

Strategy Discussion Practice Guidance for partner agencies

Cumbria County Council Children's Services have been implementing the Signs of Safety Practice Model. To support fully embedding the practice model Signs of Safety Liquid Logic IT Solution was implemented on the 3rd November 2023.

Partner agencies will notice a difference to some of our practice, in particular the way Strategy Discussions are chaired. This guidance is to notify partner agencies about some of the changes, so they are prepared around what questions will be asked of them during Strategy Discussions.

- 1. What are we worried about?** Information from all professionals in the strategy discussion, will feed into this section.

Harm: The harmful behaviours that have happened, which have caused us to be worried about the child or young person. Describe the detail of the behaviours, and why this behaviour causes professionals to be worried. Consider what evidence you have that supports your worries, and what we know the impact is or will be on the child.

For example, the child has been coming into school with dirty uniform, their nails are dirty and toenails very long. We are worried they are not getting regular baths/showers at home. The other children are bullying them, and say they smell.

Complicating Factors: The things that we are worried about as professionals, but there is no evidence that this has caused harm to the child or young person. However, we are worried that this may impact upon us reaching our end goal.

For example, if a parent is at risk of eviction, this does not equate to harm, however it would potentially impact upon us reaching our end goal.

- 2. What is working well?** Information from all professionals in the strategy discussion, will feed into this section. The existing strengths will be build upon to develop into safety to mitigate the worries.

Existing Strengths: What is happening in the family to make the child/young person's life better, what are the good things, or the plans the family say they will do to keep the child safe and well.

For example, Mum and Dad take the child to the park on the weekend, the child tells us they enjoy this.

Existing Safety: The things we know have happened to help keep the child safe and well when the worrying behaviour has been happening. The actions and steps people have taken to ensure the worrying behaviour hasn't happened.

For example, a grandparent having the child over night when Mum or Dad is struggling to care for them.

3. Analysis and Judgement

Danger Statement and Safety Goal: The Danger Statement is what we are worried about happening to the child if nothing changes, and the Safety Goal describes the behaviours we will see in the future when we are no longer worried. If a Child and Family Assessment has been completed with the family during the current period of involvement, then the Danger Statement and Safety Goal will be shared by the Social Worker.

Scaling Question: A specific scaling question which is linked to the Danger Statement and Safety Goal will be read out by the Chair. If a Child and Family Assessment has already been completed on the family during the current period of involvement. The scaling question measures the progress from the statement towards the goal.

What are the things that need to happen to make things better for the child (What could improve things by 1?)

All professionals in the Strategy Discussion will be asked to share their score on a scale of 0-10, and their rationale for their score. Along with what needs to happen to help provide safety for the child. (*Services don't provide safety*)

The scaling question is not linked to the decision about whether S47 enquiries need to take place or not.

Professional disagreement should not detract from ensuring a child is safeguarded. Disagreement between professionals may happen within the meeting or while working with the child/ren or family. Disagreements should be able to be resolved with discussion. Where disagreements cannot be resolved agencies need to follow the Escalation Policy and Procedure which can be found [here](#).