

What can you do?

You don't have to put up with it. No-one deserves to be abused, so it is not your fault in any way. Don't believe what he says to you - whatever you do won't change how he treats you.

If you have been assaulted, raped or sexually assaulted you can call the police. Assault is a criminal offence; rape and sexual assault is still a crime even if you are married to or living with a man.

You may wish to speak to someone you trust like a doctor or health visitor. You may need medical attention even if the injuries are slight, tell the doctor how you were injured. Ask the doctor to keep a record of this.

Contact Women's Aid

What can we offer?

Information and support If you want to talk to someone confidentially

If you need information about your rights (legal, housing, money etc.)

If you and your children are in danger and you need urgent help

A safe place to stay

Women's Aid runs refuges, safe houses at secret addresses, where you can stay with your children, if they are with you. Refuges are not hostels; they are ordinary houses where you and your children, usually, will have your own room and share the rest of the house with other families who also have experienced domestic abuse. A few refuges have self-contained flats. There are pictures of different refuges on this web-site.

You can: -

- **Stay in a refuge as long as you need to**
- **Take the time to decide what you want to do**
- **Get support to help you achieve whatever option you've chosen**
- **Come back again if you decide to go home and the abuse continues**
- **Come just for a break, time to think, you don't have to be planning to leave permanently**
- **Be safe - refuge addresses are secret, and there are refuges all over Britain which you can move to if you can't stay in your own area.**
- **Get support from the other women living in the house, who know just what you've been through.**
- **Get support for your children too.**
- **There are refuges for black and minority ethnic women and children; some refuges are assessable for women, children and young people with disabilities.**

What will happen next?

We will listen to what you want to tell us, and believe you.

We can give you information about your legal rights, housing options or entitlement to benefits. If we don't know something, we will find out for you.

We will try to find you a refuge space, or some other safe place to stay if you want to get away.

We will not tell anyone what you have said, or even that you have been to see us.

We will not tell you what to do, but we will support you to make your own decisions, and we will respect your choices.

Some ideas for emergencies.

Think about how you might escape if you need to. Tell your plans to people you can trust.

Try to put some money aside for taxis, bus fares, phone calls

Try to have your Child Benefit book, your rent book and marriage, birth certificates and passport handy to take with you. Don't worry if you can't, these can all be replaced if need be. In case you have to leave quickly, try to keep some clothes for you and the children at a friend's house, and perhaps a small toy for the children. If you have photos you want to keep, try to keep them safe.

Make sure you have a key to your home

Keep a note of phone numbers for e.g. your local Women's Aid group or the Social Work Department. Make sure you keep these in a safe place where he will not find them but you can.