

# Signs of Safety Newsletter

4<sup>th</sup> Edition – January 2017

## Welcome and Update

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This is the fourth Enfield Signs of Safety (SofS) Newsletter. It might be more apt to call this edition Signs of Something, as a major strand of the work of the past few months has been to spread further the understanding of the SofS practice framework across our partner services and across Children's Services. The adaptability of the basic three column approach and scaling has been used helpfully across different settings in the UK and elsewhere. The terminology has been adapted to be used across early help, child in need and young people in care in addition to the original use of the framework in the child protection arena. The table below gives some guidance on how the analysis categories can be adapted to think about 'well-being and success'.

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	Past	Future	Complicating Factors	Existing Strengths	Existing Solutions	Goals	Next Steps
Signs of Safety <i>Child Protection</i>	Harm	Danger	Complicating Factors	Existing Strengths	Existing Safety	Safety Goals	Next Steps
Signs of Wellbeing <i>Early Help</i>	Wellbeing Concerns (past)	Critical Worries (future)	Complicating Factors	Existing Strengths	Existing Wellbeing	Wellbeing Goals	Next Steps
Signs of Success <i>LAC</i>	Worrying Behaviour (past)	Critical Worries (future)	Complicating Factors	Existing Strengths	Existing Success	Success Goals	Next Steps

# What have we been doing?

We have been listening to the views of practitioners. We gathered the information from the July 2017 SofS survey.

**You told us the we needed to work on the forms used to make them more SofS friendly.**

We have continued our work with IT consultants and will be ready to launch a whole suite of new forms through from first contact, referral, assessment and child protection conference forms. It is planned to launch these with live workshops to demonstrate the use of the forms in January or early February 2018.

**You told us that we need to provide more training from bite sized one hour coaching to full day training.**

We have since September run on average of four sessions per week, ranging from, one hour coaching sessions, two-three hours briefings, through to full one day training. Because of this work we have been able to introduce the SofS framework to a wide range of practitioners across a variety of services and teams. The teams/services we have delivered coaching, briefings and one day training include, police, schools, health visitors, colleagues in adult services, adoption team, fostering service, parenting support service, change and challenge, contact centre, family assessment service, education psychology service, and coaching sessions run at Triangle House, Cheviots Disabled Children's Centre, Claverings, and Charles Babbage House. This has been delivered to over two hundred practitioners!!!!!!!!!!!!

**You told us that you would like the opportunity to attend the 5 day advanced training.**

We are running a further 5 day advanced training from February 19 – 23 2018. There will be 30 places to practitioners across Children's Services. Access to these places will be decided at a senior management level but please speak to your manager if you manager if you wish to attend.

**You told us you would like access to more guides and examples of good SofS practice.**

We have worked with colleagues in Learning and Development and we have a SofS 'button' on the I-Learn Dashboard with a range of SofS resources including practice guides, examples of good practice. This is up and running now but more resources will be added through December.

This can be accessed via the link

<http://enfield.learningpool.com/course/index.php?categoryid=245>

Words and Pictures coaching session at Triangle House with team manager Turkey Hadji-Filippou presenting a draft words and pictures explanation to the group.



## What is a practice framework?

A practice framework is just one way of looking to shape and improve how child and family welfare services are delivered. The interest in practice frameworks across the UK and the world is one strand of this wider interest in the delivery of children and family welfare services. In Enfield we have looked around at the practice frameworks being used by other Local Authorities and London Boroughs. We think that the Signs of Safety framework best fits with our philosophy and drive to improve the lives of children and families in our area. The term 'practice framework' is often used interchangeably with 'practice model', 'practice approach' amongst other terms. In England and Wales we have had since 2000 The National Assessment Framework commonly referred to as 'the triangle' a 124 page framework with accompanying 141 page guidance plus appendices! Whilst this framework has its strengths a criticism has been that workers have been overly guided by gathering large amounts of information about children and families and that it has not so readily allowed workers to help families find solutions to their problems.

## What does this mean for children and families?

The SofS framework gives workers a set of a set of principles and a suite of tools to use in our work with children and their families. This means that in practice workers are not taking an 'expert' approach to the problems of the family and doing more 'with' children and families rather than doing 'to' children and families; workers are being open and transparent about the worries using danger or worry statements with children and families, and workers are providing a vision of what families need to do to show everyone that they don't need to be worried using safety or well-being goals. Workers are putting the worries and goals in straightforward language that the family use and can understand. The framework provides tools for the worker to communicate with the children and young people with words and pictures, using three houses, safety/wellbeing house, words and pictures explanations of adult worries.

**Time to be  
appreciative**

It is with sadness for us in Enfield and with excitement and appreciation for Grant Landon and his family that we say goodbye and good luck as he moves onto new challenges. Grant's energy, skill and humour has been a driving force for service improvement in Enfield in a number of roles within the LCSB and Children's Services. His commitment to service development will be sorely missed in Enfield and will be an asset to his next challenge in the Republic of Ireland where SofS is the nationwide practice framework. THANK YOU!

# Turning questions into conversations: EARS Process

	WORRIES	STRENGTHS	GOALS
<b>Elicit</b> First question	<p>What are we worried about?</p> <p>What harm has happened to any child in the care of these adults?</p> <p>What is the danger to this child if left in the care of this mother/father/family?</p> <p>What would make this situation more complicated?</p>	<p>What's working well here?</p> <p>What are the best attributes of this mum's / dad's parenting?</p> <p>What would the child say are the best times she has with her dad?</p> <p>When has the mum fought off the depression and be able to focus on the child?</p>	<p>What needs to happen?</p> <p>What do you need to see to be satisfied the child is safe enough we can close the case?</p> <p>What would mum say would show everyone the child could come home?</p> <p>Where would the teenager say he wants his life to be at 18?</p> <p>What do we need to do to create a relationship where we can talk about difficult issues?</p>
<b>Amplify</b> Behavioural detail: what would you see?	<p>When has harm happened?</p> <p>How often and how bad?</p> <p>How did the incident effect the child? What language can we use to say that so the mum and child can easily understand?</p> <p>How long has this harm/problem been happening?</p> <p>Give me the first, worst and most recent examples of the harm/problem?</p>	<p>When has that good thing happened? How often?</p> <p>How did the mum fight off the depression? How else? How else?</p> <p>How does the neighbour help?</p> <p>How is the parenting programme making things better for the child?</p> <p>What did the dad do to make those contacts visits really enjoyable for his kids?</p>	<p>Describe the details of the behaviour you would want to see that would tell you that this child is safe?</p> <p>How many people do you think should be involved in this safety plan?</p> <p>What is the father's willingness/capacity to do this?</p> <p>Is this plan written in a way the child understands it?</p> <p>How will the mental health services involvement make this plan work?</p>
<b>Reflect</b> Meaning	<p>Which of the danger statements do you think is most important (or easiest) to deal with first?</p> <p>Which danger would worry the parents most?</p> <p>Of all the complicating factors which do you think is most important to deal with?</p>	<p>Which of the strengths are most useful in terms of getting this problem dealt with?</p> <p>Which aspects of their parenting/family life would mum/dad be most proud of?</p>	<p>Where do you rate the child's safety with this mother on 0 to 10 scale?</p> <p>Is this a plan that the parents believe in? What confidence on a 0 to 10 scale would they say they have in it keeping the child safe?</p>
<b>Start over</b>	<p>Are there any other worries that we have missed?</p>	<p>Are there any other good things happening in this family that we have missed?</p>	<p>Are there any other important things that we have missed in the plan?</p>

## Are we speaking the same language?

The use of straightforward language that is understood by all is a key element of SofS. A frustration I had when I first encountered SofS was that it introduced new terms that I was not familiar with and seem to run counter to the principal of straightforward and simple language. Being understood by the people we work with (children, families and professionals) is essential if we are to work together to help. Below are a list of some of the terms used in the framework and where you might see them. Please have a look on i-learn for a more full guide.

Term	What is it?	Where you might see this happening?
Mapping	An assessment tool which focuses on strengths and identifying the key concerns and risks. Driven by children and families, it allows you to agree next steps with the involvement of the wider network and partners.	On first contact with families and at the first step in any assessment process. At any meeting with a family. To work through stuck cases, case drift and professional disagreements.
Danger/Worry Statements	Part of an analysis which captures who is worried about what and why, in relation to the impact on the child and the care they receive.	In assessments and plans.
Safety/Wellbeing/ Success Goals	What we need to see happen for the child in order to close the case or to be confident that the problem has been sorted.	In assessments and plans.
Scaling Questions	Used to capture how people feel at any one time and create further conversation. Creates space for people to think about what needs to happen to make things better or safer for the child and helps to understand how individuals view the risk. Makes families and partners share the responsibility and take ownership of planning.	When mapping or in direct work. Any time you want to initiate solution-focused discussion, always starting by describing what 10 looks like. Review of plans and Assessment.
Words and Pictures Explanations	A method for the adults (professionals and parents/carers) to explain to the children why the adults are worried and what they will do to help.	Whenever a young person needs an explanation for adult actions, in safety plans, when children/young people aren't living with their birth parents, whenever a young person has a

## What Needs to Happen?

1. The roll out of a suite of new forms across Children's Services expected for January/February 2017.
2. A whole range of SofS resources to be placed on I-Learn.
3. Reconnect with front line staff about what they want from a practice framework.
4. Continued work to spread the understanding and application of the framework across Children's Services, partner agencies and stakeholders.
5. Better use of questions particularly strength-based, solution-focused and scaling questions.
6. More words and pictures explanation to children and young people.

We want to hear from you. If you have any ideas, questions or comments 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](mailto: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.

For more information, resources and tools visit the [ESCB Signs of Safety webpage](#) and Signs of Safety's own website <http://www.signsofsafety.net/>  
For details of the recent large scale evaluations of the model funded through the Department for Education visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/signs-of-safety-practice-in-childrens-services-an-evaluation>

<http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Thematic-Report-2017-Social-Work.pdf>

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