

# LLR Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)

Guidance for professionals making a request for service from the Leicestershire Local Authority Children & Family Wellbeing Service and Children's Social Care

## **IMPORTANT:**

If you have immediate concerns for the safety of a child, you do not need to complete the MARF immediately.

Telephone Children's Social Care First Response Children's Duty now on the numbers below:

Leicester: 0116 454 1004 available 24/7 | Leicestershire: 0116 3050005 | Rutland: 01572 758407; out of hours: 0116 3050005

Follow up your call by completing the MARF to provide written evidence of your concern.

If you have concerns that a child is in imminent danger, you should consider calling the Police for an emergency response.

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## The LLR Multi agency referral form (MARF) - introduction



The MARF is a form to request services from the Local Authority's Children and Family Wellbeing Service and Children's Social Care services. It relies on professionals providing clear written evidence to support their request for services and aims to assist robust and timely decision-making by all professionals.

- You **must** make it clear at the top of the form if your request is for Early Help or for Social Work intervention.
- The form should provide enough detail to make robust decisions about interventions that are proportionate and timely to support and protect children.

**There may be a delay in providing responses if the quality of the MARF is not sufficient to understand the child's needs and how best to support them.**

If you wish to seek advice on making a request for a service and your own agency safeguarding lead cannot assist you due to complexity, you can contact the relevant Professional Advice and Guidance line below:

***Children & Family Wellbeing Service – 0116 305 8727***

***Children's Social Care – 0116 305 5500***

**Do not use these numbers if you have an immediate safeguarding concern. They are for advice and guidance only.**



## What are you asking for?

These notes will assist you when considering whether you need to make a request for a service. They should be read with the [LLR SCP Threshold](#) for intervention document:

### 1. Are you concerned that a child is suffering significant harm and is in imminent danger?

**You should contact the Police for an emergency response straight away**

### 2. Do you suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm?

The child may have made a disclosure, presents with an injury that appears inflicted or raises suspicion or they may be in a situation that has escalated so much that the child is in danger.

**You must contact the relevant Children's Social Care on 0116 305 5500 by telephone as quickly as possible and make an urgent request for a response. You will be asked for information that you will include in writing in the MARF which you MUST send within 24 hours**

### 3. Have you assessed that the child may now require a Social Work assessment?

A Social Work assessment should be requested when:

- Single agency support has not impacted on the required improved outcomes for the child(ren) and family
- Coordinated Early Help intervention, which is likely to have included support from the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, (see section 4 below) has not impacted on the required improved outcomes for the child(ren) and family
- The child's needs have become more complex and there has been an escalation of previous worries which are now impacting upon the child's well-being.

#### When asking for a Social Work assessment:

- You will have evidence that help already provided has not brought enough improvement for the child and their health and development are being adversely affected now.
- Without social work intervention you are worried that concerns will escalate further, and the health and development will be affected in the future.
- You will have spoken to the child's parents about your worries and they are agreeing to a referral to Children's Social Care to get the extra help they need.

**If you are asking for a Social Work assessment to consider if the child is a 'child in need', you must complete the MARF and if you are in Leicestershire submit this online OR via your agreed agency processes This must fully document your concerns and provide evidence that has informed your assessment that the child now requires a Social Work assessment –including what help and support has been put in place already including by early help intervention.**

#### 4. You have identified that a child has some additional needs that require a more coordinated response or access to specific support services that do not require a Social Work assessment

This is likely to be following intervention from a single agency that has not impacted on the required improved outcomes for the child(ren) and family. You have identified the type of help the child and family requires and how this will assist the child and family **before** the issues start to affect the child's wellbeing.

You may need specific resources or help from the Local Authority's Family Wellbeing service and have gained the parent's permission to make the request.

**If you are asking for the Family Wellbeing Service to consider services /intervention and you will need to complete the MARF giving the evidence to support the request including the views of the parent; setting out what services will help the child**

## Sources of help for professionals

If you are worried about a child and are unsure about what action you should take, including what information you can share or if permission is required to make a request for service:

- You should talk to your supervisor and / or contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for your agency. They will have the skills and knowledge to help you decide what action to take.



**You can refer to the [LLR SCP Thresholds document](#)**

- In complex cases you can contact the Professional Advice and Guidance Lines as detailed on page 2 for more guidance.

## Completing the MARF form

The following information will assist you when starting to complete the form:

- 1. Before completing the form, you should consult the [LLR SCP Thresholds document](#) and if required, discuss your worries with a manager.**



This will assist you in gathering the information that you need to complete the form and to explore the reasons why and what outcome you are trying to achieve for the child. See above for the link to the [LLR SCP Thresholds document](#).

- 2. You should ensure that you have all the essential information to complete the form before you start. The online form times out in 60 minutes**

Important information includes: the name, DOB, and address of the child/ren who the worries relate to and the name, DOB, and address of parent / carer and any other useful information that you have about the child and family structure and network of support. It may help to talk to other agencies that are working with the child and may hold important information to understand what needs to happen before completing the form.



- 3. You should include details of any work that you have done with the child and family.**



Attach electronic copies of any assessments that have been completed by your agency now or in the past (Early Help assessment; CSE risk tool, neglect toolkit, FGM risk assessment, DASH, gang involvement tool, etc.)

- 4. Worries may be found in many families, particularly when there are issues such as parental mental health, parental alcohol and substance use, domestic abuse, and neglect.**

You should try and think about the impact these issues are having upon the adult's parenting and how this affects the child. Provide any evidence that you have and record this in the MARF. This might be for example that the parent has disengaged from important services that are managing their own support needs and how their parenting will now be affected

## 5. Aim to provide a picture of what life is like for the child.

It is important to balance any worries that you have with things that are working well for the family and child so that a balanced picture can be formed. The form should allow someone who has not met the child to understand your worries and what needs to change to make things better for them.



## 6. Specific groups of children including disabled children may be particularly vulnerable and need additional resources to support them.

Young carers may also have additional support needs. The Children & Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) can be considered for these children to enhance single agency support. Children who are privately fostered should always be referred for a social work assessment.

## 7. All children will have individual characteristics which will impact on their lives.

Details of the child's culture, ethnicity and religion will help to understand their experience of family life and support decision making.



## 8. Worries may focus on the child / young person's wider network



It is important to remember that some risks may be presented outside of the family network including risk of sexual and criminal exploitation. These sorts of contextual risks need careful co-ordination and planning, so information sharing and use of supporting risk tools are essential.

## Seeking permission to make a request for intervention – talking to parents & carers

All intervention is likely to be more meaningful for children if parents understand professional worries and have an opportunity to work in partnership to bring about change. Having an open and honest conversation with parents as soon as you are worried about a child will generally be the way to start the process of providing help.

- ✓ Think about who is best to talk to parents about your worries – this may be the professional who has most contact with them and knows the child best.
- ✓ **If you are asking for Early Help services from the Children & Family Wellbeing Service, a parent will always need to agree to this request being made.**
- ✓ It is expected that you will have made efforts to discuss your concerns with a parent and made them aware of the MARF, **unless to do so would create additional risk to the child.** In situations where risk is not identified, the lack of parental permission may lead to a request for service being declined by Children’s Social Care.
- ✓ However, parents do not always have to give permission to make a request for service for social work intervention. This is usually when worries are so great that the child is suffering or at risk of harm and child protection responses are required. If you are not sure if this threshold is met take advice immediately.
- ✓ If parental permission to make a request for service is an issue impacting on your ability to support a child, seek advice from your manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead or by using the FRCD Professional Advice and Guidance Line.
- ✓ Lack of parental permission to request a service from Children’s Social Care should not delay contact when you are making a child protection referral as set out above.
- ✓ You do not need parental permission to share information and seek advice from children social care.

## What happens after you have submitted to MARF?

- All Multi-Agency Referral Forms will be screened by Children’s Social Care. Requests for Early Help support will be directed to the Children & Family Wellbeing Service.
- There will be a Social Work manager’s decision made to determine a social care response within 24 hours, unless there are significant gaps in the information to make a safe decision. You will be notified if further information is required which may be gathered from you or you may be asked to re-submit the MARF. The need to contact referrers to gather more information can create delay.
- You will be notified of the outcome of the MARF. This may be treated as information only if the information provided does not indicate social care action or Early Help is needed or where parent permission for the MARF is not in place and is required to proceed.

- If the MARF meets the threshold for an assessment by Children’s Social Care, you will be expected to assist in assessment work that is carried out and work with the child, family and professionals involved to address any needs and risks identified. You should receive a copy of the completed assessment and be party to any plans that follow from this.



## Useful contacts

- Children’s Social Care: Leicester: 0116 454 1004 available 24/7 | Leicestershire: 0116 3050005 | Rutland: 01572 758407; out of hours: 0116 3050005
- **IF YOU HAVE IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS OUTSIDE OFFICE HOURS, PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS**
- Submit MARF online: [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-a-child /](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-a-child/)
- Secure email: [childrensduty@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childrensduty@leics.gov.uk)
- Submit the MARF using your agency agreed process.

### Leicestershire Professional Advice and Guidance Lines:

- Children & Family Wellbeing Service (prev. Early Help) – 0116 305 8727
- Children’s Social Care – 0116 305 5500