



Multi-agency meeting guide

When working with adults with care and support needs, including those with multiple and compound needs, engaging in multi-agency working is essential.

This means working closely and well together with staff from involved agencies. This ensures that all involved in an adult's care are aware of, and understand, each other's work and views so that the adult experiences a fully coordinated approach.

This ensures you are providing a high standard of support and allows you to share your experience and expertise, increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes for the adult. Multi-agency meetings are an essential part of this approach.

What are the benefits of multi-agency working?

We asked staff to share their positive experiences of multi-agency working as part of our multi-agency working staff survey. Here's what we heard.

Multi-agency meetings lead to:

- better information-sharing and a more holistic approach;
- better understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities, and expectations;
- shared goals and mutual respect;
- better understanding of risk;
- more effective and defensible decision-making;
- more timely and person-centred intervention.

Tips for positive participation

Consider the following to get the best from multi-agency meetings:

- When arranging the meeting, be clear on the purpose, to enable agencies to make informed decisions about their participation;
- Ensure that you know what the adult wants, what matters to them, and what support is already in place;
- Respect, hear and value the input of all agencies involved; egos or hierarchy can get in the way of effective multi-agency working;
- To create a culture where staff feel confident to contribute, begin the meeting with a statement of professional differences, for example:

“as this is a multi-agency meeting, all participants’ views are welcomed and valued. There are likely to be differences of opinions which represent professional challenge, and this is important and necessary.”

- Be clear on the remit of your agency, and set professional but clear boundaries; don’t overpromise, but look at where flexibility is possible;
- Don’t leave the meeting without a plan for who by, and when, actions will be taken forward, and when actions will be reviewed.

What challenges might we face?

Our multi-agency working staff survey also told us of challenges faced by staff. We heard that:

- staff shortages and availability can make it difficult to arrange well-attended meetings;
- there is a lack of understanding of the remit of other agencies;
- responsibility is often passed on in a transactional process, instead of adopting shared responsibility;
- it can feel like there is a hierarchy, which makes it difficult to have a voice;
- high staff turnover and organisational restructures can make it difficult to know who to contact.

We hope that through following the positive participation tips in this guide, you will experience fewer of these challenges. For safeguarding multi-agency meetings, there is an [Escalation & Resolution protocol](#), which should be used when there are differences of opinion between agencies.

Where can I find out more?

For more information about multi-agency working, visit the following resources:

- [Multi-agency working resources](#)
- [Complex needs toolkit](#)
- [Sussex safeguarding adults policy and procedures](#)

“Attending the Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) subgroup, I can see how supportive members are of each other which is a positive approach and offers a wide range of perspectives and knowledge [...] It creates a positive culture of multi-agency working.”

– a MARM subgroup attendee on the benefits of multi-agency working