NRCPD sign language interpreter

Family members, friends and children of the victim will not be asked to provide language support during support meetings. This may prevent the victim's voice been fully heard and understood and risks may go undetected. The CM will not conduct sensitive meetings in front of children as it is inappropriate for children to be present during sensitive conversations relating to DAV.

The Case Manager will check if the victim requires a same sex translator/interpreter and adhere to this request if it is required. When booking a translator/interpreter the CM will consider if it is appropriate to meet in person or conduct the meeting by telephone. The CM will also consider the victim's cultural background, religious beliefs/non-belief and seek to find a good translator match for the victim. The CM will book out an appropriate length of time, with the option to extend the meeting should the victim make a disclosure and further time is required. The CM will ensure the translator is provided with an understanding of their role and the purpose of the meeting, in advance of it taking place. Providing clear instruction and guidance to the translator/interpreter seeks to avoid any mistakes or misunderstandings occurring (i.e.) where there is no direct word translation, the translator MUST advise the CM. This will allow the CM to either rephrase, ask for alternative word options or provide an explanation of the meaning of the word. Culturally specific phrases, similes and metaphors are not to be used during language translation/interpretation as these can cause confusion and misunderstandings.

Case Manager's will explore victim's culture, beliefs, and non-beliefs during the initial stages of working with a victim. This will enable any culturally specific practises and beliefs which are important to the victim to be understood, so that the CM is respectful and person-centred in their approach with the victim.

Where there are culturally specific practises are illegal and abusive under UK law the CM will be unsure this is understood by both the victim and perpetrator and that appropriate action is taken to keep the victim safe. Where the CM suspects that a victim, child or other may be at risk of harm of cultural practises e.g., Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour-based violence, Exorcism practise, Forced Marriage, underage marriage, these will be immediately reported to the Police and other appropriate statutory services without delay.

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3.10 Gender

IVH recognises that victims of domestic abuse are predominantly women. However, men are also the victims of domestic abuse, but may not report or reach out for support as frequently as women. IVH also recognises that gender is fluid and that victims may identify as transgender, non-binary or by other gender terminologies.

The Case Manager will check with all victims which pronoun they use, and which gender they identify with. The Case Manager will use gender neutral language and refer to victims and perpetrators by name, rather than by their gender. Where a victim has legally changed their name or prefers to be known by another name IVH will ensure that they use the victims preferred name.

IVH recognises that traditional gender structured barriers exist within some external DAV support services i.e.) the Freedom Programme. IVH recognise that transgender and non-binary DAV victims may want to access similar but alternatively structured programmes and support. The CM will ensure that all LGBTQI+ victims are aware of the LGBT+ Centre DAV Support services and Freedom Programme which focuses on healthy relationships but does not focus on gender and sex.

Further information and contact details can be found via the link:

<https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/service.page?id=kmMCSy239Co&directorychannel=2-6>

3.11 LGBTQI+

IVH recognises that some of the external DAV structures that we may operate within are culturally heteronormative. Processes and screening tools such as the standard DASH-RIC form does not always meet the needs of all our customers and the outcome scores can appear lower for victims within the LGBTQI+ community. LGBTQI+ victims are less likely to score 14+ as the DASH form contains questions that are specifically designed to be used to support cis heterosexual women. IVH will use the 'ROAR' appendix 1 form in addition to the standard DASH-RIC for LGBTQI+ victims to ensure fairness and equality for all our customers.

3.12 Vulnerable Adults/Disabilities

IVH recognises that some victim's options and choices may appeared be limited in relation to accessing DAV support services and staying safe. Victims may have other vulnerabilities and disabilities that impacts their ability to independently access services. The CM will seek to identify any additional support measures that are required to support vulnerable/disabled victims of DAV. The CM will ensure that adequate support resources and provisions are provided to ensure that fair and equal access to services is provided.

3.13 Older People

On average, older victims experience abuse for twice as long before seeking help as those aged under 61 and nearly half have a disability. Older clients are underrepresented among domestic abuse services. Generational attitudes towards relationships mean some older victims might accept the abuse as "the way it's always been". When working with older people the Case Manager will explore with the victim some of their wider contextual concerns to fully assess their support needs and make

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extra considerations as to potential barriers that may prevent an older person engaging with support i.e.) generational attitudes and stigma, traditional roles and previous societal of acceptance 'putting up this the abuse', potential external family pressures, caring responsibilities, mobility issues, illness, frailty, detrimental financial impact, memory problems and fluctuating capacity. The Case Manager will work in partnership with Adult and Older Persons services to ensure older victims needs are fully understood and that they are supported to access appropriate services and stay safe.

Older women may be from a time where it was not socially acceptable to talk about problems in their relationships; where women's roles were confined to the home and divorce or separation were taboo.

<https://safelives.org.uk/spotlight-1-older-people-and-domestic-abuse> - Further Older Persons Guidance & Advice

3.14 Children & Young People

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 now recognises children as victims of domestic abuse. Historically children have often been the hidden victims of domestic abuse. Children who see, hear, and witness domestic abuse are adversely affected. Children's voices can go unheard and unseen. The long-term emotional impact of 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (ACE's) can negatively impact on the mental and physical development of the child into their adulthood. Ultimately ACE's can contribute to a reduce life-expectancy for that child in later life. The Case Manager will ensure that any DAV cases involving children are referred into Children Services within each GM locality. The Case Manager will work in partnership with Children's Service to ensure that child's voice and wishes are heard, their daily experience is known by services, and the impact of the domestic abuse for that child is understood and acted upon.

Young people in the 16 to 17 age group can also be victims of domestic violence and abuse. IVH works in partnership with Youth/Young Persons Services GM wide to offer additional emotional, financial, housing, and educational/employment support. Young people to come forward and get the support they need, through a helpline or specialist service support.

- **AVA project** website at avaproject.org.uk
- **NSPCC** website at www.nspcc.org.uk
- **ATL** website at www.atl.org.uk

4.0 Training

4.1 All frontline colleagues receive the following training:

- Basic domestic abuse training.
- Have a good understanding and awareness of domestic abuse.
- Can recognise signs of domestic abuse and are able to report incidents of domestic abuse.
- An understanding that reports of domestic abuse can be made via many differs sources, including through other parties or witnesses.

4.2 All CMs responsible for dealing with domestic abuse cases should:

- Have the appropriate specialist training in dealing with domestic abuse victims and alleged perpetrators and be trained in completing the DASH risk assessment.

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- Be given regular and up to date training in-line with changes in legislation and changes in practice within Local Authorities on effectively dealing with domestic incidents.
- Be able to competently complete an inhouse vulnerability risk assessment and make referrals where required to relevant organisations.
- Recognise that LGBTQI+ victims can face additional barriers to accessing DAV support and the standard DASH-RIC can give lower scores for a victim who is at high risk.

4.2 We will ensure that there is:

- Access to GM MARAC SharePoint contact in place with MARAC leads across all Local Authorities, to check if our customers have been referred to MARAC.
- At least two colleagues who can comprehensively check and assist colleagues with completing MARAC DASH risk assessments.
- At least one domestic violence champion available to offer support and assistance to colleagues dealing with domestic abuse cases.

5.0 Tools

5.1 In some cases it may be suitable for IVH to take legal action against a perpetrator or seek the assistance other statutory agencies such as the police, probation, and children’s services to use a range legal intervention measures to disrupt and deter abusive, harassing, and intimidating behaviour.

5.2 Legal tools

Injunction orders, including:

- A Non-Molestation Order
- An Occupation Order
- Restraining Order
- Anti-social Behaviour Injunction
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DPVO)
- Bail conditions
- License conditions
- Prohibited Steps Order
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (‘Clare’s Law’)
- Child Protection Plans
- Supervised contact around accessing any children
- Care Orders/Partial Interim Care Orders
- Demotion of Tenancy
- Closure Order or Partial Closure Order
- Notice Seeking Possession
- Eviction

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6.0 Review and Feedback

- 6.1 Each case will be reviewed in line with our Domestic Abuse Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Complaints policy.
- 6.2 The Tenancy Services Manager will be responsible for spot checking cases to ensure consistency and efficiency in dealing with cases. Any issues raised will be addressed and relevant training offered, where required.
- 6.3 Where legal action is being considered with a DAV case, the Case Manager will seek legal advice prior to making decisions on dealing with cases of domestic abuse and violence.
- 6.4 During case closure victims will be asked for feedback in relation to the support and actions IVH have taken. Feedback can be given verbally or sent via email to with the Case Manager or the Tenancy Services Manager.

7.0 Confidentiality

- 7.1 Confidentiality when dealing with cases of domestic abuse is very important. Information relating to DAV cases includes personal and special category data. Victims should be advised as to how their data will be handled, stored, and shared. No information should be shared with any other person or organisation, including referral agencies, without the consent or permission being granted, unless there is a serious risk or concerns of serious harm or risk to children or vulnerable adults. In these cases, our safeguarding policy and procedure should be followed.
- 7.2 When a management move or forwarding address is given or known to the association this should not be shared with any other person or organisation without the consent of the victim.
- 7.3 All colleagues should be aware of the various methods perpetrators will use to access personal information about their victims, this can include requesting information direct from the organisation in several different forms. Colleagues must be vigilant and aware that victims of DAV may be coerced, controlled, and forced to give IVH permission to speak to the perpetrator. IVH colleagues have the right to refuse to share information if they suspect the victim is being forced to give permission to disclose information.

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‘ROAR’
Stonewall Housings
LGBT* Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service

(Pilot) LGBT* professional judgement special considerations checklist –

This pilot document is a set of LGBT* specific ‘special considerations’ to be used in-conjunction with the SafeLives DASH-RIC. Its purpose is to inform your professional judgement when assessing the risk associated with domestic abuse or HBV experienced by LGBT* people. ‘Yes’ answers indicate a heightened risk for consideration under professional judgement only.

(Please do not add to the DASH-RIC score.)

Organisation	Client Reference Number
Date of assessment:	
Gender	
Is your gender the same as that assigned at birth?	
Do you identify as intersex or non-binary?	
Preferred pronoun	
Sexuality	

Appendix 1

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NB: Trans* or T* is an umbrella term to describe a broad spectrum of gender identities that include transgender, intersex, gender queer or non-binary people.

		Yes (Tick)	Comments
1	Is this your first relationship since identifying as an LGB and/or T person?		
2	Has (.....) threatened to out or has outed you to family, work, children, friends, education, services, religious or other communities regarding: Your gender identity Your sexuality Your HIV status		
3	Has (.....) any history of hate crime/incidents, harassment, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic views or criminal charges related to the above?		
4	Has (.....) threatened to withdraw/ disrupt contact with children, due to your ... Sexuality? Gender identity?		

5	<p>Do you use non prescription drugs/chems (G, Tina, Methadrone etc) alcohol?</p> <p>Do you have concerns about consent when using drugs/chems/ alcohol?</p> <p>Does (...)coerce you into using chems/ alcohol?</p>		
6	<p>Do you feel that you are at risk of contracting HIV , HEP C or any other STI?</p>		
7	<p>Does (.....) try to prevent you from expressing your gender identity or refuse to relate to you in your chosen gender identity?</p>		
8	<p>Does (.....) try to prevent you from accessing essential medications, surgery, services or other medical treatments?</p>		
9	<p>As an LGBT* person do you fear or have you experienced 'honour based' violence or forced marriage as a result of your family/ religion/ culture/communities beliefs</p>		

	regarding sexuality/ gender identity?		
10	Does () identify as		
	Lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Gay	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Heterosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Trans	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Intersex	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Non-binary	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cisgender	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is there more than one person involved in the abuse?		
11	Does (.....) blame the abuse on your sexuality or gender identity?		.
12	Have you ever experienced or been threatened with: conversion therapies / corrective rape / exorcisms/ talisman/ corrective behaviours		
13	Has (.....) threatened you with being taken out of the country to a place where there is an increased risk due to your sexuality/gender identity?		

	Is a report to the Home Office a concern?		
14	Has (.....) attempted to isolate you from support?		
15	As an LGB and or T person, are you reluctant to approach services?		
	Or have you been refused access to services or inappropriately referred?		
16	Do you have concerns about safety online- by (.....)? i.e. FB/Twitter/Grindr/Gaydar/girls/trans friendly		
17	Do other characteristics also feature in the abuse you experience or make you more susceptible? For example:		
	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Class/financial disadvantage	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Ethnicity		

	Gender		
	Immigration Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Pregnancy/childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Marriage/civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Religion/belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	

SafeLives	
DASH RIC Score	

Has this case been taken to MARAC?

Were there gaps in service provision available

Further Comments/ Information

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