

# Safe Spaces Newsletter



Quarterly Newsletter - Issue 5

March 2022

## Hello and welcome to the Spring 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](mailto:safespacesfeedback@victimsupport.org.uk)

In this March 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)

Hi everyone and welcome to the Safe Spaces Newsletter.

Safe Spaces was a little quieter over the Christmas period and in January. However, we are much busier now with double the number of referrals received in February than the previous 2 months.

The Safe Spaces steering group held their much anticipated and needed meeting in January. There had been a long wait between meetings, primarily due to the increasing demands of the safe spaces service teams, and also for steering group members, who were committing their valuable time to take part in the grants assessments process.

Despite delays, we now have a renewed commitment and streamlined approach to meeting on a regular basis, with our next meeting scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Alongside this, we have had another round of the grants scheme. There were no successful applications in this round but we provided feedback and are eagerly awaiting to receive some revised applications by the extended deadline of the 28<sup>th</sup> February.

Linda, one of our case workers has recently reduced her working hours and Jack another of our caseworkers is moving onto a new and desirable position within Victim support, so Safe Spaces have been busy recruiting new caseworkers.

The new case workers will be starting soon, we were all able to meet for the first time this week during a training session provided by a steering group member and survivor activist. We look forward to introducing them properly in the next newsletter.

### How to contact us...

#### Safe Spaces is open:

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

Thursday: 12pm - 8pm

Sunday: Closed

#### Email:

[safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk)

#### Phone:

0300 303 1056

#### Website and Live Chat:

[safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](https://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 or drop us an email. We will get back to you as soon as we are able to.

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

## Safe Spaces Grants Service Update *(by Donna)*

**Round 2 of the grants process** was advertised in the previous quarter. With a deadline for the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. The panel was made up of the project manager and 3 steering group members, who are also victims and survivors of Church related abuse. From this round we were able to successfully award two rounds of grants.

These went to:

**Men Against Sexual Abuse**: A fantastic therapy group using different platforms, to help men gain a level of control of their issues stemming from sexual abuse. Working with churches to target this support at victims and survivors of abuse specifically relating to the Church of England and Catholic Church in England and Wales.

<https://masamenagainstsexualabuse.com/>

**Mersey Counselling and Therapy Centre**: Who are providing fully professional counselling, psychotherapy and/or spiritual accompaniment sessions for people who have suffered abuse through their churches, whether that abuse is physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual throughout the northwest and beyond. They asked us to include a feature; which you will find on the next page.

<https://www.mctcwirral.org.uk/>

**The third and final round** of the Grants Process was advertised with a deadline of the 9<sup>th</sup> January. Unfortunately, the panel wasn't able to make a positive decision on those applications. However, feedback was given and we agreed to extend the deadline for those applicants to the 28<sup>th</sup> February to make amendments. We look forward to receiving them and wish the applicants the very best of luck.

The steering group have committed to running a lessons learned session regarding this process so that we can take that learning forward benefitting the future of the service.





*If you or anyone you know has survived any type of church related abuse, bullying or trauma, **MCTC** is here to help you.*

We have secured funding from Safe Spaces, a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales.

Although the churches have funded the service, it is run independently by the charity Victim Support, who are one of the leading charities providing specialist support to survivors of abuse in England and Wales.

If you have been affected, however long ago, thanks to Safe Spaces and Victim Support, MCTC can help you. You do not have to have told the police or the church authorities, and you do not have to still be involved with the church. Your information will not be shared without your consent unless you or someone else is in immediate danger.

Please contact us in complete confidence: [charlotte@mctcwirral.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@mctcwirral.org.uk)

**Following a successful application in Round 2 of the Safe Spaces grants process we are very happy to share with you the services of the Mersey Counselling & Therapy Centre.**

Offering Face to Face and Online counselling, psychotherapy and spiritual accompaniment to support the victims and survivors of church related abuse, MCTC offer a blended approach to therapy adding creative aspects to sessions to assist those who may need a different approach when sharing their difficult experiences. Sessions may, for example, include art therapy or spiritual accompaniment but are tailored to the individual to ensure support and guidance throughout the healing process. In promoting the wellbeing of clients psychologically as well as holistically, MCTC offer their clients a place of safety as they manage the understanding of how their difficult and negative emotions have impacted on their lives. Connecting with the whole person, MCTC advocate the process of deep and lasting healing.

The combination of professional counselling and creative interests have far reaching benefits which are not only well documented but that were clearly outlined in the MCTC bid and demonstrated a clear commitment to improving the wellbeing of clients. The resulting Safe Spaces grant will help to reinforce the benefits of a multi discipline personal approach and ensure that those who deliver the service are recognised for the work they do.

## Safe Spaces Compliments

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.

This Spring we are sharing the gratitude and experience of some of our services users feedback, offered recently following their time within the service



*“Thanks very much to XXXXXXXX in particular for her patience and understanding; I am very happy that everything is well resolved and everyone is safe and looked after now”*



*“Pleased there is a point of contact for Survivors of Clerical abuse”*



*“When I initially spoke to safe spaces they told me about the urgent and interim support schemes offered by the Church of England. Although unsure of how to access these at the time I have now done so as I was also contacted by the Church of England in a past case review exercise. I am much stronger now and well supported. Although it’s a pilot scheme at the moment the support is/was excellent so far they have paid my rent, helped with urgent bills, paid off my credit cards, provided counselling and kept in touch to this day”*

We are delighted to offer space in our newsletter for another of our previous grant recipients – The Diocese of Newcastle – who wanted to share information about an additional project they are running..... We wish Maggie and Carol best wishes for their upcoming events.



## Is someone close to you a survivor of church-based abuse?

Supporting a family member or friend as they disclose their experiences, talk about them and seek help and support is an important and challenging role.

It can be confusing, frightening and isolating. But it can also be inspiring and fulfilling, as we witness the strength and resilience of the survivors we love and accompany them as they recover from trauma and experience healing.

### Peer Support

The Diocese of Newcastle would like to establish a **peer support group** for people in this supporting role – those who love and care for survivors of church-based abuse.

One aim of the group will be to help participants become more trauma-informed, which is a **compassionate** approach to supporting people with trauma experiences. But most of all we hope to create a space in which we can come together to **support each other** in our own experiences and also to celebrate those **moments of healing**.



Working together to build bridges of support!

### The Events

We want to hold two initial meetings where those who have experience of supporting survivors of church-based abuse can come together to talk and decide about how a peer support group could be run.

If you feel you would want to be part of this conversation please join us either in person **10am 5 March 2022 at Newcastle Cathedral** or over Zoom **5.30pm 8 March 2022**.

Please contact Donna Brown  
([d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org](mailto:d.brown@newcastle.anglican.org))

to register an interest for either conversation and she will send you joining instructions nearer to the time.

The group will be co-facilitated by **Carol Butler**, DSA for Newcastle Diocese, and **Maggi Creese**, who supports a survivor of church-based abuse.

**We are very much looking forward to meeting you!**

*Maggi and Carol*

## Survivors Artwork

Reflecting the change in seasons, we say farewell to winter months and look forward to the delights of spring. Thank you to our contributor for these beautiful additions to our newsletter.



## Pastures New

We wanted to wish our colleague Jack all the very best as he embarks on his new role at Victim Support, we will miss you on the Safe Spaces Team JC.

Just a few words from the man himself .....

*I have been an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor on the safe spaces project for just under 18 months now and can safely say I have enjoyed every moment of it. I am remaining within victim support but moving to work for another ISVA team.*

*I wanted to take this opportunity to pay thanks to the courage, integrity and honesty of all the clients I have had the pleasure of supporting and working with. The nuances of church abuse and its effects on survivors have taught me much and will take these lessons into how I support all survivors going forward.*

*It's with a heavy heart I say goodbye, but with overwhelming appreciation for this opportunity; that I say thank you all, so very much.*

Jack Cochran.



## Safe Spaces Evaluation

Rocket Science, an independent research and evaluation organisation, has been commissioned by Safe Spaces England 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 experience 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. Contact details for Rocket Science can also be found by following the link.

### CAN YOU FURTHER HELP THE TEAM AT ROCKET SCIENCE?

As part of the ongoing evaluation, we would like to understand more about perceptions and experiences of using the Safe Spaces website. If you would be interested in taking part in a short online focus group to share your views, please contact [jenny.paisley@rocketsciencelab.co.uk](mailto:jenny.paisley@rocketsciencelab.co.uk) directly.

### 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.

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### Keeping in touch

If you would like to continue to receive our quarterly newsletter please email [safespacesfeedback@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto: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 [@safespacesfeedback](https://twitter.com/safespacesfeedback)