



Relaunching stay safe cards and safe places

In 2011 the Speak Out Council launched a Stay Safe Card and Safe Places Scheme. Supported by the Child and Adult Safeguarding Team, and Cambridgeshire Constabulary, cards were distributed to hundreds of vulnerable people in the county. Dozens of organisations, particularly in Cambridge City came on board and lots of others supported it.

Due to the project restructuring the scheme is no longer active. However we feel the conditions are now right to return to it.

5 Reasons to relaunch the project

1. Less than half of people feel safe outside in their communities. (42% in our consultation in June/July). This includes those who only feel safe when someone they trusted was with them.
2. Places people know are very important to how safe they feel (in our one question consultation over the same period – the most popular answer for something that made you feel safe was a place you felt safe).
3. Many people are worried about going out in the evenings, after dark and the type of people they might encounter. People who were drunk or on drugs featured quite highly on what made people feel unsafe.
4. It fits in with attempting to increase public awareness of stopping disability hate crime. 71% say that people are horrible to those with a Learning Disability, rising to 92% if you include sometimes. Despite this we know reporting is still very low.
5. Its fits in with the Community Safety Partnership objectives of protecting vulnerabilities and victims. We have already discussed this with the partnership in Hunts.

How will we make it successful?

1. We will use a bottom up approach that means the project is self-sustaining, allowing volunteers in a particular town (or part of that town in the cause of larger localities) to be in charge of distribution and approaching safe places themselves.

That means even if Speak Out Council staff change, volunteers will still be able to carry on with the scheme.

2. We know this can work because we have spoken to other places (like Suffolk) who use this model and they have told us it works well.

3. We will trial this on a small scale in one of our medium sized towns such as Huntingdon, before we try it anywhere larger.

4. One of Speak Out Leaders (who is temporarily the representative for East Cambs and Hunts) has volunteered to lead on a trial in either of his two areas.

He has direct experience of running a similar scheme successfully in Shrewsbury.

5. We will assess it against our own success criteria and only expand if it proving beneficial for volunteers, service users and proprietors.

The Re-Designed Card

Our card has been re-designed by a former Sixth Former at Granta Special Needs School. Please see the design below.



There are two major changes from the old card:

1) We have reduced the card from lots of sides to just two.

We found much of the information wasn't necessary.

For example health issues have been removed. This is because if it was to say for example, that the person had epilepsy, this would be of little benefit or purpose unless the person was properly trained to recognise a seizure and respond.

Similarly with communication skills, it can take a while for even the most patient, proficient and well trained care staff to open up a channel with some service users. We think the priority should be speaking to someone the person trusts or getting them somewhere safe, as soon as possible.

We have also considered concerns about whether the cards would identify the person as vulnerable. We think taking off a lot of the information, so only their first name and the name of one personal contact is on the card.

We have also removed the need to tell people to call 999 in an emergency as we felt. This is very common public knowledge. The person with a learning disability or autism is unlikely to show the card during an emergency, only following an emergency, when police advice is to call 101 anyway.

2) Have a card that explains clearly what it is for.

We think the old card did not actually make it clear what the person who was shown the card was meant to do.

We trialled how self-explanatory the card was with one of our members of staff in the VoiceAbility Office.

We told her nothing about the card but said she had to work out how to help us. After several minutes of her asking us politely what we wanted, and us ignoring her (because we were too frightened and had communication issues), we explained that she needed to open up the card to see the information inside.

In real life situations a person with learning disabilities or autism may not be able to explain that the card needs opening up to use properly.

How would it work? Case Study - Huntingdon

1. We would meet with a volunteer and induct them into the project. The volunteer would be a person with learning disabilities or autism.

Our volunteer would decide:

- a) Where they could distribute the cards.
- b) What sort of places they'd like to approach to be Safe Places.

With both of the above the Speak Out Council would be able to support deciding on suitable locations and individuals to contact.

2. They would then approach the Safe Place directly, with support only if they felt they required it.

The Safe Place would be expected to do the following.

1. Place a sticker in their window to state that they are a Safe Place. Below is our proposed design. At a similar size to what we propose it being.



2. In the event that someone with a stay safe card enters their premises and hands them their stay safe card.

a) Ring the emergency contact on the person's card three times.

b) In the event that they can't get through ring 101 and inform the police.

c) Keep the person safe and calm whilst this is happening.

d) They are also in principle saying that they will be a safe place for people with a learning disability or autism to come and visit their establishment. Also that they will inform the police or adult safeguarding if they think any abuse of a person with a learning disability or autism has taken place.

What support do we need to relaunch it?

In order to make this a success we need the following to promote and work with us on this:

- Adult and Children Safeguarding Team within the County Council
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
 - In particular to begin with those officers in Huntingdon and with special responsibility for hate crime.
- Community Safety Partnership (In Hunts to begin with and then in the rest of the county)
- Local organisations (to be Safe Places)

- Local service users and services (in Huntingdon to begin with)
- Police Commissioner's Office Outreach Officers
- Other voluntary organisations

However we would cover the training of the volunteers, who would be in charge of the distribution of their own cards and stickers. So there would be very little additional input required by any of the above.

There would also be very few financial costs in the first place.

We would want 1000 cards to comfortably cover Huntingdon (and the major day centres there) at an estimated cost of around £300.

In addition there would be a small cost to cover the cost of printing of signs for the Safe Places. We envisage this to be no more than about £25.

In the past we believe Children's Services at the Council funded the printing and marketing of the cards. We would greatly appreciate any support that could be provided in the first instance or with supporting the cards moving on – based on how successful the trial proves.

If we are unable to find external funding we will have to consider looking at alternative ways of getting the cards produced.

Time line

This is what we are planning:

August/early September 2015 – discuss with partners and service users about relaunching scheme.

October 2015 – have found a source of funding for printing off first lot of cards.

Late October 2015 – Discuss trial and training with first volunteer. Most likely to be current Speak Out Leader for East Cambs and Hunts.

Produce and distribute cards.

November 2015 – Launch trial in Huntingdon.

December 2015 – Trial Month 2.

January 2015- Assess trial in Huntingdon. If successful look at finding volunteers in three more locales and repeat process of initial trial.

February 2015 – Launch trials in three more locales within Cambs.

March 2015- Trial Month 2

April 2015 – Assess whether project should keep expanding.

How will we assess whether the cards have been successful.

We will only look to move this project across Cambridgeshire if it is successful, so how will we decide on its success?

1. Feedback from volunteers

Questions - Have they had good responses to proprietors about Safe Places? How many are signed up? Have they had good responses to the Stay Safe Cards from volunteers? How many are distributed.

2. Feedback from proprietors

Questions – Have they had noticeably more people with a learning disability visit than previously? Have they had someone come in with a stay safe card? Did that help them deal with the problem?

3. Feedback from people with a learning disability or autism.

Questions – Does the Stay Safe Card make them feel safer? Have they been outside more as a result? Have they been able to use it for its' ascribed use?

Feedback and further information

For any further information or to give feedback on this proposal please email james.sheard@voiceability.org.