

Signs of Safety Newsletter

Hello, and welcome to the 10th Signs of Safety (SofS) newsletter. We intend to use the newsletter to keep you in touch with any news and developments which relate to our implementation of Signs of Safety.

MEANINGFUL MEASURES- COUNTING WHAT COUNTS

Meaningful measures is the way we look at our performance and look at the quality of service that our children and families are receiving across the whole service and how we measure the impact that we have on children and families lives. We want to move away from only using number data and look at the quality and purpose of our work and how we change things for the families that we all work with in whatever way we do across the whole service.

There are 5 Meaningful Measures.



1. Keeping children safe, supported and improving their lives.
2. Making sure we are working with children, parents, important family and friends so that they are fully involved in developing plans that are clear about who will do what and when.
3. Making sure that children are living safety and securely as soon as possible.
4. Making sure families and staff from all services work with each other to make things better for children.
5. Offer the right training and supervision to improve confidence, skills and knowledge of workers.

Contact Mel and Paul at the Signs of Safety Mailbox,
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Adults and Children's Services

 Northumberland
County Council

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Our vision: One council that works for everyone **Our values:** Residents first, Excellence and quality, Respect, Keeping our communities safe and well

WHAT DOES MEANINGFUL MEASURES MEAN?

1

What will you see or hear that tells you we are meeting this?

Rapid safety plans, using the harm matrix, good quality information in the mapping, danger statements, worry statements, safety/wellbeing/success goals, scaling questions, safety circles, clear bottom lines, simple clear language, using a questioning approach, family led plans.

2

What will you see or hear that tells you we are meeting this?

Family network meetings, family members included in all meetings, seeing the families words in the mapping, seeing the network worries and strengths in the mapping sections, words and pictures, clear explanations for the children that have been written by the family with the worker, direct work with the children, M3H, safety house.

3

What you will see or hear that tells you we are meeting this?

The timeline is clear and there is a clear trajectory for the case. Scaling questions are clear and are measuring the progress of the case, balanced information with analysis of strengths and safety as well as worries in all areas where decisions are made.

4

What will you see or hear that tells you we are meeting this?

Meetings will have the right people at the right times there and the views of other professionals will be clear, purposeful factual and relevant. There is clear evidence of how and when things are decided and we know who is helping and how and know when this is working or not working.

5

What will you see or hear that tells you we are meeting this?

Workers will know all the ways they can learn and develop their practice such as tri.x, newsletters, SharePoint and training and there will be access to good quality up to date training. Supervisors will ask really good questions Workers will be able to say what tools they are using and why, and case files would show what the worker did with the family.

Feedback from teams across the service

First Contact team

I feel everyone should be proud of all the progress made within SOS and I feel we can see the difference is having on families. In the past we would tell people what plans needed to look like and who could be part of the plans. However, more recently I have seen family led safety plans, plan rules and networking work so well that a child was able to go home to parents after the breakdown of an SGO. More importantly it is a plan the family produced, a plan they are invested in and a plan that we have been able to test and importantly, it is working. If we invest the time where it really matters the way, we work with families can really make a difference. Workers have used fire drills on a case and then shared how they were used with the team.

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SIGNS OF SOMETHING...

Signs of Safety is the main practice model, it all started with child protection workers and practice but it has developed to include many other areas. Wherever you are in the service think about Signs of Something.....

- ✓ Signs of Wellbeing
- ✓ Signs of Success
- ✓ Signs of belonging

Principles

Underpinning the approach. Wherever you are in the service we want to see all workers modelling the principles in everything that they do, say and write down.

Working relationships are fundamental

With families and other professionals relationships must be forged and maintained in the face of the coercive nature of child protection intervention, biases towards pre-judgment of families and different perspectives of professionals. Without the relationship nothing else will work.

Stance of critical inquiry

Always being prepared to admit you may have it wrong As Munro (2009) observes, “the major source of error in child protection is not being prepared to admit you may have it wrong”. Child protection investigations need to take a questioning approach and remain open minded. They cannot be the formulation of a hypothesis and fitting the evidence to support that hypothesis.

Landing grand aspirations in everyday practice

Families and front-line practitioners are the arbiters of whether practice works. This “practice led evidence” has informed the development of Signs of Safety and continues to drive of learning for practitioners and innovation of the approach.

Message from your Practice Leads

Mel and Paul have been working with First Contact for the last few months, as a service they have worked really hard to develop their practice. Mel and Paul have supported workers with rapid safety planning, using the plan rules and recording their initial visits in a way that can support their assessment work moving forward.

Mel and Paul have also been supporting the management team to look at how they quality assure the work and the assessments. They have spent time supporting workers and managers with danger statements and safety goals and developing measurable scaling and purposeful scaling questions.

They have seen an amazing commitment from the workers and have also recruited some fantastic new champions. They will be moving on to other areas now but will continue to support the team. They have developed a programme of group supervision for the next 12 weeks to support their own learning and development.


It has been a positive few months for Mel and Paul with this service and it has been exciting to see workers embrace and embed the model in the way that they work with children and families right from the beginning. The team is now feeling confident that the work is now set up really well right from the beginning of our work with families.

Take a minute to check that you are using these ongoing processes in everything that you do and in everyway you talk to, spend time with or write things down, with children, young people and their families or the adults that they are connected to.

Authority - Honoring - Vision - Questioning - Compassion.

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