

Sample Helpline Call 1

Call from a survivor looking for refuge

A woman called the helpline from a friend's house after fleeing her abusive husband with her three children. The perpetrator knew where her friend lived and she was feeling unsafe. It was therefore both unsafe for the woman to remain there on a long term basis, and impractical due to her friend having a large family and not much room.

The woman had suffered physical abuse from her husband, alongside coercive control, psychological abuse and intimidating and threatening behaviour, including threats to kill her. He had previously strangled the woman, and threatened her with weapons.

The woman left whilst her husband was at work and when he realised she had gone with the children he had sent her numerous abusive and threatening text messages and harassed her with phone calls.

The woman had contacted the police previously when her husband had been threatening. The perpetrator had denied the abuse and the woman had felt that they sided with him. The woman decided not to press charges, as she was concerned about the repercussions for doing this.

The woman had not approached the council for housing as she wanted to leave the area in order to feel safe. The helpline worker was able to reassure the woman, and spoke about the option of accessing a refuge.

The woman explained that she and her children could stay with her friend that night if needed. The helpline worker encouraged the woman to contact the police on 101 to let them know about the high risk nature of the situation and to request that a marker be placed on her friend's property, so if she was to phone 999 later that evening or throughout the night, the police could make her a priority.

The helpline worker completed a confidential questionnaire with the caller, which enabled the worker to assess risk, gain more understanding of the woman's situation and ascertain specific information about the woman's needs regarding refuge. The helpline worker understood that the woman wanted to get far away from where she was at the moment and that her friend who had a car could support her to get to a safe place to meet a worker from a refuge.

The helpline worker did a refuge search for the woman, searching in an area which was a safe distance from where she was and where the woman had other support from friends and family.

The worker was able to find several refuges showing vacancies specific to the woman's needs. The helpline worker passed on the public contact numbers for 4 of the refuges,

women's aid

until women & children are safe

empowering the woman to take control over her situation and to make direct contact with the refuge.

The woman said she would contact the refuges to see if they could accept her and the children, later that day. The helpline worker reassured the woman that if they couldn't accept her because the space had already gone, or it was too late in the day, then she could contact the helpline again in the morning for more vacancies.

The helpline worker gave the woman a Caller ID and asked if she would like to leave her name and number. The helpline worker then explained that her call records were confidential and sought permission to store her details on the helpline database.

The helpline worker advised that should the woman need to contact the helpline again, she should let the helpline worker know of her caller ID so that the worker would then have all the information needed to do a quick refuge search.

The helpline worker reassured the woman that she could contact the helpline at any time, and reminded her that in an emergency, she should call the police.

Call duration: 16 minutes.