



## **Signs of Safety                      Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q1. What is Signs of Safety (SofS)?**

A1. SofS is a framework for practice with origins in Solution Focused Brief Therapy. It can be applied to support work with children, young people and their families from Early Help Services to Children in Care.

### **Q2. How is SofS being implemented in County Durham?**

A2. SofS implementation within Durham County Council's Children Services has already begun. SofS consultants are in the process of training the workforce and supporting practice leaders to successfully embed the framework within practice.

SofS is a whole system change for Children's Services, therefore implementation will be a staged approach over approximately 3 years.

You will begin to see SofS language used in Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and Team Around the Family meetings as well as within written reports.

DSCP are ensuring that partner organisations are kept up to date with progress and responsible for sharing key documents and guides that will aid partners in their understanding of how the framework may affect them.

### **Q3. Is there training available for partners?**

A3. A number of briefing sessions have been delivered to approx. 500 frontline practitioners and managers from partner agencies across County Durham. We have additional places on the following briefing sessions still available:

10th April am and pm sessions.

24<sup>th</sup> May pm session

The Workplace Newton Aycliffe. Sessions run either 9.30am-12.30pm or 1pm-4pm

### **Q4. What are the 3 columns?**

A4. When thinking about children, young people and their families SofS using the following approach to support the formulation of questioning

techniques, assessment and plan development and considers each of the factors listed:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
<b>What are we worried about?</b>	<b>What's working well?</b>	<b>What needs to happen?</b>
Harm	Safety	Next Steps
Complicating factors	Strengths	
Danger statements		Safety Goals

**Q5. We are starting to hear and read words and phrases in meetings and reports that we haven't seen before?**

A5. You will start to hear the following phrases and language within Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and Team Around the Family meetings:

**Danger statements** are developed based on the information gained throughout assessment. They should clearly articulate what professionals are most worried about within the family (column 1), they should be written in plain English and be developed and shared with the family so everyone is clear what the concerns are.

**Safety Goals** are developed with the family in order to address the concerns that have been identified within the danger statements.

**Scaling Questions** are being used within a range of meetings including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Team Around the Family meetings and as part of direct work with families. Scaling questions are used to help articulate people's worries and identify progress for example on a scale of 0 – 10 where 10 means the child/teen is safe enough and we can close the case and zero means things are so bad for the child/young person we must remove them into care immediately, where do you rate this situation today? If you are asked a scaling question you will also be asked what evidence you are basing your decision on, it's expected that different judgement numbers will be applied to different people and that families may scale different to professionals.

**Q6. Does this mean the Single Assessment paperwork is changing?**

A6. There are no immediate plans to change the paperwork at this time. During the implementation period the documentation may need to be reviewed/amended. Any changes to paperwork will be indicated on the DSCP website.

**Q7. How do we keep updated about progress of Sign of Safety implementation?**

A7. DSCP have a dedicated area on their website that will house key documents and regularly updated timelines of what partners can expect to start to see and when.

Regular Frequently Asked Questions documents will be posted

**Q8. Where can I go to if I need support?**

A8. DSCP website will be kept up to date and will give you access to a range of key documents and helpful guides.