

Housing Options for those experiencing domestic abuse

If you are thinking about leaving an abusive relationship and are worried about your safety or the safety of your children, you do not have to suffer alone. There are people who can help, and you can take steps to stay safe.

Housing Options can assist you if you are suffering from domestic abuse (physical or sexual violence, emotional, mental or financial abuse).

If you want to leave an abusive relationship Housing Options can help you by providing confidential advice and practical assistance such as:

- Helping you to find a place of safety if you are at risk. Emergency accommodation can be arranged 24hrs a day, seven days a week if you need this.
- Referring you to specialist domestic abuse services like Women's Aid, who can provide you with a range of practical and emotional support.
- Exploring the various options for you to remain safely in your home, if this is your wish. This could include options such as looking at affordability, basic safety planning and seeking legal advice regarding court injunctions and non-molestation orders.

If you wish to speak with someone for further confidential advice and assistance please contact the Housing Options team on 01204 335900.

Refuge Accommodation

A refuge is a safe house for women and children escaping domestic abuse. Women can stay in a refuge (with or without children) until they decide what to do next. Sometimes women just stay for a few days to give themselves a break and sometimes women use it as a stepping stone to leaving their home permanently.

Refuge addresses are confidential (a PO box address is used for post) but there are refuges all over the UK. If space is available women can stay anywhere that they feel safe and comfortable. This may be the nearest one or it might be the opposite end of the country.

A space can be found anywhere in the country by ringing the National 24-Hour Helpline Number **0808 2000 247**.

Refuges can offer:

- A telephone helpline for those experiencing domestic abuse and those offering them help
- Practical and emotional support for making and implementing decisions about the future (sorting out benefits, schools, GP's/Health Visitors, contacting legal services, liaising with housing departments)
- Resettlement and outreach support for women in the community
- Work with children of abused mothers