



SUPPORT SERVICES

Women's Refuge

A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTS



INTRODUCTION

Westlea Housing Association are committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for the benefit of women and children experiencing domestic abuse and emphasis is placed on a user led service whilst offering support and information.



Importance is placed on providing safety, security and confidentiality, so please ensure you have spent some time reading this handbook which explains:

- > How you will get the support and services you need
- > How the Refuge is run and managed

Don't worry if you can't take everything in at once!

The staff are here to offer support and information and can go over anything you are unsure about, so if you have any worries or questions, please come and see us.

The staff

The Refuge has three Support and Resettlement workers:

Sally House
Accommodation Based
01249 714873

Angie Tinson
Resettlement
01249 654384

Karen Townley
Accommodation Based
01249 654384

Staff are on duty from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Alex Pointing is the Supported Housing Co-ordinator – **07774172823**.

If there is an emergency situation outside office hours, we have a telephone number posted in the Refuge by which staff can be contacted directly.

Westlea Housing Association also operates an out of hours service for emergency maintenance and repairs. Call **0800 854205**.

REMEMBER: If you feel your safety is at risk you should always contact the relevant emergency service first, by dialling 999.

Support Services

An initial assessment of your needs will enable us to determine the level of support you require and your key worker will work with you to agree your support plan.

Some of the things we can give you information and support with include:

- > Safety planning
- > Help with claiming benefits
- > Legal protection/advice
- > Health
- > Housing

Your support plan will be reviewed every three months. However you can request a review of your support plan at any time.

In addition to your review meetings, staff will hold a prearranged support visit with you every week.

Coffee Mornings/House Meetings are held once a fortnight. Please feel free to offer your views and opinions on ways we can improve our service. Any ideas, questions or concerns you do have can be discussed as a group or individually with staff.

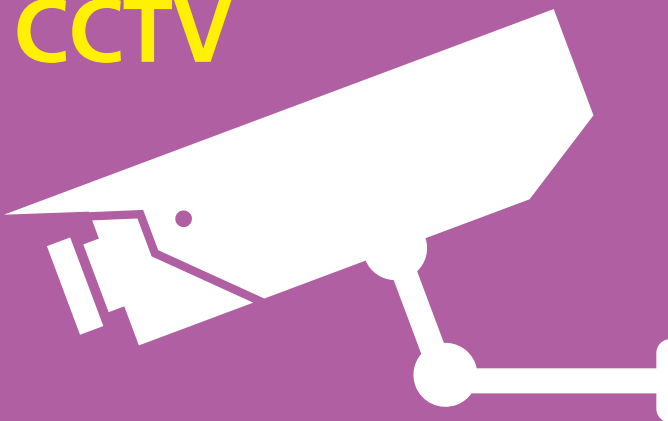
A computer with internet access is available for all residents to use.

If you have children with you, staff can give you the relevant information regarding education and recreational activities. There is Lone Parents Support Group in the area that you may be interested in joining.

For the health and safety of all concerned we ask you observe the following guidelines:

- > Children under the age of 16 should never be left unattended in the house.
- > You are asked to respect other children's bedtimes and to refrain from loud music etc within the house.
- > Please note that visitors are not allowed to baby-sit at the house
- > Staff do not take responsibility for any child left in the care of another resident
- > There should be no violence or abuse of any form between residents
- > No unofficial visitors should be invited to the Refuge. Ex-residents are welcome by prior arrangement with staff, during office hours.
- > Any intention to stay away from the property should be discussed with staff before you leave.

CCTV



CCTV cameras are installed to ensure the safety and security of the premises. The cameras are located to cover every exit within the building.

Fire Procedures

There are various Fire Safety measures within the Refuge.

We always ensure that these procedures are explained to you on arrival and also ask that you read the notices and familiarize yourself with the fire exit routes and procedures for evacuation.

Fire exit routes are clearly sign posted and the assembly point is outside, at the front of the building.

Smoke detectors are fitted in the property for your safety as a means of detection which will give a warning in case of fire. Never tamper with these appliances. Always report defects to your smoke detectors to a member of staff.

Fire blankets are also placed on the wall of the kitchen.

If the alarm sounds, leave the building by following the fire exit routes.

Smashing the break glass panel will automatically release all the fire exit doors.

Once you are safe contact the Fire Brigade.

Do not attempt to re-enter your property until you are told it is safe to do so.



Equal Opportunities

Westlea Housing Association are committed to ensuring that no one receiving our services is discriminated against in terms of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural origin, disability, gender marital status, sexual orientation or age.

Equality and Diversity will be promoted and discussed at House Meetings on a regular basis.

A full policy is available on request.

Reporting abuse

If anyone has concerns that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, we have a duty under the Wiltshire Child Protection Procedures and the Children's Act 1989 to inform the relevant agencies.

The protection of children is paramount within the Refuge.

Promotion of children's well-being and safeguarding

them from harm is seen as essential and reflected within our Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

If you have any concerns relating to any type of abuse, either for yourself or any other person, you should inform a member of staff as soon as possible.

Investigations will be made in line with the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection Regulations and appropriate action will be taken.

What is abuse and how to report it

The Association is committed to providing a service delivery environment that is free from abuse. Abuse takes all forms; it is identifiable in the way people are treated differently than others because of any reason.

Abusive behaviours include, but are not limited to the following:

Physical

hitting, biting, pushing, smacking, or any contact carried out in an aggressive way.

Sexual

making inappropriate comments, touching a person against their will, being negative about a person's sexuality, treating them differently because of their sexuality.

Racial

performing any negative action because of a person's race, religion, cultural beliefs or ethnic origin. This can be verbal, physical or emotional.

Emotional and psychological

(which may include humiliation and degradation of an adult or a child) – talking negatively to a person, 'putting them down', making them feel or look stupid, not encouraging their own self worth, allowing them to put themselves down.

Financial or material

controlling a person's money against their will, being negative towards people because they have

too little, or too much, money, stealing from them. Treating them differently because they do not possess the same material goods as others or have more than others.

Neglect

failing to identify and meet the needs of an individual on basic requirements to survive. This can include food, water, shelter, warmth, cleanliness and emotional support.

Bullying

Threatening, intimidating or aggressive behaviour or language

Verbal insults

smacking and other forms of corporal punishment

Damage or theft of property

or any other behaviour, which could reasonably be expected to cause fear or distress

If you suspect or have substantiated evidence that abuse has, or is occurring, please discuss this with a member of the Supported Housing Team.

If you do not wish to discuss this with a member of staff please put your concern in writing and send it to the Supported Housing Co-ordinator at:

Westlea Housing Association
Methuen Park
Chippenham
SN14 0GU

Remember it is better to report a concern rather than ignore it.

Confidentiality

To maintain a safe environment it is necessary for all those who come into contact with the organisation, staff and customers, to respect the confidential nature of the Project, as follows:

- 1** To keep confidential the names of women and children who live, or have lived at the Project.
- 2** Not to divulge the full address and payphone number.
- 3** Not to discuss confidential matters in public or communal areas.

In order to provide you with the necessary support, it is important for us to keep records of all contact with you.

All records and information kept on computer are protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 and can only be accessed via a password.

Files containing personal information are kept in secured cabinets and only accessible by Refuge staff.

You have the right to inspect any personal information recorded about you during your stay.



Complaints

We welcome any comments regarding our service. However, if you have a complaint we have a procedure for you to use and we aim to deal with this as quickly and amicably as possible.

A complaints leaflet is enclosed with your Handbook.

Moving on

When you are ready to move-on our Resettlement Worker will continue to support you with your housing related support needs through home visits and/or telephone support, for 4 – 6 weeks. Resettlement clients can also participate in activities organised by The Refuge Befrienders Group.

This service is currently available to customers who resettle within the following areas:



- Wiltshire
- South Gloucester
- Bath
- North East Somerset and Mendip

Useful telephone numbers

Child Support Agency
0845 713 3133

Chippenham Borough Lands Charity
01249 658180

Citizens Advice Bureau
0845 120 3707
01249 445115 (Jennie Jopling -
Westlea Representative)

Connexions
0800 085 9034

Community Safety and Drugs Team
01225 776890

Disability Benefit Enquiry Line
0800 8820200

Doctors

Corsham Surgery
01249 712232

Hathaway Medical Centre
08444 120023

Rowden Surgery
01249 444343
01249 444808 (Appointments)

NHS Direct
0845 4647 (24 hr helpline)

Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 200 0247

FRANK
0800 776600 (Freephone)

Inland Revenue (Tax Credits)
0845 300 3900

Job Centre Plus (Chippenham)
01249 428000

Learn Direct
0800 100900 (Freephone)

Library (Internet access)
01249 650536 (Chippenham)
01249 713159 (Corsham)

Local Education Authority
01225 713000

National Debt Line
0808 808 4000

National Rail Enquiries
0845 748 4950

Wiltshire Council

General Enquiries
0300 456 0100

Council Tax/Housing Benefit
01249 706122

Refuse Collection
01249 706352

Social Services (North Wilts Team)
0845 603 1570

North Wiltshire Credit Union
07790 717930

Probation
01249 656836

Reachout (Support for
Substance Misuse)
01249 46188

Social Services

Adult Community
01249 444747

Children & Families Services
01249 444321

Mental Health Team
01249 456468

Emergency Duty Services
0845 60 70 888

Southern Electric
0845 744 4555

SPLITZ
01225 777724

Taxis

Easy's
01249 655471

Home James
01249 463463

LPC Cabs
0800 169 1933

Travel Line
0870 608 2608 (Bus and rail
services)

Waste Not Want Not
01249 447140

Wessex Water
0845 600 4600

Westlea

Westlea Call Centre
01249 465465

Westlea Maintenance
01249 466100

Westlea Emergency
Out of Hours Service
0800 854205

Westlea Support Services (Rent)
01249 466146

Wiltshire Police
0845 408 7000

Wiltshire College
01225 766241

