

Domestic abuse: housing options

Your housing options if you are at risk of domestic abuse at home.

Domestic abuse is not just physical violence. It could happen if a family member, partner or ex-partner verbally abuses or threatens you, controls your money, or stops you from contacting your family or friends.

Domestic abuse is a crime. Call 999 if you or your children are in danger.

Get a place in a refuge

A refuge is an emergency safe house, where you can get support until you decide on your long-term housing options.

You might be able to get a place in a refuge immediately, but there can be shortages. You will normally be offered a place in a refuge away from where you and the perpetrator lived.

If you need a place in a women's refuge, call the National Domestic Violence 24 hour Helpline on **0808 2000 247**.

Most refuges are for women, but there are a small number of places for men. Call the Men's Advice Line for advice and support on **0808 801 0327**.

The National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ Domestic Abuse helpline (GALOP) can provide advice and support for anyone in these groups on **0800 999 5428**.

Ask a local council for homeless help

If you can't remain in your home because of domestic abuse, you can apply as homeless to any local council. The council must give you emergency housing if you meet immigration and residence requirements and have a priority need. For example, if you have children with you, you're pregnant, or have physical or mental health issues.

Even if the council doesn't have to house you, it must assess your needs and help you to find somewhere suitable to live.

Factsheet

Find a new rented home

You could try to find a private rented accommodation away from the perpetrator.

If you are a social housing tenant, you can apply for a transfer or mutual exchange. Ask your landlord how to register for any schemes they offer. Ask anyone moving into your home not to disclose where you have gone.

Get help to stay in your home

If you can't or don't want to leave your home, domestic abuse helplines can direct you to local specialist support groups or services. They can also help with safety planning, for example so you can change the locks or make the home secure.

You have the right to stay in your home if you are the owner or tenant or if you are married or in a civil partnership with the owner or tenant. You may be able to ask a court to let you stay, even if your abuser is currently the sole owner or tenant. A court is more likely to let you stay if you are caring for children.

Apply for a court order

You can also ask for a court order that forbids your abuser harassing you or coming to your home. They can be arrested if they break the terms. If you need a court order urgently, you can ask for a temporary emergency injunction without the abuser's knowledge.

You can get further advice from england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice, a local Shelter advice service or local Citizens Advice.

If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, are at risk of harm or losing your home within the next 2 months, call Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444 for advice and information on your options. Calls are free from UK landlines and main mobile networks.

