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Use of the Multi Agency Service Request Form for submitting a request for service to Children's Social Care

In February 2017 the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board were made aware that a large number of requests for service (over 80%) to children's social care were not being submitted on the multi-agency request form (MARF). This is the GSCB agreed format and is specifically configured to prompt professionals to ask for all relevant information to assist timely and appropriate assessment and minimise the need for further information gathering. Requests being made outside of the agreed format result in a delay in an appropriate assessment being carried out, often due to further information needing to be sought and having to deal with the issue of consent.

Colleagues within children's social care are receiving up to 2000 requests for service every month, which is an unprecedented level of demand. Having to seek further information in the majority of cases is not sustainable and means that vulnerable children are not being responded to effectively. The GSCB has therefore agreed that all requests for service should be submitted on the MARF. It is accepted that there will be times when there is insufficient information to complete every field but these fields can be marked as not applicable, or not known. Issues of consent must be dealt with in every case to ensure that the family is aware the referral is being made and there is not a delay to a child's needs being effectively supported. **Requests for service that are made in a format other than the MARF, will not be accepted and will be returned.**

However, the process for where there are concerns that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm has not changed. In these cases, the Children's Helpdesk should be contacted on 01452 426565 and the MARF should then be completed and sent to the Children's Helpdesk within 48 hours as written confirmation of the verbal request.

*****please share widely within your organisation*****