

THINKING ABOUT **refuge?**

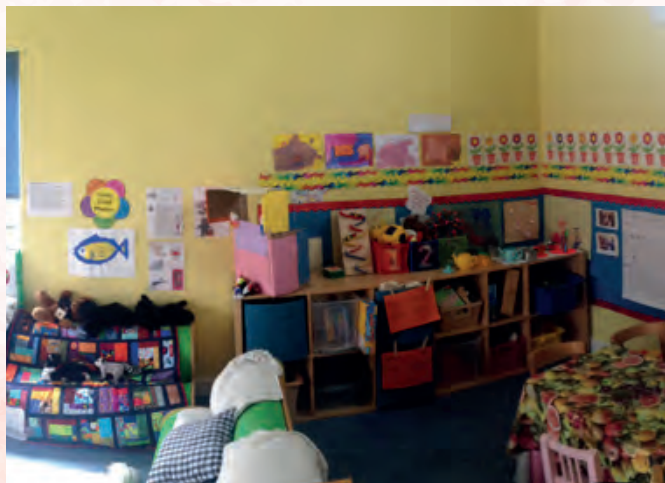


EAST & MIDLOTHIAN

Changing Lives - Challenging Attitudes
Working to end domestic abuse

Refuge Accommodation Information

The accommodation is managed by Women's Aid East and Midlothian and all individual flats, you do not share these with any other service users. For the duration of your stay the property will be your home until you are re-housed or decide to return home. The addresses of the properties are confidential and your safety at any of the areas will be a primary consideration in the decision to offer you a refuge space. All our refuge spaces are monitored 24hrs by CCTV.





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Why WE ARE NEEDED

Domestic abuse, whether it be physical, emotional, sexual or financial, occurs throughout our society. Abusers come from all social, ethnic and economic groups.

Many people are surprised that there's a need for refuge accommodation in Midlothian and East Lothian. We know from our experience that any woman can be abused, and it usually happens behind closed doors. It's important that all women, children, and young people within our communities have the option to seek help and support to stay and feel safe. Some women who have experienced domestic abuse, describe that they've had no control over their lives for many years. It may feel like they've not been able to decide anything for themselves, their children or home for a long time or perhaps they've lost their confidence and self-esteem. Women and children also face the prospect of re-establishing themselves into a new community or school, which could be a daunting prospect.

The staff at Women's Aid East and Midlothian (WAEML) have a role in helping you and your family to settle into a new location. Some women haven't been allowed contact with family or friends which can make you feel isolated or alone. Support workers will support you to build up those relationships and help you to make new ones.

The WAEML staff will support you and your children to deal with the impact of domestic abuse by providing practical advice and support; enabling families to become as independent and confident as they can, in all that they do.

- We will listen to you and **BELIEVE** you; we do not **JUDGE**
- We can provide refuge space for you and your children if you decide you need to get away
- We provide information about legal rights, housing options and entitlement to benefits. If we don't know we'll find someone who does
- We will NOT tell you what to do but we WILL support you in the decisions you make and respect your choices
- We will not tell anyone what you have said or even that you have been to see us, unless we are worried about adult or child protection



OUR accommodation

All the flats we have are fully furnished and equipped to a high standard. They will be clean and in a good state of repair when you move in and will need to be maintained to this standard; this means you will need to keep your accommodation in a clean, tidy, and hygienic condition.

We provide every home with a television that incurs a weekly charge towards the TV licence fee. If you're unable to make the payments, it may result in this service being unavailable.

You will be given information on the practical running of the home, its facilities, and the location. All equipment checks, servicing of appliances and risk assessments of equipment/ buildings are carried out in accordance with legislation and good practice.

All policies and procedures in relation to Health and Safety and Fire Regulations must be followed. These will be explained to you in full when you enter the refuge, and you must agree to follow these procedures as a condition of staying in the accommodation.

You will be asked to agree to visitors entering your home to allow regular checks to ensure the property remains clean, safe, and secure for you and your family. You will be given notice of these visits and you have the right to be present. If you're not available, the visitor will sign themselves in to make you aware they have been.

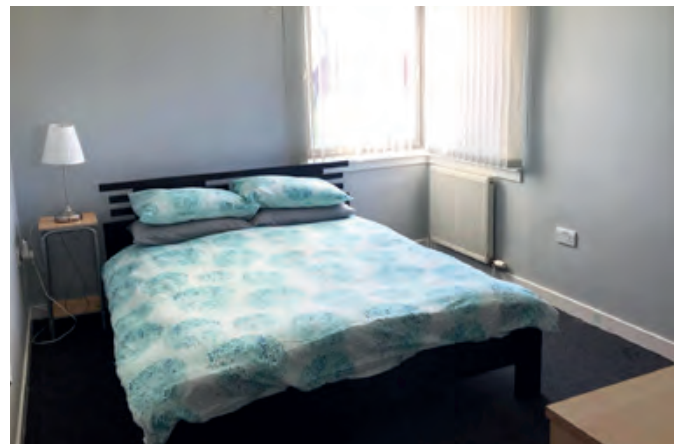
You will be charged a weekly rent for the property which may be partially or fully covered by Housing Benefit, (Universal Credit) if you're eligible for this payment. You must sign an occupancy agreement and agree to follow the refuge rules. The refuge rules are included in this pack. If you want to see a copy of the conditions for occupancy before you decide, please ask a worker and they'll provide you with a copy.

If you choose to take up refuge accommodation you will be required to look after yourself and your children, just as you would if you were living in your own home. You will also be expected to treat others with the same standards of respect, consideration, and confidentiality that you can expect for yourself.

We can't be responsible for your personal possessions nor can we store any of your furniture. There's no insurance cover available for any items you bring into the refuge. You may be able to bring your pet with you to the refuge, so long as it meets the guidelines of our pet policy. However, you can't get a pet after entering the refuge. If you want a copy of the pet policy, please ask for a copy which must be signed and agreed by Management in advance.

If you feel that our accommodation isn't suitable to your needs, we'll support you, by providing you with information to find alternative accommodation. You can still access our services, such as 1:1 support, drop-in and group work, as well as our helpline, without moving into the refuge accommodation.

There may be a waiting list for refuge accommodation. The waiting list is on a first come first served basis. You will be regularly updated about your position on the list and asked if this is the service you still require, or if we can support you in any other way.



Services

WE OFFER



Refuge

We have accommodation to suit different sizes of families in various locations in East Lothian and Midlothian. Each one is an individual flat with all the amenities you'd expect; including a cooker, washing machine, fridge freezer, Hoover, kettle, microwave, TV, and furniture.



Outreach Support

Our outreach staff work with women and children/young people who come to WAEML for support, who continue to stay in their own homes, are still with their partners or haven't entered the refuge. If you choose to decide to stay at home with your partner we'll work with you to increase safety for you and your family.



The Freedom Programme

A free 12-week groupwork programme for women. This programme is open to any woman who wants to learn more about the reality of domestic abuse. Its aims are to:

- Help women to understand the beliefs held by abusers
 - Recognise the tactics used by abusers
 - Help women to gain self-esteem and the confidence to improve the quality of their lives
 - To look at the impact of domestic abuse on children
 - To help women recognise warning signs of domestic abuse
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Partnerships

We work in partnership with other services, groups, and organisations to enhance the support we provide. Details of a full range of additional support available will be made available to you by your support worker.

Children's and Young Person's Service

This service offers the space to explore how domestic abuse impacts their lives and supports them along their path towards recovery. Each child or young person is allocated a fully qualified Key Worker who will help them understand what domestic abuse is; how it's affected their lives and help support them achieve their future goals.



Follow on Support

This service provides women, children and young people support once they've left refuge and have been re-housed into new homes and communities. It's provided to help you and your family make new community connections. Find out what is happening in your area, from where to get a pint of milk through to leisure centres and where the dentist is. WAEML's support workers will help you on your way.



Group work support/Activities Programme

We offer a range of group work for women and children and young people. Details of groups currently offered will be provided to you. When living in accommodation there are also monthly activities planned that offer an opportunity to meet and socialise with other families staying in our accommodation.



Court Support

If you're worried about a court case relating to your domestic abuse, we can support you. We'll help you understand the process and hopefully alleviate any of your concerns or fears. This can be a traumatic experience, that YOU don't have to go through alone. We've strong links with victim support and can arrange special measures, such as a court visit or a screen to be in place, where necessary.



Training, Development and Awareness Raising

WAEML strive to raise awareness, locally and nationally, on the impact of domestic abuse on women, children, and young people, including talks to community groups. The organisation also promotes personal development of its members and service users.



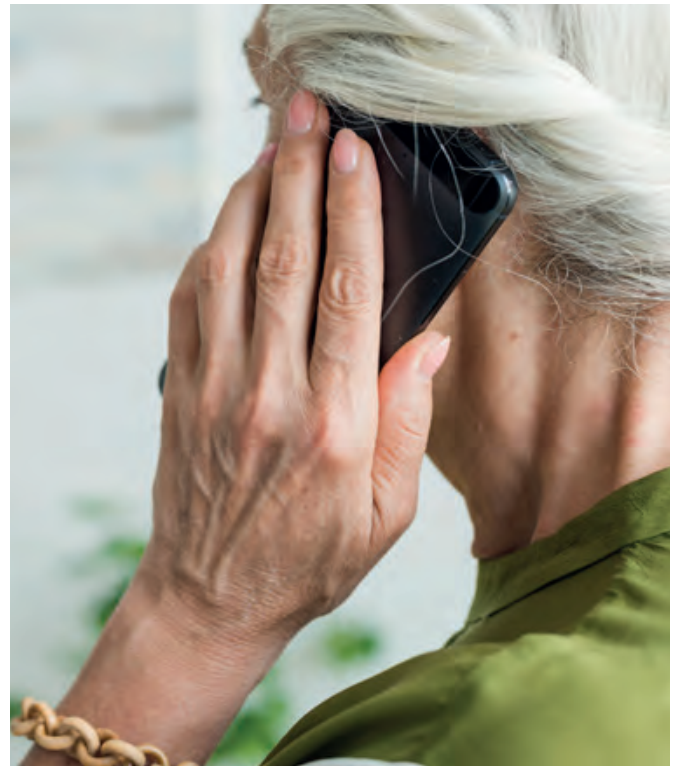
Confidentiality

Women's Aid East and Midlothian are committed to maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality in all our work in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of service users and their workers. In some cases, we know it can be a matter of life and death. We want it to be clear that information may be shared, as appropriate, between staff within WAEML. This is so we can minimise risk and make sure plans for families work together.

"Women's Aid East and Midlothian will take steps to ensure as far as possible that all personal information remains confidential to Women's Aid East and Midlothian. However,

we are obliged by law and by our obligations to other agencies to pass on certain information, particularly in relation to child protection, adults at risk of harm or serious criminal conduct. The exceptions to our ability to maintain confidentiality are set out in Confidentiality Policy, a copy of which will be made available to you."

Where possible we'll try and let you know if we plan to make a protection referral. If we believe this might put you or a child at further risk, we will do so, without informing you.



Complaints

Women's Aid East and Midlothian take complaints seriously and will investigate issues thoroughly. Our written complaints procedure ensures we can improve our services to women and children and maintain the high standard of support given by staff. You can speak to us for information on how to complain. If you're not happy with this outcome, you can also make a complaint to the Care Inspectorate in writing or by phone.

How to Make a Complaint or Suggestion

WAEML aim to provide a high-quality standard of service. If we fail to do this, it's important that we know about it. We would encourage any woman, child or young person who is dissatisfied about the standard or quality of service provided by WAEML to inform us of their concerns. Any complaint you make will be taken seriously and can be given anonymously.

Informal Complaints/Suggestions

If you simply want to suggest some way that the service can be improved, we'll be happy to discuss this with you and take any action required. Your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days and you'll be informed of any outcome and changes made within ten working days. Suggestion boxes are available within our refuge accommodation and in our support offices for you to use and we welcome your feedback.

Formal Complaints

WAEML has a set procedure to make sure that complaints are dealt with properly. Full details of this procedure are available at all our offices or any of our staff can explain it to you. Your complaint will normally be dealt with by the Management Team however, you can address your complaint to our Board of Directors if you don't want the Managers to be involved.

Support with Making a Complaint

You have the right to seek independent advice from the Citizen Advice Bureau or another advice agency to

gain advice on your rights and responsibilities. Formal complaints should be made in writing and you can do this in several ways:

- By telling an individual staff member what the complaint is about. They'll write down what you say to them and read it back to you, to make sure your complaint is captured accurately. If you agree that it's correct, they'll ask you to sign it and then take your complaint to Management.
- By writing the complaint in a letter and sending it to Service Manager at, 29A Eskbank Road, Dalkeith, EH22 1HJ.
- By arranging a time to meet the Service Manager along with a friend or other representative to help you put your point across. Again, you'll be asked to sign a written record of your complaint.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days and you'll be asked if you'd like to meet with the Service Manager to discuss the situation. You'll be informed of the decision, and any further action which may be taken, within fourteen days. If you're still unhappy with the decision you have the right to appeal. These rights will be explained fully when the decision is given to you.

You also have the right to complain directly to:

The Care Inspectorate,
Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee
Phone: 01382 207100
Website: www.careinspectorate.com

YOUR views

WAEML undertakes regular evaluations and consultations with service users. Your views are very important and can help us to improve the services in the future.

There are also opportunities for service users to be actively involved, through our raising awareness events, service user group and structured evaluations and feedback. Comments and suggestions are valued as this helps us improve the service we provide. You can also express your views to us at any time. All comments will be treated confidentially. You'll be asked to give us feedback on your experiences with the service. This may take the form of questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and attending events.







Contact us

-  cyp@womensaideml.org
-  www.womensaideml.org
-  [@WomensAidEML](https://twitter.com/WomensAidEML)
-  [womensaideml](https://www.instagram.com/womensaideml)
-  www.facebook.com/waeml

Women's Support Line: **0131 561 5800**
(Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm)

Dalkeith Office: 29a Eskbank Road
(loop system)

Tranent Office: Unit 5, Macmerry Business Park
(wheelchair accessible, loop system)

Penicuik Office: 10 Carnethy Avenue
(wheelchair accessible)

Registered Office: 29a Eskbank Road,
Dalkeith Midlothian EH22 1HJ

Deaf or hard of hearing?

Mobile phone service: **07711 591894**
Mini com: **0131 561 9924**

Funding and support

