

WHO ARE BWA?

BWA are a specialist provider of domestic abuse prevention and intervention services. Our mission is to provide domestic abuse support and advocacy services to everyone who comes to us experiencing domestic abuse.

We aim to listen, support and empower people to act for themselves and believe everyone should be able to live free from fear and domestic abuse in their own lives.

WHAT IS REFUGE ACCOMMODATION?

BWA have four refuges across Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell where we are able to accommodate up to 32 women and 63 children. We also provide specialist provision for women from an Asian background.

BWA refuges provide a safe, confidential home where you will have time and space to make informed choices and decisions about your future. Staff will work directly with you to provide emotional and practical support.

This support is focused on your needs and we will work with you to devise a personal safety and support plan based on a full assessment of your needs and risks.

Key workers can provide support and information around a range of areas linked to your safety and wellbeing. Whilst BWA may not provide these services directly, we will make sure you know your options.

We can refer you to services for support in relation to:

- Housing, move on accommodation and home security
- Information around finance, benefits and debt
- Obtaining legal orders such as a non-molestation order, occupation order, or child arrangement order
- Help in reporting incidents to the police or supporting you at court
- Referring your case to the Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- Signposting to services that can help with immigration needs
- Safety planning around child contact and support at meetings relating to child protection
- Services to support emotional wellbeing, such as counselling or group work
- Services to support physical wellbeing, such as medical treatment or drug and alcohol services
- Accessing work, education or training opportunities

HOW LONG CAN I STAY IN REFUGE ACCOMMODATION?

We know that moving into refuge accommodation can be a difficult decision and that you may need some time to decide what happens next.

Women can stay in refuge accommodation for up to a year; your key worker will start working with you when you arrive at refuge to help you make a plan about your long term options. They will be able to support you to understand your options about housing and support you to make applications to the local authority and give you information about obtaining orders that may help to keep you safe.

Refuge key workers offer a combination of practical support and emotional support. Once your worker has helped with practical support, we will discuss how you can access ongoing emotional support through BWA group work or other external services, such as counselling.

WHO CAN ACCESS REFUGE ACCOMMODATION?

BWA offer refuge accommodation to women and children. We can support you via our Helpline to help you find a space in another refuge if you are not a woman.

BWA offer refuge spaces based on the survivor's current risk. Women do not have to be local to the area and we can consider referrals to our refuge accommodation from anywhere in the UK.

We can complete a full assessment for refuge accommodation for women who meet the following criteria:

YOU ARE AT CURRENT RISK AS A CONSEQUENCE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is defined as any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other as a result of being, or having been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

If you are not at current risk but would like support for past experiences of domestic abuse, BWA will signpost you to an appropriate service in your area.

YOU CONSENT TO THE REFERRAL BEING MADE TO OUR SERVICE

BWA are only able to work with individuals who have given their consent to access our support.

HOW CAN I ACCESS BWA'S REFUGE ACCOMMODATION?

You can refer yourself for support by calling the BWA Helpline on:

0808 801 0882

This number is free to call from UK mobiles and landlines and does not show up on itemised bills. When you contact the Helpline, one of the team will take your information. They will also be able to provide safety planning advice and direct you to other services if you need them.

If you leave us a message, please let us know when it is safe to return your call. We may call you back from a private number and may not always leave messages. If you think you have missed a call from us, please call us on our Helpline: 0808 801 0882

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I HAVE BEEN REFERRED?

When you speak to our Helpline, they will take some basic information from you. This will include where you are living currently, whether you are seeking a space for yourself or are travelling with your children, and whether you have any additional support needs.



If we have a room that is the right size for you and your children, your referral will be passed to one of the refuge team for a full assessment. This is usually completed over the phone. An assessment will try to identify whether our refuge space is right for you and can meet your needs. We will also discuss whether the location of our refuge accommodation is a safe area for you to be in. We prioritise anyone who is identified as high risk.

A BWA manager will then review your referral and confirm whether we can offer you a space. If we do not think our refuge accommodation is the right service for you, someone will contact you to discuss other support that is available and provide you with phone numbers of other refuges who may be able to help.

HOW DO I GET TO THE REFUGE?

If your referral is accepted, the team will help you work out how is best to travel to us. We can arrange train travel via the Rail to Refuge Scheme or work with other professionals supporting you who may be able to help.

DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE MY INFORMATION?

Information that you share with us will be confidential within BWA unless there are exceptional circumstances. We aim to get your consent to share information unless it is considered that doing so will increase someone's risk. Although we aim to get your consent to share your information, in exceptional circumstances we may have to override your consent for example, if we believe you or someone else may be at risk of significant harm.

against domestic abuse
bwa

SUPPORT ● ADVOCACY ● REFUGE

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