

Embargo: Immediate release

## **News Release: Cathedral LOUDfence to offer support for sexual abuse survivors**

Final preparations are in place for the launch of a special installation at Carlisle Cathedral to support survivors of sexual abuse.

A LOUDfence will be located in the Cathedral grounds from Monday 1 November to Wednesday 3 November, All Survivors' Day, with people being invited to tie ribbons to it in support of the survivors and victims of abuse.

The fence forms part of a Safeguarding Season which is currently being run by the Cathedral. A working party including Cathedral chapter members, diocesan officers and representatives of survivors have developed the series of events and services.

Antonia Sobocki, who organized the UK's first LOUDfence event at St Peter's, Kirkbampton, in 2020, and who is a member of the Safeguarding Season working party, originally suggested the LOUDfence installation at the Cathedral.

Antonia said: "I recently posted pictures of the Carlisle LOUDfence page and my Twitter and Facebook pages went crazy. I have ribbon requests from all around the world. The founders of LOUDfence contacted me to send their support and have asked me to tie ribbons on their behalf. I have spent the week compiling lists of ribbon and message requests from Twitter and Facebook.

"I'm so pleased that people will have this very visible public display through which they can support and draw alongside those people affected by abuse. Our message will be as strong as ever: we believe you, we hear you and we will do all we can to stop this from ever happening again. The hope is that this LOUDfence will further enable survivors to speak out, for the good of themselves, for others and for the whole church."

The LOUDfence installation will run for 20 yards on the south side of the Cathedral. It will be officially launched with a short ceremony at **11am on Monday 1 October**.

As well as tying ribbons to it, people will have further opportunity to stop, reflect and pray for those survivors of sexual abuse.

The Rev Canon Dr Benjamin Carter, Canon Warden at the Cathedral and its lead for safeguarding has led the working group in developing the Safeguarding Season.

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He said: "It's been wonderful to work alongside Antonia in the development of the LOUDfence and to have her valuable input as part of the working group.

"Our Safeguarding Season is based around three key themes: the need for the Church to lament, to listen and to learn from survivors of abuse. The LOUDfence installation offers a wonderful way in which this can be achieved and it complements beautifully all the other safeguarding themed services and prayer stations that are offered up as part of the season.

"Whilst nothing can be said or done to right the wrongs of the past, our hope and prayer is that survivors of sexual abuse will find comfort from this LOUDfence and, indeed, from all that forms this Safeguarding Season."

Weekly Eucharist services are also focusing on the themes of truth and justice and there is a dedicated place of prayer in a side chapel with opportunity to light candles and tie coloured ribbons to a prayer tree, which will later be tied to the LOUDfence. Pastoral support is also being offered to anyone affected by abuse and who makes an approach for further help.

Anyone affected by issues raised above is encouraged to contact [Safe Spaces](#): an independent service supporting survivors of church-related abuse.

This independent service is run by the charity Victim Support and funded by the Church of England together with the Catholic Church in England and Wales and the Church in Wales. It is free to access via telephone, email or web-chat.

- Tel: 0300 303 1056 (answerphone available outside of opening times)
- Email: [safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk)
- WebChat - via the [Safe Spaces website](#)

**ENDS**

#### Notes to editors

- For more about the Safeguarding Season visit: <https://carlislecathedral.org.uk/safeguarding/season/>
- For more about Survivors Voices visit: <https://survivorsvoices.org/>
- For more about Loudfence visit: <https://survivorsvoices.org/activism/loudfence/> or <https://www.facebook.com/loudfence/>

#### LOUDfence Launch – Media Invitation

***Any media wishing to attend the launch of the LOUDfence at Carlisle Cathedral on Monday 1 November at 11am should contact Dave Roberts, Diocesan Head of Communications, on 07469 153658 or at [communications@carlisle-diocese.org.uk](mailto:communications@carlisle-diocese.org.uk).***