



One Minute Guide



When developing a Multi-Agency plan to meet the needs of a child, young person and their family, (including Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection) the plans MUST be SMART.

SMART planning principles are 'Specific', 'Measurable', 'Achievable/Agreed', 'Realistic', & 'Time-bound/Timely'.

Nationally, Safeguarding Practice Reviews have consistently raised concerns about issues with planning including: lack of focus; plans not reflecting the identified concerns; practitioner over optimism; and disguised compliance of parents/carers which prevents risks or issues being appropriately addressed. Locally we know that plans have been based upon not understanding all of the information and knowledge about the child/ren and their family, not triangulating information with other services information, not fully considering the history of the family and concerns and therefore not understanding all of the issues that are impacting upon the child.

Ensuring these approaches are considered helps families and practitioners to develop plans that are clear and they address the identified risks and needs. The development of the plan is everyone's responsibility; practitioners and the family.

The plan should draw upon the resources available to both the family and the practitioners; their skills, expertise and knowledge and should demonstrate the wishes and feelings of the child.

Practitioners should feel able, and committed, to challenging each other about aspects of plans that they feel are not clear or SMART. This is supported by the [West Yorkshire Consortium resolving professional disagreements](#).

When developing a SMART Multi-Agency Safety Plan

- Ensure all children are included;
- Ensure the plan is from the child/rens perspective;
- Focus on outcomes for the child/ren;
- The safety of the child/ren is paramount;
- Promote the child/ren's welfare;
- Identify developmental needs of the child/ren, and the services required to help the child/ren reach these;

- Multi-agency plans should have a clear outline of each professionals responsibility;
- The family should set out what they will do differently which is agreed at the meeting/ conference with clear expectations and timescales;
- Ensure everyone involved in the plan understands their role and responsibilities;
- The plan should be succinct and clearly set out and written in language that is accessible to all
- Situations and circumstances can change quickly and the plan must be reviewed following any changes in circumstances for the child/ren or family.
- Review the plan regularly; (set review dates and stick to these)



7 Steps to SMART Safety Planning

1. Applying the Wakefield Families Together approach when developing Safety plans for children, young people and their families across levels 2, 3 and 4 of the [Continuum of Need](#).

Wakefield Families Together will develop and implement a sustainable whole system partnership wide model of integrated working for early intervention, early help and children's social care that delivers the vision of an integrated 'Think Child, Think Parent, Think Family' approach where families have one conversation at the right time, right place with the right service practitioner.

Planning for children should answer: How is this going to improve the child's lived experience?



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2. Scaling System for Safety Plans

On a scale of Zero to Ten: 0 is the worry/concern is present and the child **will** be hurt/harmed or disadvantaged. 10 is everyone is confident that the child will be well cared for and **safe** even when things get difficult for the family. Where do you rate the impact of your current concern/s on the child?

3. Be clear about what we need to know when developing plans

(Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection & Children Looked After)

- Identify the family's strengths.
- Identify areas of concern for the child and family at this time.
- Identify needs that are not being met for the child.
- What is the impact of these concerns for the child's safety, health and wellbeing?
- What are the most important things the family need to change to make life better for the child?

4. What needs to change?

Identify what the change should look like so you know what you are working towards. For each concern identify what good would look like for the child e.g. Concern - Jenny is living in an environment where there is significant substance use.

What needs to change? – For Jenny to feel safe in the family home she needs her mum and dad to develop a plan about how they will manage their substance use and ensure Jenny is safe.

NB: Avoid identifying action under this heading. You are identifying the outcome that you are.

5. Who is going to do what and by when?

This is where you identify the action for each concern:

- What will be done to support the family to make the change/s?

- Who will support the family to make the change/s?
- When will this be done? (Specific dates and timescales are important i.e. started/ completed by)
- How will the family sustain the change when professionals are no longer involved

Break things down into manageable prioritised tasks.

6. Safety plans must be SMART

Specific - Outcomes are clear — what is going to be achieved and the steps needed for this to happen.

Measurable - How we know that the outcome has been met i.e. the child's lived experience has improved.

Achievable/Agreed - Identify steps that are achievable and agreed don't make them too big.

Realistic - The child's needs must be the main focus of the plan the actions need to reflect this.

Time-bound/Timely - Timescales need to be realistic according to the child's needs, what needs to change and what are the timescales required for the change, considering the impact on the child.

7. Remember to be clear about:

- Understanding the impact of the concern for the child
- The outcomes that need to be achieved to improve the child's lived experience i.e. What does good looks like for the child?
- How the family will be supported to achieve outcomes, by whom and by when?
- What are the small steps needed to move things forward.
- How the parents can build a family network of support.