



# Support for Victims & Survivors

The Diocese of Durham aims to provide caring, practical and helpful support for all victims and survivors. Durham Diocese aims to deal with any contact made by a survivor/victim of abuse in a church-related context with empathy and integrity.

Many people who have experienced abuse want to get support. It doesn't matter if the abuse happened recently or a long time ago, there is support available for you. You will be believed, listened to and never judged.

The Diocese of Durham recognises the importance of providing access to a range of support services, so you can choose what support is right for you. You may take up as many support options as you wish, engaging with one option does not preclude engaging with another. You will be in control of what support you receive. You don't have to share your identity with the Diocese to access support if you don't want to. We have listed below independent agencies that can support you without sharing your identity with the Diocese. You can access support even if you have never reported your abuse to the police.

## I want to talk to someone

### Safe Spaces Helpline

Safe Spaces is 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. Their Helpline is 0300 303 1056 and there is more information about their support here [safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk)

### Diocese of Durham Counselling Service

The Diocese of Durham has its own in-house counselling service. You can normally be linked with a counsellor within two weeks of a referral being received. All our counsellors are British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy accredited. If you are, or maybe in court proceedings we can arrange counselling before you have to attend, which may assist with this process. You can request a counsellor of a specific gender, for counselling to be either face to face or online or a mixture of both and in a geographical location to suit you. We would match you with a counsellor trained in supporting victims and survivors of the type of abuse you have experienced. All our counsellors are trauma trained. Your counsellor will always be guided by you and will work at your pace and work with you to understand what you want to get out of counselling. Regular reviews take place between counsellor and victim/survivor to ensure need continues to be met. Any, decision to end counselling will be made jointly with survivor / victim and counsellor.

If in house provision is not suitable consideration will be given to offering financial assistance to fund identified therapy.

The counselling service is accessed through the Head of the Pastoral Care and Counselling Service, Simon Rose. Contact Simon on [Simon.Rose@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Simon.Rose@durham.anglican.org) / 07746 846317.

## I want someone to support me

### Safe Spaces Helpline

Safe Spaces is 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. They can offer support including:

- providing you with information (including information on church and criminal justice procedures and options)
- reporting abuse to the Diocesan safeguarding team with you or on your behalf
- attending meetings with relevant agencies and professionals alongside you
- helping you complete paperwork and applications
- helping you to access listening services, counselling, or therapy (including funding)
- helping you to make an official complaint about a member of clergy
- helping you to receive an apology or accountability
- helping you with any appeal processes or complaints
- providing signposting and referrals to partner and other agencies for further support, including solicitors for legal advice and mental health professionals and services
- providing emotional support alongside practical guidance and assistance

More information about their support can be found at [safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk)

## Support Person

If you wish, a support person can be appointed for you by the Diocese, with your consent. They can support you in different ways, including:

- Support within the community and the Church.
- Listening, being alongside you.
- Liaise between you and the Church about the management of your safeguarding disclosure.
- Explain support being offered and assist you to choose and engage with the support options that meet your needs.
- Supporting you during meetings with statutory services and other professionals.
- Assisting you with exploring how your longer-term spiritual and welfare needs can be managed.

If you would like to explore accessing a support person, you should contact:



### Diocesan Safeguarding Officer Beth Miller

Address: Cuthbert House,  
Stonebridge, Durham DH1 3RY  
Email: [beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk](mailto:beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk) |  
[beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:beth.miller@durham.anglican.org)  
Mobile: 07968034075.

Alternatively, you could use one of the survivor advocacy services listed below and they could make the request on your behalf.

## Spiritual and Pastoral Support

Spiritual and pastoral support can be important for some victims and survivors who for example may have a need for a theology that can assist them to make sense of their traumatic experiences or wish to make arrangements to worship in a different church, to prevent re-traumatisation.

Victims and survivors with faith, or those who wish to explore faith, understandably, may have great difficulty in reconciling the Christian teaching of a loving God with the reality of their abuse. Some Christian survivors also struggle with the notion of “forgiveness”, as they may think of it as absolving their abuser of their criminal conduct. Spiritual and pastoral support may assist in the exploration of these issues.

If you would like to explore accessing spiritual and pastoral support you should contact: **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Beth Miller** (contact details above).

## Interim Support Scheme

The Archbishop’s Council has established an interim support scheme. This Scheme is not intended to provide compensation or restitution to survivors, nor is it a redress scheme. The Scheme is intended to give 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.

If you would like to make an application to the interim support scheme, please visit the Church of England website [churchofengland.org](http://churchofengland.org)

## I want an apology

You may wish for an apology from the church body in which you were harmed and abused. This should not happen without your express wishes and views being sought including who should make the apology, how it is communicated with you and the issues it should address. All efforts should be made by the church body to comply with your wishes.

If you would like an apology, you can contact the **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Beth Miller** (contact details opposite)

Alternatively, you could use one of the survivor advocacy services listed below and they could make the request on your behalf.

## I don’t want to make contact with the Diocese of Durham

The Diocese of Durham recognises that many victims and survivors may not wish to contact church representatives directly. There are a number of ways in which support can be accessed from outside of the church.

If you would like additional support, you can also contact **Safe Spaces** [safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](http://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk), which is 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.

As an alternative, you can contact **MACSAS** [www.macsas.org.uk](http://www.macsas.org.uk), which supports women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church.

There is also **Survivors Voices** [survivorsvoices.org/support](http://survivorsvoices.org/support), a survivor-led organisation that runs peer support groups for victim-survivors of all kinds of abuse, including faith-based abuse. It has a newsletter and other special events for survivors of abuse experienced in churches and other faith-based communities.

You may also wish to visit the **House of Survivor** [houseofsurvivors.org](http://houseofsurvivors.org) website. This site has been published by two members of the Survivor Reference Group who are Survivors of Church of England based abuse. Its purpose is to provide helpful information for fellow Church abused survivors in various aspects of understanding or interaction with the Church and/or its representatives (legal, insurance, etc.).

If you are a survivor of Church of England-related abuse and are in need of urgent or immediate support, please take a look at the **Interim Support Scheme** [www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/interim-support-scheme](http://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/interim-support-scheme)