



Signs of Safety: A Guide for Families

In Worcestershire, we're working in a new way called Signs of Safety. This leaflet will help you to understand what this means for you and your child/children and your family.

What is Signs of Safety?

Signs of Safety is an approach of working that supports families who need help in bringing up their children. Children and their parents are at the heart of how we work. Professionals will work with your family and extended family members so that everyone understands what is happening in the child's life and what risks exist.

Professionals will help parents find solutions to the risks and provide support to help them ensure their child is safe. These professionals include social workers, health visitors, teachers, police, doctors and family support workers.

How will we support you?

Your family is central to all of the work. Professionals will work with you so that you all understand who is worried about your child and what they are worried about. They will want to know how your child feels and talk with you to identify what is working well in your child's life. We call these 'strengths'.

Together you will talk about and agree what needs to happen to build on the strengths and reduce worries. We call these 'goals'. Professionals will want to know if there are people in your wider family or among your friends who can support your child and you to reach the 'goals'.

The views of your child

Talking to children is at the heart of Signs of Safety. It's important that children, as well as adults, have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about. Also discuss what makes them happy and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe.

Signs of Safety Child Protection Conference

Before the conference starts, the chairperson will meet with you to explain how the meeting will run and how you can contribute to the discussions. The professionals attending the conference who have contact with your child or yourself will have been asked to prepare a report (they will have spoken to you about this). The chairperson will speak with conference members including you to gather information about:

- What is working well?
- What people are worried about?
- What complicates things?
- How people could help you keep your child/children safe?

The key information is written on a whiteboard so everyone can see. When all the information has been shared the Chairperson will ask the social worker what they are worried will happen if nothing is done to change the situation?

Scaling questions may be used to help assess how worried everyone, including yourself, is. We use a scale of 0 -10 where 10 is good and 0 means we are very worried for the child's safety. The conference will agree a Safety Goal; this describes what you need to do to assure everyone that your child is safe now and in the future. Actions that need to happen to help you achieve the Safety Goal are agreed during the conference and written on the whiteboard.