

## Staying safe

Everyone has the right to be safe in their home. This fact sheet explains what help is available if you don't feel safe and need to leave your home.

If you are in an emergency, ring **000** immediately.

If you need help you can ring the Family Violence Response and Referral Line on **1800 633 937**. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## What is family violence?

Family violence is a form of abuse. It might include physical abuse, assault, sexual abuse, threatening behaviours, bullying or verbal abuse. For some people, the abuse is emotional, or it may be about money, religion or culture.

Family violence is not acceptable. It is against the law and breaking a Family Violence Order (FVO) is against the law.

Family violence is not the fault of the victim. Please know there is support and services available to help you.

If you are not safe, finding a secure and affordable home for you and your family is a priority.

This fact sheet explains what to do if you need housing assistance or if you are unsafe in social housing. For most people, it is better if you can speak to someone earlier rather than later.

## Getting help

If you are experiencing or at risk of family violence you should call the Family Violence Response and Referral Line on 1800 633 937.

You can discuss or report family violence incidents with them.

They are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And you can read more on the website at [www.safeathome.tas.gov.au](http://www.safeathome.tas.gov.au)

## If you are homeless because of family violence

There are emergency housing services for people who are homeless because of family violence.

You can also contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588.

## Finding somewhere to live

If you need a safe, secure and affordable home or a transfer between social housing properties, you should contact Housing Connect.

Housing Connect can work out what kind of housing you need and can link you to other support services.

Housing Connect can help you into emergency accommodation such as a hotel or into crisis accommodation if available, such as a shelter. Housing Connect can also help you into an affordable private rental and can help you to apply for social housing.

The people at Housing Connect know that escaping family violence is not easy. They can help you.

Housing Connect will:

- give you information
- help you make decisions
- explain what they can and can't do
- understand that the person is not responsible for what is happening
- offer you an interpreter if you need one
- allow you to bring a support person if that helps you
- talk to you in a private room
- allow you to talk to a man or a woman, depending on who you want to talk to.

## How long will you wait for social housing?

Applicants are prioritised on the Housing Register based on an assessment of their need to make sure people with the greatest need receive housing offers first. The highest need is called Highest Priority. Applicants need to provide evidence about the circumstances of their household.

The Housing Register ensures that applicants in greatest need are housed first and are matched with appropriate properties.

## Your information

Housing Connect, and your tenancy manager, will need to know some things about you. They will not need to know everything that has happened. But they may need to know things such as:

- whether you or your children are in immediate danger
- where you need to live
- what supports you have in place
- if there is a current FVO.

We will always believe what you are telling us. However, we may need to see some documents, such as an FVO or documents from a lawyer or doctor. These types of documents help assess your need for housing assistance.

You can still talk to us if you don't have these kinds of documents.

Housing Connect and your tenancy manager cannot share your information with anyone else unless you say it is OK to do so. Your information will be kept confidential. However, under the law, we must report any situation where a child may suffer abuse.

## What if you are unsafe in social housing?

If you already live in a social housing property but you need to leave because of family violence, please tell your tenancy manager. It is important that you and your family are safe.

Your tenancy manager needs to know that you have not abandoned your home, so it is a good idea to tell them that you've left. They can also help you access other types of support.

There are several social housing managers in Tasmania including:

- Homes Tasmania
- Centacare Evolve Housing
- Community Housing Limited
- Housing Choices Tasmania
- Mission Australia Housing

- Wintringham
- Salvation Army Housing.

You may live in a home that is managed by one of the social housing providers.

## If you move back in with your partner

Sometimes people get back together with their partner.

You will not be judged or questions about your decision if you decide to move back with your partner. Only you know what is right for you.

Housing Connect and social housing providers do want you and your family to be safe and have the right support in place. If you do move back in with your partner, please let us know.

## Security

Sometimes, the security is upgraded at certain social housing properties to protect victims of family violence. This may make it safe for you to return to your home.

Please talk to your social housing provider about this. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Social housing providers will also seek advice about this from the police. If it is not safe for you to return to your home, you may need to move to another home.

## Rebecca's story

Rebecca fled her home in the middle of the night. She rushed her kids into the car. They only had the clothes they were wearing and hardly any of their belongings.

She felt desperate and alone. She didn't know where to go. They spent the first night in the car.

Rebecca had fled her social housing property that was managed by Homes Tasmania. She had the Homes Tasmania phone number in her wallet. She phoned them and they put her in touch with Housing Connect.

Housing Connect found Rebecca and her children urgent accommodation. She was able to stay there while she waited to move into a home of her own. While she was there, she contacted Safe at Home who helped her to get counselling and support, including clothes for the kids.

Rebecca worked with an officer at Housing Connect. They put her on Housing Register for a home. Eventually, she moved into a two-bedroom unit that was managed by Mission Australia Housing. She felt safe in her unit. Her kids could start school again and Rebecca felt like she could start getting her life back on track.

## Contact us



Call Homes Tasmania on 1300 665 663.



TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 135 513.

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 135 513.

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1300 135 513.



Email at [tenancyservices@homes.tas.gov.au](mailto:tenancyservices@homes.tas.gov.au)



Homes Tasmania

GPO Box 65

HOBART TAS 7001



Call Housing Connect on 1800 800 588.