



**Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board  
Vulnerable Adult Risk Management (VARM)  
Fact Sheet**

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## 1. What is VARM?

VARM is a multi-agency approach to manage risks that may arise for adults who can make decisions for themselves, but who are at risk of serious harm or death from:

- Self-neglect
- Risk taking behaviour, chaotic lifestyles, or
- Refusal of services

## 2. Who can arrange a VARM risk assessment/meeting?

A VARM can be initiated by any agency including Derbyshire County Council (DCC) Adult Care, Police, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, Housing, the NHS, Environmental Health, Probation, voluntary sector, faith groups or any other organisation working with the individual.

## 3. When should I call a VARM?

You may be worried about an Individual's safety or the way they are choosing to live. Before calling a VARM meeting you must consider the **four** criteria of which must be met for a VARM meeting to take place.

1. A person **must have capacity** to make decisions and choices regarding their life.
2. There is a **risk of serious harm or death** by self-neglect, fire, deteriorating health condition, nonengagement with services or where an Adult is targeted by local community, is subjected to Hate Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour or sexual violence - and they do not meet the criteria for safeguarding (serious harm means death or injury, whether physical or psychological, which is life threatening and/or traumatic and which is viewed to be imminent or likely to occur in the future).
3. There is a **potential risk to the health and safety of others in the community**. This could be due to fire risk, cuckooing, drug dealing, hate crime and other crimes committed which could make others feel unsafe in the area; environmental health concerns such as vermin, excess rubbish and unsanitary conditions and any other issue which could impact on the health and safety of neighbours, visitors, the wider community or professionals who need to enter the property to provide a service.
4. **There are high levels of concerns from partner agencies.**

## 4. If I think all four criteria apply, what should I do next?

Speak to the Adult Safeguarding Lead within your organisation to discuss and establish that all **four** criteria for a VARM meeting are met. You can then start the VARM process.

Should your VARM referral not meet the criteria, you will be informed by the VARM Administrator. There may be other options available to for you to support the adult. Should you

require support in finding an alternative support mechanism please contact Call Derbyshire 01629 533190.

## 5. How do I get started?

Contact the VARM Administrator, email [DerbyshireSAB@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:DerbyshireSAB@derbyshire.gov.uk) who can advise you where to find all the documentation required for the process and will issue a case reference number. Information will be recorded about the VARM, so that the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board is able to track progress and quality assure the process.

The [VARM policy and VARM staff guidance](#) provide detailed information about the process and there is a flow chart that you may find useful. Remember, any agency can call a VARM but as the lead agency who has raised the concern you will be expected to chair the VARM meetings.

## 6. How do we involve the person in the VARM process?

It is useful to involve the person wherever possible and every effort should be made to engage them in the process. There is a leaflet called 'VARM – What to Expect' that explains the VARM process and gives the person an opportunity to share their wishes and feelings, using their preferred method of communication. This may be useful for people who do not want to attend but would like to contribute, or who have difficulty expressing their wishes and feelings. A carer or family member could help them fill in the leaflet. If they don't want to be involved you can still go ahead with the VARM. There are online and printable versions of the leaflet:

- [VARM – What to Expect leaflet \(online version\)](#)
- [VARM – What to Expect leaflet \(printable version\)](#)

## 7. Who should I invite to the meeting?

All agencies involved or who could be involved to support the person. It is important that professionals who attend the VARM meeting are able to make decisions on behalf of their organisation.

## 8. What happens during the VARM meeting?

Agencies share information about the person, evaluate concerns, outline each agencies responsibility and produce an action plan to manage the risks. The VARM meeting may identify the need to make other referrals about the person, other adults at risk or children. Whether or not the person is present, their views must be sought and considered. There is a [meeting template](#) to record the discussion and actions agreed, which should be completed with as much information as possible.

## 9. Are there some examples of what has been discussed at VARM meetings?

Examples of issues that have been discussed (there are usually more than one of the issues listed below):

- Fire risk at home to self or neighbours
- Self-harm or suicide attempts
- Hoarding
- Self-neglect
- Not taking medications or not accessing medical attention
- Risk to animals
- County Lines/cuckooing
- Homelessness
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Risk taking due to poor mental health
- Exploitation
- Anti-social behaviour

## 10. Is there any practical support in the VARM process for people who hoard?

There is a small multi-agency funded budget called the VARM Hoarding Grant that can be applied for to access practical support for people who hoard up to the value of £600 per household. There is [staff guidance](#) and an [application form](#) on the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board website.

## 11. How do we know what has been agreed at the VARM meeting?

It is important that accurate minutes are kept using the [VARM Meeting Record](#) template to identify the agreed actions. The minutes must be circulated within 10 working days of the meeting to all attendees and a copy must be sent to the VARM Administrator, email [DerbyshireSAB@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:DerbyshireSAB@derbyshire.gov.uk)

## 12. What happens after the meeting?

The actions agreed at the meeting should be completed within the agreed timescale. Where necessary, review meetings can be arranged.

### **13. When do I close the VARM?**

The VARM process should be closed when actions have been completed. Remember, the purpose of the VARM process is to minimise the likelihood of death or serious harm. The VARM minutes should identify the process and action taken to manage the risks with an evaluation of the outcome.

### **14. Where can I find more information about VARM?**

The Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board has a dedicated [VARM webpage](#) where all the VARM documentation can be found. Related supporting documents are:

- [VARM Policy](#)
- [VARM Practice Guidance](#)
- [VARM Process Flowchart](#)
- [VARM What to Expect information leaflet \(online version\)](#)
- [VARM What to Expect information leaflet \(printable version\)](#)
- [VARM Meeting Record](#)
- [VARM Hoarding Grant Practice Guidance](#)
- [VARM Hoarding Grant Flowchart](#)

For any email queries, please email [DerbyshireSAB@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:DerbyshireSAB@derbyshire.gov.uk)

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