

Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Partnership

Signs of Safety Briefing



February 2020

Developing Signs of Safety Practice in Solihull

Signs of Safety has been the established model of practice for Solihull Children's Services since 2016 and is at the centre of assessment work and meetings such as Team Around the Family and Child in Need meetings and Child Protection Conferences. The Signs of Safety model is constantly evolving and developing in line with the evidence base gathered from its use around the world. In Solihull we are keen to keep up with such developments and, as such we will be using the Signs of Safety module of our new Liquidlogic recording system which will go live on 2nd March 2020. This means that we will have a system that aligns with the most up to date Signs of Safety practice and will continue to be updated regularly.

What you may notice has changed

All of the key components of Signs of Safety practice that partners will have become used to will still very much in use such as the focus on 'what's working well', 'what we're worried about' and 'what needs to happen'.

Danger statements and Safety Goals

Current practice of developing danger statements and safety goals with family in order to frame the work to be completed with them will continue. You will notice that these statements and goals play a much more prominent role and are set out right at the start of meetings of any kind and a lot of the discussions will relate back to them.

Scaling

Each danger statement will be paired with a corresponding safety goal and you will now see a bespoke scaling question for each pair and should be prepared to scale each pair during meetings. This enables families to be very clear about what the key issues are and for professionals to honour progress made in particular areas even if there are still worries in others – or to highlight overall lack of progress.

Next Steps and Plans

Plans for children in need of help or protection will take the form of a Safety Plan. This moves away from a simple list of tasks and timescales. It focuses on how to build safety for children with the best use of their naturally connected networks and additional input from professionals whilst this is needed. 'Plan Rules' consider how to recognise that things are going well in relation to a particular concern, stresses and triggers that may increase danger, 'red flags' that things may be going wrong and who will do what if this happens.

Plans will be in timeline format so that it is clear to families in what order things should be prioritised and will almost always include a target date for the file to be closed to children's services if the plan is a success. Importantly, the plans and timelines belong to the network (which includes family members and their support people as well as professionals). This means that they can regularly be changed or added to and so, for example, core groups will have much more ownership of child protection plans and ensuring they are working well between conferences.

Further information

If you would like to know more, to see some examples or have some direct input on the changes, please contact Emma Lightfoot, Principal Social Worker and Signs of Safety Lead: emma.lightfoot@solihull.gov.uk and she will be happy to assist in whatever way that is most effective for your workforce.