

Safe Spaces, the independent support service for survivors of Church-related abuse, run by the charity Victim Support, marks its first anniversary this week.



The service, launched at the end of September 2020, has since helped a total of 188 people. In any one month, Safe Spaces is helping an average of 65 survivors, with some cases remaining open for longer periods than others to ensure the correct support is in place

Those contacting Safe Spaces have received a range of support including emotional support, advocacy, information and advice. Service users have also been supported to raise their cases with the Church and statutory agencies.

Bishop Debbie Sellin and Bishop Paul Mason, two of the directors of Safe Spaces England and Wales (SSEW\*), said: “While these figures show the importance of setting up this service, it is vital we remember the harrowing personal experiences that lie behind such statistics. We must never forget the appalling abuse suffered by these individuals who have found the courage to come forward and ask for support and the important input of those survivors who have helped inform the way the service has been set up.

Both Churches remain committed to Safe Spaces, and we are looking to the first-year evaluation report to build on the lessons we may learn for the future.”

SSEW has commissioned an independent evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the service which will inform both an initial baseline report and an interim one-year report, before the final two-year project evaluation report. This will be published however early feedback from the evaluators has shown that the service is well regarded by those who have used it.

Victims and survivors wishing to use the service may contact Safe Spaces through its independent helpline on *0300 303 1056*, email [safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk) or via livechat on the service [website](#). *Safe Spaces contact details are shared by dioceses and the national Churches when there is a safeguarding story or a report is released.*

\*The company set up by the Church of England and the Catholic Church in England and Wales to oversee the contract with Victim Support

More information on the service Safe Spaces England and Wales – [Safe Spaces England and Wales](#).

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