



CAN YOU MAKE YORK AN EVEN SAFER PLACE FOR EVERYONE?

I recently joined York CVS as Co-ordinator of Safe Places in York. The scheme launched last year with funding from York BID to boost the city's reputation as a friendly, welcoming and accessible place for everyone. This year the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in North Yorkshire is funding the development of the scheme.

There are 19 Safe Places registered across York with many in the City centre. A mix of locations including libraries, places of interest, cafes, banks and shops. These locations are open to anyone who feels vulnerable when they are out and about. This could include younger people, disabled people, those living with dementia, mental health issues or a learning disability. But it could be anyone! Someone may use a Safe Place because they feel confused, lost, unwell or scared. Or they might just want to see a friendly face and pop in to say hello! All Safe Places have a sticker displayed in their window which lets people know they will get a warm and supportive welcome inside. There's also a mobile App which will take people to their nearest Safe Place location when out and about.

I am really keen to widen the number of Safe Place locations in the city centre. My 20 year old son has learning disabilities and I know first-hand what a difference a friendly and supportive attitude can make in the community. It is not a scary or onerous task signing up to becoming a Safe Place. All it involves is filling in a registration form and then meeting with me (and in the future some potential scheme users) to go through an awareness session about the scheme and how best to help people. We will provide resources to help you do this. Some scheme users may have a Safe Places card that they will show you and ask you to phone a named contact person for them. But not everyone will. Staff in the Safe Place locations will connect them to assistance and offer a safe place until help arrives (if that's what they need) or they feel confident to leave. We are really lucky to have the Rangers available in the City Centre too, and they are available to offer any additional assistance to the Safe Place locations should they need.

I think York is a safe and friendly place (I've just moved back here after 14yrs away down South!) but we can all feel vulnerable at times and need extra help and support. The more stickers we can have in a range of different locations covering longer opening hours in windows in York – the better! I know most places will already be welcoming and helping people anyway. But please consider being proactive and

signing up to this growing network in York; taking part in an awareness session, getting a sticker in your window and making the City a Safer Place for everyone.

If you would like more information, have any questions or would like a registration form please get in touch with me directly on: maria.munday@yorkcvs.org.uk. I really look forward to hearing from you!

Further information and registration form here at <https://www.yorkcvs.org.uk/safeplaces/>