

# Domestic violence

If you have been the victim of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) from your partner or family member then you are suffering from domestic and extended family violence.

This factsheet explains the options available to you if you feel you need to leave your home because of domestic violence.

## What are my options?

### Women's refuges

Women's refuges are the main source of emergency accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence.

Women can usually enter refuges with their children but some refuges may not allow male children over 15 years of age to live there.

All refuges are different. In some you may have self-contained flats, in others you will probably share areas like the living room, kitchen and bathroom; however you will always have your own room.

Refuges have trained staff who are there to provide you with emotional and practical support.

To find a refuge space phone the 24hr National Domestic Violence helpline **0808 2000 247**.

[www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

The Women's Aid website

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) also has contact information for local domestic violence services and refuges. You can also phone the Women's Aid general enquiry line on **0117 944 4411**.

### Temporary Accommodation

Not everybody fleeing domestic violence will be considered vulnerable and in priority need. The council must take into account the nature and extent of violence, the physical and psychological harm this violence has caused, and the network of family and friends that a person has.

To be eligible your immigration status and residency in the UK must entitle you to have the right to access public funds – certain people coming into the UK from abroad including asylums seekers are not eligible.

Where somebody is not in priority need or eligible there will be no duty to provide temporary accommodation. However, we do have a duty to provide advice and assistance to all homeless households.

If you are homeless due to domestic violence and are eligible for assistance and in priority need, we will have a duty to offer you alternative accommodation or provide you with emergency temporary accommodation.

## Other housing options

### Eaves Housing For Women

Eaves Supported Housing provides temporary housing and support to single vulnerable women aged 16-60 who have support needs. They offer support and housing for up to two years to make the transition to living independently. Eaves Housing for Women accepts self-referrals or referrals from any agency.

All referrals must be made via an initial phone call to **020 7735 2062** between 9.30am-4.30pm, Monday to Friday. If you meet the criteria then an application form will be sent to you or the person referring you.

### Beverley Lewis House

Beverley Lewis House is a 'safe house' for single women with learning disabilities escaping domestic violence or other forms of abuse. Women aged 16-65 can apply for help but there are no facilities for children. We can also make referrals on your behalf.

To find out more call **020 7473 2813** or visit [www.east-living.co.uk/blh](http://www.east-living.co.uk/blh)

### Women's Link

Women's Link is a London-wide housing advice service for homeless women. They provide advice on emergency accommodation and longer term housing options for women in London. Phone: **020 7248 1200** or visit [www.womenslink.org.uk](http://www.womenslink.org.uk)

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## What help can I get to stay safe in my own home?

### The Sanctuary Scheme

The Sanctuary Scheme provides extra security to properties and advocacy support for households in fear of violence.

### Is the scheme suitable for me?

The decision to leave an abusive relationship is not an easy one to make and the scheme is not suitable for everyone living in fear of violence. You may be at more risk as you are trying to leave or end the relationship, and sometimes the only option is to move you and your children out of the area as soon as possible. However, with advocacy support and extra security it is sometimes possible to stay in your own home.

### Risk assessment

A risk assessment will be carried out by a police officer to see if extra security is the best option. If the assessment shows that extra security will work for you, a crime prevention officer will inspect your property and make recommendations for increasing your security. If the property is rented then permission from your landlord is needed to carry out the work. The work is then carried out by a trained local lock-smith at a time suitable for you - usually within 48 hours.

### Who can access the scheme?

The Sanctuary Scheme is open to any person living in Brent who is threatened with homelessness due to domestic violence.

If you would like to find out more about the Sanctuary Scheme, please speak to a Housing Options officer.

## Other services available

### Broken Rainbow

Broken Rainbow supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who are experiencing domestic violence. The national helpline offers a confidential service giving information, support and advice on legal and housing options, safety and home security, and will make referrals to other services as appropriate.

The helpline is available:

Monday 2pm-8pm

Wednesday 10am-5pm

Thursday 2pm-8pm

Phone: **0300 999 5428** or visit [www.brokenrainbow.org.uk](http://www.brokenrainbow.org.uk)

### M.A.L.E. (Men's Advice Line and Enquiries)

If you are a male victim of domestic violence or abuse, in a heterosexual, gay, bi-sexual or transgender relationship and need confidential help, contact M.A.L.E. for emotional support and practical advice and information on services that can provide further support. The advice line is available from Monday to Friday, 10am -1pm and 2pm-5pm. Phone **0808 801 0327** or visit [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

### POPPY Project

POPPY provides support and housing to women who have been brought into the UK to be exploited in some way. This could include (but is not limited to):

- sexual or labour exploitation
- other forced activities such as begging
- organ harvesting.

For more information please contact the duty officer between 9.30am and 5.30pm on **020 7735 2062**.

If you would like to know more about the options available if you are fleeing domestic violence, contact a housing options officer for further advice.

If you feel you are in immediate danger dial **999** and speak to the police straight away.

**020 8937 2000**

[www.brent.gov.uk/housing](http://www.brent.gov.uk/housing)