Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
www.dardni.gov.uk
An Roinn Talmhaíochta agus Forbartha Tuaithe
Mínisteireacht o Fairms an Kintra Fordèrin

MARA

Maximising Access to Services, Grants and Benefits in Rural Areas

MARA household visit

During the visit, households will complete an electronic assessment form which will help assess eligibility for any grants or benefits. The home visit will also identify local services they may be interested in accessing. Households will then be asked to sign a consent form that details the referrals identified and these will then be either automated or manually made by the community lead organisation to various referral partners.

The referral partners will then contact the householder directly to process the referral. These include referrals to rural community transport, smart pass for free or half fare travel, energy savings homes scheme (warm homes), boiler replacement grants, assessments from occupational therapists (OTs) for disabled facilities grants, home safety checks, benefit entitlement checks and any other local or social services available in their area.

Households who have been referred for any grants, benefits or services will receive a second visit to ensure that referral partners have been in contact with the households and that the referrals are being processed in a timely and efficient manner.

It should be noted that the MARA Project cannot guarantee that households will receive any or all of these services, grants or benefits. The referrals associated with the MARA Project may, in some instances, take some time to be processed.

If you have any queries about any aspect of the MARA Project please contact:

or alternatively contact:

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HSC Public Health Agency

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MARA

Maximising Access to Services, Grants and Benefits in **Rural Areas**

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Manystrie o Fairms an Kintra Fordèrin

The MARA Project is a cross-departmental regional project funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and managed by the Public Health Agency (PHA). The MARA Project was officially launched by both the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Michelle O' Neill and the Minister for Health, Edwin Poots.

What is the aim of the MARA Project?

The aim of the project is to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in rural areas in Northern Ireland by making them aware of, or helping them access local services, grants or benefits thus supporting vulnerable rural dwellers living in, or at risk of, poverty and social exclusion.

Who will deliver the MARA Project?

PHA will commission 13 rural community lead organisations in 13 identified delivery zones who will recruit and train enablers to undertake approximately 12,025 household visits. The visits will take place from May 2012 to November 2014 and households will be signposted to various services, grants and benefits. The households identified for visits will incorporate older people, carers, disabled people, lone parents, ethnic minorities, lone adults, farming families and/or low income families.

Why the MARA approach works?

The MARA Project builds on the success of Phase 1 of the Maximising Access project which targeted the top 30% deprived rural super output areas in Northern Ireland. Evidence and experience indicates that access to the most difficult to reach people, and those suffering greatest inequalities and disadvantage, requires a more innovative, extensive and personal approach to that traditionally used.

The home visit, which is carried out by trained enablers, requires a supportive and empathetic approach that will build trust and commitment. It encourages people to avail of services, benefits and grants which they would not otherwise have known about, or felt that they were not entitled to.



HSC Public Health Agency