

## FACT SHEET



# SHELTERS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

provide support to victims

## What we do?

### HELP TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The shelter is a home-like environment where victims find a refuge from violence and where they get help to stop the violence. In their crisis, victims of violence get support, guidance and counselling from professionals at the shelter as well as assistance and information for dealing with practical arrangements.

The shelter is meant to be a short-term refuge during a crisis. Length of stay is always individual.

The shelter has staff available 24 hours a day, and victims can go there either on their own initiative or on referral. It is possible to go there anonymously. Staying in a shelter does not cost anything for the client.

## Who we help?

### VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The shelters for victims of domestic violence are open for anyone – women, men and children of all ages – who has experienced acts or threatened acts of domestic violence. Children usually stay in the shelter with their parent.

Not all the shelters are fully accessible at the moment. However, disabled people who have experienced domestic violence, or its threat, must be arranged a place in a shelter or other safe location where they can also get help in their crisis.

Physical violence is not the only reason to seek shelter, and even threat of violence constitutes domestic violence. Anyone can phone the shelter if they are concerned about their own or a client's situation.

## How we help?

### SHELTER HELPS IN A CRISIS

- The staff in the shelters for victims of domestic violence are trained to meet adult and child victims of domestic violence. The staff help the victims in their crisis and support them in dealing with their violent experiences.
- The shelters offer counselling on legal issues and practical arrangements, such as accommodation.
- Each client or family have their own room during their stay in the shelter. The shelters have locked doors and camera surveillance and other forms of technical equipment to ensure safety.

## What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence means violence committed by the current or a former spouse or intimate partner, the victim's own child or his/her partner's child, other close relative or other person close to the victim.

### Domestic violence can be:

- physical
- psychological
- sexual
- economic
- abuse
- negligence
- cultural or
- religious violence

### All parties are affected

Domestic violence affects the health and well-being of all the parties involved. It can lead to a physical or psychological injury, disturbed development, deprivation, or even death.

# Important to know

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A STAY IN THE SHELTER?

The staff at the shelter explore together with the client what kind of support he or she will need after the stay in the shelter. Where necessary the staff will also collaborate with the municipality and other service providers.

The municipality is responsible for providing community care for those of its residents who have experienced domestic violence as well as for arranging support after clients leave the shelter. According to section 11(5) of the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014), the municipality must arrange social services to support those who have experienced domestic violence or other forms of violence or abuse.

## CLIENT'S SAFETY IS A PRIORITY

Social and health care staff should complete a risk assessment to determine how dangerous their client's situation is. They should also draw up a safety plan for each client. The risk assessment and the safety plan help both the client and the staff understand the danger of violence.

A place in a shelter must be arranged immediately for those clients who are not safe at home. The staff should also take care of the safety and service needs of other family members, children especially, and submit a child welfare notification if necessary.



## STATE FUNDING FOR SHELTERS

The Act on reimbursement out of State funds for providers of shelters for victims of domestic violence (1354/2014) took effect on 1 January 2015. The responsibility for financing the services provided in the shelters rests with the State.

THL is responsible for the national co-ordination of the shelters for victims of domestic violence.

A list of the shelters receiving state funding is available at [www.thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut](http://www.thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut) (in Finnish).

## MORE INFORMATION (IN FINNISH)

[www.thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut](http://www.thl.fi/turvakotipalvelut)

[www.thl.fi/kasvunkumppanit](http://www.thl.fi/kasvunkumppanit) > työn tueksi > Lähisuhde- ja perheväkivallan ehkäisytyö

## CONTACT DETAILS

**Helena Ewalds**

Development Manager, Department of Government Services  
firstname.lastname@thl.fi

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