

Signs of Safety



Briefing note 7 for partner organisations and practitioners
October, 2021

Welcome

Welcome to the Signs of Safety briefing note for partner organisations and practitioners. It is designed to update all practitioners working with children and their families on what's happened so far to implement the Signs of Safety approach in South Gloucestershire and the next steps.

What are we focussing on at the moment with Signs of Safety in South Gloucestershire?

Improving and updating our systems that we use to record our work with families

In response to feedback from practitioners and team managers in our teams about difficulties with our current set of forms in our IT system (which is called Mosaic), an Integrated Children's Services (ICS) Mosaic taskforce was set up. The aim is to improve the way we use the available technology as an integral tool to guide our practice and recording in the most effective and efficient way instead of thinking of Mosaic simply as an IT system into which we have to enter data.

We have been finding out what are the best next steps for us as a local authority and learning from other Authorities using updated forms already and their assurance that they had been able to make the forms work effectively and demonstrate benefits for children, young people and families as well as to themselves. The decision has been made to update our forms and system to make sure we are on the latest version that is released in November 2021. The Integrated Children's Services (ICS) Mosaic taskforce will be planning how this is completed but we are hopeful that the system and training will be ready to use by our social care teams by end March 2021, then our preventative services after this.

What this means for our colleagues from partner agencies:

You may notice some difference in the layout and wording of some of the assessments and plans that we share with you about the families we work with. If you have any questions about these, Jo Hillier will be involved in the planning, training and discussions so please contact her.

Learning

Signs of Safety training for partners

To help our partner agencies understand the way we work with children, young people and families in South Gloucestershire, we have been offering Signs of Safety awareness for partners (3 hours) and Signs of Safety in practice for partners (3 hours) courses.



We have been delivering these sessions since January 2016 and here is some more information about the courses

Signs of Safety Awareness for partner's session (AM)

This session is designed for workers who need to know about the use of the Signs of Safety framework in the council and partner agencies and understand the basic concepts of Signs of Safety to assist them in their job role. This 3-hour session is relevant to employees who: - will not be using the Signs of Safety approach directly with families but will see it in practice and need to understand its simplest form - need an introduction to the approach before they go on to do more specific role-relevant training. These half-day workshops are provided at no charge to South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership partner agencies. There are 24 spaces on each course.

The dates this course is running in South Gloucestershire are:

25th November 2021, 25th January 2022, 24th March 2022.

If an employee needs to learn more about using the Signs of Safety model in their job role, they will also want to book themselves onto a 'Signs of Safety in Practice for partners' session. These run regularly during afternoons on the same days as the morning 'awareness' session.

Signs of Safety in practice for partner's session (PM)

Delegates must have already attended the Signs of Safety Awareness session before booking on this workshop. They can either have done that on an earlier date or by attending the morning of this course date.

This 'SoS in practice for partners' session offers the opportunity to explore and practice the model. It is aimed at the Safeguarding Lead within a single setting, team or organisation: employees actively involved in assessments, CP Conferences, Children in Need meetings, such as Designated CP Leads in Schools, relevant operational managers or practitioners in Early Years settings, Health and the voluntary sector. Following the course those practitioners will want to think about how they then ensure others in their work-setting get a basic awareness of Signs of Safety, for example via a short internal cascade meeting for key staff etc. These half-day workshops are provided at no charge to South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership partner agencies.

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Signs of Safety bitesize sessions

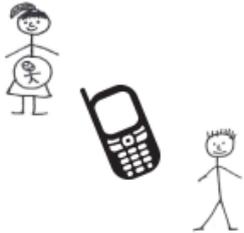
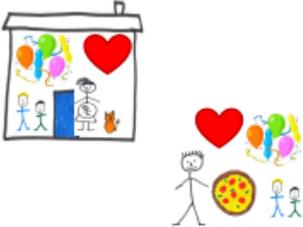
Launch of skills bitesize workshops to support staff and colleagues in partner agencies to focus on the individual tools and skills of the Signs of Safety approach. Since April 2021, we have been delivering Bitesize sessions (1 hour 30 minutes) on the topics listed below which can be booked onto via the learning and development site. To be able to attend these sessions you must have already completed the Signs of Safety Awareness session or 2-day Signs of Safety training. I have included some more information about each session, and sessions are offered free of charge to our partner agencies.

Creating Safety/wellbeing plans with families (3 hours)

This is a 3-hour session and the course learning outcomes are to support attendees:

- To understand the importance of writing plans with families
- To be able to understand different levels of plans with families
- To understand the Signs of Safety- safety planning process
- To be able to prepare questions for safety/wellbeing planning with families
- To see examples of good practice of safety planning with families.

Using words and pictures session

<p>Who was worried? Mrs Clarke (Teacher) is worried as you have been upset at school and seemed quiet.</p> 	<p>What are we worried about? Mrs Clarke is worried that you have been upset about not seeing Daddy on your Birthday and this is making you feel sad.</p> 
<p>What happened next? Mrs Clarke and Jo spoke to Mummy about this. Mummy and Daddy spoke on the phone and they knew it was important for you to see them both on your Birthday.</p> 	<p>What are we doing about the worries? Mummy and Daddy have agreed that on your birthday. You will spend the morning with Mummy, Tom and Tibbles. Then Daddy will pick you and Tom up and he is going to take you both to the Pizza restaurant for a birthday lunch.</p> 

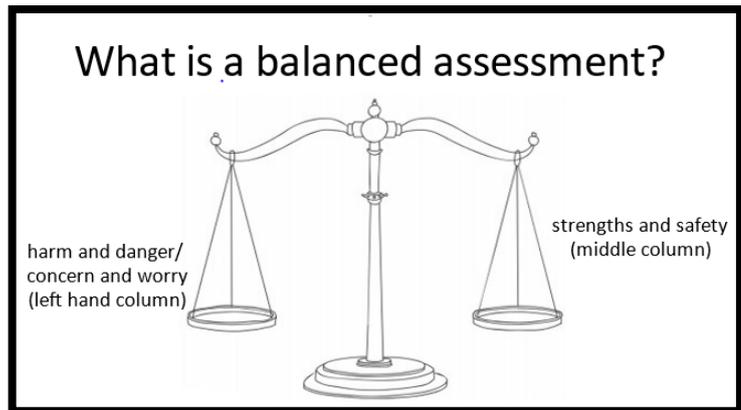
A 1 hour 30 minute bitesize session for people working with children and families in South Gloucestershire to be able to explore and gain confidence in creating words and picture explanations for children and families.

What are words and pictures?

A creative way to communicate to a child or parent, in a way they will understand. It allows parents and partners to share the same simplified narrative to explain to a child what has happened and what is going to keep them safe/well.

Building on families strengths (Using Appreciative Inquiry with families)

A 1 hour 30-minute bitesize session for people working with children and families in South Gloucestershire to be able to explore and gain confidence in building on families strengths using strength and safety questions.



Finding family networks

A 1 hour 30-minute bitesize session for people working with children and families in South Gloucestershire to be able to explore and gain confidence in finding family networks to increase connection, belonging, life- long links for children and young people.

Please see South Gloucestershire Learning and Development site to read about the courses and book onto future courses. [Please click here to look at Signs of Safety courses](#)

Next steps

- By End Nov 2021 – give a short Signs of Safety overview to all Primary and Secondary/Special School Heads and Senior Leaders Briefing
- By End Nov 2021 - 1 hour training session to be delivered to Education, Learning and Skills colleagues
- By November 2021 - provide 5-day training for more of our staff as Practice Leaders of Signs of Safety.
- By December 2021 - create a survey to find out how many of our partner agencies staff have attended Signs of Safety and what are the barriers that are getting in the way of more staff attending.

Contact

For more information, feedback, comments or to share your experience of Signs of Safety so far please contact:

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