

An Independent Evaluation Report for 'Safe Spaces,' a support service for victims and survivors of church-related abuse in England and Wales, has been published.



Safe Spaces is an independent advocacy and support service for adult victims and survivors of church-related abuse in the Church of England, and the Church in Wales and also the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The report has been carried out by Rocket Science, an independent research and evaluation company, who were engaged to assess the pilot of Safe Spaces which ran from 2020 until the autumn of 2022.

The Independent Report supports the decision to continue the service after its initial pilot period, with a new service provider, First Light, commencing work in January 2023.

Responding to the report, survivor representatives from the Safe Spaces Advisory Committee said: “We welcome the independent evaluation and the effort made by Rocket Science to canvas survivors and users of the service in making their recommendations.

“The evaluation identifies an ongoing need for survivor advocacy as well as a greater awareness of the service from those who might benefit from it.

“We also note that within the churches generally over the period of the pilot, there has been some slow progress in recognising the complex needs of survivors.

“We look forward to the continuing development of the Safe Spaces Service so that it can become a strong independent advocate ensuring that the churches respond in meeting these needs.”

The Bishop of Southampton, Debbie Sellin, a trustee of Safe Spaces England & Wales (SSEW) said: “The Evaluation Report clearly shows that Safe Spaces has already become a valued service for the many service users.

“We welcome all the recommendations, and where areas for improvement have been identified, we are already addressing these as part of our work to continually improve Safe Spaces and the service it provides to victims and survivors.

“We would also urge parishes, communities and public spaces to consider publicising details for Safe Spaces, so that those who are in need are aware of the support that is available to them.”

Bishop Paul Mason, Safeguarding Lead for the Catholic Church, Board Member of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and a Trustee of SSEW said: “When it comes to support for survivors of abuse, it is vital that church bodies listen, and hear, whatever feedback is available. This independent report is no exception, and we look forward to the next steps in our journey of continual improvement.”

The Board also wished to record its thanks to Victim Support for running the service during the pilot phase, and to Rocket Science for compiling the report.

More information

- [Read the Independent Evaluation Report](#)
- [Safe Spaces Website](#)

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