

Housing options for men fleeing domestic abuse

Going to stay with a friend or relative

If you have a supportive friend or relative who can let you stay with them the advantages to this option include the possibility that you may not have to pay rent and that you will get support from someone who already knows and understands you. They may also let you bring any pets you might have with you. If you are not eligible to claim benefits this option may be more accessible for you.

It is important to consider whether this is a safe option both for you and the friend or relative you are hoping to stay with as it is likely that the person/people you are escaping will know your friends and relatives. This means they may find you very easily which could be unsafe both for you and the person you have gone to stay with. If your abuser/s knows the person you have gone to stay with well, they may also try to persuade them that you should return to the abusive situation.

You will need to consider how moving in with a friend or relative could affect your relationship with that person. If staying with them creates overcrowding this may have a negative effect on the relationship you have with them.

Going to stay with friends or family is usually a short-term option so you will need to seek guidance from specialist domestic abuse and/or housing advice agencies and/or the local authority on what to do next.

Going into a refuge / safehouse

If you phone the Men's Advice Line (Telephone 0808 8010327 [Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK](#)) you can discuss refuge/safe house options and how to access these. There are now lots of refuge spaces for men in England and Wales.

Some of these are in single sex men's refuges and some are in non sex/gender specific refuges. There are refuge spaces for both single men and for men with dependent children and some may take pets.

There are many advantages to going into a refuge including the fact that these are in hidden locations. This means it would be very difficult for your abuser/s to find you. You do, however, need to be aware that it also means you will need to move out of your local area and that you will not be able to have visitors at the refuge to protect the refuge's security. Refuges often also have additional rules aimed at keeping everyone safe.

If you go to a refuge, you will receive support from specialist domestic abuse workers who can help you decide what to do next and give you practical support in relation to future housing options and any benefits you may be entitled to claim. The refuge can also link you into other support services including counselling, mental health support and legal advice. Refuges also provide support services for children.

In addition, you will meet other survivors of domestic abuse which you might find helpful. This can feel less isolating when you have moved to a new area.

You will need to pay rent to stay in a refuge. The refuge provider will offer assistance to confirm whether you are eligible for the housing component of universal credit (to pay the rent) or any other financial support

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systems. You can also assess your eligibility for benefits by using the [Turn2Us benefits calculator](#). Referrals into refuge follow an assessment for suitability. If a bedspace is offered, you will be expected to move in either on the day or the day after.

The length of stay in refuges varies from person to person and will depend on what you decide to do next and on what alternative housing options are available in the areas you want to live in when you leave the refuge.

Homeless Application

If there are no refuge spaces available when you leave or you do not wish to go into a refuge, you can make a homeless application and the local authority will (if you meet the criteria for making an application) have a duty to provide you with interim (short term) accommodation whilst they are assessing your application – [Shelter – Applying As Homeless](#).

If they cannot find you a place in a refuge or supported homeless hostel (considered to be suitable accommodation for those made homeless by domestic abuse) they may place you in a bed and breakfast (hotel) until something more suitable can be found.

If you are entitled to claim housing benefit or the housing component of Universal Credit you should apply for this as soon as possible to cover some of the costs of staying there. You can go onto either the [GOV.UK website](#) or [Turn2US benefits calculator](#) to find out if and what you are entitled to claim.

Private Rental Accommodation

If you are currently living in private rented accommodation, you may decide to look for alternative private rentals.

This option might suit you if you are working and want to continue to work without having to take a break from employment.

If you need to move out of your local area and you want to keep your job, you can find out whether your employer (and/or union if you are a member of union) is able to support you. They may have a domestic abuse policy and could be able to offer you home working or a job in another area (if you don't feel safe to carry on living and working in the same area) so that you can maintain your employment.

If you can only currently afford private rental accommodation because you are renting with your abuser, you should seek advice about the affordability of a private rental move.

If you are currently claiming benefits or will need to start claiming benefits when you move, you will only be able to claim housing benefit costs for renting within the Local Housing Allowance set by the relevant Local Authority. You can find out what the LHA for the area you want to move to is by clicking on the link shown here: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/>

The main advantage of a private rental move is that you can choose where you want to move to. You can seek advice as to the affordability and availability of private rental accommodation in the area you want to move to. You could contact a local domestic abuse outreach or IDVA service for additional support in this area and/or approach your local authority for advice and information.

If you need help with a deposit and/or moving costs you can approach your local authority to try to access discretionary housing payment to cover these. You must be entitled to housing support (Universal Credit or Housing Benefit) to qualify. You can click on the link shown here to make your application <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

If you decide to move to alternative private rental accommodation, you can still access support from specialist domestic abuse services. The Men's Advice Line (Telephone: 0808 8010327 / [Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men | Men's Advice Line UK](#)) can advise you on the available services in the local area.

If you are currently a sole council or housing associate tenant

You can approach your landlord and request a **management transfer move** if you don't feel safe to remain in your home due to domestic abuse. This could be because of ongoing risks posed by your abuser/s and/or because your home triggers bad memories of the abuse you have suffered there which is making it difficult for you to recover from the abuse.

If you need to move quickly you could go and stay with a friend or relative or move into a refuge or approach the local authority as homeless **without** serving a notice to quit on your tenancy. You will still need to pay rent on your tenancy home even if you move out due to domestic abuse. This means you may need to pay two sets of rent (on your new interim accommodation and your original home) until you decide what to do next.

If you are eligible for housing benefit or the housing component of Universal Credit you can apply for both sets of rent to be paid by benefits. This is likely to mean you will need to make a Discretionary Housing Payment application.

You may be entitled to have both sets of rent paid for up to 52 weeks. You will need to declare an intention to return to your original home to be eligible for both sets of rents to be paid by benefits for over 4 weeks. You will not actually have to return to your home if it turns out that it isn't safe for you to return. Making a dual claim on both properties will prevent you from accumulating rent arrears whilst you are deciding what to do next.

The other option you may wish to consider is to exchange your social tenancy home with another social tenant. You can register your home with either [Home Swapper](#) or with [House Exchange](#) and can get more information about this option from the [Shelter website](#).

This option may give you more flexibility about where you move to but needs to be balanced against the risk that it would be easier for your abuser to find you if they guess that you have directly swapped with another social tenant.

If you are worried that this would be unsafe, you could instead contact the [Domestic Abuse Relocation Service Revive](#). They will work with you to try to find you another social tenancy home in a different part of the country.

Family law and occupation rights are complex. You must always obtain advice from a qualified expert before making any decisions regarding your home.

Shelter Housing and Homelessness Advice pages

Use our online advice pages linked below if you want to find out your housing rights:

- [Housing advice from Shelter – Shelter England](#)
- [Get help from Shelter – Shelter England](#)

Respect
Men's advice line

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