



Safe Spaces Quarterly Qualitative Report

1st January 2021 – 31st March 2021

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI:12: Service website includes relevant information about other agencies and how to contact them
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The Safe Spaces website has now been updated with a page providing a directory of support services and resources for victims and survivors of church related abuse.

You can find this here.

<https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/my-support-space/>

It is also the intention that the Safe Spaces Steering Group will work with the Safe Spaces project manager to co-produce a page with victim/survivor led content. Including artwork, advice and peer support.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI. 34: Provide a quarterly anonymised case study
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This has been redacted for public consumption

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI.39: No of grant payments of up to £5,000 per group made community groups supporting victims/survivors of abuse.

KPI.40 Min 4 grant payments made in first year of contract.

KPI.41: 10% of contract grant funding to be made to a community group or groups in Wales.

The Safe Spaces project manager presented a proposal to the steering group in the first meeting on the 3rd March. Much of the steering group meeting was dedicated to this and the group did manage to make some progress, but it became apparent that for there to be a meaningful co-production process, more time would have to be dedicated from steering group members outside of that meeting. A small group will be set up from steering group members to finalise and begin implementation of the grants programme. The project manager has proposed a new deadline for the 20th May to have the grants programme signed off by the steering group and ready for publication.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
KPI.44: A minimum of 1 engagement event/activity per quarter

As referred to under KPI39, the first Safe Spaces Steering group meeting was held on the 3rd of March. Prior to this meeting an extensive piece of engagement work was completed. A briefing paper was developed and sent out to partner agencies, to notify them of the intended development of a Safe Spaces steering group. The project manager then reached out to relevant agencies to build a relationship and to establish if they have a representative they would like to attend. Relationship building calls were held with: Thirtyone:eight, Replenished Life, Survivors Voices, Restored, Chester University, John Moores University Liverpool, Liverpool University, The Survivors Advisory Panel, the survivors reference group, MACSAS and an individual survivor who contacted us following receiving information from her Diocese.

Once group members were identified, calls were made to every group member in preparation for the meeting. In these calls, we agreed an agenda and ground rules for behaviour within the meeting. This was to ensure that steering group members felt safe and were encouraged to engage. The meeting was 3 hours long and held over zoom. Following the meeting, the project manager held debrief calls with steering group members to check on everyone's wellbeing and to receive feedback about how the meeting was handled. This meeting was successful and a report was developed for the Safe Spaces Board detailing the discussions in the meeting. This report was sent out to steering group members to agree before being shared.

Additionally, there were some groups which were part of the networking process that didn't end up joining the steering group. This includes Liverpool University, where other academics were prioritised based on their particular expertise on the subject, Restored, who are a charity supporting victims of domestic violence in the faith context. These groups were invited to join the development network, so that space could be reserved for survivors who have received support from the safe spaces service. Conversations were also held with Replenished Life, who have had a place reserved for them when they have capacity to engage. Ongoing communications have been maintained between these groups and the Safe Spaces project manager.

On the 4th of February, the team met with a representative from an organisation called Broken Rites. Broken Rites support separated and divorced spouses and partners of members of the clergy and provided training for the Safe Spaces staff team.

The Area Manager who oversees the Safe Spaces project provided a presentation to all national managers within VS to promote the Safe Spaces service. Alongside this presentation, a briefing paper was prepared for Area managers to distribute to statutory and voluntary victims services in their local area.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
KPI.45: Provision of a quarterly report, alongside an annual report, which sets out how victims and survivors have been involved in the ongoing development of the Safe Spaces Service

As discussed above the Safe Spaces Steering group held its first meeting on the 3rd March.

- Donna Craine, Safe Spaces Project Manager, as Chair
- Safe Spaces Administrator to take minutes
- A Representative from Survivors Reference Group
- 2 Representatives from the Survivors Advisory Panel
- A representative from Survivors Voices
- A representative from thirtyone:eight
- A representative from the Survivor strategy for church related abuse: Newcastle Diocese (Church of England)
- 2 Academics
- 1 Victim Support employee who wishes to engage the group on co-production of Victim Support materials in relation to child sexual abuse

A report was developed from this meeting to articulate key discussion points and requests from the group to take to the Safe Spaces board. You can find a copy of this report in appendix A.

The Safe Spaces branding finalised in January, following an extensive consultation process. The Safe Spaces website was updated with the new branding, as well as the Safe Spaces live chat service, which included changes to our live chat supplementary questions following feedback from representatives of a Survivors organisation.

We are aware that there has been a low number of client feedback forms received so far. This is a challenge that we are currently exploring solutions to and we would hope to benefit from the experience of steering group members, in relation to how they might have been asked to feedback in the past or indeed how they receive feedback in projects they are currently managing.

Whilst the feedback forms haven't been strong in number, the quality of narrative we are receiving is incredibly helpful. Additionally, we also try to create an environment where it is possible to give feedback.

Following the distribution of the Safe Spaces Newsletter in December, a growing number of people expressed an interest in receiving future communications. Additionally, some contacts requested joining the development network. This network was discussed in the previous quarterly report and continues to be a route to increasing engagement with stakeholders and victims and survivors, when they do not want the formal avenue of engaging with the steering group.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
KPI.46: Development and execution of a communications strategy produced by Victim Support in consultation with Church of England and Catholic Church in England and Wales

The survivor's engagement strategy was presented to the board in November 2020. A delivery and action plan is being prepared to send to the Church project management team on the 14th April.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
KPI.47: The production, sharing and implementation of standard referral form, referral pathways, information sharing protocols.

In the previous quarter, the Safe Spaces website was developed and also a secure electronic web referral form that can be used to send referrals from church DSA, police and other stakeholder agencies with the victim/survivors consent, or for victims and survivors to self-refer confidentially. This has been utilised by a number of external agencies including churches and for a number of victims and survivors to make self referrals.

Information sharing protocols are being developed as the service develops and partnerships are created with stakeholders. This includes an information sharing protocol being developed with the independent evaluators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
KPI.48: No of engagement events with both denominations

The Safe Spaces team have continued to hold frequent meetings with the NST in the Church of England and representatives from the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service. The meetings dropped off for a little while as the caseworkers became more confident. However, these will be picked up again to discuss new issues.

On the 19th January, the Safe Spaces team met with the Church of England, Diocese of Chichester and associated ISVA's, to develop a working relationship.

On the 3rd February, the Safe Spaces project manager and a caseworker met with the Safeguarding team within the Church in Wales to develop a relationship and discuss support for victims and survivors who experience abuse in relation to the Church in Wales.

On the 24th February, the Safe Spaces project manager delivered a presentation about Safe Spaces to the Church of England Diocese of Derby as part of their Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel. This was to promote the service. As a result, Safe Spaces have also been asked to present at the Derbyshire Adult Safeguarding Board which is a multi-agency meeting, promoting safeguarding in Derbyshire.

On the 2nd of March. The Safe Spaces project manager and a Safe Spaces caseworker met with the Diocese of Europe. This was at the request of the Diocese so they could learn about the service that is being offered. Whilst many people in the care of the Diocese of Europe would not be eligible for a service, it may be that there are victims/survivors of abuse, in relation to the Church of England or the Catholic Church of England and Wales, who have moved to an area covered by the Diocese of Europe since the abuse occurred. In this case, Safe Spaces would do all they can to support the individual.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
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KPI.49: Production of publicity materials

The website is now in full service, which fully promotes the Safe Spaces service and referral protocols. During this quarter, the website and livechat service was re-branded with the Safe Spaces logo. In addition, changes were made to the livechat supplementary questions following feedback from representatives of a survivors group. Also, the website has now been updated with SSEW information, as well as an updated directory of services, our newsletter and public quarterly reports.

Additionally team members, when requested by individual churches, developed ad-hoc publicity materials for the service. An example of this is promotion materials created for the Diocese of Exeter, who wanted to promote the service to members of their congregation engaging in a personal histories archive run by the clergy. Now that the branding has been finalised, a generic Safe Spaces leaflet and poster can be created.

A branded briefing paper was sent to Victim Support Area Managers across the country, which detailed the service and provided website and contact details. This was disseminated to local police contacts, local police safeguarding teams, local authority and adult social care teams, as well as local sexual violence and mental health support agencies.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
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KPI.50: Victim Support to provide a quarterly and annual written report on the service, impact, activity and any issues, challenges and risks identified including equalities monitoring info and the case study.

This quarterly report has hopefully provided relevant information to highlight the Safe Spaces services.

As you can see from the quarterly statistical KPI report, new cases are lower for this quarter (Q1 - 44 compared to Q2 - 18). However, active cases are much higher (Q2 - 77 compared to Q1 - 58). This means that the team are still very busy and working on creating positive outcomes for a number of challenging cases. Cases are only closed when outcomes have been met and if the client is ready to end support, we do not rush the process.

New cases were rather low in January and have continued to increase at a steady pace from there. The team saw a considerable dip in referrals over the Christmas period, as identified in the previous

report, so it could be that things are picking up from there. Another observation is that contacts (via email, phone or live chat) are much lower this quarter than the previous quarter. This is to be expected considering the decrease in new cases, as contacts are more frequent in earlier days of support whilst the team are responding to immediate enquiries. As the case develops, the work the caseworkers engage in means less frequent contacts which are often more lengthy and detailed. Examples of this might be writing detailed reports in preparation for multiagency meetings.

Whilst contacts have been low, outcomes in terms of service delivery have been significantly higher this quarter than the previous one. Ongoing emotional support has had the most significant increase (from Q1 - 21 to Q2 - 180). Ongoing emotional support is recorded when a client has had any contact after the first and the advocate is providing support in relation to their emotional wellbeing. Information provision (Q1 - 68 to Q2 - 176) and advocacy (Q1 - 21 to Q2 -61) has more than doubled this quarter compared to the last. There have also been significant increases this quarter in financial advice and onward referrals. This could represent an increase in work, it could also represent an increase in the caseworkers knowledge of the VS support data recording system so they are recording services more accurately.

In the previous quarterly report, we highlighted some of the challenges we have been facing with collating EDI data. We have decided to take positive action to improve this, as we do feel that it is important to identify trends in the experience of victims. We have therefore designed a form aimed at collecting data in a non-intrusive way which can be used if asking the questions verbally is not appropriate or proving difficult. We'd like to be clear that this is to support current efforts to gain ED&I data, the team will be encouraged to have conversations where appropriate. Additionally, victims and survivors will be provided with the option of not answering and it will be made clear that Safe Spaces support is in no way dependent on a client completing this form or answering EDI questions from staff. We hope that by the next quarterly report we will see an increase in EDI data gathered.

With regards to identifying issues, a key issue that my team have presented to me, from their experience of frontline work, is the difficulties created by the current safeguarding procedures within the church. For the purpose of this report, we are referring to the Church of England, that is not to say however that there are not similar issues within the Catholic Church of England and Wales, but we have not been made aware of them yet.

There have been several cases so far where, following a report regarding an experience of abuse to Diocesan Safeguarding Teams, there has been a decision made that a case is not considered to be a safeguarding issue and therefore no further action is to be taken. In some cases these concerns have been reallocated to the clergy disciplinary measures, which from the reports of victims and survivors are often not victim focussed and can be re-traumatising.

If someone is at risk of immediate harm, then obviously Safe Spaces holds a safeguarding duty to report this to the police. However, in cases where there is no risk of immediate harm but a victim and survivor wants to ensure that the church have taken action to remedy issues raised by their complaint, an effective avenue for reporting needs to be provided. Often the victim/survivor is encouraged to report the matter to Police. However, many survivors do not want to go through the criminal justice system and wish the church to be accountable for the harm done.

It seems that there is no process for challenging decisions made by the diocese and as a result no way for Victims and Survivors to have their voices heard following decisions made about their experiences. The Safe Spaces team have sought advice from the National Safeguarding Team

regarding this issue, who have confirmed that unless there is a complaint that spans across more than one diocese or that is against senior clergy members they cannot challenge decisions made by Safeguarding officers within an individual diocese.

We are aware that the lessons learned review, regarding Emmanuel Church Wimbledon, also highlights these challenges that clients are raising with Safe Spaces. The below paragraphs taken directly from the report are particularly pertinent to the experiences of some of Safe Spaces clients.

"A further complication is the current definition of vulnerability for adults. This definition is particularly pertinent for this report. Most of those involved in any of the behaviours detailed would not have constituted adults at risk of harm under statutory definitions. However, the Reviewers would argue that those who are in contexts in which damaging coercion and control are exercised could be made vulnerable or at risk by this. In domestic violence, coercive control is recognised in family situations. It can clearly be argued that the imagery of family is frequently used within church contexts to represent the relationships between individuals. Indeed, terminology of brothers and sisters is frequently used. Therefore, there is a clear argument to be made that adult safeguarding needs a much more nuanced understanding of adult vulnerability." C3.12. Limited definitions within adult safeguarding, Final Report – Independent Lessons Learned Review for Emmanuel Church Wimbledon (March 2021) p55

"This Review demonstrates that current understandings of safeguarding primarily are seen to relate to children, young people and adults 'at risk of harm' (often still referred to in faith contexts as vulnerable). Where adults do not meet the criteria for being at risk of harm, they can experience damaging behaviours that do not cross into a statutory category of harm and in this context can render them vulnerable. There is a need for this current void to be addressed. There has rightly been recognition that in cases of domestic violence, experiences of coercive control are categorised as abusive and constitute a legal offence. However, this does not currently apply outside of the intimate partner or family context. We also consider that the issue of consent requires further legislative scrutiny in contexts where there is a significant imbalance of power and/or status and/or age including in a religious context." Theme 11: understanding vulnerability, Final Report – Independent Lessons Learned Review for Emmanuel Church Wimbledon (March 2021) p100