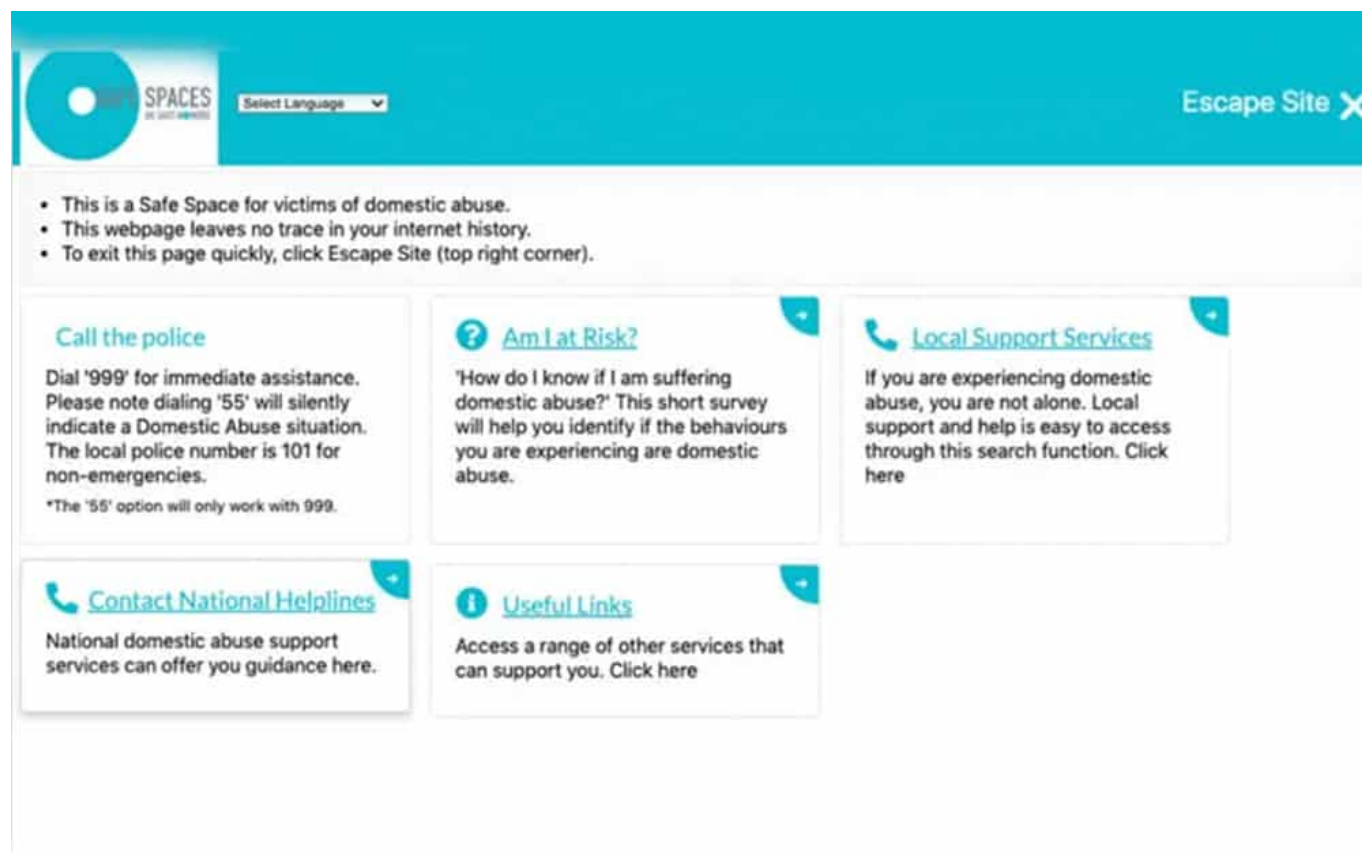


# Rail organisations urged to join industry partners to help victims of domestic abuse

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Several railway organisations are leading the industry in supporting victims of domestic abuse by implementing **UK SAYS NO MORE's** Online Safe Spaces service, which offers a discreet pathway to specialist domestic abuse support. They are encouraging others to sign up.

Network Rail, Southeastern, LNER, Great Western Railway, Abellio, HS1, CPMS, Women in Rail and Rail Business Daily are just some of the businesses from the industry promoting the service.

More than 50 organisations overall are offering the virtual, potentially lifesaving portals, which in October 2021 alone were receiving nearly 2,000 visits every day.

The Online Safe Spaces service can be installed on websites free of charge – providing support, advice and contact services via a pop-up window, and allowing users to access resources discreetly without leaving an online history trace.

Patrick Ryan, Chief Executive Officer at Hestia, home of **UK SAYS NO MORE**, said: “Over the last year, the use of Online Safe Spaces has increased exponentially with an average of 1,927 visits per day in October

alone.

“Businesses have a unique role in ensuring that victims of domestic abuse can access the support they need.

“We are delighted that so many rail organisations are adopting and providing Online Safe Spaces and hope many more will follow so that victims of domestic abuse can get the life-saving support they deserve.”

Online Safe spaces was developed by the Royal Mail Group, in collaboration with Hestia – which for the last 50 years has provided support and hope for those recovering from crisis – and their **UKSAYSNOMORE** campaign.

It has an assessment tool to determine whether someone is experiencing domestic abuse and provides a variety of helpful support, advice and contact information to those at risk or experiencing domestic abuse.

It also includes helplines and features a quick exit button and leaves no internet history, ensuring the safety of those using the service.

Rajinder Pryor MBE, from Network Rail and a Women in Rail trustee, initiated the collaboration between UKSAYSNOMORE and the rail industry after reading about the service portal in the media.

“It is fantastic that we’ve reached my initial milestone of 10 rail organisations signing up, but this has to be the start and I’d urge more to get involved,” she said.

“This is not only a great example of cross industry collaboration but also how as individuals we are empowered to make things happen.

“Such initiatives can’t happen alone; it takes team effort and a collective spirit from an industry where safety is held in the highest regard.”

The appeal for more organisations to have Online Safe Spaces on their websites comes as reports of domestic abuse in the UK have increased dramatically. Refuge has reported on its website a 25 per cent increase in calls and online requests since the first lockdown in March 2020.

David McLoughlin, Chief Executive at Rail Business Daily, said: “Domestic abuse and sexual assault are unacceptable and we must do anything we can to end it and help protect anyone suffering.

“As an organisation that receives more than four million website views every year, we are more than happy to offer an Online Safe Space – an excellent system developed by the Royal Mail. I just hope no-one finds themselves in the situation that they need it.”

It is just another example of the vital role the rail industry is playing in helping victims of domestic abuse. Last month it was revealed that the Rail to Refuge scheme – that offers free train travel to those fleeing domestic abuse – had helped 2,265 survivors, including 650 children.

Dyan Crowther, chief executive officer, HS1 Ltd, said: “We were proud to be among the first organisations to be driving forward this important Online Safe Spaces in our industry.

“We want to ensure that our stations and the entire passenger journey is a safe environment for those who need it. Through leading by example, I hope we can influence others to take part, support communities and make a greater stand against violence and domestic abuse.”

Your company can play an integral role providing a discreet pathway to lifesaving specialist domestic abuse support.

Joining Online Safe Spaces is simple and free. Email [uksaysnomore@hestia.org](mailto:uksaysnomore@hestia.org) to register your interest or [wr@womeninrail.org](mailto:wr@womeninrail.org) for more details.