

## **NATIONS UNITE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

A new partnership across England, Scotland and Wales has formed to increase the pathways for victims of domestic abuse to access specialist support.

The partnership, led by Hestia's UK SAYS NO MORE campaign, brings together Scottish Women's Aid and Cardiff Women's Aid to expand Safe Spaces for people experiencing abuse.

Over 6,000 [Safe Spaces](#) are now available on the high street nationwide providing space for local people to phone a helpline, contact a support service or talk to a friend or family member.

The Safe Spaces are confidential, inclusive and accessible and provide routes to safety for victims of abuse and violence. Following the increase in public awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, the scheme is working with [pharmacies and banks](#) to make preventing domestic abuse everyone's business.

Experts in the three nations are working to expand the scheme, raise awareness of Safe Spaces and develop a framework of quality assurance and monitoring to ensure that the scheme is fit to support all victims of domestic abuse.

**Cicelie Vobe, Safe Spaces Project Coordinator at Cardiff Women's Aid said:**

"Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence is a shared responsibility. We are excited to be partnering with the Safe Spaces Scheme to create more avenues of support for survivors in Wales to the fantastic local organisations working to eradicate violence and abuse and the Live Fear Free Helpline, run by Welsh Women's Aid. We are looking forward to developing the scheme in a Welsh context and to working closely with our partners across the nations."

To access a Safe Space, ask a member of staff and they will direct you. They will not ask you for your name or any contact details, it is an anonymous and confidential scheme. In a Safe Space, you will find contact details for England's National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0808 2000 247), Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline (0800 027 1234), Wales' Live Fear Free Helpline (0808 80 10 800), Men's Advice Line (0808 80 10 327) and information for Hestia's free smartphone app, Bright Sky which provides contact details to local support services.

Sue Harper, Head of Domestic Abuse Prevention at Hestia said:

“Our UK SAYS NO MORE campaign is proud to unite our nations to drive partnership opportunities with local businesses and communities to ensure those experiencing domestic abuse can access specialist support.”

Alice Rowe, Safe Spaces Engagement Officer at Scottish Women's Aid said:

“We have seen that the Safe Spaces Scheme has had the reach and capacity to help survivors of domestic abuse across Scotland access support quickly and safely, during the pandemic and beyond. We are excited to be partnering with the scheme and to work with partners, our Women's Aid network and the many supportive allies we have across Scotland to reach more people experiencing domestic abuse. Together we can work to signpost survivors to safe, expert advice and support from our local Women's Aid services and Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline.”

Through the generous support of the players of the People's Postcode Lottery the partnership will enable more Safe Spaces in communities across Scotland and Wales to provide a safe and discreet way to reach out to friends and family and support.

- ENDS -

## Notes to editors

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## About Hestia, UK SAYS NO MORE and Safe Spaces

Hestia is one of the largest providers of domestic abuse refuges in London and the Southeast and is the main organisation supporting victims of modern slavery in the capital. It is the home of domestic abuse and sexual violence campaign UK SAYS NO MORE and developed the Bright Sky domestic abuse app in partnership with Vodafone. In 2020, Hestia celebrated 50 years of providing support to those in crisis by providing safehouses, refuge accommodation and support.

Safe Spaces was developed as an initiative of the UK SAYS NO MORE campaign in response to the challenges faced by people experiencing domestic abuse during the COVID-19

lockdown and their inability to access specialist support services. It was first launched in 2020 and is now available in over 6,000 pharmacies and banks across the UK, Safe Spaces operates alongside the Home Office Ask for ANI scheme, whereby people can ask for 'ANI' at pharmacy healthcare counters to access an immediate police response. Safe Spaces is supported by the players of People's Postcode Lottery Recovery fund.

Online Safe Spaces launched in partnership with the Royal Mail Group in September 2020. Online Safe Spaces is a discreet portal that opens in a pop-up window, which can be installed on both internal and external websites. The service provides support, advice, and helpful contact numbers for those at risk of domestic abuse. It leaves no internet history trace and provides quick exit options for the person seeking information.

### **About Scottish Women's Aid**

Scottish Women's Aid is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse. We play a vital role coordinating, influencing and campaigning for effective responses to domestic abuse. We work with a network of over 30 specialist local Women's Aid groups toward a shared vision of a Scotland where domestic abuse is not tolerated. The Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage helpline is available to support anyone experiencing domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends, colleagues and professionals who support them. They provide a confidential, sensitive service to anyone who calls. Support is offered in the caller's preferred language through a confidential interpreting service and there are accessibility options for anyone with a hearing or speech difficulty.

Any story about domestic abuse should point to appropriate sources of support, such as the Helpline or local Women's Aid services.

For free, survivor-sensitive images to use in any story about domestic abuse, [see here](#).

### **About Cardiff Women's Aid**

Cardiff Women's Aid is a woman-led, feminist organisation which exists to support women and end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in all its forms. For over 45 years, we have supported survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and all other forms of violence against women.

We provide 24/7 crisis support and advocacy, emergency accommodation (refuge), aftercare and recovery, outreach and community engagement and ongoing support to survivors to reclaim their lives and reach their full potential.

While each of our services has its own key aim, everything we do is interconnected, and our specialist team has the knowledge and skills to bring all the elements of our provisions together. A personal advocate is as comfortable discussing legal protection and housing options as she is using her skills to address trauma.