

If you feel you are in immediate danger dial 999 to speak to the police straight away or for non emergencies dial 111.

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence or something that only happens within the home. Any incident or pattern of threatening behaviour or abuse is domestic violence. This includes physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional abuse and can occur between people who have been intimate partners, members of the same household or family members.

### Fleeing abuse

The Council may be able to provide you with support if you have to leave or have left your current accommodation as a result of domestic abuse. The Council can provide you with advice and may be able to offer emergency accommodation. Your circumstances and the support you are currently receiving will be taken into consideration.

If you are fleeing abuse, you are entitled to apply to any local authority and you will not be referred back to your local authority of residence if there is risk of violence against you there.

You can approach the Council's services to seek advice and you can request to be seen by an officer of the same gender. If you do not speak English, you can request an interpreter. You will not be obliged to report any incident to the Police if you approach the Council.

The Council can also provide you information on your rights or refer you for full legal advice in relation to your housing, family and matrimonial rights.

### The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Since April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act has changed the homelessness duties for all Local Authorities in England.

The new legislation means that all applicants who are eligible and about to become homeless will be entitled to receive advice and assistance in order to prevent them from becoming homeless.

The Act changes the way we address and resolve the issues around homelessness by introducing two new duties in addition to the main housing duty. These two duties are:

#### 1) Duty to Prevent Homelessness

Hertsmere Borough Council will provide advice and assistance to people who are about to become homeless within 56 days. If you are eligible for assistance and at risk of losing

your home, we will try to prevent your homelessness by working with you to, either, help you remain in your current accommodation or help you find somewhere to else suitable for you and your household.

## 2) Duty to Relieve Homelessness

If you are already homeless, and considered eligible, Hertsmere Borough Council will provide advice and assistance to help you find suitable accommodation. If you are considered to be a 'vulnerable person', the Council can offer you emergency accommodation while we work with you to find alternative accommodation that is suitable for you and your household.

## Refuges for Women

If you are fleeing domestic abuse you can be placed into a refuge as an alternative to being housed by the Council. A refuge is a safe space for you to live in while they provide you with support to enable you to move on to independent living. You can apply independently, or via the Police or the Council.

### **St Albans and Hertsmere Women's (SAHWR) – 01727 824425**

For all St Albans and Hertsmere Refuge and Outreach services please contact the 24 hour line on 03301 025 811.

## Advice for Women

**Women's Aid – [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)**

**Safer Places – 03301 025 811 [www.saferplaces.co.uk](http://www.saferplaces.co.uk)**

**National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247**

**Herts Area Rape Crisis & Sexual Abuse Centre – 01707 276 512**

## Advice for Men

**Men's Advice Line (M.A.L.E) – 0808 801 0327**

**Mankind – 01823 33 42 44**

## Advice for LGBT

**Broken Rainbow National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline – 0300 999 5428**

## For Pets

**Dog's Trust – 0800 298 9199**

**Cat Protection League National Helpline – 0300 12 12 12**