

**Effective Support for Children, Young People, and Families in North Somerset**

**Appendix 1 – Signs of Safety**



In North Somerset, we are committed to using the Signs of Safety model across our multi-agency workforce when working with children and families. Signs of safety assesses risk and identifies solutions via four straightforward questions:

1. What are we worried about?
2. What’s working well?
3. What needs to happen?

The scaling Question. The scaling question might be designed around a particular concern, or by which we assess the continuum of need for professional involvement. It is always on a scale of 0-10 and indicates the level of concern we may have for a child.

These questions underpin the conversations we need to have with families when we believe that children are not receiving the care and support, they need or may be at risk of harm.

When thinking about a child or family who might need help and support, practitioners and professionals should use these four questions as basis of evaluating their concerns. In addition, practitioners and professionals might want to think about:

* What have you seen or heard that worries you?
* What are you most worried about?
* What do you think will happen if nothing changes?
* Are things getting worse?
* What is the child worried about?
* What impact is all of this having on the child?
* Does the child or the family receive support from anywhere else? If they do, is it making things better?
* Does the child or family do anything already that makes things even a little bit better?
* What do you think needs to happen to make things better for this family?
* What services or agencies are needed to support this family?
* On a scale of 1-10, how worried are you about this child or family?

Using the Signs of Safety approach as the basis of a conversation about a family’s needs can help:

* Understand present and past concerns
* Recognise existing strengths and safety
* Be clear about what needs to happen next
* Have a clear view of the scale of the concern or worry and assess improvement or deterioration of concerns

A strengths-based approach can allow families to overcome their difficulties through adapting universal or targeted services, without the need for statutory child protection services. Families sometimes find it difficult to open up, and consent to services, so it’s vital to build trusting relationships and consider what can be done differently to form relationships and enable engagement as well as considering if statutory intervention is necessary.

Where you are becoming more concerned about a child or young person, please have a conversation with your manager or safeguarding lead. Where a referral to the Front Door is required, please see [Request for Support form](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/12607/request-for-support.docx).