

Leeds Women's Aid

SERVICE USER CONSULTATION REPORT 2009

What do you think about the standard of accommodation in the refuge?

"Very good. When I was shown everything I was given I felt very safe and reassured at having a roof over my head. It has everything that you need on a day-to-day basis"

"I found it welcoming and I still feel it's welcoming. The place was furnished with little touches such as pictures, fake flowers and cd player. These things made all the difference"

"I thought it was poor. However, it's improved whilst I've been here, new beds, carpets, rugs etc. I think no-one was using the budget before, but things are really starting to get done now"

"Pleasantly surprised. I was jumping around when I realised I had my own bathroom. If we were missing any items, they would be replaced quickly. I also like the fact that the sofas had replaceable covers"

"I am happy with my accommodation and my son's room"

What has been your experience of sharing a kitchen with other families? Was it a good or bad experience?

"Because there's only three of us we often sit down and eat together"

"Good- we all have dinner together and socialise."

"It helps if you've just left home and you might feel a bit lonely, to be able to sit down and eat with other families"

"Alright. I think it encourages the children to eat if they see other children eating"

"Half way through my stay I had my benefits stopped and was left with no money for a month. I would cook all the meals from scratch for all the families and do the cleaning, and the other families would buy the food. I really appreciated the chance to do this as it made me feel like I was part of a big family. However, we all got on so it worked for us"

"I learned from the experience of sharing a kitchen- not to give up. It's made me stronger. Now I find it a good experience as we cook at the same time and we have fun, explaining cooking tips and ideas on different types of food e.g. Italian, French etc. Previously there was no thought about tidying up behind themselves e.g. not washing up, cleaning the cooker, emptying the bins"

What has been your experience of sharing a living room with other families? Was it a good or bad experience?

"I don't use the sitting room as I prefer a separate living space"

"We prefer to gather in the kitchen"

"As many of the other women have children, they're often happy to let the children watch CBeebies early in the day, and then we can watch what we like when they have gone to bed. You can always go off to your own room if you want to. Even though I don't have any children myself, seeing the children laugh and play really lifts me up"

“Good. The kids rule the remote though!”

“It was a good experience for me.

“I don’t spend much time in the living room as the children are still young and need a lot of sleep. Currently it’s a good experience as we watch TV together and talk about what’s on the news”

Living with women who are also survivors of domestic violence can either give you strength or it can cause problems. Which of these applied to you?

“It’s given me strength, because I know I am not alone. It’s been very difficult for me because I’ve not been allowed to have any contact with my family because of my particular situation”

“It’s given me more confidence, before I came here I wouldn’t even get up to get off the bus, but after support from the other women and my support worker, I’ve regained my confidence”

“Strengthens me and I found it very supportive”

“It can be amazing to have someone there who understands what you have been through. It helps when you and others have a shared experience. They know when to leave you alone and when to support you”

“It has given me strength. I want more from life, to get back to work and move on with my life”

If we had been able to offer you a self-contained apartment or house instead of your current one, would that have made a difference to you and/or your children?

“I don’t think I would have coped initially because I needed support from the other women. I would have felt isolated”

“I don’t think I would”

“Yes. I wouldn’t however change the experience I had in a shared environment, so I don’t really know what living in a self-contained flat would have been like”

How safe do/ did you feel living in the refuge on a scale of 1-10 (10 being very safe)? What could improve the level of safety?

“I feel very safe here. I also feel supported. There’s someone on duty 24 hours a day, and someone checks up on you regularly. I would also like that done here”

“10 - I feel safe- no-one knows me around here”

“I feel safe.10”

“Because I was 200 miles away from my partner I felt safe” Overall score 7”

Staff are present at the refuge Monday to Fridays from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Is this adequate/ too much/ about right/ not enough?

“With the 24 hour cover it takes away any fear I might have about my safety”

“I think it’s about right as we can get hold of staff in an emergency”

“I think it’s about right”

“It’s about right”

“Once when there was an incident where we needed a member of night staff, essentially when the night staff were on they were great and there was always someone to help you. They’d all muck in and help each other out”

“For me it’s been really useful. I really value my key worker. She’s always been very supportive”

Would you like to say anything else about Leeds Women’s Aid’s services?

“I get the help I require and I feel safe knowing that there are people around me who will keep me safe”

“I think LWA has helped me move forward with my life. I think the team have all been very supportive”

“Generally my experience with LWA has been good. It’s helped me tremendously, and there aren’t enough places out there like it. The team in general always help, even if your support worker isn’t there”

“Very happy with my key-worker, she always feels like she has time for me and gives me advice and support”

“ I wish I had written to HO and told them how brilliant my support worker was. If it wasn’t for her I don’t think I would have got through it. I’ve kept in touch with lots of women, who have also had her as their key worker. She went out of her way with everybody she dealt with. It’s one of the things I miss about the refuge. She put her heart and soul into everything. She also always considered the children”

“Thank you for taking me in as I didn’t know what might have happened if I didn’t find a place straight away. It would be really nice to have house meetings more often. I really enjoyed the Chinese restaurant as it gave me a chance to meet all the other residents. I also found it useful when the woman came in to show us how to cook nutritious meals cheaply”