# Three Houses Guidance

# **The Three Houses** is a direct work tool based on the Signs of Safety Framework. The tool helps children and young people to share their feelings about their life which can contribute to assessments. Direct work is really important when assessing neglect as it can help children communicate, feel listened to, and build their self-esteem.

**How to use the tool:**

* You can use the template provided or encourage the child to draw the outline of three houses.
* Ask the child which house they would like to fill in first (often the *House of Good Things* is the easiest to begin with). The child can write or draw pictures if they choose.
* Encourage them to talk about what they are drawing or writing but ensure you are asking open rather than closed or leading questions as prompts.
* Record what the child says in their own words.
* The child’s wishes and feelings can be used to speak to parents about any concerns (where it is safe to do so) as well as to inform any assessments or plans that are ongoing.
* Be creative and adapt the activity to suit the child’s interests, abilities and needs.

**House of Dreams**

Ask the child what they would wish for in their life if they could have anything. This can draw on the response for the other two houses – for example what would stop them from being worried?

**House of Worries**

Encourage the child to write or draw and talk about anything that makes them feel scared, worried or unhappy. This could be current, past or future.

**House of Good Things**

The child should write or draw and talk about anything that makes them feel happy and positive. This could be about themselves, home, school, family, friends, hobbies or any other area of their life. These are areas of resilience that can be built on.

Three Houses Template