

Safe Spaces Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter - Issue 3
July 2021



Hello and welcome to the summer edition of the Safe Spaces newsletter

Thank you for joining the mailing list to receive our newsletter. If you have received this via a contact and you would like to receive it directly, please contact us at:

safespacesfeedback@victimsupport.org.uk

In this summer edition, we'll be updating you on what the Safe Spaces team have been up to and sharing some extra content from people who have used our service.

Service Update *(by Donna)*

Since the previous newsletter in April, it has been all go here at Safe Spaces.

The main focus for myself and the steering group was to develop the process for the grants provision and get it uploaded to the website and promoted across our partners. You can see an article talking about the grants scheme on pg. 2. After we agreed the paperwork and procedure, it was my job to get it out to as many people as possible. We sent information out to all of our partners nationally, including; internal Victim Support Services, Victim Support external partners, our steering group and development network, across the Church of England and Catholic Church in England and Wales and the Church in Wales contacts, in an external briefing to police and crime commissioners and as a feature of the week in the Victim Support Newsletter which goes out to national voluntary sector organisations.

Since the beginning of April; we have taken 34 new cases, 151 phone calls, 275 emails and 14 live chats. The team have continuously worked hard to provide support and advocacy to victims and survivors.

Our latest quarterly report has been released with lots of information about the service and if you are interested you can find this here.

[How we can help? – Safe Spaces England and wales](#)

How & when you can contact us.

Safe Spaces is open:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Friday and Saturday: 10am - 6pm

Thursday: 12pm - 8pm

Sunday: Closed

Email

safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

Phone

0300 303 1056

Website and Live Chat

safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk

If you'd like to chat with us via live chat please visit our website. You can do so anonymously, if you prefer, and this service is available during the opening hours above.

When Safe Spaces is closed, you can leave a voicemail, drop us an email, or complete the web referral form on our website. We will get back to you as soon as we are able to.

If you are in crisis or need immediate help call 999.

Steering Group and Development Network Update *(by Donna)*

The Safe Spaces project manager and three steering group members began their first piece of significant work last month. This was creating the Safe Spaces grants service; you can find more information about this in the article below.

This process involved the project manager meeting with three steering group members, who made time to co-produce the application process, the scoring matrix and all of the relevant documents so that the grants service could be launched. It took 2 meetings, over 5 hours on Skype and then several emails back and forth to get there.

From my perspective as project manager, this was an incredibly rewarding experience. The steering group members who engaged with this process have lived experience of Church related abuse. Not only this, but also have experience of either supporting, or providing strategic input to promote positive change for victims and survivors in the future. I couldn't have asked for more appropriate expertise to support me with this challenging task. I sincerely thank those individuals for their time and commitment.

Here is what the participants had to say:

"As a survivor, it felt really good to be involved in the development of the grants process with Safe Spaces and the steering group. In trying to establish the best criteria & protocols for awarding these grants, we were always conscious that in so doing, we were also working to serve the best interests of victims & survivors. That in itself was a privilege. Additionally, I found the absolute respect in which each of us was held to be in itself a vehicle of healing"

"I am grateful for having had the opportunity to develop the grants programme with other steering groups members and Safe Spaces. Whether we met online or through emails, I felt my voice and opinions were listened to, valued and respected and when appropriate acted upon in a gracious manner. I would be very willing to participate in other projects."

Launch of Safe Spaces Grants Programme

**Are you a group or project providing support to survivors of church-related abuse?
Are you wanting to set up a group to provide support to survivors of church-related abuse?
Is the support focussed around self-help?**

We have grants available for new or existing groups or projects doing just that. You can apply for one-off funding of up to £5000 to kick-start a new project or continue an existing project.

All the information about how to apply, including the application form, can be found on the Safe Spaces website www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/grant-funding/

Safe Spaces Comments

Feedback is incredibly important to the Safe Spaces Service. When we are nearing the end of support with service users, we send a form asking for feedback. Below are some comments regarding service user's experience of support.

The person I spoke too was extremely helpful, kind and supporting. I only panicked when there was talk about the police being involved but after further discussion the police were not needed and that calmed me down

I would like to just highlight how helped I have been by XXXXXX. She gave me the courage to express myself in writing which I would never have done without her help. I will always be eternally grateful for this. Our conversations has helped me hugely and I know I am a better and happier person thanks to her and to this organisation.

Rather than just saying I was satisfied by the 'Services offered by Safe Spaces' I would say it exceeded all my expectations and from the morning I rang in great distress, as a last resort and continuing to this moment, I found not just gentle kindness and a place where I was listened to without judgement, but the most objectively professional consideration which settled my emotions and then has steadily supported me in understanding options for a way forward to a point where I have been able to accept that there is nothing more I can do at this time in simply wanting to be heard. And so coming to a balanced and logical acceptance and drawing a line under the experience. And still Safe Places stays quietly at my side

Safe Spaces Team Changes

One of our caseworkers, Rebecca, will be leaving her post at Safe Spaces at the end of July. She will be taking a job a little closer to home, mentoring people moving out of homelessness.

“It has been a great privilege to have had the opportunity to work within Safe Spaces. Thank you to those who trusted me with their stories. I have learned more than I ever thought possible because of you, and the fresh insight I leave this role with, I attribute entirely to you. Your voices are powerful.

Thank you to the church safeguarding officers who have given their time to answer my questions and concerns. You have been gracious to me.”

Finally, thank you to my colleagues (who have become great friends to me!). You are hilarious, you are supportive, and you are relentlessly passionate about your work. I will not stop cheering you on from afar! You are the reason that this service is a Safe Space for everyone.”



Survivors Voices is a survivor-led organisation that harnesses the expertise of people affected by abuse in order to change society's response to trauma. We work with survivors of all types of abuse, whether experienced as a child or as an adult.

What we do

- We run peer support groups for survivors.
- We have peer networks for survivor researchers, writers, therapists and other survivor activists. We are always open to survivor activists who wish to join us.
- We have a survivor and allies network for survivors of abuse in faith communities.
- Currently we are concentrating on survivor engagement with the Church of England and other Christian settings.
- We educate about abuse and trauma-informed practice. We can speak at your event or run training or workshops.
- We research survivor experience of abuse, safeguarding, help-seeking and recovery. We can help you to engage well with survivors in your research project.
- We publish research and resources for survivors and those who work with them.

We work anywhere to engage and amplify the voice of survivors. If you are a survivor who needs support or wants to be heard, a professional or service who wants to listen, or an ally who wants to support us, we want to hear from you.

connect@survivorsvoices.org

More about us and our work on our website: www.survivorsvoices.org

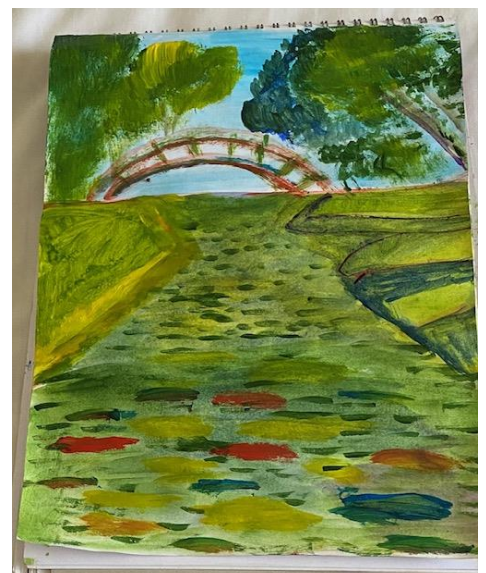
Survivor Artwork

You may remember from our previous newsletter that one of our incredibly talented clients shared her artwork with us. We are delighted to say she has shared another painting.

Here's what she had to say...

The bridge symbolises strength in hardships. The water is calm and serene. This painting symbolises my journey to get me out of my pain from a sea of depression.

If you have anything, you would like to share then please get in touch we'd love to see it.



Safe Spaces Evaluation



ROCKET SCIENCE

Rocket Science, an independent research and evaluation organisation, has been commissioned by Safe Spaces England and Wales to evaluate the Safe Spaces service, delivered by Victim Support. One of the aims of the evaluation is to understand the impact of the service for those who have accessed it. The evaluation will be conducted by a trained team of researchers at Rocket Science, who are all experienced in trauma informed research.

If you are currently being supported by Safe Spaces or have previously been in contact with the service, they would like to hear about your experience. An on-line survey is available here: <https://www.research.net/r/HHSJW7W>. The survey should take no more than 7 minutes to complete, all answers are completely anonymous and confidential and the survey only asks about your experience of using the Safe Spaces service. Direct contact details for Rocket Science can also be found on our website, see the below link.

https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/how-can-we-help-2/?preview=true&zn_pb_edit=1

In the next newsletter, we are hoping that we will be in a position to provide an update from the evaluation and your input.

Can you help us with future newsletters?

We at Safe Spaces hope that eventually this newsletter will be co-produced with service users. We therefore welcome anyone who has engaged with us to write to us with any suggestions for input, or even write an article.

Keeping in touch

If you would like to receive our quarterly newsletter please email safespacesfeedback@victimsupport.org.uk

If you have already registered to receive this newsletter you will remain on our mailing list, until you ask to be removed. If you know of anyone who would like to receive our newsletter in the future, ask them to email us directly on the link above.

We are recruiting!

As our Rebecca is moving on to another role. We are recruiting a Safe Spaces Advocate. This role will be advertised nationally **next week**. If you are interested in looking at this vacancy, you will find it on the link below. Alternatively, if you would like an informal discussion then please get in touch on the safe spaces feedback email address and I'll contact you as soon as possible.

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/more-us/jobs/>