

MAARS and Team Around The Adult

Multi-Agency Operating Procedure

September 2022

Safeguarding
Adults
in Stockport

Multi-Agency Adults at Risk System (MAARS)

This operating procedure provides all agencies working in Stockport with information and resources around the Multi-Agency Adults at Risk System (MAARS) which also incorporates the Team Around the Adult process (TAA).

Both the MAARS and TAA processes have been designed to complement statutory Section 42 safeguarding processes, including those taking place via other forums including MARAC and Channel Panel for example. The system is intended to identify, risk assess and support adults who would not be eligible for statutory support under The Care Act 2014¹. MAARS and Team Around the Adult are not alternatives for statutory safeguarding under Section 42 and where safeguarding concerns are identified, they should be referred to Adult Social Care.

The Multi-Agency Adults at Risk System (MAARS) provides a single pathway for agencies working in Stockport to highlight adults at risk in the community. Adults may come into contact with services but not necessarily meet the threshold for those services. MAARS Panel is not a case-holding team and does not directly provide care or support for adults. MAARS Panel is a referral system to facilitate support and identify lead agencies and professionals best suited to support that adult's presenting need(s).

MAARS Provides a multi-agency forum to collaborate and co-ordinate action across services, reduce duplication and agree the best way to work with an adult's current needs, and prevent crisis. The MAARS and TAA processes provide the space for professionals to better understand and reduce risk. The system proactively reduces demand on services through a more efficient and informed use of available resources. The aim is to work with adults in a way that supports their desired outcomes, views and wishes. MAARS and TAA

should not be used for professionals to decide what should happen for the adult and then impose that course of action. Wherever possible, the adult should be involved in all stages of the process.

MAARS Panel and Team Around the Adult meetings should:

- Establish a multi-agency forum to consider the best way to address the person's current needs to prevent crisis
- Recognise the adult's desired outcomes, views and wishes
- Reduce the large numbers of referrals to the Adult Social Care Contact Centre not meeting agency thresholds

The cohort discussed under this process may have complex needs and are likely to be known to multiple services or have been excluded from services (including housing services) but have on-going needs. They can create high levels of demand, including repeat and frequent call outs for the Police. The cohort may include young adults who have previously been looked after children.

Whereas MAARS provides a multi-agency forum to discuss and agree actions for a range of individuals, Team Around the Adult meetings are a dedicated planning process for a single adult that only involve key professionals and agencies currently working with that adult.

The principles of **Making Safeguarding Personal** should be followed at all times in the process, ensuring that the adult is at the centre of any decisions and discussions about them. More information on Making Safeguarding Personal can be found [here](#).

1. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

MAARS Panel

Consent and information sharing

Before making a referral to MAARS Panel, you should talk with the adult and seek their consent. This will allow you to explore their views and desired outcome which will support discussion at Panel. Unless there is clear evidence of significant harm to themselves and/or others then referrals should not be made without the adult being informed. The MAARS referral form will ask for you to provide information around consent and this should always be completed. Where consent hasn't been gained then MAARS Panel will consider if MAARS is the best route for the individual.

Referral process

Any professional can make a referral into the Multi Agency Adults at Risk panel, through the online referral form [here](#).

Referrals will come into a triage point where they are assessed for suitability before progressing for discussion at MAARS panel. Please note the below points regarding case referrals.

- a) Cases that are already being discussed at Team Around the Place or the Place Based Initiative should not be referred into the MAARS or Team Around the Adult Process as that would be a duplication of effort.
- b) Cases where an adult social worker is allocated should go straight to a TAA meeting unless there are difficulties in attaining multi agency attendance.

When completing the online referral form, make sure to complete all necessary fields and provide as much information as possible. The form will ask for the specific risk factors evident which are used by Panel Members when considering the case.

Panel meetings

MAARS Panel meets on a monthly basis, and meetings are held virtually. All professionals making a referral to MAARS panel will be required to attend for an allocated timeslot to present their case. Discussions should include, as a minimum:

- An overview of the adult's current vulnerabilities and any action taken prior to the MAARS referral
- Confirmation of the adult's consent to information sharing and an explanation of the adult's desired outcomes.

Once heard at MAARS, a decision will be made on whether to progress to Team Around the Adult or whether the case can be managed at MAARS. If it is decided for a case to be managed at MAARS, that professional will be invited back to future meetings to provide updates on the adult's progress.

Referral criteria are provided later in this guidance document, and it is likely that individuals will meet more than one of these criteria.

The key referrers to the MAARS pathway and the core members of the MAARS panel are:

- Police
- Probation
- Stockport Homes
- Adult Social Care
- Stockport Family
- Mental Health Representative
- Drug and Alcohol Representative
- The Prevention Alliance
- Greater Manchester Integrated Care (Stockport Locality)
- Stockport NHS FT

Team Around the Adult Meetings

Consent and information sharing

As with MAARS panel, consent should always be obtained from the adult before commencing with a TAA meeting. This will also support practice that promotes adult voices and will help to achieve the adult's desired outcomes, views and wishes. Practitioners should, wherever practicable, seek the consent of the person before sharing information or taking any action. Where an adult with capacity explicitly refuses any supporting intervention, this should normally be respected. Exceptions to this may be where a criminal offence may have taken place or where there may be a significant risk of harm to a third party, including children. Where a criminal offence is suspected it may also be necessary to seek legal advice.

TAA Process

The Team Around the Adult process starts with the nomination and appointment of a lead professional, who will usually be the key worker from the lead agency for the adult. The lead professional will be responsible for leading on meetings, developing a shared plan for the adult, and championing their voice throughout the process.

A Team Around the Adult Meeting can be led by any agency and should always be chaired by the professional or agency who is taking a lead role in supporting the adult. Not all Team Around the Adult meetings will include representation from Adult Social Care and will more ordinarily include other organisations. There is no set attendance list for a Team Around the Adult meeting as they should consist of those agencies who are already involved with the adult, as well as those who may be able to provide additional support.

Wherever possible, a Team Around the Adult meeting should include input from the adult. Where this isn't possible their views and wishes should always be heard in line with Making Safeguarding Personal principles.

As noted above for MAARS Panel, consent for information sharing is key for Team Around the Adult meetings. This should always be discussed with the adult in advance along with any considerations for advocacy support or other considerations to support the adult to convey their views.

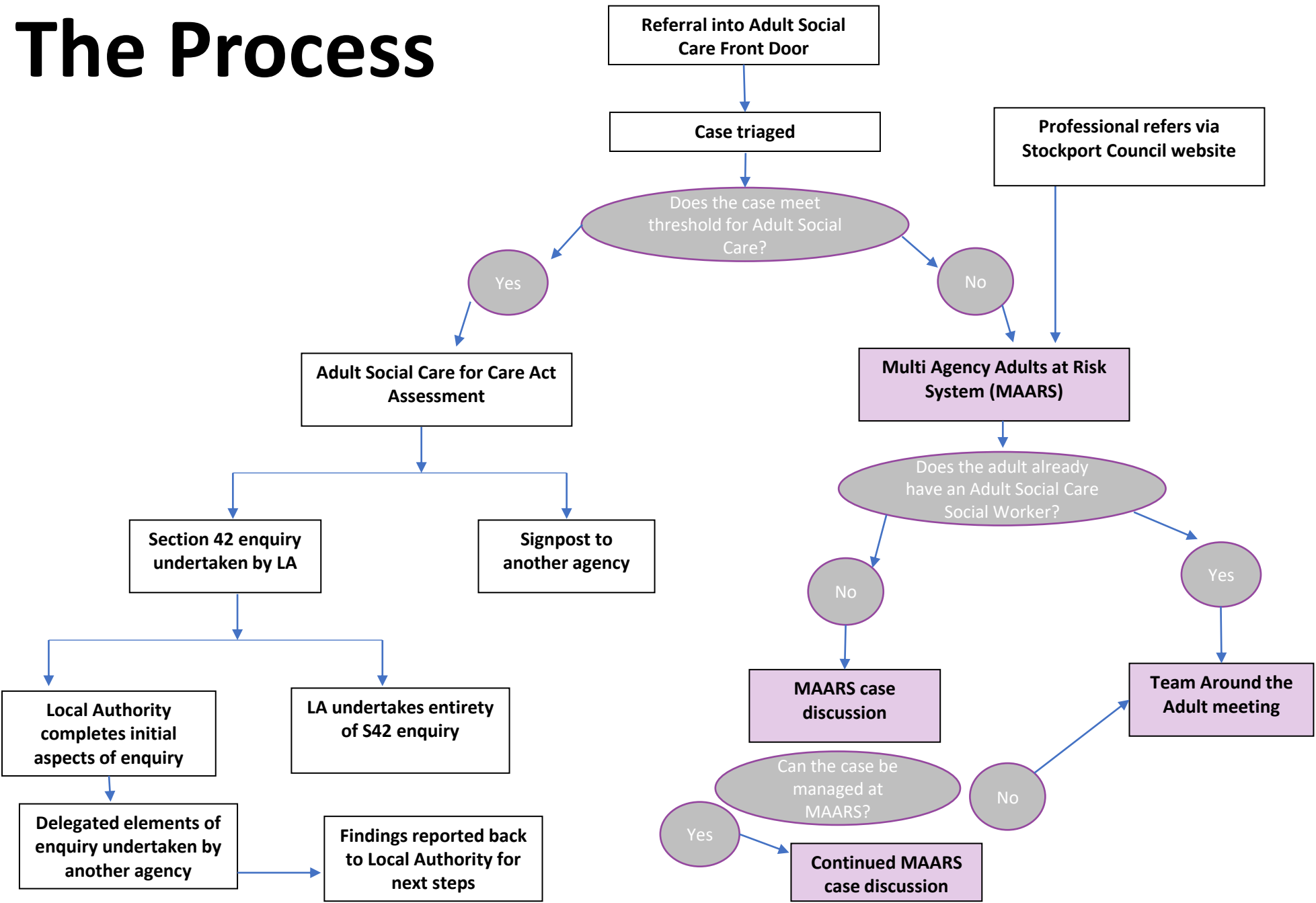
A sample agenda for a Team Around the Adult meeting is appended in the toolkit at the end of this guidance document.

The purpose of Team Around the Adult meetings are to:

- Improve outcomes for Adults at Risk
- Share information to increase safety, health and well-being of individuals
- Identify risks to any individual or wider community
- Jointly agree actions to minimise risk, this may include individual action plan
- Improve support for individuals
- Increase resilience for the individual and reduce risk to themselves and/or the community
- Improve inter-agency co-ordination
- Reduce the demand on repeat calls for services

Note: It is the responsibility of each individual / agency to report any relevant information into the panel meetings and act on any actions tasked to that agency / individual. Members of panel should ensure effective feedback on actions to the group.

The Process



Process guidance notes

A professional or a member of the public can make a safeguarding referral to the local authority, where it will be triaged and assessed for the most appropriate course of action. Where it is believed that the adult has care and support needs (in line with The Care Act 2014) the case will be directed towards a statutory safeguarding response. Where the initial triage does not identify any care and support needs, it is possible that the local authority may recommend MAARS as an alternative route.

Only a professional can make a referral into MAARS using the [online portal](#). Once received, the referral will be triaged for suitability for MAARS panel. Feedback will always be provided to the referrer which will outline:

- If the case has been accepted for MAARS panel, and attendance requirements for the next panel date
- If any additional information is required to make a decision about the best course of action
- Any alternative processes that could be followed if the case is not suitable for MAARS or Team Around the Adult

Where an adult is referred into MAARS who already has an adult Social Worker, the case will be directed to the Social Worker to undertake a Team Around the Adult meeting and no MAARS panel discussion will take place. If no Social Worker is involved, then the case will be allocated a timeslot at the next available panel date (held monthly).

The professional will be invited to attend MAARS Panel to discuss their concerns, the adult's desired outcomes and what action has already been taken. The Panel will decide upon the best course of action for the adult, and whether the case can be managed at MAARS in which case it will remain on the Panel's case list and come back for an update to the next meeting. Where concerns are of a nature that require a more immediate and in-depth response, the Panel will request a Team Around the Adult meeting is convened, and will identify the lead agency and professional to manage the process. Where no lead professional can be identified, Panel members will agree who will Chair the initial meeting. At the first Team Around the Adult meeting a lead professional must be identified to take forward the TAA process.

Once the presenting concerns and risks have been addressed, the case will be closed to the MAARS and/or TAA process. An adult can be re-referred into MAARS where concerns or risks escalate or reappear.

NOTE

The adult's consent should always be sought before making a referral into MAARS and at this point, a conversation should take place to understand their desired outcomes, views and wishes.

MAARS & TAA Process: Roles & Responsibilities

MAARS Panel

At MAARS Panel, any professional making a referral will be invited to attend the panel meeting to present the case. They will be given a timeslot and a meeting link to join the call at the next available panel date.

Attendees at MAARS Panel will be expected to have the following responsibilities.

- Make sure you have gained the consent of the adult before making the referral into MAARS Panel – cases where consent hasn't been gained should not be discussed.
- Share with panel members what the main concerns are, and what actions you have already taken prior to the referral, along with the outcome of these.
- Share with panel members what the adult's desired outcomes are.
- Take forward any actions arising from the panel discussion and where appropriate, provide feedback and updates at the next panel.

Professional Curiosity

Professional curiosity is where a practitioner explores and proactively tries to understand what is happening for an adult, and within their family or peer network, rather than making assumptions or taking a single source of information and accepting it at face value. At all points in the MAARS and TAA process you should:

- Hear the adult's voice
- Understand barriers to professional curiosity and why you might need to explore factors with the adult, potentially asking difficult questions
- Be able to share your findings and feelings with other professionals at MAARS Panel or TAA Meetings



Team Around the Adult

The lead practitioner in a Team Around the Adult meeting will be responsible for coordinating activity for the adult, which will include the following.

- Chair Team Around the Adult meetings ensuring all agencies involved with the adult attend.
- Ensure the adult is aware of the TAA process and their views and wishes are heard at each meeting.
- Lead on developing a plan for the adult that meets their desired outcomes, making sure that all appropriate agencies and organisations are included.
- Review progress against the plan at each meeting and identify any additional actions that need to be taken.
- To escalate concerns wherever appropriate regarding increasing risk or drift and delay in progressing the plan.
- Make sure the adult has a copy of any plans or risk assessment, including sharing these with carers or advocates where appropriate.

To support lead professionals in Team Around the Adult meetings, a toolkit is appended to this guidance which includes templates for a meeting agenda, minutes and a support plan.

Referral criteria to MAARS and Team Around the Adult

An adult may have one or more of the vulnerabilities opposite and would therefore meet criteria for referral into MAARS. All adults referred into MAARS should be over 18 years old, and will need to be informed that their situation will be discussed at Panel and their information shared.

MAARS referrals are to be made once all single-agency approaches have been exhausted and a co-ordinated multi-agency approach is required for the adult.

The online referral form asks for the specific risks and vulnerabilities to be identified and these should always be completed in full as part of the referral.

Where an adult has previously been subject to MAARS or Team Around the Adult processes, they can be re-referred for the same, or different, issues in future where their situation escalates or they become unable to manage independently.

MAARS and TAA should not be used to remove the adult's decision making and independence over their situation, and at all points consideration should be given to how they would like risks or vulnerabilities to be managed or removed.

- Threat of homelessness
- Anti-social behaviour issues
- Complex needs
- Victimisation (including domestic abuse)
- At risk of harm to themselves and others
- Substance misuse issues
- Offender / or at risk of offending
- Problems with independent living
- Low level mental health
- Physical health problems
- Learning disability
- Lack of resilience to cope / lack of problem solving

Example procedure

- 1 MAARS referral made using the online form (*no later than 5 working days before panel*)
- 2 Referrer is made aware of outcome of referral, and confirmation of consent and any other actions will be clarified
- 3 Invites, timeslots and papers will be distributed to panel members and referrers no later than 3 business days prior to panel
- 4 Referrers attend for their timeslot at MAARS panel and explain the current concerns, the adult's desired outcomes and any work taken to date
- 5 Panel members will decide upon the best course of action for the adult, and will nominate the lead individual to take any actions forward
- 6 MAARS Panel minutes will be distributed, confirming all action points, no later than 5 business days after the meeting
- 7 All Team Around the Adult meetings should be convened within 4 weeks from Panel date, and before the next MAARS panel
- 8 The referring agency and / or lead professional will be responsible for informing MAARS Panel Chair of any issues in progressing actions
- 9 The referring agency should record MAARS / TAA activity on their case recording system
- 10 Updates, assurance and escalation is reported on the case at the next available MAARS Panel where any additional actions will be agreed
- 11 Case closed once all actions are completed

What should be discussed at a TAA meeting?

Each Team Around the Adult meeting will look different based upon the individual needs of the adult. The below points are intended to help you in holding a Team Around the Adult meeting, or in contributing to it. They are by no means exhaustive and all meetings should follow, and respond to, the needs of the adult and their views and wishes.

- Discuss the adult's desired outcomes from the TAA process
- Discuss all current risks to the adult and the impact of these on their life
- Discuss any activity that has already taken place, or support currently being offered
- Discuss or consider any issues regarding the adult's capacity, mental health or understanding
- Agree the multi-agency plan to support the adult, with clear objectives, actions and timescales
- Record everyone's commitment to the plan
- Identify if any of the needs and planned outcomes can be met by the adult
- Agree any missing information within the plan for example confirming the type of service provision, frequency, roles, start dates for the service
- Consider and record any disagreement with the plan and if not resolved within the meeting escalate through appropriate tiers of management.
- Agree the date, time and venue of the next TAA meetings and reviews
- Agree who will provide feedback to the adult (if they are not in attendance at the meeting)
- The adult should be visited at home and seen alone wherever possible. Visits to the adult should take place outside TAA meetings, particularly where the TAA meetings are held at the family home. Members of the TAA who are unable to attend will be asked to send a representative with relevant information or a written report. The invitation should always be sent to the adult's GP for information advising of the meeting and inviting them to send any relevant information.



Team Around the Adult Plan

The purpose of a Team Around the Adult approach is to develop a coordinated, multi-agency plan that supports the adult in line with their desired outcomes. The adult (or their carer/advocate) should always be aware of the plan and actions within it.

This may not always be a formal action plan and could be achieved via a series of action points arising from each TAA meeting. The approach will look different depending upon the adult's individual circumstances, and

their desired outcomes.

A proforma plan is attached in the appendix to this guidance and should be held by the lead professional as part of their case management system.

When creating the plan, the following points should be considered.

- All actions should be person centred and discussed with the adult
- The plan is written in a way helps the adult achieve their desired outcomes
- All actions are achievable with realistic timescales attached
- All professionals named in the plan understand their role and the actions they need to take
- All agencies have input into the plan and understand their role in reviewing the plan
- The plan identifies how to escalate concerns where risk increases or the adult's situation changes
- The plan is written in plain English to ensure it is accessible
- The plan should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis



Governance and Information Sharing

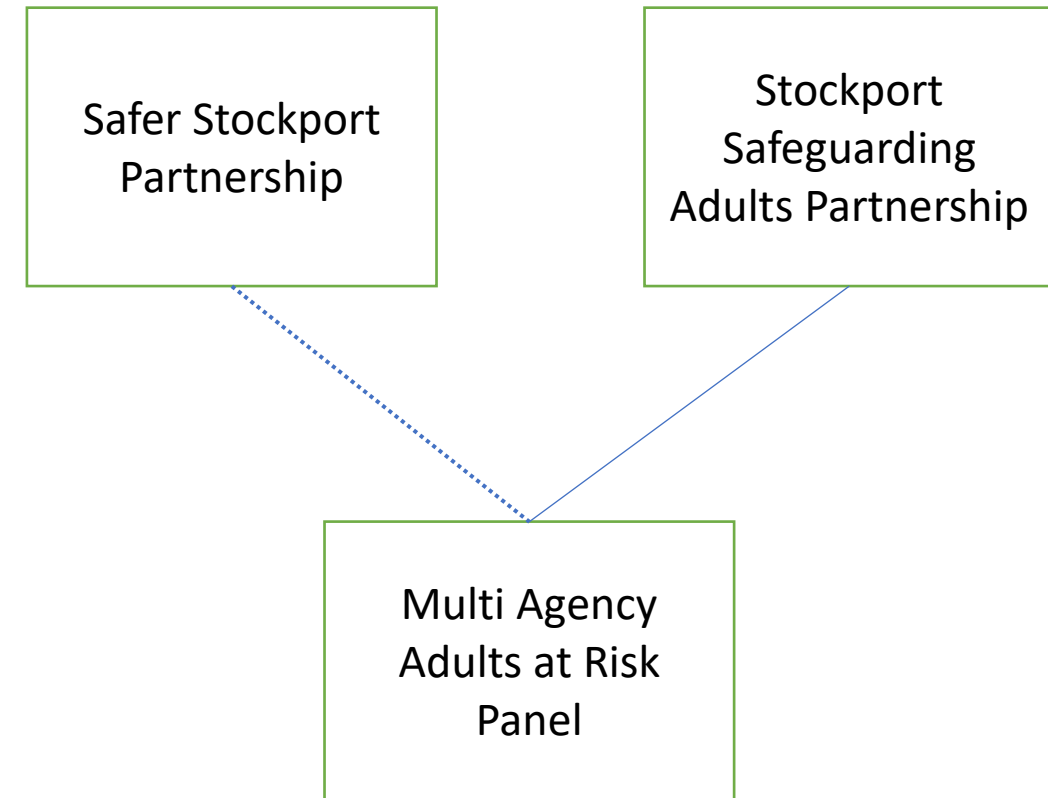
The Multi Agency Adults at Risk panel will report into the Protecting Vulnerable People workstream of the Safer Stockport Partnership.

The Stockport Safeguarding Adults partnership will hold the partnership to account for supporting better outcomes for Adults at Risk.

Information is shared under the Safer Stockport Partnership Information Sharing Protocol, and this was reviewed in 2020.

Work has been also been undertaken with Information Governance colleagues to ensure that information can be shared on the basis of risk.

All partners have been advised of the privacy notice for the Team Around the Adult process and we have gained successful outcomes of sharing information without consent on the basis of risk.



Toolkit

Draft Team Around the Adult agenda and minutes template



TAA Sample
agenda



Blank TAA
Minutes template

Blank Team Around the Adult Plan



TAA Sample Plan

Blank composite risk assessment



Composite Risk
Assessment

MAARS Referral portal - [Click here for link](#)

Adult Social Care Professionals only referral portal - [Click here for link](#)

Other referrals - 0161 217 6029