

Safe Spaces, the free national support service for victims and survivors of church-related abuse, will increase operational hours under a newly appointed independent provider, First Light, who take over the service from Monday 9th January.



Safe Spaces offers a confidential, personal, and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England, The Church in Wales or The Catholic Church in England and Wales, regardless of disability, age, gender or sexual orientation.

The Safe Spaces Services will be available on 0300 303 1056 or via the website.

Opening hours will be extended to Monday to Friday 9am – 9pm, Saturday 9-1pm and Sunday from 1-5pm (excluding bank holidays, subject to review)

Safe Spaces can also be contacted at **Safe Spaces England and Wales**

First Light is an independent organisation with over 25 years' experience in supporting those who have experienced or are experiencing sexual abuse and/or domestic violence and abuse, including survivors and victims of church-related abuse.

First Light were appointed by The Church of England, The Church in Wales and The Catholic Church in England and Wales on 24 November 2022 after a rigorous recruitment process by The Board of Trustees of Safe Spaces England and Wales including victims and survivors. First Light have assumed responsibility of the website and communications for Safe Spaces, and will post updates in due course.

The Bishop of Southampton, Debbie Sellin, a Trustee of SSEW said: "This new arrangement will support a welcome continuation of Safe Spaces, a vital service for those who have been affected by church-related abuse. I will be praying for all current and future service users, as well as for First Light as they begin their work as the new providers of Safe Spaces."

Bishop Paul Mason, Safeguarding Lead for the Catholic Church, Board Member of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and a Trustee of SSEW said: ""First Light have shown exceptional commitment to survivors and victims of church-related abuse. As they take over as new independent providers of Safe Spaces today, these extended opening hours demonstrate a responsiveness to need which we are confident will go a long way to reassuring service users."

Lyn Gooding, Chief Executive of First Light said: "We are delighted to have been selected to deliver this vital service to survivors. We're confident that we have the skills, experience, understanding and expertise be able to offer survivors a truly independent support service. We are proud to say we're here for anyone who needs us on their journey to recovery, and towards a future free from abuse."

More information

- **Safe Spaces England & Wales**