

Signs of Safety Newsletter

Enfield
Safeguarding
Children Board
...because safeguarding children
is everybody's business



1st Edition – April 2016

Welcome

Enfield Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) and its partners, including Enfield Children's Social Care, have committed to implementing the **Signs of Safety** framework. The comprehensive implementation plan has been approved and endorsed and funding has been secured for the next 2 years to help move this important project forward.

This means that we have begun to make some significant changes to the way we work with children, young people and families to ensure they are always at the centre of the work we do. Signs of Safety is an integrated framework that is underpinned by key principles - developing and sustaining working relationships with children, families and professionals; having a questioning approach, remaining open minded; and keeping the work grounded in everyday practice.

So far the response from front line staff across the multi-agency partnership in Enfield has been overwhelmingly positive. They have told us that they believe implementation of Signs of Safety in Enfield will improve our practice and improve outcomes for children and young people. Importantly, parents/carers and young people have said that Signs of Safety will help them to be more closely involved in the assessment and planning process and to understand the changes they need to make to ensure children's safety.

The implementation plan is well underway and the aim of this newsletter is to share the progress of the journey with you. It's always useful to get feedback and if there is any particular information that you would like to see in the next newsletter or would like to share your views, lessons learnt or case studies, please get in touch through the ESCB local.safeguarding.children.board@enfield.gov.uk.

Geraldine Gavin, Independent Chair, Enfield Safeguarding Children Board

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What is Signs of Safety?

The Signs of Safety approach focuses on the question "How can the worker build partnerships with parents and children in situations of suspected or substantiated child abuse and still deal rigorously with the maltreatment issues?" This strengths-based and safety-focused approach to child protection work is grounded in partnership and collaboration. It expands the investigation of risk to encompass strengths and 'Signs of Safety' that can be built upon to stabilise and strengthen a child's and family's situation. The approach is designed to be used from commencement through to case closure

We are introducing Signs of Safety as our core, multi-agency approach to working with families and managing risk where children are in need of help and protection. The Signs of Safety framework provides an evidence-based approach to assessment, planning, intervention and review that is based on a genuine partnership with children and families, one in which practitioners balance needs and risks with family strengths.

'KRATOS feel Signs of Safety is a more collaborative way of working, feeling that the child / young person and their family are in the best position to know what would work for their family. KRATOS advocate for the voice of the child and are happy to see that Enfield is committed to hearing the voices of children and young people.'

Peri Louise Revan, Enfield Children's Rights Advocacy Co-ordinator



What's working well?

We started our implementation journey in the summer of 2015. Since then, we have developed the Project Plan which has endorsement from relevant boards and senior managers and we have established a multi-agency steering group which leads on further development and implementation across the Multi-Agency partnership.

We have delivered Signs of Safety briefings to more than 150 Social Work practitioners and have begun to deliver briefings for all partners including Schools, Health, and the Police

We also had two 2-day training sessions, delivered by a licensed Signs of Safety trainer, which were attended by 60 practitioners who are already starting to use the Signs of Safety framework in their practice.

www.signsofsafety.net
[ESCB Signs of Safety webpage](#)

Next steps

A message from AGI GAULT – Licenced SoS trainer for Enfield



'I really look forward to working with everyone in Enfield. I always enjoy the two-day Introductory training. It is designed to show people the Signs of Safety model and encourage everyone to start using it. The workbook is a good guide too. The message I have for you all is to remember that the Signs of Safety model may feel different, but it is essentially a way of taking your existing skills, knowledge and practice into a framework that creates a visual exploration of a family or child's situation and promotes a cooperative network of professionals, family members and their natural network to work out the best way to solve the problem.'

Having used Signs of Safety with families and professionals, the most important thing I have learned and seen make a difference is to give families honesty and vision. This is not about quick fixes or focusing only on positives. Signs of Safety enables us to articulate clearly what people are worried about, what everyday life needs to look like to satisfy everyone the child will be safe in the future, and offers the family the opportunity to show what they can do in order to achieve that. The important thing is that we work with families and offer them opportunity to make changes before we impose our own actions to keep a child safe.'

What needs to happen?

Following the first two sessions of 2-day SoS training, we will start the pilot stage of implementation. This will be a good opportunity to see what is working, what the areas for further development might be and what needs to happen next.

At the end of the Pilot phase there will be an audit of cases that have gone to CP Conference where SoS principles have been applied to help us move forward. We plan to fully 'go-live' in the early autumn



We have made some changes to 'front door' referral forms to ensure they reflect SoS principles. Professionals are already using Signs of Safety methodology by asking: **what are we worried about?, what's working well? and what needs to happen?** from the very beginning.

Training

Training and Development update

- 45 min briefings to more than 150 front line SW practitioners
- 20 multi-agency briefings delivered between February and April
- 2-day training sessions for 60 practitioners delivered
- Further 2 day training for another 60 professionals has been scheduled on 20th and 21st of June and 22nd and 23rd of June.
- Specialist training date for Child Protection Conference Chairs is scheduled for May .



Feedback from the first 2-day Signs of Safety training sessions

'This was an excellent course. The content was challenging. The presentation was clear and understanding. Agi was a brilliant trainer. The use of one case as a whole group example and then using our own case within the smaller group, has given us a range of experience and practice. The venue was also excellent.'

' I really enjoyed the course and I am enthused to take it back to my team to implement it. Agi is superb. She understood the needs of the group and you could tell she is really passionate about the subject.'

For more information visit the [ESCB Signs of Safety webpage](#). If you have any ideas, questions or queries or if you would like to request a Signs of Safety briefing for your service or agency please email: local.safeguarding.children.board@enfield.gov.uk
We are also keen to hear and share your experiences of using Signs of Safety in your workplace.