



Information Leaflet  
for Parents

# The Role of Social Workers

Social workers work with families when concerns are raised about the welfare, protection or safety of a child or when there are concerns about the care of a child or they have been the victim of abuse or neglect.

If a worry has been expressed about a child all social workers have a legal responsibility to respond to referrals in line with The Children's NI Order 1995 and the Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2016, developed by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) DHSSPS 2012.

This includes notifying PSNI where there is a child protection concern.

## What is Signs of Safety?

Signs of Safety was first introduced in Northern Ireland in June 2018.

### **What difference will Signs of Safety make to the way Trusts works with me and my children?**

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 visitors, social workers, teachers, doctors, PSNI) as well as your wider network (friends and family) working together to meet your child's needs in the best way possible.

# What is Signs of Safety?

Signs of Safety uses different tools, one of these uses a whiteboard and we call this a 'Mapping'. During a mapping four key questions will be asked of you, the child, your wider family and anyone else who helps care for your child:

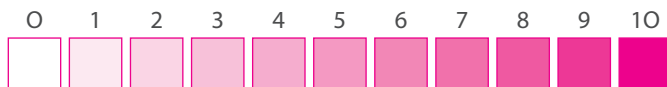
1. What are we worried about for your child?
2. What is working well in your family?
3. What needs to happen to make sure your child is safe and well in the future?
4. How safe is your child on a scale from 0 to 10?

(0 meaning the child is not safe, 10 meaning the child is safe).

Mapping on a whiteboard will look like this:

What are we worried about?	What is working well? (Strengths and demonstrated safety)	What needs to happen?

**Safety scale:** On a scale of 0-10  
(place different peoples' assessment of the continuum).



From the mapping meetings, Danger Statements and Safety Goals are agreed.

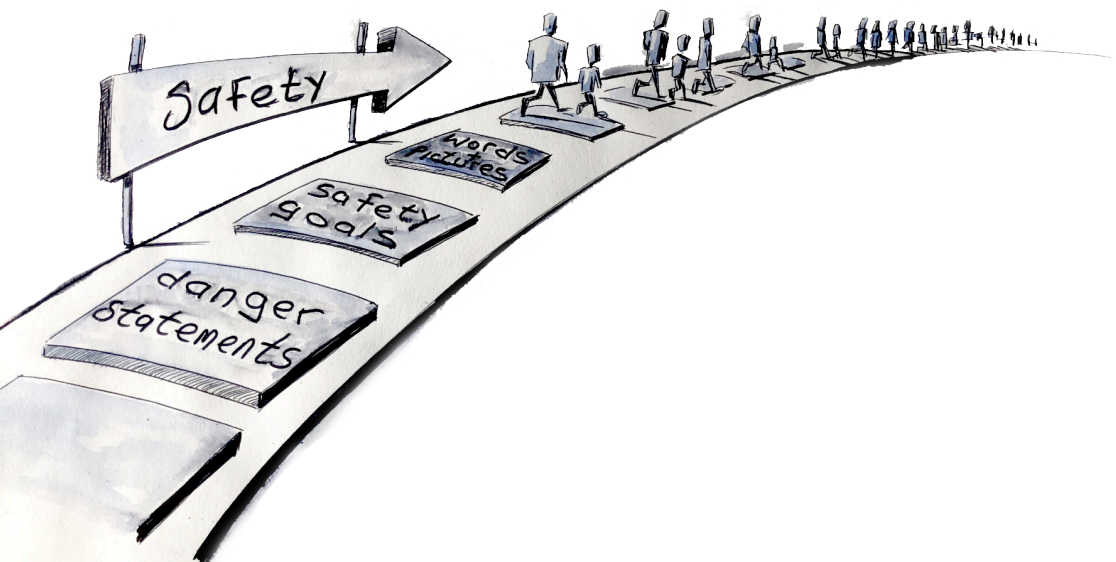
# Here are a few other steps in the Signs of Safety Process:

**Danger Statements** state the worries everyone holds if nothing changes.

**Safety Goals** state what needs to happen to deal with the danger. These are the goals that need to be reached to make sure that your child is safe and well at all times.

Central to this process is the **Safety Network**. A safety network consists of people in your life that are important to you and your children (like grandparents, aunties, uncles, close friends). All safety goals need to identify a safety network. This shared network of family, friends and professionals provide support to your family to achieve your safety goals.

**Words and Pictures** are used to communicate with everyone what has happened and what will keep your family safe in a way everyone understands.



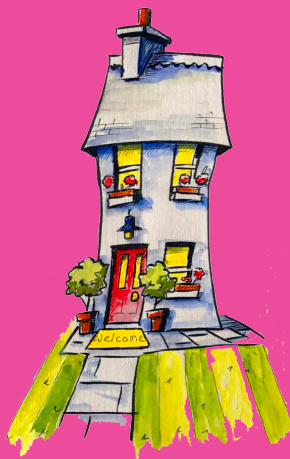
Talking to children is at the heart of Signs of Safety. It is important that children, as well as adults, have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy, and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe. The Signs of Safety approach uses a tool called **The Three Houses** to talk to children and ask them their views:



House of  
Worries



House of  
Good Things



House of  
Dreams

TALKING TO  
CHILDREN

# Safety Plan

A safety plan includes all the things that will happen every day and will show everyone; (the professionals, your safety network, and your children) how the child will be safe in the future even if the danger is present. The Safety Plan is written together with you, your social worker and your safety network.

A timeline to show when all these steps will be done with you and your family is called a 'trajectory.' The trajectory works towards the Safety Goal. 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.

Signs of Safety is a way of making sure that the social worker, and other people involved have the same understanding of the strengths and the worries for your children. It helps everyone involved, including the child, to think of ways to keep them safe, healthy and settled, wherever they are living.



# Your Rights

As a parent you have the right to:

- Be heard
- Be kept informed and involved
- Participate in the thinking and planning in decisions about the safety of your children
- Seek legal advice
- Ask for and be given explanations
- Be supported
- Access your child's records
- Have access to an interpreter if you require one
- Have your religious and cultural background taken into account
- Complain

If you have any questions or queries please speak to your social worker or their team leader.

## **Social Worker**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Team Leader**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

