Safe Places Kernow

Everybody has a right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. We all have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of vulnerable adults and we must ensure that we are doing all that we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society treating them with care and compassion and dignity and respect.

The case study below demonstrates how successful partnership working can result in a scheme that supports individuals with learning disabilities and ensures that they have access to a safe place where they will be treated with care, compassion and understanding.

What is Safe Places Kernow?

The scheme helps people with learning disabilities deal with any incident that takes place whilst they are out and about in the community – for example harassment, bullying or maybe the person they are meeting fails to turn up.

How does it work?

The idea is simple – Safe Place stickers are issued to establishments that sign up to the scheme so that people with learning disabilities will know that they have access to a safe place should they need it. People with learning disabilities carry a card with emergency information and contact details; this allows the staff in the safe place venue to assist anyone who goes to them for help.

The Safe Places scheme, led by Cornwall Council, together with Cornwall People First and Devon and Cornwall Police, employs seven people with a learning disability to work as Safe Places Champs. Together with buddies, they work in their own local areas, recruiting shops, cafes, businesses and leisure facilities to become ‘Safe Places’. These display stickers advertising that people with a Learning Disability can go there if they are in difficulties. Many circumstances can cause a person to seek out a Safe Place, from losing their phone, missing a bus, or, unfortunately, bullying.
Why does it work?

Disability hate-crime is largely hidden because of people’s reluctance or inability to report incidents. However, according to national data, nine out of ten people with a learning disability are bullied, so there is a clear need for a scheme to support them, as well as raising awareness of the problem.

It has to be a whole-community approach, and Safe Places Kernow achieves this by signing up local shops, businesses and food-outlets, as well as public sector premises, such as the Council’s one stop shops, libraries and hospitals. All 174 St Austell Brewery pubs were early adopters.

Proof that it works

The scheme has won several awards including

- Safe Places in Cornwall won the MJ Diversity Achievement of the year award for 2011.
- Safe Places in Cornwall is also a Breakthrough UK - Independent Living Award Winner 2011.

In 2010 Safe Places was also joint winner of the Health and Social Care Equality award. The scheme helps people with learning disabilities deal with any incident that takes place whilst they are out and about in the community – for example harassment, bullying or maybe the person they are meeting fails to turn up.

A real example: Sharon’s story

‘I was attacked on the street a couple of years ago, and after that I was frightened about going out again. Safe Places has given me the confidence to get out and about again.

‘I look out for the Safe Places sticker and know where they are in my area. My friends also think the scheme is great, and that there is somewhere safe we can go if we need to.’

For more information

If you would like to find out more about the Safe Places Kernow scheme, please visit our website: www.cornwall.gov.uk/safeplaces