

## **NI32: Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence**

### **Advice to inform Government Office negotiations with local areas on developing improvement targets**

**This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Target Negotiation Brief for NI32.**

This guidance aims to support Government Offices in negotiating specific targets for NI32 with local areas through the LAA refresh process.

This guidance, along with the spreadsheets that accompany it, provides indicative numbers for considering what target may be appropriate for a given area. It is not intended to be interpreted as specifying 'mandatory' target levels, although there are certain considerations for negotiations in order to make targets meaningful.

#### **Introduction**

Tackling domestic violence is a major priority for the Home Office, and is included as a key part of PSA 23 (priority action 1); Reduce the most serious violence, including tackling serious sexual offences and domestic violence.

The tackling of domestic violence is most directly represented in the National Indicator Set for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships by NI32; Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence.

The intention to reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence will be measured by the proportion of cases reviewed at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) in a 12 month period that had also been seen by the same MARAC within the 12 months preceding the review. This will clearly only measure repeat incidents of the highest risk cases of domestic violence (as only the most serious cases would be expected to reach MARAC).

## Definitions

For the purposes of this indicator, a case should be defined as a combination of a victim and perpetrator (or groups of perpetrators), being reviewed at the same MARAC.

Once a case has been taken to MARAC it remains flagged as a 'MARAC case' for a total of 12 months after the most recent MARAC review (i.e. if a case is seen at MARAC in January only it will be flagged for 12 months from this date. If this case is then reviewed at MARAC in the April of the same year then the case will be flagged for 12 months from April).

In a given 12 month period, the case will be counted each time it is reviewed at MARAC (i.e. if the same case is reviewed at MARAC meetings in both January and February in the same 12 months then it will count as two cases).

MARACs are expected to develop safety plans which are timely and realistic and are discharged as quickly as possible. Ideally actions should have been completed by the next MARAC.

All cases seen or reviewed at a MARAC are a consequence of at least one incident involving criminal behaviour<sup>1</sup> being reported to at least one MARAC agency and then referred to the MARAC. Reporting of the incident to the police is not compulsory but cases must meet the local MARAC referral thresholds. Multiple incidents occurring between MARAC meetings only result in one MARAC review.

For the purposes of this indicator, a repeat case occurs when a case that is reviewed at a MARAC has also been seen or reviewed at the same MARAC or a different MARAC within the same Local Area Agreement within the preceding 12 months (from the review). Each repeat case will also be counted each time it is reviewed in a given 12 month period (i.e. If a case first comes to MARAC in January and then is reviewed in February and July this will count as two repeats). If a case was reviewed at a different MARAC outside of the Local Area Agreement within the preceding 12 months, this will not be counted as a repeat.

For LAA areas containing more than one MARAC please see page 11 for advice on target setting.

---

<sup>1</sup> Using the CAADA definition of incidents where any of the following types of behaviour has taken place:

- Violence or threats of violence to the victim, or
- Where there is a pattern of stalking or harassment, or
- Where rape or sexual abuse is disclosed

Any of these categories would in fact be defined normally as criminal behaviour if they became known to the police.

It is possible for a case to go to MARAC where there is more than one perpetrator. This will be counted as one case and will be reviewed if there are any incidents with any of the named perpetrators. However, if the victimisation of an individual by a named perpetrator in a MARAC case stops and then that individual is victimised by another person this would be a 'new' MARAC case and not a repeat.

The following DO NOT constitute a repeat case:

- Where a case is reviewed at the MARAC involving the same victim but a different perpetrator or group of perpetrators.
- Where a case is reviewed at the MARAC involving the same perpetrator but a different victim.
- Where an incident occurs which does not constitute a repeat and is therefore not reviewed at the MARAC. This could be an incident not involving criminal behaviour, for example the victim being shouted at by the offender in a public space such as a park. A MARAC should **not** review a case unless there has been an incident involving criminal behaviour. If any such reviews **are** undertaken, they will not be counted for the purposes of this national indicator. However that criminal behaviour can be noted by any MARAC agency and not just the police, probation or YOT.
- Where the same combination of victim and perpetrator is involved, but is reviewed at a different MARAC outside of the LAA area. This is clearly a repeat in human terms, however for the purpose of this indicator, will not be counted.
- Cases which are discussed at a MARAC meeting but for information purposes only. This could be, for example, because the perpetrator is due to be released from prison.
- Where a case was reviewed at the MARAC more than 12 months previously, and there was not a repeat incident in the initial 12 months following the case review.

The final target is measured by:  $(x/y)*100$

Where: x = number of *repeat* cases reviewed at the MARAC between April 2010 and March 2011.

And: y = *total* number of cases reviewed at the MARAC between April 2010 and March 2011.

**The *baseline* period for this indicator is the financial year 2008/9. However, as comprehensive baseline data will not be available to inform target negotiations, the most recent data available will be used instead. As targets will be framed in the LAAs as rates expressed as a percentage, rather than changes compared to baseline, this “official” baseline has only a limited role in the targets as they appear in the LAA.**

Established MARACs are encouraged to maintain the volume of cases being seen at meetings. There is therefore an expectation that throughput of cases will not fall greatly below the baseline year volume. Indeed many immature MARACs would expect the volume of cases reviewed to increase. The target for this indicator should not be achieved through an intentional reduction in the volume of cases seen by a MARAC. Rather, attention should be paid to the recommended

volume of cases and the mix of referrals between police and non-police agencies. CAADA will look at this as part of their continuous assessment of operating MARACs and will provide Government Offices with guidance on the volume of case-load expected for each MARAC..

### **General approaches to developing improvement targets**

Many areas have MARACs which have been in operation for a relatively short period of time, or are currently in the process of establishing MARACs. This limits the data available for target setting. For this reason, in terms of approaches to target setting, there are three distinct groups of MARACs, which should be considered separately:

#### **1. MARACs with less than 15 months data as of November 2008**

In the first 12 months, the data on repeat cases collected by a MARAC is not comparable with data from more mature MARACs. This is because the MARAC has not been in operation for long enough to build up a “previous 12 months” of cases from which repeat cases could potentially be drawn. As the MARAC progresses through its first 12 months, the pool of previous cases from which repeat cases could be drawn is increasing. Data from mature MARACs shows that the rate of repeat cases increases as the pool of previous cases is built up. This early data is not reflective of what the rate may look like in the future, hence it is not suitable for use in target setting. From month 12 to month 14, the repeat rate from each month draws on a complete history of cases. However, to set a target on 2 or 3 months of such data is not statistically robust.

Therefore, for these MARACs, an average rate of repeat cases can be used as a reference from which to set targets. This rate is the average rate of repeats experienced by mature MARACs (those with over 24 months data), for which data is available, and is presented as a band of values, 28 % – 34 %. It is advised that the target be set below the lower level of this band, and this is the figure which appears in the spreadsheet to inform target negotiations.

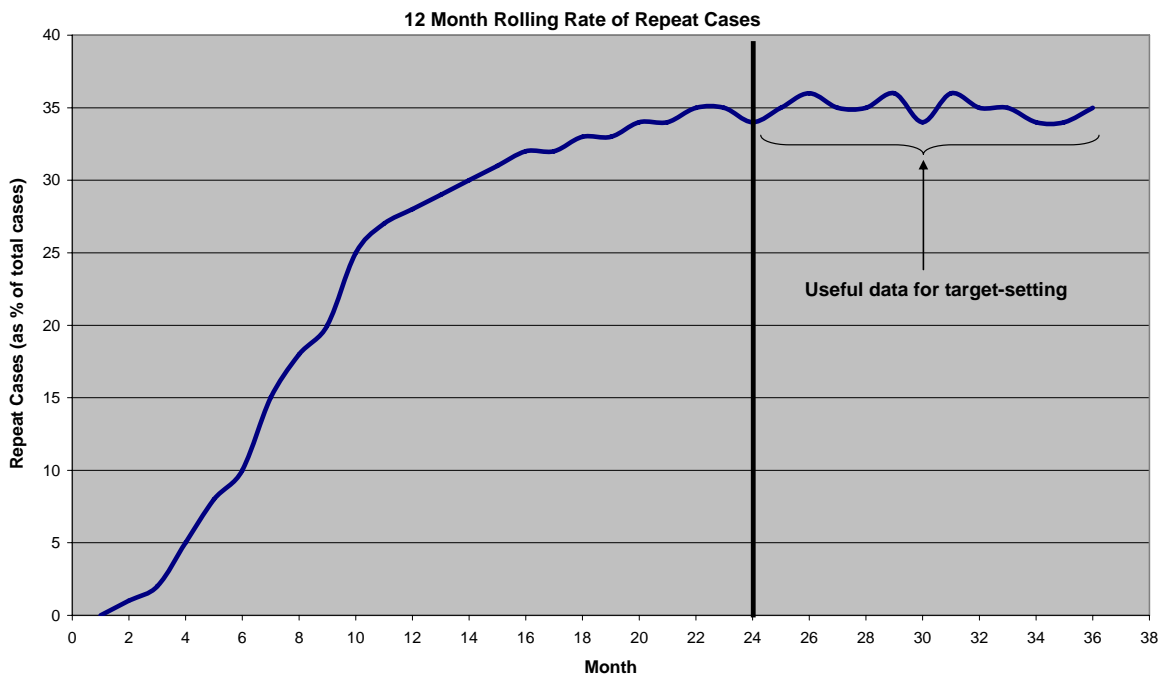
#### **2. MARACs with at least 24 months data as of November 2008**

By 24 months, 12 month rolling figures of rates of repeat cases can be considered mature. This is because at this point all cases reviewed in months 13 – 24 have had a full 12 months of data to draw potential repeats from.

For these MARACs, they can use their own current performance as the reference point for their target (rather than the average rate). Such MARACs will be expected to achieve a reduction on their present rate of repeat cases. An indicative rate of repeats that each of these MARACs would be expected to achieve is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

It is possible that achievement of this rate will leave a MARAC above the average rate figure. In such a situation, negotiations may wish to utilise the average rate as a reference point in setting a more challenging reduction.

The following graph shows the 'typical' maturation of the repeat rate for the first 36 months of a MARACs life.



### 3. MARACs with between 15 and 23 months data as of November 2008

These MARACs should set targets with reference to both their own data, and also the average rate.

These MARACs may have a few months data which provide a fair comparison with what performance may look like in the future.

After the initial 12 months, data from any subsequent MARAC meetings have a full 12 months worth of previous cases from which potential repeat cases can be drawn, so data from these months is a fair reflection of the ongoing measure. In order for these data to be used, a 12-month rolling average rate should NOT be calculated, as this would provide an artificially low estimate. This is because the earliest points of the 12-month period would not have a full 12-month period from which to draw repeat cases.

The figures provided in the spreadsheet are a rolling average rate calculated using the most recent available data. For example, if a MARAC has 15 months data available (12 months + 3 months) then a 3-month average rate will be given. If a MARAC has 23 months data available (12 months + 11 months) then an 11 month average rate will be provided.

Also provided is a figure of how many months worth of data this covers (for example, if the MARAC is only 15 months old, then this 'valid' rate will only be drawn from 3 months worth of

data – but if the MARAC is 23 months old then this ‘valid’ rate will be drawn from 11 months worth of data.

The number of months from which this ‘valid’ rate is drawn is very important to the weight that should be given to the two figures in target negotiation. As a general rule:

- If this ‘valid’ rate is based on 3 to 5 months data, it should be treated very cautiously, as only a small part of the year is represented. Therefore targets should largely be negotiated on the basis of the average rate (see above, as for MARACs with less than 12 months of data), although the emerging ‘valid’ rate provided can be used for additional context to these negotiations.
- If this ‘valid’ rate is based on 6 to 8 months data, then it can be used more actively in the negotiation process, although as it is still only drawn from a limited part of the year, the average rate should be given at least equal weight in the negotiation of targets.
- If this ‘valid’ rate is based on 9 to 11 months data, then this can be treated with a fairly high degree of confidence as it is drawn from 75% of the year. The average rate should still be used as a reference point, but in these cases reduction targets can be set largely on the basis of these figures from the MARAC concerned.

While these figures provide the basis for target negotiations, there is not an expectation that in all cases they will match the final targets agreed. Other factors, such as local knowledge of any distinctive nature of the case load of a particular MARAC, or any changes that are likely to take place, can also be used in the negotiations (and it is important to take into account the impact that other ‘competing’ priorities might have on what is achievable, and the resources that are available). The following are recommendations for minimum criteria :

- For MARACs with less than 15 months data, the target rate should not be higher than X, which represents the upper level of the estimated average rate.
- For MARACs with at least 24 months of data, the target rate should not be higher than the value given in the attached spreadsheet.
- For MARACs with between 15 and 23 months of data, the target rate should be lower than at least one of the above (in the above two bullets).

**REMINDER** The target rates set here are to be achieved by the end of financial year 2010/11 if they are to qualify for PRG payments.

## What information is being made available to inform LAA negotiations?

The data in the attached analysis for this measure has been produced in order to inform LAA negotiations.

For each MARAC, the following information is provided:

- Number of months in operation
- 'Average' repeat rate at 24 months, (same for all)
- Volume of total cases and repeat cases for the most recent 12 months (for information only)

### For MARACS with 24+ months data

- Total number of cases seen at MARACs (12 month rolling data)
- Number of repeat cases (12 month rolling data)
- Rate of repeat cases (12 month rolling data)
- Significant reduction on rate of repeat cases

### For MARACS with 15+ months data

- Total number of cases at MARACs (average using 'valid' months)
- Number of repeat cases (average using 'valid' months)
- Rate of repeat cases (average using 'valid' months)
- Significant reduction on rate of repeat cases
- Number of months data the rate uses

### For MARACS with less than 15 months data

- Number of cases to date
- Number of repeat cases to date

As discussed above, the figures on the volume of total cases and repeat cases provided for all MARACs should **not** be used in target negotiation. They are provided for information only.

## Working with estimates from the different approaches: worked examples

Table 1 on page 9 gives some worked examples as to the types of reductions that might be negotiated for MARACs based on the methods described above.

### *Scenario 1: Setting a reduction target for a MARAC with less than 15 months data*

Town A has a MARAC that has been in operation for just 10 months. Therefore, any **rate** figures produced (in terms of rate of repeat cases as a proportion of cases) would not be applicable to future performance (for reasons described above). Therefore, the important figure here is the rate based on available data for mature MARACs (28% - 34%). *So the target for the MARAC in Town A should be set at (or no higher than) 28%.*

### *Scenario 2: Setting a reduction target for a MARAC with 24+ months data*

Town B has a MARAC that has been in operation for 37 months, which means that it has more than the 24 months data necessary to set a target based on its own data alone. The current rate for Town B is 38%, but the key figure here is the suggested reduced rate, which is 31%. *The target for the MARAC in Town B should therefore be set at (or no higher than) 31%.*

For the MARAC in Town B, this figure (31%) is greater than the average rate suggested by data from mature MARACs. There might, therefore, be a case for negotiating a reduction that took the MARAC down toward or below the average rate of 28%.

### *Scenario 3: MARAC has between 15 and 17 months data*

Town D has a MARAC that has been in operation for 15 months. Therefore only the most recent 3 months of data can be used to calculate a rate that is valid in terms of comparing to future performance. From these three months of data, the rate is calculated as 41%, and the suggested reduced rate is 32%. However, this data only covers a small part of the year so should be treated with extreme caution. Therefore, the important figure here is the average rate for mature MARACs of 28%. However, the rate currently emerging from the MARAC itself can be used to add context to negotiations. *So the target for the MARAC in Town D should be set at (or no higher than) 28%, although the emerging rate from this MARAC (32%) can be used for context.*

For the MARAC in Town D, its emerging average was slightly greater than the average rate for mature MARACs (28%). If it had however been a lot lower than 28%, this may have led to a possible discussion of the target being set more ambitiously. However, the important figure would remain the average rate.

#### *Scenario 4: MARAC has between 18 and 20 months data*

Town C has a MARAC that has been in operation for 18 months. Therefore only the most recent 6 months of data can be used to calculate a rate that is valid in terms of comparing to future performance. From these six months of data, the rate is calculated as 33%, and the suggested reduced rate is 25%. However, this data only covers part of the year so should be treated with some caution. Therefore the average rate of 28% is also important here. Both figures should be consulted in the negotiation process. In this example, 28% may not be considered sufficiently challenging when 6 months data shows the MARAC already heading towards this, although 25% may be considered too ambitious given that it is below the average rate and based on incomplete data. *So the target for the MARAC in Town C may fall somewhere between 28% (the average rate) and 25% (the suggested reduced rate using incomplete data), and the target should not exceed both these figures.*

#### *Scenario 5: MARAC has between 21 and 23 months data*

Town E has a MARAC that has been in operation for 23 months. Therefore the most recent 11 months of data can be used to calculate a repeat rate. From these 11 months data, the rate is calculated as 35%, and the suggested reduced rate is 30%. This data covers most of the year so should be treated with a fairly high degree of confidence. Therefore, the important figure here is the suggested reduced rate (30%). However, the average rate can also be used to add context to negotiations. *So the target for the MARAC in Town D should be set at (or no higher than) 30%, although the average rate can be used for context.*

The most likely use of the national average in this context is if it is lower than the suggested reduced rate, as in this case. There may be room to negotiate a target that is a little more challenging that would take the rate to or nearer to the average rate of 28%.

### **Low Repeat Rates**

For some MARACs, the current rate of repeat cases and/or the significant reduction on the rate of repeat cases given in the table of data to inform target negotiations may be very low (below 10%). Where this is the case, it will be important for GOs to explore the possible reasons why this might be the case in deciding on a reasonable target (e.g. does the low repeat rate indicate data collection issues).

## **Use of Significant Reduction Estimates**

In relation to the point above, for some MARACs the significant reduction on the repeat rate may be big. In these instances special attention should be paid to the maturity of the MARAC when negotiating targets. In particular, where a MARAC with a low repeat rate has limited maturity (15 – 20 months), the calculations will be based upon a limited period of data, potentially resulting in a big suggested reduction as the significant reduction on the repeat rate. In these cases, the average rate is likely to provide a more helpful guide for target negotiation.

In addition, the volume of cases seen by the MARAC should be taken into consideration; if the MARAC in question has reviewed a small number of cases, the significant reduction on the rate of repeat case should be treated with some caution.

MARAC NAME	MONTHS IN OPERATION	MATURE MARAC AVERAGE RATE	AVERAGE RATE FOR TARGET SETTING	TOTAL CASES	REPEAT CASES	RATE OF REPEAT CASES	SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION ON RATE OF REPEAT CASES	# MONTHS DATA USED FOR THE RATE	VOLUME DATA FOR INFORMATION ONLY (MOST RECENT 12 MONTHS)	
									CASES REVIEWED	REPEAT CASES
Town A	10	28% - 34%	28%						212	28
Town B	37	28% - 34%	28%	250	95	38%	31%	25	250	95
Town C	18	28% - 34%	28%	87	29	33%	25%	6	160	39
Town D	15	28% - 34%	28%	44	18	41%	32%	3	271	84
Town E	23	28% - 34%	28%	199	70	35%	30%	11	201	73

Table 1: Data to inform target negotiations.  
Source: CAADA.

### **LAA areas containing more than one MARAC**

Some LAA areas will contain more than one MARAC.

This poses a challenge, as these MARACs are likely to be of different ages, and will therefore have different datasets available. Producing combined rates for these MARACs risks producing figures based on data from MARACs with insufficient maturity to contribute meaningfully to any combined average.

Therefore, targets should be negotiated using the methodologies described in this document for each MARAC in the LAA area separately. The target that would be entered into the LAA would then be an *average* of these figures; achievement of this target (or otherwise) would be measured by an average of the rates of the MARACs in the LAA at the end of the target period.

This means that if one MARAC did not reach the agreed level, the LAA target could still be met if the other MARAC(s) exceed their targets. Conversely, this also means it is possible that if a MARAC fails to reach its target, the result could be that the overall LAA target is missed if other MARACs do not compensate enough. It should be noted that at the end of the LAA period, only MARACs with more than 24 months data will be included in the calculation of the rate of repeat cases.