

The person making the referral will be asked to provide some information on the phone in order to allow the refuge to check that the referral is appropriate for their service.

### **How can someone get more information?**

Anyone who is suffering domestic abuse or is at risk of abuse can call the 24 hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline on **0808 2000 247** for help and advice on their situation. There is also further information available at [www.bedsdv.org.uk](http://www.bedsdv.org.uk)

**Where someone is in immediate danger then they should dial 999 for immediate assistance.**

### **Bedfordshire Domestic Violence Partnership**

Ground Central  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Shefford  
SG17 5TQ

Tel:0300 300 5168  
Fax: 0300 300 8232

Web: [bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



# **Domestic Abuse Refuge Accommodation Fact Sheet**

**BEDFORDSHIRE DOMESTIC  
ABUSE PARTNERSHIP**

## What is the purpose of a Domestic Abuse Refuge?

Domestic Abuse Refuges aim to provide emergency accommodation for those fleeing their own homes because of a current or ongoing domestic abuse situation.

This could be abuse from a partner or family member, and covers all forms of abuse, not just physical.

A refuge aims to provide a safe place for the victim and any children to stay once they have left their home and will provide them with ongoing support to address and manage their situation, including assistance in accessing benefits, legal advice, health services and education for their children.

## Who should be referred to a Refuge?

Anyone who requires emergency accommodation as a result of having to leave their home either because of abuse they are already suffering or because there is a risk of abuse if they remain in their home can be referred to a refuge. If the person has older male children then refuge accommodation may be harder to find, as many refuges will not accommodate male children above a certain age.

Referrals to refuges must be limited to people who are dealing with current

domestic abuse situations. If someone is homeless or facing homelessness, and has experienced domestic abuse in the past, but is no longer at any risk of abuse, then it is not appropriate for them to be referred to a refuge as they will not meet the eligibility criteria for the service.

Most refuges around the country are for single women and women with children only, but there are a few men only refuges as well for male victims of domestic abuse. Culturally specific refuges are also available in some areas e.g. refuges specifically for Asian women.

## Will all referrals be accepted?

No. Those wanting to access a refuge service will be asked some questions to check that the refuge would be an appropriate service for them. Usually, where it is clear that someone is fleeing abuse or is at risk of abuse if they remain in their current home, then they will try to accommodate them if they can. However, if the person lives in the same area as the refuge, they will need to give extra consideration to whether it would be safe for the victim to be in a service so close to their home, particularly if the person or people they were fleeing from were actively looking for them.

## Can someone choose which refuge they go to?

Refuges spaces are always in high demand, so those seeking a place at a refuge may find that their choice of location is limited to where a vacancy can be found. Unfortunately this may mean that they end up staying somewhere that is far away from the place they were living and far away from their family or friends. Once a person is in a refuge and safe, then the refuge staff can try to help them transfer to a refuge in another area if there is somewhere they would particularly like to be e.g. so they can be closer to their parents or to family or friends who will be able to support them.

## How can you access refuge accommodation?

There are a number of ways to access a refuge.

The person can refer them self directly either by calling a refuge directly if they have the number, or calling the National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline on **0808 2000 247**.

A support worker, case worker or other professional working with the individual can also make a referral on behalf of the person to a specific refuge or ask a local refuge to assist them in locating a vacancy in a refuge elsewhere through the 'refuges online' system, which most refuges will have access to.