

Domestic abuse: housing options

This factsheet looks at your housing options if you are a woman or man at risk of domestic abuse where you live.

Domestic abuse is not just physical violence. It happens where a family member, partner or ex-partner (including same-sex partner) controls you through things like bullying, verbal abuse, sexual violence, not letting you have any money, or keeping you isolated by stopping you seeing your friends or family.

Helplines

You can get confidential advice from:

- [National Domestic Violence \(NDV\) 24 hour Helpline](#) 0808 2000 247*
- [Men's Advice Line](#) 0808 801 0327*
- [National lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans helpline](#) (GALOP) 0800 999 5428*

If your personal safety is threatened, you should call the police on 999.

Emergency accommodation

If you are a woman experiencing domestic abuse and you want a place in a refuge, call the NDV Helpline. A refuge is an emergency safe house for women and children, where you can get support until something longer term can be sorted out.

You will probably be offered a place in a refuge immediately, but the refuge is likely to be away from your local area.

There are a small number of refuge places for men - call the Men's Advice Line.

Apply as homeless

If you can't remain in your home because you are at risk of domestic abuse, you can apply as homeless to any local council. If the council has to find you somewhere else to live, it will be in temporary accommodation. You might not get anywhere permanent for a long time.

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

Get an injunction

An 'injunction' is a court order that forbids your abuser coming to your home, or orders them to leave it. They can be arrested if they break the terms. Call the [National Centre for Domestic Violence](#) on 0800 970 2070* for free advice about getting an injunction.

Staying put

If you can't or don't want to leave your home and are at continued risk of abuse, the helplines can tell you about any local support groups or services. They can also advise on safety planning, eg you could leave an emergency bag and money with a friend in case you need to flee your home suddenly.

Make your home safer

To improve your safety at home, you could:

- change the locks, put locks on windows, install an outside light to come on when someone approaches
- create a 'sanctuary' room (with a panic alarm and reinforced doors) within your home. Contact your local council for advice as they might help you with this.

Get the home in your name

In some situations the courts will transfer the home into your name, even if your partner is currently the sole owner or tenant. This is more likely to be agreed if you have children. A family law solicitor can advise you on this.

Call the [Civil Legal Advice helpline](#) on 0345 345 4 345 to find out if you qualify for legal aid.

Ask for a transfer or exchange

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

Find private rented housing

Private landlords usually ask for a deposit and rent in advance, as well as a reference. Shelter, local Citizens Advice or your council can advise you on finding a rented home.

Further advice

You can get further advice from england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice, 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.



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Note

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