

Section 8: Centrally arranged support for victims and survivors

3 minutes read

Last updated: 21 March 2022

Version: 1

Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service for victims and survivors over 18 years old, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England, the Catholic Church of England and Wales, or the Church in Wales. First Light has been commissioned to run this national service, providing remote support through a helpline, live chat service and website. Remote support is provided for as long as the survivor needs. This can be advocating for the survivor, giving them support, providing information (including on Church and police procedures), understanding individual needs and jointly working on individual support plans. If face-to-face support is required, contact and referrals will be made with appropriate local organisations depending on need.

The Safe Spaces team can be contacted by:

- Tel: 0300 303 1056 (Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9am-9pm; Saturday, 9am-1pm; Sunday, 1-5pm; answerphone available outside of opening times)
- Email: safespaces@firstlight.org.uk
- Website: <https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk>

Interim Support Scheme

The Archbishops' Council has established a support scheme for urgent survivor needs to improve the Church's response to current and non-current survivors of Church-related abuse. This Scheme is part of the Church's recognition that harm has been caused by both that abuse itself, and the Church's responses to survivors. This Scheme is not intended to provide long-term compensation or restitution to survivors, nor is it a redress scheme. It is intended to provide immediate help and support to survivors whose life circumstances are significantly affected by the abuse suffered, and the response to it. The Scheme is designed to address immediate and urgent needs that help in the short-term to put the survivor's life back on track.

Email: SupportScheme@churchofengland.org

National Redress Scheme

This guidance does not address questions about financial compensation for victims and survivors because a national, cross-Church, Church of England scheme to be known as the National Redress Scheme is in development. This is further to a commitment made by the General Synod in February 2020, and as the response to Recommendation 7 of the IICSA report to introduce a Church wide policy on the funding and provision of support to victims and survivors. The Scheme aims to have a formal but flexible structure, seeking to minimise painful experiences for applicants

to the Scheme by avoiding overly formal process or an adversarial approach, where possible. Its objective is to provide means of redress that will go some way towards delivering financial compensation, therapeutic and pastoral support, apology and closure for victims and survivors.

Besides providing restitution, part of the Scheme's rationale is for the Church to face its moral responsibilities and be seen to publicly atone for any wrongdoing on its part. It is hoped that the Scheme will be able to include the development of arrangements for early mediation for those claims where this is appropriate. A development manager and a project manager are in place and work on the Scheme is ongoing. It is hoped that the Scheme will be in place by 2023.

This document is version 1 and was printed on 26 April 2024. The most up to date version of this policy can be found on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding>

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