

April 2026

GSAB MARM: Multi-Agency Risk Management Practice Guidance



Gloucestershire
Safeguarding Adults
Board

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April 2026



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Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board

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Guidance Summary

Criteria for Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM)

The agency with the best working relationship with the person at risk will usually lead on the MARM process. However, in particularly complex cases, or where the referring agency lacks experience or confidence in arranging and chairing multi-agency meetings, the MARM Coordinator may provide some additional support (such as co-chairing the initial meeting).

There may be instances where it is appropriate for the lead agency (who holds chairing responsibility) to change during the course of the MARM process, in order to support the best possible outcomes for the individual. Any such changes must be communicated promptly to all relevant agencies involved in the MARM, including the MARM Coordinator.

Consent to hold a MARM should be sought from the adult wherever possible, and they should be actively encouraged to participate in the process. However, the absence of consent does not prevent a MARM from proceeding in situations where significant risks have been identified.

Under common law, professionals may act without consent if it is necessary to prevent serious harm, in line with the principle of necessity.

To consider an individual for a MARM, the following criteria must be met:

1. The adult **has mental capacity** to make decisions about their life.
2. There is a **risk of serious harm or death**, which is imminent or likely, and arises from issues such as:
 - Medical self-neglect
 - Homelessness and rough sleeping
 - Rapidly deteriorating health (physical or mental)
 - Persistent refusal of essential services or disengagement
 - Substance misuse
 - Targeting by others (e.g. hate crime, sexual violence, anti-social behaviour)

Serious harm includes life-threatening, or traumatic, physical or psychological injury.

3. The case **does not meet the criteria for a Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry**.
4. There may also be a **significant risk to others**, including:
 - Community safety concerns (e.g. cuckooing, drug activity, hate crime)
 - Environmental hazards (e.g. vermin, hoarding, unsanitary conditions)
 - Risks to professionals or neighbours entering the property
5. There are also **concerns from other partner agencies**.

Any agency can initiate a MARM meeting. Where applicable, the organisation's Safeguarding Lead is expected to exercise professional judgement when making this decision, ensuring the case meets the agreed threshold for MARM involvement by discussing it with the MARM Coordinator and obtaining the relevant reference number for the case.

The GSAB MARM Coordinator should be kept updated in regard to all MARM consideration and cases via email: MARM@gloucestershire.gov.uk

If it is not felt that the concerns meet criteria for a MARM Meeting you will be advised of this. Alternative support options may be available to help meet the adult's needs – such as the existing multi-agency forums within Gloucestershire as listed on the following page.

The MARM Coordinator will endeavour to assist with additional advice and signposting where possible and applicable.

Existing Multi-Agency Forums in Gloucestershire that should also be considered

MDT Forum	Focus Area	Lead/Key Agencies
MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)	High-risk domestic abuse	Police, IDVA, Health, Housing, Probation
MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)	Management of violent and sexual offenders posing serious risk	Police, Probation, Prisons, Mental Health, Social Care
MTAC (Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination)	Serial domestic abuse perpetrators and prevention of reoffending	Police, Housing, Health, Probation, Local Authority
SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project)	Support for sex workers	Women's Centre, Outreach teams, Public Health, Safeguarding
Complex Case Cell	Rough sleepers with substance misuse and housing challenges	Housing, Substance Misuse Services, Safeguarding
Blue Light Forum	Individuals frequently engaging emergency services	Emergency services, Mental Health, Social Care
FERN (Frequent Engagement Response Network)	Mental health crisis and frequent professional contact	Complex Emotional Needs Team, Mental Health Services, Safeguarding

If you require assistance identifying an appropriate pathway, please contact Call Gloucestershire on 01452 426868 for further advice.

For advice and guidance on how to initiate and lead a MARM, please see the [GSAB MARM Flowchart](#) and contact the MARM Coordinator directly: MARM@Gloucestershire.gov.uk

Section 1: Invitation to Attend a MARM Meeting

The lead agency is responsible for arranging and chairing the MARM meeting, as well as any subsequent review meetings. It is essential that the adult's views are fully represented where possible, either directly or through an advocate, to ensure meaningful participation in the process.

The “*MARM: What to Expect*” leaflet serves as a tool to support the adult's understanding and involvement in the MARM process. It should be completed with the adult or their advocate, allowing them to express their views using their preferred method of communication, prior to the meeting being agreed.

When planning a MARM meeting, it is important to identify and address any barriers that may affect the adult's ability to attend or engage meaningfully. Consider the following:

- **Venue Accessibility:** Is the location physically accessible?
- **Inclusion in the Process:** How can the adult be supported to participate?
- **Risks or Concerns:** Are there any safety, emotional, or practical concerns that may impact the adult's attendance or engagement?

The Chair must ensure there is time to gather the adult's views and confirm whether they wish to attend the meeting.

Reasonable adjustments should be made to support the adult's attendance wherever possible. Completed leaflets should also be shared with the MARM Coordinator to support learning and service improvement through review and feedback.

The nominated Chair is responsible for completing **Section 1** of the “*MARM Meeting Record*” form which acts as an invite to the meeting. This section should include clear, relevant, and meaningful information, with particular attention to:

- The adult's **history and current situation**
- The adult's **views and expectations** (where known)
- **Work already undertaken** to reduce risk or address concerns
- **Agencies** that should be invited or involved in the MARM process
- A proposed **venue, date, and time** for the meeting
- The **identified risk of serious harm or death**
- How the adult's views will be included (e.g. direct attendance or via an advocate)

Once completed, the Chair must circulate this to the relevant partner agencies using a **secure email account or delivery method**. It is recommended that a minimum of **10 working days** is allowed for agencies to prepare and assess any associated risks prior to the meeting.

Should a Professional be unable to attend; they can instead be sent the “*MARM - Report for Partner Agencies*” document to complete and return to the chair to be considered in their absence.

Receiving an Invitation to Attend a MARM Meeting

Agencies invited to a MARM meeting are expected to:

- **Gather relevant information** held within their organisation about the adult.
- **Take reasonable steps** to obtain any additional information that may support risk assessment and planning.
- **Liaise with the Chair or Lead Agency** to confirm attendance or, if unable to attend, submit the Partner Agency Report form to inform the MARM process.

The adult should be invited to attend the meeting where possible. However, consideration should also be given to whether full or partial attendance is appropriate.

In some cases, the adult's presence may:

- Increase risk (e.g. due to full disclosure of sensitive information),
- Impact their ability to engage with the process, or
- Inhibit open discussion between professionals.

In such circumstances, a **pre-meeting** may be held prior to the adult's arrival. The Chair should determine how the pre-meeting is recorded, and all agencies must ensure compliance with **confidentiality and data protection** requirements.

Each agency should be represented by a professional with:

- Appropriate knowledge and expertise in their field, and
- The authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisation.

As an invited professional, should you not be able to attend a blank copy of the "MARM – Report for Partner Agencies" document can be found on the GSAB Website for you to complete instead.

But please be aware that actions may still be set for you by the Chair in your absence.

Section 2: The MARM Meeting

Chairing Responsibilities

The nominated Chair is responsible for coordinating and leading the MARM meeting. They must complete Section 2 of the MARM Meeting Record Form, which serves as a summary sheet to ensure all key areas are addressed and recorded.

There is further *“Guidance for the Chair”* which is a check list of considerations. Please also see the guidance video on *“How to Confidently Chair a Meeting”*. Both on the GSAB Website.

Meeting Opening

- **Introductions:** The Chair will introduce all attendees, clarify their roles and the agencies they represent, and introduce the adult or their advocate (if present).
- **Confidentiality Statement:** The Chair will read the *“MARM Confidentiality Statement”*, outlining the legal basis for information sharing.
- **Apologies:** Any apologies and submitted reports from non-attending agencies should be noted and recorded.

Adult Participation

- **Is the Adult Present?**
While adult participation is encouraged, it may not always be appropriate or achievable. If a representative or advocate is attending on the adult’s behalf, their relationship and suitability should be assessed in line with the adult’s best interests.
- **Sensitive Information:**
The meeting may involve confidential or sensitive information. The Chair and attendees must consider the relevance and necessity of sharing specific details. For example, while a fire risk may not require disclosure of a diagnosis, information about mobility may be essential for risk planning.
- **Understanding the Meeting:**
Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure the adult understands the purpose of the meeting. This may involve additional written and/or verbal explanations.

Capturing the Adult’s Perspective

What is important to and for the adult? The Chair should facilitate discussion that distinguishes between:

- What matters most to the adult (e.g. independence, privacy)
- What professionals believe is necessary to reduce risk (e.g. safety interventions)

This section allows for open dialogue, negotiation of outcomes, and recognition of differing perspectives. **However, risk reduction must remain the focus.**

Example: Cuckooing

An adult may wish to maintain contact with those posing a risk of harm. Professionals may need to explore compromise solutions that reduce risk while respecting the adult's wishes.

- **What's important to the adult:**
They feel socially connected to individuals staying in their home.
- **What's important for the adult:**
These individuals are exploiting the adult financially and using the property for criminal activity, increasing risk to the adult and community.
- **Negotiation:**
Professionals may work with the adult to understand the risks and explore safer ways to maintain social contact.

Description of risks (including a risk rating)

Set out the risks known to the group. It may be necessary to write a short explanation of the risk and the hazard to which the risk relates.

For example:

- **Risk of fire** from old electrical installation.
- **Risk of infection** from poor hygiene and lack of washing facilities.
- **Risk of scalding** given excessively high-water temperature.
- **Risk of a fall** given poor balance and the absence of a handrail.
- **Risk of malnourishment** given difficulties purchasing food due to financial difficulties.

Rating the risk

Each identified risk should be rated by the most appropriately qualified professional present. The rating should reflect the **likelihood and potential severity of harm**, based on the adult's current circumstances.

A complex scoring system is not needed.

However, where available, the group should refer to relevant **guidance, codes of practice, or evidence-based tools** to support consistent decision-making. Formal research into risk rating is not necessary for this task.

For Example:

- **Low:** Harm is unlikely and/or impact would be minimal.
- **Medium:** Harm is possible and could have a moderate impact.
- **High:** Harm is likely or imminent and could have severe consequences.

Actions to reduce the risk

The **Action Plan** is a record of agreed activities designed to reduce the adult's exposure to identified risks. The effectiveness of the plan will depend on:

- The **professional judgement** and expertise of those attending the meeting,
- The **appropriateness of the actions** identified, and
- Whether the actions are **successfully implemented**.

Each action should be:

- Clearly linked to a specific risk,
- Assigned to a named **individual or agency**, and
- Accompanied by an **anticipated completion or review date**.

Actions may vary in nature. Some may offer **direct risk reduction** (e.g. securing the property to prevent unauthorised access), while others may provide **indirect or enabling support** (e.g. financial advice, referral to substance misuse services).

The impact of each action must be **monitored and evaluated** by the agencies involved.

Based on this evaluation, the group should determine whether a **MARM Review Meeting** is required to reassess risk and progress.

Description of conflict identified

Conflict of opinion may arise for any number of reasons. This is an opportunity to describe the nature of the conflict, and the views of the individuals involved.

For example, a Fire Officer or Environmental Health Officer may demand the removal of materials from a hoarded property for the purpose of fire prevention and/or vermin management, but another attendee may feel that this is a violation of the lifestyle choices of the Adult.

Legal Powers and Duties considered

Professionals attending a MARM meeting should consider any **relevant legislation, statutory duties, discretionary powers, policies, or codes of practice** that may apply to the case. These should be clearly referenced in the discussion and, where appropriate, reflected in the Action Plan.

- **Statutory duties and powers** should be identified and any proposed interventions clearly recorded.
- **Discretionary powers**, even if not enacted, should be noted where relevant to the adult's circumstances.
- All decisions must consider the **Human Rights Act 1998**, particularly **Article 8** (the right to respect for private and family life).

There is an expectation that MARM Chairs and/or the attendees are familiar with key legislation, which may include (but is not limited to):

- Human Rights Act 1998 – European Convention on Human Rights
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 / Mental Health Act 1983
- Public Health Act 1936
- Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 / Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

This does not mean that you need to be a legal expert in any of the above to be able to lead on the MARM Framework – the aim is progress not perfection.

Outcome of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the MARM meeting, the Chair should verbally summarise the risks identified, and the actions agreed by partner agencies. Each agency is responsible for ensuring that their assigned actions are completed within the agreed timescales and for evaluating the impact of those actions on the identified risks.

Responsibility for completing the action remains with the agency, not the Chair.

During the meeting, it may become clear that an alternative statutory pathway is more appropriate for managing the risks. This may include, for example:

- **Care Act 2014** (e.g. Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry),
- **Mental Capacity Act 2005**,
- **Mental Health Act 1983**, or
- Other relevant legal frameworks.

In such cases, the MARM process may be closed, and the case transferred to the appropriate statutory process. This decision should be clearly recorded as a rationale for closure in Section 4 of the meeting record.

Where it is agreed that the risks have been sufficiently reduced or removed, the MARM can be formally closed. This decision must also be documented in **Section 4: Closure of MARM** on the “*MARM Meeting Record*” Form.

Review Meeting Required

The Chair will decide whether a further meeting is required, and the timeframe for this to happen. It is more than likely that at least one Review Meeting will be required to record actions taken and evaluate the impact of these on the identified risks.

The Chair will need to consider whether any other agencies could usefully contribute to a Review Meeting and invite them accordingly.

Following the MARM Meeting

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the relevant sections of the “*MARM Meeting Record*” are completed accurately and circulated securely to all invited agencies, regardless of attendance, via secure email (or other secure means).

A copy of this will also need to be shared with the MARM Coordinator to enable them to maintain a central record on Adult Social Care Systems.

If a minute taker has formally recorded the meeting, the minutes should be summarised or attached within the free-text section of the “*MARM Meeting Record*”.

The Chair must also:

- Clearly identify how the outcomes and actions from the MARM will be shared with the adult.
- Communicate the date, time, and purpose of any review meetings to the adult or their advocate, following the guidance outlined in this document.

Section 3: MARM Review Meeting

The Chair responsible for the MARM Review Meeting should record updates in the Update and Actions section (3) of the “MARM Meeting Record”.

Agency Updates:

Each agency is responsible for providing an update on:

- The impact of actions they have taken.
- Any outstanding actions that remain incomplete.

It is the responsibility of each attendee, not the Chair, to follow up on and complete the actions assigned to them.

Additional actions

During the MARM meeting, attendees may identify new actions beyond those agreed in previous meetings. These **additional actions** should be recorded clearly, including:

- The **individual or agency** responsible.
- The **agreed timescales** for completion.

Note: This section should only include new actions. Outstanding actions from previous meetings should be recorded separately.

The Chair is responsible for:

- Deciding whether a **further Review Meeting** is required.
- Making the necessary arrangements if a review is to take place.
- Circulating the **updated MARM Meeting Record Form** to all relevant parties.

Section 4: Closure of MARM

The Chair should complete section 4 of the MARM Meeting Record when it has been agreed that the MARM process can be closed.

Date of closure

This identifies the date that the MARM process concludes.
This does not prohibit the re-opening of a MARM should it be necessary at a later point.

Reason for closure / update from Chair / Evaluation of Meeting

The Chair should use this section to summarise and conclude the MARM meeting, including:

- Key **discussions and decisions** made.
- **Actions agreed** and any **relevant legislation** applied.
- Any conflicting views, lack of engagement by the adult, or other significant factors that influenced the outcome.

The Chair may also:

- Highlight any shortfalls in the process.
- Identify potential triggers for re-referral into the MARM process.

Risk Retention and Closure Considerations

If the adult chooses to remain in a situation that exposes them to identified risks, this decision must be clearly documented.

The “*MARM Meeting Record*” should include:

- The **adult’s views and choices**.
- The **perspectives of each agency** regarding the closure of the MARM.
- A summary of **any ongoing risks** that remain.

It is acknowledged that not all risks or concerns may be fully resolved. However, the purpose of the MARM process is to ensure that **all agencies have taken reasonable and proportionate steps** to support the adult in recognising and reducing the risk of serious harm or death.

Feedback on the MARM process - such as how it was applied, its impact, and overall effectiveness - should be submitted at the end of the process using the feedback form links provided by the MARM Coordinator after they receive your completed closure form.

Your insights help improve future practice and support continuous learning across partner agencies.

Glossary

Acronym	Description
MARM	Multi-agency Risk Management
Risk	The term used to judge the likelihood of harm
Adult	The person at risk of harm or death
Advocate	A representative for the Adult
Attendee	An appropriately appointed/invited professional representing an organisation at the meeting.

Supporting Documents

- MARM Policy
- MARM Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- MARM Flowchart
- MARM What to Expect Leaflet
- MARM Guidance for the Chair
- MARM Report for Partner Agencies
- MARM Confidentiality Statement
- MARM Meeting Record
- MARM Risk Management Action Plan