

The Signs of Safety Approach



In Wakefield families are starting to hear about **Signs of Safety**. The aim of this leaflet is to give you a better understanding of what it means for you and your child or children.

Signs of Safety is a way of working that supports families who need help with bringing up their children, it will help you understand any support you need and any risks to your child.

What is **Signs of Safety**?

Signs of Safety is about family members and professionals (health visitors, social workers, teachers, doctors, police and early help) working together to meet children and young people's needs in the best way possible. It puts children, young people and their parents at the heart of the work.

Families play a key part in working alongside professionals, making it clear about the worries and concerns that are identified for their child, (who is worried and why), identifying the things that are going well in the child's life (strengths), and agreeing what needs to be done (goals), to build on the strengths and reduce the worries.

What difference will **Signs of Safety** make to the way professionals work with me and my children?

The whole point of **Signs of Safety** is to make sure that the views of children, young people, their parents and carers are fully heard with the strengths of the family clearly identified and included in the plans and actions to keep the child safe and/or promote their wellbeing. Professionals will make sure this happens by asking questions such as:

"What do you think is going well?" "What are you worried about?" "What needs to change?"

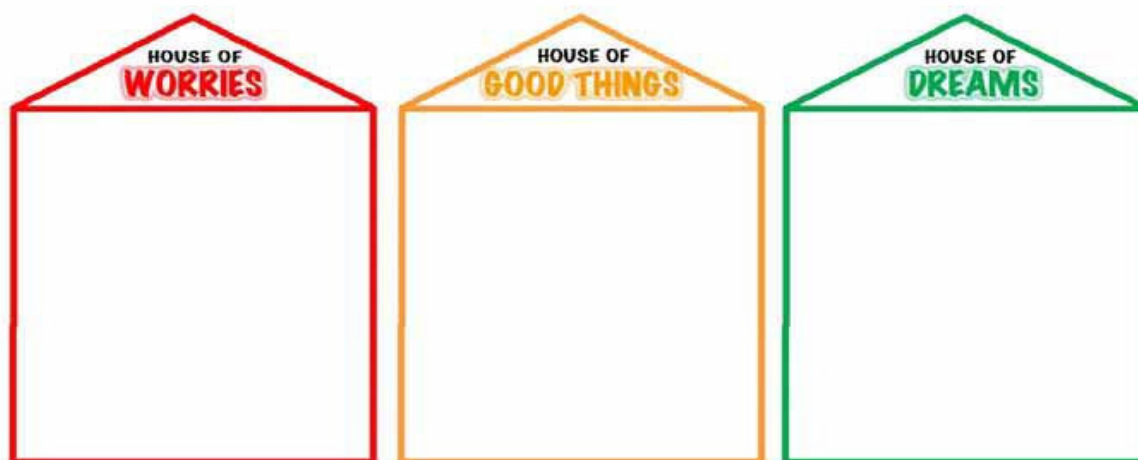
Signs of Safety is a way of making sure that everyone involved in a child's life has the same understanding of the strengths and the worries, and agrees the goals that need to be reached to make sure that your child is safe and well at all times.

Professionals will be asking you how satisfied or worried you are about your child's safety, health, where they are living, or anything else which is important to your child and the kind of support being offered.

Signs of Safety helps everyone involved with a child/young person – including the child/young person themselves – to think about ways to keep safe, healthy and settled, wherever they are living.

Talking to children

Talking to children is at the heart of **Signs of Safety**. It is important that children, as well as adults, have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy, and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe. The **Signs of Safety** approach uses a tool called *The Three Houses* when social workers, early help or other professionals talk to children to capture their views:



The **Signs of Safety** assessment will also include professionals working with your child, such as teachers, health visitors, school nurses, doctors and the police. During an assessment four key questions will be asked of you, your child, your wider family network and anyone who else who helps to care for your child:

1. What are we worried about for your child?
2. What is working well in your family?
3. What needs to happen to make sure your child is safe and well in the future?
4. How safe or well is your child on a scale from 0 to 10?
(0 meaning the child is in danger, 10 meaning the child is safe)

This becomes a family plan which looks like this:

| What are we worried about? | What's working well? | What needs to happen? |
|---|---|--|
| What has happened to make us worried and what is the impact on the child, including things that may be happening in the family's life that make the problem(s) harder to deal with. | Things that are already happening to keep the child safe and protected from harm and how well the family meet their needs. Working with the family to identify strengths which can be built on. | What the family and professionals need to see to be satisfied the child is safe and well. These are turned into goals and a family plan. |
| Scaling –0 →→10 Child in danger Child is safe | | |

You will be given a copy of your child's assessment plan. The same plan will also be used in meetings between you and your children's social workers.

Your child's social worker will review progress against the plan of what needs to happen and how well the plan is working with you and your safety network - family members, friends and other professionals - working together to increase safety and wellbeing for your child.

If you have further questions about **Signs of Safety** that this information doesn't answer then please discuss these with your child's social worker or early help worker.