

Signs of Safety

Assistant Director, Children's Social Care
Sarah Alexander

What is Signs of Safety?

A framework for how we do child protection work – from the principles of practice; the disciplines for practitioners' approach to the direct tools for assessment and planning and in the ways we engage with families, children, partners and the wider community.

Discipline

1. Clear distinction between past harm, future danger and complicating factors
2. Clear distinction between strengths and protections
3. Plain language
4. Statements focusing on specific observable behaviours, actions and inactions
5. Skillful use of authority
6. Assessment is always a work in progress

Tools

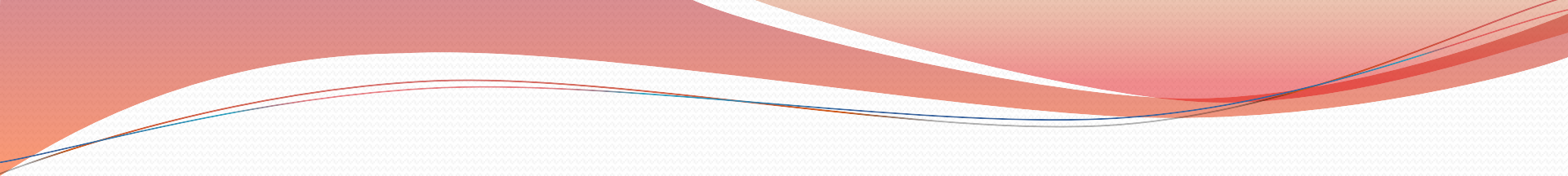
- Assessment and planning
 - Three columns
 - Scaling questions
- Engaging children – Three houses
- Words and pictures explanations

Process

- Mapping the assessment and plan – paying as much attention to strengths as weaknesses
- Narrowing down the key factors to clear statements of past harm and future danger
- Making a judgment about how safe children are
- Building a safety plan that addresses the danger statements, drawing on a safety network of extended family, friends and professionals
- Engaging the children & young people
- To do all of this in a timely way so worries can be spotted

What is the impact on the child we are looking for?

- We need to spot worries early to respond effectively.
- We are looking for behaviours that may impact on an adults ability to parent and
- Parental substance misuse
- Mental Health Issues
- Domestic abuse
- For children signs such as
- Missed appointments
- Not meeting milestones
- Mental health issues

- 
- SoS can be applied in any situation
 - Helpful when foster carers are managing difficult behaviour
 - Can be used in the court arena to determine what children want
 - Accepted practice model by Ofsted
 - Has a sound basis in theory and evaluation
 - Practice model that is easily recognisable