

# Chapter 14: Relationship breakdown

If you are married or living as a couple with someone and your relationship breaks down, the following guidance applies to you. The actions that you and we can take will vary according to your tenancy.

**If you are not a council tenant**, you should contact the council's prevention and options service. Staff can explain what can be done and discuss your housing options.

**If you are the sole tenant**, you have the right to remove the other person from your home. Consult a solicitor, advice bureau or law centre on how to do this. If it is not safe for you to return home, go to your local Customer Services Centre or contact the council domestic violence centre, Hearthstone, for advice. You can find their details later in this chapter.

**If your partner is the sole tenant** and has asked you to leave, you should get advice. If you are potentially homeless, you should contact the council's Prevention and Options service who will be able to advise you about your options.

**If you are a joint tenant** and you do not have any dependent children, your tenancy management officer will interview both tenants to discuss who should stay in the home.

If you have dependent children, you will usually be allowed to stay in the family home. We will normally offer to rehouse the other partner unless there is evidence of violence. In these cases, we will not usually rehouse the person who has been violent and in some cases, we may take legal action to evict the person who has been violent.

If there has been violence, you may want a temporary or permanent move instead of having the tenancy put in your name only. You will be able to get more help and advice from Hearthstone.

If the home will be larger than you need after your partner has left, your tenancy management officer will discuss your options for a transfer. Chapter 15 explains more about this.

## Domestic violence

- You are not alone.
- It is not your fault.
- Help is available.
- You have a right to live free from fear!

Violence in the home can include physical attacks, threats, sexual abuse, rape or incest. We will always try to make sure people who have suffered from violence or who are at risk of violence are safe.

**If you are at immediate risk**, you should report actual or threatened domestic violence to the **police** or to **Hearthstone, Haringey's domestic-violence advice and support centre**, on **020 8888 5362**.

The Hearthstone Centre will give you information, help and advice about what action you can take against the person carrying out the abuse and on how to improve security in your home.

You may need **alternative accommodation** or refuge for a short time, while things are sorted out.

If you want to return to your home and want the person who was violent towards you removed from the property, Hearthstone will give you advice on how to do this. They can also tell you how to **make your home safe through the Sanctuary Scheme**.

Domestic violence is a crime. Protect yourself and your children's safety by taking action against abusers. Domestic violence is any physical, sexual, financial, verbal, emotional or psychological abuse which happens between partners, ex-partners or family members. Although most sufferers of domestic violence are women, men can also be victims.

Outside office hours, contact the Hearthstone Nightline 0800 023 2794 or the police if you are at risk of domestic violence. Staff will take your concerns very seriously.

Hearthstone gives survivors of domestic violence access to all the support they will need in one place. The centre brings together housing officers, police community safety officers, health professionals, counsellors, solicitors, support agencies and other professionals who can help and advise you.

### Contacting Hearthstone

You can drop in to Hearthstone from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Their address is:

10 Commerce Road  
Wood Green N22 8ED.

Or, you can phone 020 8888 5362 to make an appointment. Lines are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. The fax number is 020 8889 6508. See the websites [www.homesforharingey.org](http://www.homesforharingey.org) and [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk).

#### Important emergency numbers

24-hour national domestic violence helpline	0808 2000 247
Haringey Police Community Safety Unit	020 8345 1944
The Samaritans (24-hour confidential helpline)	020 8889 6888

If you are concerned about the risk of domestic violence, or you are experiencing it, you can also contact your tenancy management officer to discuss your situation.

The council has produced a booklet called *I Shall Survive*, giving practical advice and details of the support available for people suffering violence within relationships. You can get copies from Hearthstone or from any Customer Services Centres.