



North Tyneside Council

# NEWSLETTER

**We are delighted to introduce this first edition of the North Tyneside Council Signs of Safety Newsletter. We intend to make it a regular publication and it will be used to keep you in touch with any news and developments which relate to the implementation of Signs of Safety.**

## **WHERE ARE WE ON OUR JOURNEY?**

Our **Signs of Safety implementation** is well underway. We are now nearly a year into our journey. This is led by the Steering Group who focus on whole area implementation and development of our policies, procedures and quality assurance of our use of Signs of Safety.

**Organisational leadership;** leading through 'questioning' rather than 'telling' and keeping children at the centre of the work we do.

Signs of Safety supports the Children, Young People and Learning Service Plan with focus on the **Three Pledges:-**

- We intervene early with evidence based, family focussed services
- We work in partnership to keep children safe in school.
- We keep children and young people safe at home, health and connected to their local communities.



**The implementation of Signs of Safety is a priority for 2018/2019 and will be the way in which everyone in the borough works with children and young people.**

## **Progress across Services**

- Practice Leads have been identified within every Service Area and sessions have been organised with our consultant Emma Hopper.
- The Agency Referral document has been amended and is available on the [Council website](#).
- Early Help, in conjunction with partners, have revised the Early Help Assessment which is available on the [Council website](#).
- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub is continuing to develop their questioning approach when responding to calls from partner agencies and families.
- The Children with Disability Team have developed their own communication tools and are sharing these, and examples of good practice, with colleagues.
- Youth Offending have created a single intervention plan that can be used at any stage and contains concerns, strengths and areas to work on. The plan is written in conjunction with parents and young people.
- Sycamore & Elm House have successfully implemented the Signs of Safety model within Group Supervision for the residential teams. The group supervision is completed fortnightly and has been incorporated into team meetings. This way of working offers Keyworkers / House Leaders and the teams a forum to discuss progress made on cases, as well as offering the opportunity to discuss any 'stuck' cases within the groups. The young people are also working closely with the teams using this model.
- The approach has been adopted in child protection conferences and is helping to identify what we are worried about, what is going well and what needs to happen to make the child safe. Feedback from families is they feel listened to and more involved in the meeting.
- Leaving Care are using an a three columns assessment based tool to identify support for young people returning to the service post 21 in accordance with new legislation.
- 0-19 Children's Public Health Service has developed a Signs of Safety group supervision model for any of our new staff. Evaluation has been very positive and we hope to expand in the New Year and open it to all of our staff. All safeguarding health reports are now in the Signs of Safety format and the safeguarding health team are delivering a report writing session for the staff to support the new format.

## **Group Supervision**

Group supervision is progressing in each area to help support staff with 'stuck' cases and practice elements of Signs of Safety. An ASYE group, aimed specifically at newly qualified Social Workers has been created and takes place every 2-3 weeks.

Early Help group supervisions currently happen fortnightly in every Locality and are open to all including partners. If you would like to attend please contact the Locality Manager either by email or by phone:

- Julie Connolly for South West (Howden Children's Centre - 0191 643 2229) and Central (Riverside Children's Centre - 0191 643 8899)
- Bev Marrs for North West (Shiremoor Children's Centre - 0191 643 8966) and
- The Coast (Whitley Bay Customer First Centre – 0191 643 8804).

## How well children and young people are helped and protected:

*(Riverdale Ofsted Inspection Report / Aug 18)*



“The staff team have implemented research-informed practice in the care planning process. This ‘Signs of Safety’ approach helps children to recognise their starting points. The staff team focuses on what is working well with children and involves the children in their care planning process. As a result, key workers spend time with children so that they can understand and rate risk together. This approach generates discussion and identifies areas for further work through one-to-one sessions. This is direct work with children that empowers change and in turn strengthens relationships”

### **Guidance for Family Network Meetings**

There is an African adage, “it takes a village to raise a child” and in today’s climate of scarce resources, involving family, friends and community networks is becoming increasingly relevant to keeping children safe at home.



The leaflet linked below is guidance for professionals to help with Family Network Meetings.

[Guidance Leaflet \(Family Network Meetings\)](#)

## **Signs of Safety in North Tyneside - What's working well and what needs to happen**

***By Marjorie James***

I started in North Tyneside in August 2017 with the remit of working with teams to promote the importance of, and encourage regular Group Supervision in embedding the Signs of Safety approach.

I have worked with other Local Authorities and was impressed that North Tyneside was the only one who had invested in a system, which despite any difficulties, follows the basic principles of Signs of Safety.

My worries were that workers would feel ambivalent about the possibilities of what group supervision has to offer and believe this was yet another “one trick pony”.



The process itself involves discipline and helps workers think their way through cases where they may feel “stuck”. It is hard when, by the nature of the work, we are used to gathering as much information as possible, suddenly being met with four minutes worth of information, having to then create Danger Statements and Safety Goals, think about scaling their worries and go on to construct questions to help colleagues think their way through cases.

My worries proved to be unfounded and, what I have found to be working well is how workers have embraced the approach, being open to reframing cases and believing in families to work out for themselves what needs to happen. I have had the opportunity and feel privileged to have spent time with almost every team from Early Help through to Leaving Care

When I think of what needs to happen I go back to a theme throughout Signs of Safety around the world is that **“It Takes a Village to Raise a Child”**. I am passionate about this and my hope is that North Tyneside will continue to work to find networks that can provide the safety children need to be able to stay at home with their families of origin.

## Up and Coming Events/Training

### **Dublin Gathering Event**

Victoria McLeod, Senior Manager for Safe and Supported Teams and Anna McAlpine, Team Manager for Safe and Supported Teams, will be in attendance to represent North Tyneside Council. They will deliver a presentation "Implementation Across All Services and Building a Functional IT System" on **Day 2, Wednesday 7 November at 3:45 p.m.**



This can be watched via live stream as follows:-

<https://knowledgebank.signsofsafety.net/gathering-live/live>

### **North Tyneside Signs of Safety Briefing Sessions**

#### **Dates:**

Monday 12 November 2018  
Thursday 7 February 2019

#### **Three sessions available on each date:**

9:30pm – 11:00am  
2:30pm – 4:00pm  
6:00pm – 7:30pm

**If you have a Learning Pool Account, please use this to book a place.**

**Venue:** Langdale Centre, Langdale Gardens, Wallsend NE28 0HG

For more information contact:- [barbara.morris@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:barbara.morris@northtyneside.gov.uk)

## Frequently Asked Questions

This section is your opportunity to ask a question about anything relating to Signs of Safety, or if you would like to make a contribution to future newsletters.

Your questions will be answered by the Steering Group who meet every Thursday. We will display the questions and answers in the next edition of the newsletter.

Please email: - [SignsofSafety@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:SignsofSafety@northtyneside.gov.uk)

## Useful Links



NTC Signs of Safety



Twitter (Signs of Safety)



Early Help



Facebook (Signs of Safety)



Signs of Safety

## Newsletter Puzzle

B	I	L	P	G	O	Y	R	I	R	O	B	L	Y	P
Y	T	E	F	A	S	I	L	Q	V	N	I	G	X	O
T	Q	F	Q	U	D	I	N	I	J	X	D	S	F	Q
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- **DANGER**
- **FAMILY**
- **FRIENDS**
- **SAFETY**
- **NETWORK**
- **GOAL**
- **SCALING**
- **STATEMENT**
- **TOGETHER**
- **WORKING**