

We hope that this leaflet can answer some of the questions you may have about what a refuge is like.

If you are experiencing abuse in a relationship you can call Aylesbury Women's Aid on 01296 436827 Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm . Aylesbury Women's Aid can offer you support, information, and help you to find somewhere safe to stay if you need to leave your home.

You can call 07742 162484 outside these hours in an emergency and speak to a worker from Aylesbury Women's Aid. If you are in immediate danger call the police on 999

WHAT WOMEN HAVE SAID

“I thought the refuge would be like a hotel or hostel. It was nicer than that. It was another home—so ordinary”

“I was really nervous at first, then when I got to speaking to the other women, I settled down “

“After a while, I got my life back and stopped being scared of him”

USEFUL NUMBERS

Aylesbury Women's Aid
01296 436827
01296 437777

Chiltern Samaritans
01494 432000

Police - call **999** in an emergency or Thames Valley Domestic Violence Unit **101**

Victim Support
0845 3899528

National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000247

Buckinghamshire Social Services
01296 383999

Rape Crisis
01296 392468

Aylesbury Vale District Council - Homelessness
01296 585618

Citizens Advice Bureau
0344 111444

Stoke Mandeville Hospital
01296 315000



If you require any more of these leaflets please email denise@awaid.demon.co.uk or call **01296 436827**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SOMEWHERE SAFE TO STAY

WHAT ARE WOMEN'S REFUGES REALLY LIKE?

Some women in abusive relationships choose to escape their abusers by moving into a confidential safe house, or refuge. The information in this leaflet may help you to decide whether moving to a refuge is the right choice for you.

Aylesbury Women's Aid
01296 436827
9.30 am—5 pm weekdays,
Out of Office hours call
07742 162484

REFUGE

A refuge is a safe place where you can stay temporarily if you need to escape an abusive relationship. Some women stay for a few days, others for many months. It may be somewhere near where you live, or a long way from home if that would be safer.

RENT

You will need to pay rent during your stay in a refuge, but the staff will help you sort out housing benefit or other ways to pay if you don't have much money. You should never be refused space in a refuge just because you are worried about how you will pay.

SUPPORT

There will be an office in the refuge where members of staff work. They will help you settle in, find out about your benefits situation, tell you about other organisations that can help you, and help you to find long term accommodation. You will have access to a payphone so that during the evenings and weekends when the refuge is not staffed you can contact the staff in an emergency.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

The majority of refuges are like any shared house in that you and your children will be given your own bedroom but share the living room, dining area, kitchen and bathroom with the other women and children that live there.

Cots and all bedding is provided, although you can bring your own.

There are washing machines available and all the normal kitchen appliances and equipment. Each person in the house buys and cooks her own food. While you are in a refuge you will be expected to take part in looking after the house and making sure it is clean, comfortable and welcoming.

RULES

There will be certain rules that you need to agree to while you are in a refuge; for example no drugs on the premises, no visitors, and you can not tell anyone where you are living. These rules are to make sure that every woman who comes to stay in the refuge can feel safe, and that the confidentiality of the refuge is not compromised.

IS REFUGE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ME?

Even if you are being beaten or abused by your partner, choosing to leave your home for the safety of a refuge can be a very difficult decision.

We try and make sure that our refuge is a safe, friendly and comfortable place to stay whilst you decide what to do next. The decision to leave an abusive relationship is an extremely difficult one and the staff can talk to you about what your options are before you decide.

All the other women in the refuge will understand the mixture of terror, confusion, worry and relief you might be feeling when you arrive. You can live quite independently once you are settled in the refuge but you can always talk to the staff if there are things you are worried about.

If you choose to go back to the person who is abusing you, no-one from the refuge will judge you or try and make you stay. You can always go to a refuge again if you want or need to in the future.

Whatever you decide, and however long you need to stay, we hope we can make things easier for you and help you stay safe whilst you decide what is best for you.