



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



What is Signs of Safety (SofS)

Signs of Safety is the practice model used by Northamptonshire Childrens Trust. SofS aims to stabilise and strengthen families through collaboration to identify and harness their strengths and resources. This places relationships between social workers and parents at the centre of our work.

SofS guiding principles are –

- Working relationships are fundamental – honest and respectful relationships between the worker and families and between all professionals involved with a family to achieve a shared understanding of what needs to change and how this will be achieved
- Stance of critical inquiry – critical thinking to minimise error and create a culture of reflective practice, and support regular review of the balance of strengths and dangers so as to avoid drift, which may perpetuate and overly optimistic or pessimistic view of the family
- Where the experience of the child is at the centre and where families and front-line professionals judge the effectiveness of practice

The Signs of Safety Framework asks practitioners to think about any complicating factors that may make it harder for a parent to meet their child's needs, and to consider what is getting in the way of achieving safety and wellbeing for the child or young person.

What key words / terminology might we use and what do they mean?

Mapping - When we refer to mapping we are looking at four simple questions to ask when thinking about and working with a child, young person and family:

1. What are we worried about?
(Past harm, future danger, and complicating factors, consider first worst and last incidences, severity of the harm and impact on the child)
2. What's working well?
(Existing strengths and safety)
3. What needs to happen?
(Future safety)
4. How worried are we on a scale of 0 to 10? (Judgement)

Signs of Safety training will help you to develop skill in using the questioning approach with more depth and use skills in professional curiosity

Scaling - Signs of Safety asks people to scale their worries to help in decision making and planning, an example of a scaling questions may be –

- On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is the child is not safe and their needs are not being met at all and 10 is that the child is safe, has all their needs met and are thriving, what would your score be today and why?

Using mapping and the scaling together will help you to identify gaps in knowledge and analyse harm

Signs of Safety Tools

3 houses – the ‘3 houses’ is a tool we may use with a child, this could be called 3 wizards, 3 fairies or other versions. We are asking the child to identify what they would like in their house of good things, house of dreams and house of worries.

Family Networks - The Family Network Approach is an integral component to Signs of Safety practice. We know that young people grow more resilient and are more likely to achieve better outcomes when they have the support of a naturally connected network. We also know that plans are likely to be more successful when they are led and owned by the family and their wider network, rather than being imposed on them by workers.

Safety Planning – is done with families and is when we draw up a plan that outlines what everyone will do to make sure the children are safe, who is the support network, what people’s roles are and what people should do if they are worried.

Danger/worry statements and Safety/success goals – this is where we write about what worries us the most within a family and what things would look like for us not to be worried for a children safety.

There are many other words and terminology you may hear us you and to find out more you can visit the Signs of Safety web pages

Is there any training I can do?

Yes, there is a video SofS briefing available on the NSCP page’s and you can also book onto a face to face ½ day briefing through the training pages.

[Signs of Safety - Practitioner Briefing - Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](https://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/signs-of-safety-practitioner-briefing)

Useful resources

[Signs of Safety - Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](https://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/signs-of-safety)

[Signs of Safety Toolkit - Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board \(northamptonshirescb.org.uk\)](https://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/signs-of-safety-toolkit)

[What Is Signs of Safety? - Signs of Safety](https://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/what-is-signs-of-safety)

[Home - Signs of Safety Knowledge Bank](https://www.northamptonshirescb.org.uk/home)