

Domestic abuse: refuges

Find out about refuges and how you can get a place in one.

A refuge is a safe place to live if you want to escape domestic abuse. You will also get support to help you move on.

Find a place in a refuge

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**.

You might be able to get a place in a refuge immediately, but there can be shortages.

Refuges are likely to be away from your local area for safety reasons. Refuge addresses and phone numbers are confidential, and you must not give them to anyone else. Refuge staff will tell you how to get there and what to bring with you.

Bringing your children to a refuge

If you have children, you can take them with you. Some women's refuges do not accept teenage boys. Discuss your options with a domestic abuse helpline if you have a teenage son.

Children and young people can learn about domestic abuse and positive action they can take at www.thehideout.org.uk.

Specialist refuges

Some refuges cater for religious or cultural needs, for example Jewish or Asian women.

There might also be specialist help with alcohol or drug problems at some refuges.

Factsheet

Living in a refuge

Each refuge is different. You will usually have a private bedroom for you and your children. Other spaces will be shared. Some refuges have self-contained flats.

You must follow the rules of the refuge, otherwise you may have to leave. Each refuge has its own rules on things like rotas for the washing machine and children's bedtimes.

Support services

Refuge staff may be able to help you with issues such as:

- budgeting, debt and sorting out joint finances
- accessing legal advice and dealing with joint tenancies
- finding schools or nurseries and settling into the new local community

Help with paying for a refuge

You have to pay rent and charges for utilities such as gas and water. You may be able to claim benefits to help pay the rent. Refuge staff can advise you on what to claim.

How long you can stay

The rules are different for each refuge. You may be able to stay until you can find long term housing. Refuge staff can usually help you to find a permanent home.

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.

