

## Signs of Safety – Information for families

### What is ‘Signs of Safety’?

Signs of Safety is a way of working with families where there are concerns about a child’s safety or wellbeing. Signs of Safety means Wigan Childrens Service’s will work with families and other professionals so that together we can help your child feel safe and cared for.

### Why are we using Signs of Safety?

Signs of Safety makes sure your views and the views of children, young people, carers and extended family (or close family friends) are part of the solution. The approach is about family members and professionals (health professionals, workers, teachers, doctors, and police) as well as your wider network of friends and family, working together to meet your child’s needs in the best possible way.

Your case worker will ask 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 your worker, and other people involved, have the same understanding about your child’s strengths and worries. It helps everyone involved, including your child, to think of ways to keep them safe, healthy and settled, wherever they are living. This will mean asking you a lot of questions so that the worker can understand how satisfied or worried you are about your child’s safety, health and wellbeing.

### 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 the things 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 can use tools such as the Three Houses to talk to children and ask them their views. Your worker will discuss with you the best tools to use.



## Assessment process

The Signs of Safety assessment process is called Mapping. During an assessment, three key questions will be asked of you, your child, your wider family and anyone else who helps care for your child. These are:

- **What is working well for your family?** Things that are already happening to keep your child safe and protected from harm or abuse and meet their needs
- **What are we worried about for your child?** What has happened to make us worried and what is the impact on your child, including things that may be happening in your family's life that make problem(s) harder to deal with
- **What needs to happen to make sure your child is safe and well in the future?** What family and professionals need to see to be satisfied your child is safe. These are turned into goals and a plan.

### How safe is your child on a scale from 0 to 10?

(0 meaning the child is being harmed, 10 meaning the child is safe)



## Outcome of assessment

If the outcome of the assessment finds there are serious worries about your child's safety, these are written down and called **Danger Statements**. The steps taken to deal with the danger is written down and called **Safety Goals**. These are the goals that need to be reached to make sure that your child is safe and well at all times. Even if your child is looked after by the Local Authority, we will still use this approach. **Words and pictures** are used to communicate with your child in a way they will understand about what has happened and what will keep them safe. A **Safety Network** is the people in your life that are important to you and to your children like grandparents, aunties, uncles, close friends, and can include professionals. All safety goals need to identify a safety network. This network of family and friends work with you to ensure ongoing support after the case is closed.

A **Safety Plan** includes all the things that will happen every day and will show everyone - professionals, your safety network and your child - how to be safe in the future even if danger is present. The safety plan is written together with you, your worker and your safety network. A timeline includes the danger statement, the safety goal and a number of steps with a timeline. Everyone will meet regularly to see how the plan is going until **everyone is happy the safety goals have been reached and the case can be closed**.

## Your rights

As a parent you have the right to:

- Be heard - access your child's records
- Be kept informed and involved - seek legal advice
- Be supported - have access to an interpreter if you require one
- Ask for and be given explanations - participate in the thinking and planning to address the concerns.