

What are Multi-Agency Case Audits (MACAs)?



The Professional Standards & Audit Service (PSAS) within Essex County Council facilitate Multi-Agency Case Audit days (MACAs) on behalf of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

MACAs are meetings that professionals from a variety of agencies attend to evaluate, reflect, and learn from the effectiveness of multi-agency work. These events take place a minimum of 5 times per year and are nominated by a professional involved with delivering services to a child and their family. MACAs involve:

- 💡 The Professional Standards & Audit Service identify and involve a group of key professionals from a range of agencies to attend the MACA. These include practitioners who have worked directly with the child & family, those managing frontline practitioners and Strategic Leads who can influence practice development and design going forwards.
- 💡 All participating agencies are asked to complete and submit a bespoke audit tool in advance of the MACA meeting to ensure that everyone is fully prepared and able to present their agencies perspective.
- 💡 The Professional Standards & Audit Service co-ordinate and chair the MACA event and ensure that all agencies are fully included and supported to participate in a discussion about their involvement, what has worked well, what has worked less well and why.

“Feedback from professionals about their experience of attending MACAs?”

“The MACA is a gold standard process of examining multi-agency working in a positive, non-blame environment.” *(Named Nurse Safeguarding Children, Colchester Hospital).*

“How helpful it can be to share information and views on the family from different agencies that have different roles and a different perspective.”
(Social Worker, Family Group Conference).

“The MACA has given me more understanding of the challenges faced by different agencies, financial restraints, lack of resources in some areas. Good relationship building, learning for myself, my team and other agencies.”
(Team Manager, Leaving & Aftercare, Children & Families).

The Benefits of Multi Agency Case Audits (MACAs)

Reflect on your own Practice

- Opportunity to **reflect and learn from your practice** and that of others.
- Increase understanding of other agencies' roles**, systems and practice approaches which will aid how you work together in the future.
- To **enable curiosity** about how agencies have worked together and **ask questions that will benefit improved multi-agency working** without blame.

Learn from others Experience

- Hear from a range of professionals about the **common and different practice challenges and strengths** of delivering services to children and families.
- Chance to recognise and **learn from the good practice** of your peers, as well as from areas of practice that have been less impactful.
- Encourages **transparent and confident discussion across agencies** which in turn increases individual and agency understanding of different perspectives, approaches and priorities.

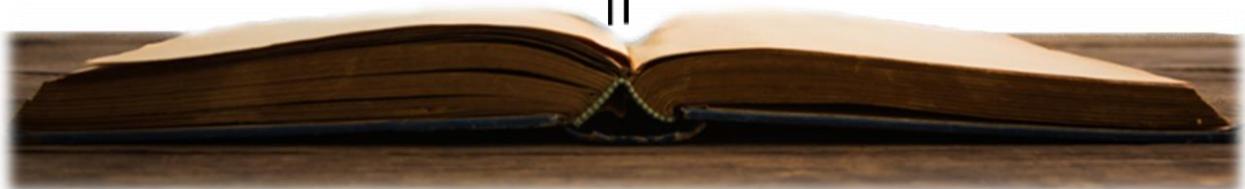


Informs Multi-Agency Practice Development

- Learning informs and influences practice/service development** across the multi-agency group.
- Shares the experience of frontline practitioners with senior agency representatives**, who can then use it to support and influence future practice development.

Strengthens Multi-Agency Networks

- Creates **opportunities for learning and strengthening practice arrangements** beyond the MACA.
- Offers a **networking opportunity** for you to meet colleagues from partner agencies across Essex.



Frequently Asked Questions



Will my practice be scrutinised?

The Professional Standards & Audit Service facilitate MACAs in a way that promotes a safe learning environment for all those who attend.

The discussion is built upon shared professional/agency curiosity that seeks to understand how and when practice has worked well or not, and to identify the key learning themes from different agency perspectives.

Do I need consent/permission from the child & family to nominate?

No, you do not. Whilst it is vital to consider the implications for a child & family of holding a MACA. Permission from the family is not explicitly required. This is due to the primary focus being about the effectiveness of multi-agency working. It is not about case management and planning work with children and families which of course should always be undertaken with the permission and participation of families. Under GDPR arrangements, MACA activity is supported as part of service development.

Will it be lots of work?

Invited professionals are asked to complete an audit tool which comprises 6 practice questions. The completion of this tool ensures you are well prepared to contribute to the MACA discussion from your agency's perspective.

The Professional Standards & Audit Service takes care of organising and facilitating the day and developing the lines of enquiry and supporting materials to be used during the event.

What do I need to consider when deciding whether to nominate a case for a MACA?

Am I nominating for the right reason? This is not a forum to influence case management decision-making or for resolving professional conflict.

Is this the right time? Has enough time passed to allow for reflection, or would a multi-agency reflective discussion compromise any ongoing activity or review?

Is this the right case? MACAs primarily focus on children (i.e. under 18) who have been open to Childrens Social Care at some point during this time (exceptions can be made). However, the family as a whole and adult involvement is typically considered in relation to the child as part of the MACA.

Am I clear about what I would like us to achieve as a multi-agency group? What might the focus of discussion be? Is there a frame for learning?

**For more information about MACA events and nominating, please contact:
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