



The MARA project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in rural areas throughout Northern Ireland, where the hidden nature of poverty and isolation can make it difficult to connect with the most vulnerable members of our community.

Under the project, people can benefit from a household visit whereby they will be given useful information on services, grants and benefits which may be of assistance to them.

The project is funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and led by the Public Health Agency for the four year period April 2011 – March 2015.

It is important that people in rural areas are made aware of the support that is available through MARA, and I hope you can help us spread the word.

How MARA works

The programme aims to increase access to benefits, grants and services which are known to improve health and wellbeing. To reach out to the most vulnerable rural households, a personal, supportive and empathetic approach is required. That is where MARA makes a difference.

By placing community networks at the heart of the MARA project and using local knowledge, it is easier to identify and connect with people who could benefit from a household visit.

There are no eligibility criteria for a MARA household visit. However, typically householders that would benefit from a visit include older people, carers, disabled people, lone parents, ethnic minorities, lone adults, farming families and low income families.

People are given information on useful support and services, such as rural community transport, SmartPass, warm homes/energy savings homes scheme, occupational therapy assessments for disabled facilities grants, home safety checks, and benefits entitlement checks.

This support can make a real difference to people's lives in rural areas.

How you can help

So that we can help make people aware of the support that is available through MARA, I would be grateful if you could share this information with organisations and groups in your area, as well as staff in your organisation.

This will help us to ensure that the project continues to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged groups in our community.

How to get in touch

If you have any queries or would like further information on the MARA project, please contact:

Teresa McGarvey, MARA Regional Project Manager, Public Health Agency, Health Improvement Team (West), 2nd Floor, Anderson House, Omagh Co Tyrone, BT78 1EE, telephone (028) 8225 3950, or email teresa.mcgarvey@hscni.net

Or contact your local MARA group on the details below:

Zone	District Council Area	Project Manager	Organisation	Contact Number	Email Address
Zone 1	Banbridge (Project ceased February 2013)	Lycrecia McGeary	Tyrone Antrim Down Armagh (TADA)	(028) 3839 8888	lycrecia@tadarsn.com
Zone 2	Cookstown, Magherafelt	Nuala Kildunne	Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN)	(028) 8773 8845	cwsanmax@live.co.uk
Zone 3	Down	Nuala McElroy	County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN)	(028) 4461 2311	nuala@countydownrcn.com
Zone 4	Derry, Strabane Limavady	Pauline Buchanan	Rural North West Community Support (RNWCS)	(028) 8166 2588	rnwcsmara@btconnect.com
Zone 5	Moyle, Antrim, Larne, Ballymena	Liz Bird	North Antrim Community Network (NACN)	(028) 2177 1155	elizabeth@nacn.org
Zone 6	Omagh	Aidan Bunting	Omagh Forum for Rural Associations (OFRA)	(028) 8225 1559	aidan.bunting@omaghforum.org
Zone 7	Ballymoney Coleraine	Paul Sampson	Causeway Rural Urban Network (CRUN)	(028) 7094 4934	paul@crun.org
Zone 8	Dungannon Armagh	Clare Thompson	Community Organisations of South Tyrone and Areas (COSTA)	(028) 8555 6880	mara.costa@btconnect.com
Zone 9	Newry, Mourne Craigavon	Allison Slater	South Down Family Health Initiative (SDFHI)	(028) 4177 4248	allison.slater@southdownhealthinitiative.com
Zone 10	Ards & Castlereagh	Leslie Johnston	County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN)	(028) 9182 8884	nicholas@countydownrcn.com
Zone 12	Lisburn	Lycrecia McGeary	Tyrone Antrim Down Armagh (TADA)	(028) 3839 8888	lycrecia@tadarsn.com
Zone 13	Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey	Anne Thompson	South Antrim Community Network (SACN)	(028) 9447 8645	wendy@southantrimcommunitynetwork.org
Zone 14	Fermanagh	Barry Boyle	Fermanagh Rural Community Network (FRCN)	(028) 6632 7006	fermanaghrcn@aol.com