

# Signs of Safety

## Newsletter

January 2020



## Happy New Year

Happy New Year to you all, wishing you a very happy 2020!

First, we'd like to share some really good feedback. In our inspection in November 2019, Ofsted were very positive about our implementation of Signs of Safety (SOS). They said they could clearly see that this was used and embraced across the partnership, and that it was supporting children and young people's views to be heard. Ofsted said that the voice of the child was a real strength in Cheshire East, and could see how this informed assessments and plans, and they saw that we find networks for children and involve them in creating plans. They thought direct work with children and young people was well embedded, and that the creativity of practitioners was impressive. So massive congratulations everyone, and very well deserved!



## We want your views!

Although we've already achieved a lot, we don't want to stop there! We've been working on our new SOS Strategy for 2020-23, and we'd like your views on whether these are the right actions that will help us to continue to develop our SOS practice going forward for the next three years.

You are the people who are best placed to know what will work for you and your team, so please give us your thoughts and feedback at [SignsofSafety@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:SignsofSafety@cheshireeast.gov.uk) by close of play **on Friday 31 January 2020.**



Our ideas are to:

- **Run short monthly workshops** on different elements of SOS practice

– for example words and pictures, trajectories, and safety plans, to help practitioners to continue to build on and develop their SOS skills, confidence and knowledge. We're really keen to get SOS Practice Leads and other passionate people involved in delivering these as well to share experiences across services. This will be on top of the two day and half day training we already offer, which will continue to provide in 2020.

- Select cases within specific service areas, and apply good SOS practice to the case from the point it comes into to service to when it leaves – we are calling these **tracked cases**. The case holders will be supported by the SOS Lead Practitioners. These tracked cases will be used to share learning on how to use SOS within each service area, highlight and address any barriers to SOS practice, and demonstrate the impact SOS can have on families. They will also be used to create practice examples.
- Focus on **supporting people to use trajectories** so everyone can be clear about what work needs to take place and how long professionals will be involved for.
- Continue to use **group supervision**, including multi-agency group supervision, to develop and reflect on SOS practice, and generate ideas for working effectively with families.
- Continue to use **Practice Lead Networks** to plan the next steps for SOS for each service area.
- Continue **training our foster carers** in using SOS.
- Continue to **keep in touch with other areas and the national SOS team** to keep up to date with developments and learn what works well in other areas.
- Continue our **commitment as a partnership** to SOS by maintaining this as a priority area for the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

## Changes for 2020 and thank you

We've now reached the end of the 'project phase' of SOS (where we were making lots of significant changes to how we work) and we are now moving into SOS being our 'business as usual' model. This means there will be some changes to how SOS is supported in 2020. We now have a wealth of knowledge and expertise on SOS within our services, and although there are still areas we want to work on moving forward, we are confident we have the right support in place to do this across the partnership within our teams and services.

Project Manager support will come to an end with the launch of the new SOS Strategy in February 2020. Delivery of the Strategy will continue to be overseen by senior leaders across the partnership. We'd like to give our thanks to Lauren Conway for keeping us organised and on task

throughout the project!

Our SOS Lead Practitioners, Louise Wright and Tyler Hand, will end their specialist support roles at the end of March 2020, but will continue to support teams as before until then. We'd like to give a huge thanks to them – they have been invaluable in helping us get to where we are now, and we simply would not have been able to achieve all we have without them.

SOS support and expertise will still be available through our SOS training pool members and our SOS Practice Leads, who will continue to support their teams as they have been doing over the last two years. Since the last five day training in November 2019, we have more Practice Leads than ever!

Although there won't be changes to their roles we'd also like to give a special thanks to our SOS training pool members (Laura Hindhaugh, Vicky Moran, Louise Wright, Barbara Banks, and Kathryn Battams) – their dedication and commitment has seen us train a massive total of **1,080** people in SOS, and to all our SOS Practice Leads (we won't name you all here!) for supporting their teams day to day over the last two years.

And of course, last but by no means least, **thank you to everyone that has brought SOS into their work, everything we have achieved is down to you.**

We know it has been tough at times but it has been well worth it!

We look forward to continuing our SOS journey together in 2020...



**Contact us at:**

[SignsOfSafety@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:SignsOfSafety@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**For Signs of Safety Training and 'How to' Guides  
please see our website:**

<http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/professionals/signs-of-safety.aspx>