



Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board

Multi-Agency Professional Forum (MAPF)

Practice Guidance

Version 6

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Document Version Control

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

1. Purpose of MAPFs

The MAPF is part of the continuous programme of active learning across the Mid and West Wales region, obtained via exploration of referred cases into the Mid and West Wales Case Review Sub Group.

The following extract from the *Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) statutory guidance (October 2024)* outlines the purpose of and criteria for undertaking a MAPF:

9.10 Multi-Agency Professional Forums (MAPFs) are a mechanism for producing organisational learning, improving the quality of work with families, and strengthening the ability of services to keep children and adults safe. In accordance with regulation 3(2)(i), Safeguarding Boards are required to arrange and facilitate an annual programme of MAPFs. They can be convened to explore learning opportunities in cases which do not meet the criteria for the completion of a SUSR. They utilise case information, findings from safeguarding audits, inspections, reviews, and other learning arising from the Wales Safeguarding Repository to develop and disseminate learning to improve local knowledge and practice, and to inform the Safeguarding Board's future audit and training priorities.

9.14 MAPFs have two main purposes:

a) Case learning: facilitated discussion, consultation and reflection by practitioners, managers, or core groups, using a systems approach to examining and analysing individual current or no longer active cases. These may include complex cases where there have been good outcomes, current cases that have become stuck, or cases which cause professional concern or interest that do not meet the criteria for a SUSR.

b) Dissemination of new knowledge and findings: from multi-agency safeguarding audits and from SUSRs, inspections or other local or national sources, in order to ensure continuing local multi-professional learning and development.

9.15 MAPFs which focus on case learning should be facilitated events, undertaken in environments that provide safe, professional support and professional challenge, with a clear set of working principles or processes so that staff know what to expect and the confidentiality of any case material is respected. The forums may use a range of creative methods already familiar in training and continuing professional development, such as multi-agency supervision, appreciative inquiry, or sculpting, as appropriate. The practice learning should be recorded and formally reported to the Safeguarding Board, and families where appropriate. The learning may be disseminated more widely by the SUSR Co-ordination Hub on a local, regional, or national level, whilst also informing the Safeguarding Board's annual review of its Business Plan.

Once a referral is completed, it is shared with the Case Review Sub-Group, who will recommend either a SUSR, MAPF or alternatively, a single-agency process, to the CYSUR/CWMPAS Chair for approval.

Whilst an agency may submit the referral with a view as to whether a MAPF, SUSR or other mechanism is most appropriate, the referral is generic at submission, with the decision as to which process to recommend being made at the Sub-Group. For this reason, the same form is used to recommend MAPFs as SUSRs.

2. Outline of Functions

- To provide a foundation for organisational learning.
- To improve the quality of work with adults, families/children and all service users.
- To strengthen the ability of services to keep children and adults at risk safe.
- To ensure continuing local multi-professional learning and development.

3. Legislative Context and Guidance

- The Safeguarding Boards (Functions and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Single Unified Safeguarding Review Statutory Guidance (October 2024)

4. Method of Operation for Learning Events

- Each authority will hold learning events in accordance with the number of MAPFs recommended by the regional Case Review Sub-Group; it is expected this will be no less than 2 per year (1 adult/1 child). The learning obtained will be shared with the Case Review Sub Group.
- The events will be undertaken in an environment which provides safe professional support and challenge.
- The process must be about open and transparent learning, and not about apportioning blame.
- A clear set of working principles will be agreed at the beginning of each event.
- Staff will be briefed on what to expect, what preparation is required and how they will make their contribution.
- The events will be facilitated through discussion, consultation and reflection.
- The learning events will be underpinned by the ethos of "[Signs of Safety](#)", a strength-based approach which explores questions of "what's working well?", "what are we worried about?", and "what needs to happen?" to develop clear practical goals.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.
- The practice learning will be recorded during the event, formally reported to the LOGs and to the Case Review Sub Group.

- Individual staff training needs, staff malpractice or negligence identified will be managed by the respective agencies.
- Any changes to policy, protocols or service delivery as a result of the learning event will occur as soon as possible.

5. Accountability and reporting line

The MAPF will be accountable to the relevant Local Operational Group (LOG).

6. Governance

The lead agency for the MAPF will hold overarching responsibility for the management and delivery of the process. This will usually be the Local Authority in which the subject(s) of the MAPF were normally resident, however, an alternative lead agency can be agreed should this be appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

The MAPF will require agencies to work together in the delivery of a multi-agency approach to learning and, as such, agencies will need to collaborate and undertake joint decision-making in respect of key aspects of the MAPF.

The MAPF report and action plan must be agreed in the first instance by all agencies involved in the process and subsequently by the Local Operational Group, who will hold responsibility for the implementation of the associated action plan.

The MAPF report and action plan will be stored and owned by the lead agency identified in line with their internal information governance and data retention policies. The report is not a published document, however, the lead agency of the MAPF can elect to share this document, if they deem it appropriate to do so and with the necessary agreement from the agencies party to the MAPF. This may include, for example, sharing with the MAPF subject and family members.

In making such considerations, agencies should be informed by their own information governance policies and guidance.

The CYSUR/CWMPAS Business Unit can support the facilitation and delivery of the MAPF process via providing support, advice and guidance.

7. Membership of the MAPF Planning Group

Membership of the MAPF Planning Group will consist of at least one representative of each service/agency involved in the case subject to the MAPF. As a minimum, this will include:

- Local Authority Adults' and/or Children's Services
- Hywel Dda/Powys Teaching Health Board (HDUHB & PTHB)
- Dyfed-Powys Police

Membership will also be co-opted as required from relevant agencies or services linked to the case and/or learning outcomes. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Education Services and/or Further Education
- National Probation Service
- Housing (Local Authority or external provider)
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue
- CAFCASS
- Commissioning Services

A representative of the CYSUR/CWMPAS Business Unit may also attend the Planning Group meetings in the capacity of supporting the facilitation of the process.

8. Administration

- Briefing papers and case summaries will be circulated before each event.
- Administrative support for the learning events and any prior planning meetings will be provided within the local authority area.

9. Frequency of meetings

Each MAPF will convene a bespoke planning group and agree an appropriate frequency and number of meetings.

Overall monitoring of the MAPF programme will take place:

- Locally at quarterly LOG meetings
- Regionally at Case Review Sub Group meetings

Informal communication and update will take place with the MAWWSB between these formal governance mechanisms to ensure MAPFs continue to progress and receive support from the Business Unit.

10. Review of Practice Guidance

The Practice Guidance shall be reviewed by the MAWWSB at regular intervals in line with the overarching Policy and Procedure Review Schedule.

11. Toolkit

The CYSUR/CWMPAS Business Unit has developed a MAPF Toolkit built on best practice from facilitated events across Mid and West Wales. These resources are available from the Business Unit to support agencies in their delivery of MAPFs.