

colchester
& tending



women's refuge

annual review 2010–2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge Ltd

PO Box 40

Colchester

Essex CO1 2XJ

tel 01206 500 585

fax 01206 500 325

email info@colchester-refuge.org.uk

www.colchester-refuge.org.uk

Big House

Main line 01206 761 276

Executive Director main line 01206 761 352

Finance Office 01206 761 365

Fax 01206 761 375

Old House

Main Line 01206 500 585

Welfare Manager direct line 01206 500 584

Fax 01206 500 325

For Women centre

Main line 01206 867 120

Fax 01206 867 235

Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge supports women, together with their accompanying children, who have suffered domestic abuse. We offer crisis accommodation and outreach support to help them make independent decisions about their futures.



- 4 **Officers, bankers, solicitors**
- 5 **Members of staff**
- 6 **Chair's report** June Freeman
- 7 **A year of financial uncertainty**
Ann Taylor, Executive Director
- 9 **Essential teamwork** Angie O'Toole, Welfare Manager
- 10 **Improving access to our services**
Julie Clifford, Outreach Services Manager
- 11 **The Freedom Programme**
Julie Clifford, Outreach Services Manager
- 12 **From volunteer to employee**
Lisa Sudbury, Outreach Support Worker
- 13 **Supporting children's emotional well-being**
Kathy Lee, Children's Services Manager
- 14 **Valuing every child**
Alex Turner, Pre-School Group Leader
- 15 **Providing reassurance each night**
Cathy Low, On Call Worker
- 16 **Insecure immigration status: Bola's story**
Angie O'Toole, Welfare Manager
- 18 **Facts and figures**
- 21 **Challenges of the Big Society**
Nancy McNichols, Treasurer
- 22 **A summary of financial activities**
- 24 **Funders and donors**
- 25 **Life's Rich Tapestry: a Refuge artwork**
Ciara Canning, Curator of Community History at Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service
- 26 **Sexual violence in Sweden: removing the stigma of abuse**
Joanna Impey
- 28 **The importance of collaboration**
Sandra Johnson, chair, Essex Women's Aid
- 29 **Essex Women's Aid statistics 2010–2011**
- 32 **Contact details for Essex Women's Aid**

Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge totally rejects all forms of domestic abuse and any attempts to justify it.

Domestic abuse is not a marginal social issue and we believe in the importance of campaigning against domestic abuse as part of asserting the dignity of women and helping them to act autonomously and independently.

We believe that every woman has the right to make free and informed decisions about her future and her right to choose the structure of her family.

We believe that children damaged by domestic abuse deserve our support.

We believe in equality of opportunity.

We believe in the independence and autonomy of the voluntary sector.

Officers

June Freeman	<i>Chair</i>
Nancy McNichols	<i>Treasurer</i>
Julie Powell	<i>Secretary</i>
Christine Dowman	<i>Trustee</i>
Clare Rhatigan	<i>Trustee</i>
Pamela Corder	<i>Member</i>
Agnes Skamballis	<i>Member</i>

Bankers

National Westminster Bank plc
25 High Street
Colchester
Essex CO1 1DG

Solicitors

Bates, Wells & Braithwaite
London LLP
2–6 Cannon Street
London EC4M 6YH

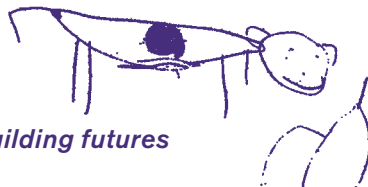
A quote from the *Life's Rich Tapestry* exhibition at the Hollytrees Museum, Colchester (see page 25):

It was difficult for me to talk about my experiences, especially with people that I didn't know. I don't have much confidence and I'm very nervous with new people but it helped getting to know you every week. I enjoyed picking out the pictures and deciding what material to use, you could use whatever one you wanted. I did lots of stitching as well. I even took some home with me to sew together.

Members of staff

<i>Executive Director</i>	Ann Taylor
<i>Finance & Administration</i>	
<i>Manager</i>	Emily Miller
<i>Administrators</i>	Eleanor Burgoyne Joann Hester Liz Porter
<i>Clerical Assistant</i>	Marian Hopkins
<i>Welfare Manager</i>	Angie O'Toole
<i>Family Support Workers</i>	Chris Beckett Margaret Harkin Lorna King name not supplied
<i>Outreach Services Manager</i>	Julie Clifford
<i>Outreach Workers</i>	Megan Saliu Lisa Sudbury
<i>Floating Support Worker</i>	Mandy Saunders
<i>Children's Services Manager</i>	Kathy Lee
<i>Senior Children's Support Worker</i>	Val Haynes
<i>Children's Support Workers</i>	Karen Lewis Ruth Cherry-Galal
<i>Pre-school Group Leader</i>	Alex Turner
<i>Pre-school Group Practitioner</i>	Amanda Martin
<i>Volunteer Co-ordinator</i>	Annie Lewis
<i>Roads to Recovery Facilitator</i>	Moyna Barham MBE
<i>Counsellor</i>	Maria Haydon
<i>On-Call Staff</i>	Jane Green Cathy Low Margaret Potter
<i>Housing Services Supervisor</i>	Ginny Cook
<i>Assistant Housekeepers</i>	Donna Bristow Nicole Brooke
<i>Drop-in Support Group</i>	
<i>Co-ordinator</i>	Jane North

SPOT



The Refuge has always guarded its independence energetically, seeing its charity status as essential to the creative innovation that the work requires. Our managers, and particularly our Executive Director, therefore dedicate a huge amount of time and effort to fundraising. The Refuge is currently in receipt of twenty-one separate revenue streams. These ensure the continuation of our work and keep our dependence on government funding as low as possible.

The bleak fact, however, is that charities cannot operate properly without stable core funding. The Refuge is no exception. Yet charitable trusts are notoriously reluctant to provide such funding. Almost invariably they want to invest in interesting new projects. Over the last ten years, government funding has been invaluable in helping us maintain our core services.

Like many charities, however, CTWR has had its statutory funding for core services reduced considerably this year. Meeting this financial shortfall simply by operating more efficiently is not possible. Some staff have had to accept reduced hours. They have been generous, however, in co-operating with us to arrange this. In return we have avoided redundancies.

The level of support we can offer our clients has unavoidably had to be reduced, however. This is worrying as the hard times ahead are likely to exacerbate family tensions and increase domestic violence. Our staff remain committed to maximising their clients' well-being, but we need to ensure they are not overwhelmed. Even in good times their work is emotionally and physically very demanding.

It has been suggested that volunteers might help. Though our current volunteers are invaluable, the work our frontline staff do with the women and children we support is complex and professional. No-one would suggest that volunteers should take on some of the specialist nursing work in a hospital. Similarly, to use volunteers as frontline support staff would be dangerous and irresponsible. The country needs to decide whether it is serious about campaigning against domestic violence. If it is, we need a more appropriate suggestion than this.

A year of financial uncertainty

It has been a testing time for our Refuge services. Both resilience and endless patience were demanded in preparing for and experiencing an extensive Supporting People accreditation and review. We felt we might drown in paperwork and red tape, but we achieved a good outcome, proving the quality of our support services.

Shortly after this came the news that we were to lose some of our Supporting People funding. We worked in collaboration with the other Essex Women's Aid refuges (formerly Refuge Essex), who were also affected, to challenge Essex County Council's decision and we lobbied our local and county councillors. There was positive support from local MPs Bob Russell and Bernard Jenkin who spoke on our behalf in the House of Commons. When the final cut in income was confirmed, we were anxious as to how we could continue to offer our clients a high quality service. However, we fared better than some refuges in other parts of the country where funding has been cut dramatically or withdrawn completely. Some services have been put out to tender, leaving them open to being snapped up by larger providers, often housing associations. One can only speculate as to the effect on the quality of service.

We managed to avoid redundancies but have had to reduce staff hours and trim our budget. The staff affected have behaved with the utmost professionalism in a very difficult time for them. We will continue to be extremely cautious financially for the foreseeable future. One initiative to bring in additional revenue is the conversion of our empty warden's flat into another unit of accommodation. Fortunately we continue to have strong backing from our local authorities and PCT and through grant funding, as well as generous support from the local community, demonstrating their concern for victims of domestic abuse. For example, the Mercury Theatre raised over £2,000 through audience collections, Colchester Ladies Circle raised £2,500 and a resourceful teenager organised a quiz night raising a magnificent £500.

A positive outcome of the struggle Essex refuges have had to retain Supporting People funding has been the rejuvenation of

A year of financial uncertainty

the Essex Women's Aid Partnership. The CEOs of each refuge have always met to share information and good practice, and now additional meetings are held regularly between CEOs and refuge chairs. This collaboration has been invaluable in strengthening our position to campaign against the cuts and we are using that partnership to share resources and expertise and work on new initiatives.

We continue with our core mission: supporting women and their children suffering abuse. A total of 99 women and 118 children stayed in our crisis accommodation in the last year. Our outreach service **For Women** has seen a dramatic increase in referrals over the last two years. The service has been extremely active in the community and has targeted Tendring in particular, setting up more drop-in services in that area. In response to the large number of referrals we are undertaking a review of the whole service and will be seeking further funding for additional staff.

Our residents and ex-residents took part in an art project with Colchester and Ipswich Museums and their finished work was shown at the Hollytrees Museum in Colchester. It was an enjoyable, if at times emotional, experience for the women, but they learned many new skills and are extremely proud of their work. An article on the project 'Life's Rich Tapestry' can be found on page 25. Women at the Outreach Centre helped to produce the 'Treasure Chest' – a safety product for women designed by students from Colchester High School for Girls. The students won the Young Enterprise team of the year award for their creation. We also were delighted to have a case study submitted by one of our Trustees, Clare Rhatigan, included in the Children's Rights Alliance for England publication 'Doing Right by Children.'

I look forward this coming year to what I hope will be a more settled period in the life of CTWR.

I like all the workers, I like have fun with them and playing with them. (Written by a mum for her six-year-old)

We opened our doors in 1977. Statistics recorded between 1998 and the present date show that CTWR has accommodated 1139 families through Refuge services with a combined total of over 1600 children, all of whom have been supported by Refuge staff.

Many women living in fear who wish to leave abusive relationships do not know that help is available in the form of refuges. Refuges are generally accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be contacted through almost all agencies, such as the police, doctors and the voluntary and statutory services. Many of these have websites with contact details. To improve our communications, our own website has undergone a major upgrade this year.

Refuge staff have specialised knowledge and can access voluntary and statutory agencies to help women and children with their specific needs.

Women who are being abused require a safe environment in which to think about their situation and decide what they want to do next. The stress of living in an abusive relationship often makes this impossible at home. But they frequently need other types of assistance, such as legal help. Refuges can advise them on obtaining protection orders against their abuser.

Some women have no money of their own. They may not be in work and even if they are, the perpetrator sometimes controls their finances. They may be forced to leave their job in case the abuser tracks them down at work. Refuge staff offer financial advice and advice on benefits to help the family with daily living expenses. They can also advise on future housing options, such as returning home, accessing social housing or renting privately.

The daily running of refuges is down to the work of dedicated staff, consisting of volunteers, house-keepers, administrators, family support workers, out of hours staff, the managerial team and the Trustees. Teamwork is essential throughout the establishment to deliver quality support to the families who come to us for help.

Improving access to our services

The outreach service has seen an increase of 34% in the number of referrals from 525 last year to 705 this year. To support our existing clients and cope with these referrals we needed to use our team to best effect to increase our visibility in the community and provide women with better access to our services.

We approached this challenge by:

- Introducing three drop-in sessions in the Clacton, Harwich and Frinton areas. We worked closely with agencies such as the police, housing and children's centres to identify a suitable location where an outreach worker can meet women and offer them support, discuss their options and, where appropriate, refer them to other outreach services.
- Increasing the number of services available at our **For Women** centre in Colchester. We have enabled more women to attend our Domestic Goddess programme which encourages them to cook and sew. We have introduced fortnightly Reiki sessions. We were fortunate to have been offered the skills of a local artist, Paula McGregor, to pilot a therapeutic art journaling programme. All these have been well attended and we plan to develop the programmes available next year.
- Opening 'Coffee Pots', a weekly coffee afternoon in Clacton. Coffee Pots is a safe and supportive environment where women can meet other women who have had similar experiences. The session is run by an outreach worker, so the women can get on-the-spot advice if they need it.
- Providing a six week drop-in training programme for our volunteers, focusing on the impact of domestic violence, the issues women face when leaving their relationship and the support and practical help available to them.

We are fortunate to have a team of dedicated volunteers who have been an enormous help to our outreach workers and the women we support. My sincere thanks and appreciation go to them all. Without their help, many women would have been unable to access our services.

The Freedom Programme

CTWR has long recognised the benefits of group work. Attending group programmes improves women's understanding of domestic violence and reduces their feelings of isolation as they realise they are not alone in their experiences. Our existing Roads to Recovery programme looks at what an abusive relationship is, the power and control that underpins these relationships and how women and children are affected by the domestic violence they have experienced.

We did not want women to wait too long before accessing a group, so we needed more group programmes. To meet this demand, members of our outreach team and Refuge services attended the Freedom Programme facilitator training in February.

The Freedom Programme is a twelve-week rolling programme that focuses on the abusive partner and examines the tactics used to gain power and control in a relationship. The roots of the belief systems used to justify these tactics are explored, as are the beliefs that women share with their abuser. The programme also looks at society, the media and the historical origins of male dominance over women.

CTWR introduced the first Freedom Programme in March. Women can choose the programme best suited to their circumstances. A number of women who attended Roads to Recovery also began the Freedom Programme and have told us they are benefiting from looking at their experiences from different angles. Understanding the behaviours and tactics used by the perpetrators of abuse can help them avoid another abusive relationship. The Programme provides women with the tools to place the responsibility for the abuse from themselves to the abusive partner.

One woman said: 'Excellent! The Freedom has helped me feel stronger and able to cope. I can now see all the different characteristics and not be fooled by them. All women should do this before their first boyfriend – it would save an awful lot of heartache in the end!'

From volunteer to employee

My first encounter with CTWR was five years ago as a victim of domestic abuse. My solicitor recommended that I attend a domestic violence programme of group work at the Refuge, where I was also able to access the Refuge counsellor. Working with both enabled me to come to terms with my own issues and make changes in my life.

I decided to become a counsellor and was accepted on to a three-year BA Hons degree course at Colchester Institute. In my spare time I volunteered to help the group work facilitator at the Refuge. I made sure that tea and coffee were available and offered one-to-one support to anyone who became upset during the session, thus reducing the disturbance to the group.

As a volunteer I developed a different perspective on group work from that of a client. Witnessing the group dynamics, I learned from the facilitator and also from the participants. Some women tried hard to make sense of what had happened in their lives, and, when realisation came, it could be followed by anger and guilt. Some women were resilient, learning to acknowledge and accept their past and think about how to move forward.

At the end of my three years at college I successfully applied for a job as an outreach worker at the Refuge and so began the transition from volunteer to employee.

I am currently the Tendring outreach worker. I support forty-two women. With a demanding caseload, my day is always busy. Being an advocate, as part of child protection plans, I attend case conferences and core group meetings. The Refuge contributes to MARAC (multi-agency conferences for high-risk victims of abuse) and I therefore work closely with social workers, housing officers, solicitors, health visitors and schools. I also accompany women to court when there are issues with contact or obtaining an injunction.

My personal experiences, my time as a volunteer and now as an outreach worker have all contributed to my commitment to supporting abused women through challenging times.

Supporting children's emotional well-being

Freedom from illness, physical fitness and a healthy diet are all important for children's health. We try to ensure that children at the Refuge have opportunities for physical exercise and fresh air and are encouraged to make healthy food choices. We work in close liaison with our health visitor to ensure they do not miss out on immunisations and regular health checks.

The emotional well-being of children is just as important. Children who have witnessed the abuse of a parent experience emotional harm that may impact on their future lives and relationships.

It's a generalisation that children are resilient. But in reality some are more resilient than others. Their resilience improves when risk factors in their lives are outweighed by protective factors. At CTWR, we aim to support and extend those protective factors by making children feel safe, cared for, listened to and valued and by developing their social and communication skills to give them strategies for problem solving and coping.

The most important protective factor for children is having positive, warm, secure relationships with family members. This includes parenting that is consistent and provides firm boundaries. We support family relationships by helping mothers to talk about the abuse with their children. We offer parenting advice and help families to have fun together by providing activities and outings and information about services in the local community. For children, it is often enough to know that someone is there to listen to them and allow them to express and work through their feelings in their play.

In some cases more specialist intervention is needed. We now work regularly with a community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service worker who provides consultation opportunities for parents and staff to help determine the most appropriate referral route. We are currently working in partnership with another agency to provide play therapy for two children and, if successful, we hope to find funding to continue this service in the future.

Valuing every child

'Children witnessing domestic violence generally have significantly more behavioural and emotional problems than children who are not in these abusive environments.'

(Humphries, 2001: 146)

My role in CTWR is to lead the pre-school group sessions by planning and implementing the Early Years Foundation State Curriculum (2008). Children attending often present with emotional and social difficulties. The pre-school ethos is to value every child as unique. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSE) is a high priority when planning the curriculum, since emotional well-being is fundamental to all learning. PSE is threaded throughout all the play activities.

The role play area is usually set up as the 'home corner', offering resources such as dolls and a tea set to provide children with the opportunity to act out past experiences by releasing negative worries and fears. Children attending often have speech and language difficulties. Communication and language skills are supported through activities such as 'small world play' – for example, playing with the doll's house or the train set. These opportunities allow children to speak when they are ready to do so.

To extend and promote this area of development, staff in the children's department have been involved in a government initiative called 'Every Child a Talker' (ECAT). This project has provided staff training opportunities and resources which have greatly strengthened our provision. It has also enabled the department to develop the outdoor play area which has been invaluable in promoting physical development. 'Free flow' play is promoted throughout the session, giving the children opportunities to transfer their play between indoor and outdoor environments. Positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and encouragement and by supporting children to make independent choices. Therapeutic play resources such as water, sand, soil and play dough are provided for children to relax and wallow in their play, thus encouraging them to release their anxieties and frustration.

The pre-school environment offers children an inviting, caring and safe place to learn through rich play experiences.



Providing reassurance each night

I love my role because I don't always know what my night on call will bring, making it interesting and bringing new challenges each night.

Some nights can be really quiet. All I may get is a text from a woman in the Refuge telling me she is staying out. On other nights I could be attending the Refuge for an admission or to do a welfare check, or speaking to other agencies who need a bed space.

When I go to the Refuge in the early evening, it's generally the children I bump into, happily playing with each other, and it's lovely to see how relaxed and settled they are, sometimes chatting with me about what they've been up to.

It's important at night for other agencies to be able to talk to me. If the Refuge is full, I'll still provide that agency with advice on other temporary housing or give them the phone numbers of other Refuges to try. Hopefully this helps resolve the situation and builds good working relationships.

I have never so far had any concerns working alone at night because if I need help my line manager is easily contactable. Also, the Refuge is very organised. There are written instructions should I need them, from fire alarms through to where to find emergency clothing and food supplies.

On one occasion I used the lounge for an emergency admission late at night because the Refuge was full and the lady and her daughter had no other options. It was helpful that the bed linen and supplies like tea and coffee were easy to find. Although the lady spent the night in the lounge she had some comforts and was safe.

The night time can be very lonely for the women in the Refuge, and I hope it's reassuring for them to know that I'm on the other end of the phone and that if they have any problems I can try and help.

Insecure immigration status: Bola's story

Bola came to the UK in 2009 with her three children to join her husband who was already here on a student visa. Before she came there had been abuse not only from him but his family. She thought joining her husband would mark a new beginning away from their control.

She found a job, but everything she earned was taken by her husband, leaving her struggling to feed and clothe the children. They were placed in schools and adjusted well to life in the UK. However, in the summer of 2010, her son disclosed to his teachers that his father was abusive to his mother, his siblings and him. The school confirmed the abuse with the mother. Social Care were called and the family were admitted into the Refuge.

Karen Lewis, Children's Support Worker, writes: *The boys aged five and four were quiet to the degree of being 'selective mute'. The family had a strong faith. Bola said the five-year-old told her when he married he would be like his dad and drink alcohol and hurt his wife. His actions suggested deep-seated anxieties.*

During an after-school trip, while the others were getting back on the bus, he walked off. A team member joined him and spoke quietly with him. He shrugged his shoulders and walked back to the bus, dragging a stick he'd found. No words were needed. These are the moments where trust is built between adult and child. Within the safe environment of the Refuge, both boys eventually started to talk.

A member of the children's team also spent time with the nine-year-old girl. Sometimes she spoke about school, and then she said she was scared that her mum might leave them or be taken away.

A Common Assessment Framework was completed for both older children, with a view to referring them to the Child Adolescent Mental Health Care Service team. Both agencies had several sessions with the children.

Over the nine months, I was with the children numerous times building up a relationship of trust which I hope will have an impact on their lives as it has on mine.

Bola went to court and was granted a Residency Order to keep the children in her care, a Non Molestation Order to protect them from further abuse and a Prohibited Steps Order, to stop the children being taken out of the country. She continued to work while trying to resolve her insecure immigration status.

Before coming to the Refuge, she and her husband had applied for leave to remain in the UK on his student visa. She was informed in November that her application had failed and she would have to go to London to appeal in January 2011.

Bola was hopeful, but two weeks later she learned that her appeal had not been successful. The Immigration Advisory Service was contacted to see if there were grounds for a further appeal. However, this was not to be, and Bola was told to wait for a notification from the Home Office on her repatriation.

Between January and May 2011, numerous telephone calls were made by Refuge staff to ascertain the arrangements for the family to return to their country. One agency said they thought they had already returned in January. However, their passports had not been released and they were now unsure where they were.

In March, staff contacted Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children to fund their fare and issue a resettlement grant. The family would have to travel to London for fingerprinting. By the time funding to go to London was arranged, the scheme had ceased to operate.

In mid April, Bola was told that their passports had been located and would be returned to her. Once she received them, she was to inform the Home Office and present herself at a police station each week.

In mid May, after more phonecalls to yet more agencies, transport was provided to take the family to the airport and they were repatriated on 19 May.

My dad shouldn't have done all the things he did.

(Left by a four-year-old boy on the voice recorder and found by a member of staff after the family had left the Refuge)

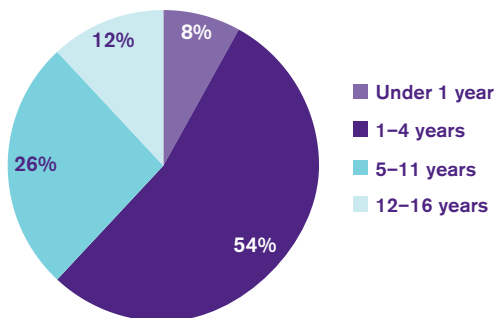
This year the number of women and children accommodated by Colchester and Tendring Women’s Refuge was 99 and 118 respectively compared with 120 women and 194 children in 2009–10.

Age of the women

The age profile of the women remained constant with about 90% aged between 19 and 45 years.

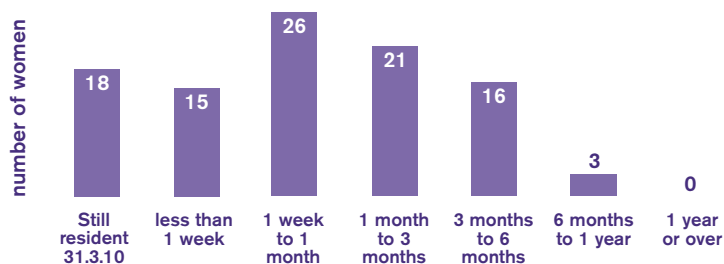
Age of the children

The age of the children from new born to four years has increased from 50% in 2009–10 to 62% in 2010–11, and dropped from 37% to 26% for children between 5 and 11 years. The number of children aged between 12 and 16 years remained constant at 11%.



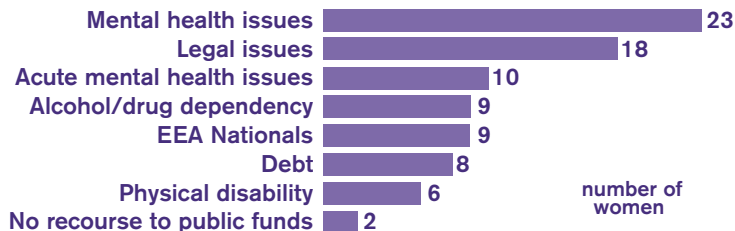
Length of stay

The number of women and children accommodated was less than last year, although overall the occupancy of rooms was higher, 96% compared with 90% in 2009–10.



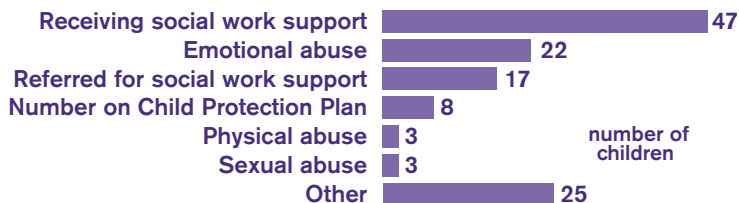
Additional support needs – women

This year the number of women with mental health issues has risen to 33%, of whom 10% were acute, compared with 23% last year. This is a worrying trend as the provision of facilities dealing with these matters in the health service is under such financial pressure.



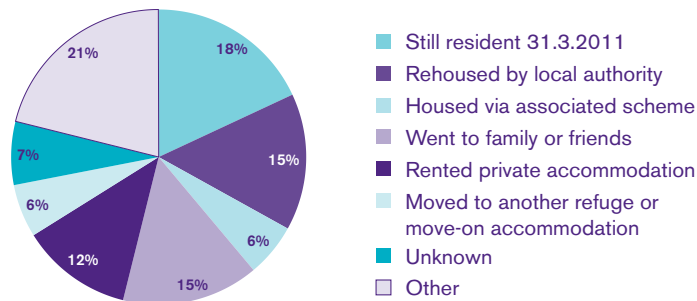
Additional support needs – children

Fewer children this year were on a Child Protection Plan (8%), but far more were receiving social work support or had been referred for it (64%).



Action on leaving

Where the women went after leaving the Refuge follows a similar pattern to 2009–10. None returned home. Fewer were re-housed by the local authority (15% compared to 22%) and fewer went to other refuges (6% compared to 12%). 18% of the women were still in residence at the end of this year compared with 10% in 2009–10.

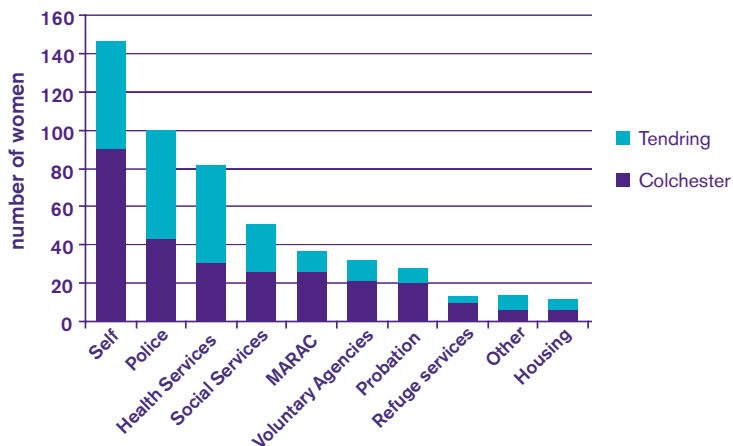


For Women Outreach Centre:

The number of women being referred for support has increased again to 705 from 525 in 2009–10 and 332 in 2008–09 when the centre opened.

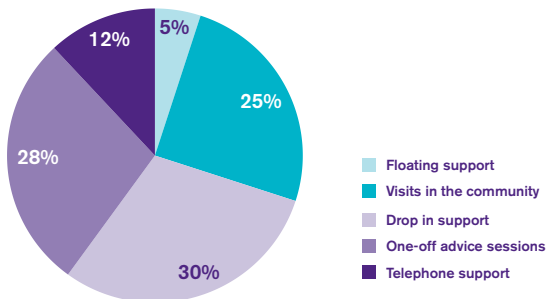
2010–11 705 (34% increase)	2009–10 525 (58% increase)	2008–09 332
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Source of referrals



Outreach Department – main sources of support

The Department offers many levels of support from one to one meetings, telephone support, drop-in services and floating support.



The challenges of the Big Society

In May 2010, the coalition government launched the Big Society which aimed to create a climate that empowered local people and communities, building a society that would ‘take power away from politicians and give it to people.’ Policies announced at that time included giving communities more power and encouraging people to take an active role in their communities.

At first sight, there was a lot to commend this initiative. However, its detractors suspected that statutory roles would be shunted to the Third Sector, who would use volunteers who might have less skill or rigour. There have been sweeping cuts in the budgets of local government, which has resulted in job losses and increased pressure on those who remain in place to maintain services.

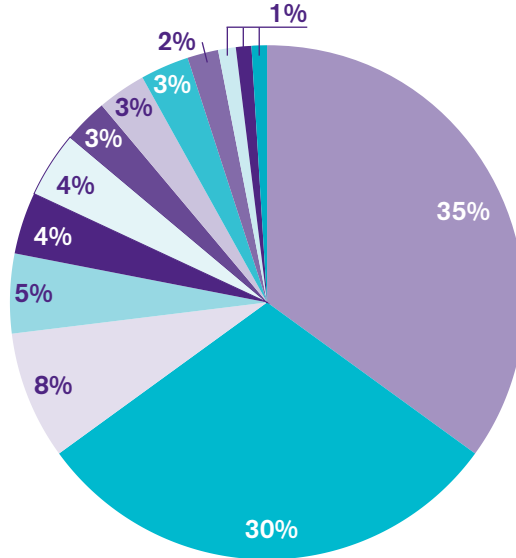
I see two other challenges to the Third Sector in general and Colchester and Tendring Women’s Refuge in particular. Both are related to money. The first is to do with changes in traditional funding sources and the second is the need to work with a variety of organisations with differing aims and ethos because of the government’s emphasis on larger contracting partners.

The first challenge is heightened as some of the headline awards designed to ‘jumpstart’ the Big Society had thinly defined objectives and were shared out in large lumps with challenging deadlines for project completion. Many of the newer pots of money have to be used for new projects only and applicants must demonstrate that they will be able to continue the project after the initial grant is exhausted.

The second challenge is that as a small charity we are being pushed to partner other organisations. It takes energy and focus to work together to develop trust, and the more disparate the organisations the greater this burden may be. This effort is outside the specific project objectives but is essential to its success. The development of inter-organisational relationships and trust saves costs and fosters innovation. But it takes time and money, both of which are in short supply.

Incoming resources

Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge total income for 2010–11 was £753,802. This compares with £708,420 for the previous year. The pie chart below shows where that money came from.



■ Essex County Council – Supporting People £262,187	■ Tendring District Council £24,763
■ Accommodation Charges £223,840	■ Colchester Borough Council £23,666
■ North East Essex PCT £63,177	■ Donations £12,680
■ BBC Children in Need £33,531	■ Lloyds TSB Foundation £10,220
■ Early Years and Childcare – Every Child Matters £29,437	■ Garfield Weston Foundation £10,000
■ Henry Smith Charity £26,800	■ Other Income £8,009
■ Local Priority Fund £25,492	

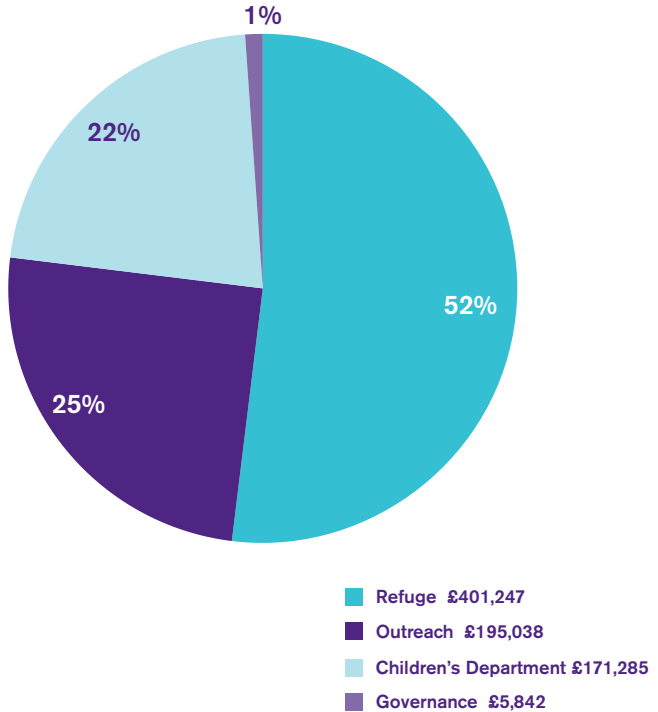
This summarised information has been extracted from the full audited accounts of Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge, for the year ended 31st March 2011 and they may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity.

Further information and copies of the full audited accounts can be obtained from Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge, PO Box 40, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2XJ or via the website. Telephone number: 01206 500 585. The full audited accounts were approved by the Trustees on 29 June 2011 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and Registrar of Companies. The audit report thereon was unqualified.

A summary of financial activities

Resources expended

The Refuge spent £773,412 in 2010/11 (compared with £693,854 in the previous year). Where that money went is illustrated in the pie chart below. 99% was Direct Charitable Expenditure.



Auditor's report to the members of Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge

We have examined the summarised information, which has been extracted from the full audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011. In our opinion, this summarised information is consistent with the full audited accounts.

Ramon Lee & Partners *registered auditors, chartered accountants*
Kemp House, 152-160 City Road, London EC1V 2DW

Continuing operations None of the company's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above two financial periods.

Total recognised gains and losses The company has no recognised gains or losses other than the above movement in funds for the above two financial periods.

Funders

CTWR would like to thank most warmly all those who have given grants and made voluntary donations this year. Our apologies to anyone accidentally missed off the list.

BBC Children in Need	LankellyChase Foundation
Colchester Borough Council	Local Priority Fund
Essex Community Foundation	Lloyds TSB
Essex County Council 'Every Child Matters'	North East Essex NHS
Garfield Weston	North East Essex PCT
'Have a Heart Essex'	Supporting People
Henry Smith Charity (managed by Essex Community Foundation)	Tendring District Council

Donors

Acorn Pressurisation Services Ltd	Lexden Methodist Church
Asda and 'Have a Heart'	Linus Project
Christmas Gift Appeal	Lion Walk United Reformed Church
Mrs Bailey	Little Horkesley Women's Institute
Mr P Birdseye	Uta Luff
Georgia Blue, Colchester Sixth Form College	Lush
Helena Bonham Carter	'Mates' Friends of the Community
Alison & Steve Buttery	Mr & Mrs McLewin
All Saints with St Cedd's Church	Mercury Theatre
Castle Methodist Church	Mersea Island Lion Club
Colchester Borough Homes	Mothers Union Essex
Colchester Conservative Club	Mrs Sheena Parsons
Colchester Free Church	Mrs R Quaintance
Colchester General Hospital (via Graham Appleton)	Clare Ratcliffe
Colchester Institute	Katie Raymond
Colchester Ladies Circle	Eunice Riddleston
Colchester Rotary Club Centurion	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Jean Curtis	St Andrew's Church, Chelmsford
Mary Daw	St Peter & St Paul
Essex & Suffolk Quilters	Sainsbury's
Fingringhoe Methodist Church	Soroptimist International
Clarissa Ford & Anna Fairgrieve	Sparling, Benham & Brough
Highwoods Methodist Church	Hilda Taylor
The Inner Wheel Club of Wivenhoe and Colchester	TROGS (The Rather Older Group of Soroptimists)
Mrs K Johnson (via Dovercourt Women's Institute)	Hanna Tudor (Natural Health Aceville Publications)
Mrs Barbara Knight	West Bergholt Methodist Church (Rev Ruth Ridge)
Mrs D Legall	Sally Whiteman
Mrs Karen Levy	Wormingford Vicarage

CTWR has joined **JustTextGiving** enabling donations to be made by mobile phone.

The number to text is 70070 and our code is CTWR11. Specific amounts of £1, £2, £3, £4 £5 or £10 can be donated.

For example, to donate £10, text 70070 with the message CTWR11 £10.

As a curator of community history I am committed to telling the stories of people who have traditionally been under-represented in our collections and displays. In 2010 we successfully applied for funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to work with people who have experienced homelessness in Colchester.

We wanted to raise public awareness about the Refuge's work supporting women and children forced to leave their homes because of domestic violence. It was important to show that people don't have to be living on the streets to be homeless.

The original idea was to make a quilt. However, during the course of ten weeks of workshops, the piece evolved into a textile tapestry of memories and emotions. 'Life's Rich Tapestry' was created by eighteen women from the Refuge coffee morning group working with the artist Alison Stockmarr. It weaves together the women's stories and experiences through their own words and photographs.

The artwork incorporates symbols of the women's lives, reflecting their past and present experiences and their hopes for the future. Participants used personal and representational photographs as well as special objects which they scanned and transferred on to fabric pieces. Many women had brought nothing with them into the Refuge, yet they had photographs in their wallets or on their mobile phones. An image created by Sheila is particularly poignant: a cheque written to her abusive partner for £50,000 in payment for her freedom.

Many women chose to focus on happy times, but others used the process to discuss painful and difficult memories. This inevitably became a cathartic exercise. The photo fragments provide glimpses of individual stories, but stitched together they represent the significance of the Refuge and the importance of the friendships formed there. The finished piece reflects the personalities of all the people who contributed.

'Life's Rich Tapestry' was exhibited in the Hollytrees Museum, Colchester from May to 4 September 2011. It will be permanently displayed at the Refuge.

Sweden is often cited as a model of social equality, but it has the highest rate of reported rapes per head of population in Europe, at 46.5 per 100,000 population (Lovett & Kelly, 2009). That figure is almost twice the rate in England and Wales, where rape reporting is also considered to be high.

Yet far from indicating a low level of female empowerment, that figure actually suggests that women in Sweden are more ready to come forward to the authorities if they feel they have been violated. In Stockholm, many of those women end up at the country's only dedicated rape crisis clinic. Lotti Helström, a senior consultant at the clinic, which is based in a discreet wing of the sprawling hospital on Södermalm island, explained: 'In Sweden we have a high number of reports to the police about rape. But many of those rapes wouldn't ever be reported in other countries where it would be regarded as the woman's own fault and she wouldn't have a chance in the system.'

The way sexual violence is dealt with in Sweden has been greatly influenced by a long-standing tradition of gender equality and a well-established women's rights movement. As a result, the legal definition of rape is somewhat wider than in other countries. Indeed, Sweden was one of the first countries to criminalise marital rape in 1965.

The current definition of rape in Sweden is forcing someone to have sexual intercourse (or a comparable sexual act) by the use of violence or threat. Under Swedish law, the term 'rape' includes other acts which might be defined as bodily harm or sexual assault in other countries. There is currently a review investigating whether the law should be replaced by a consent-based definition, rather than having to prove that the perpetrator threatened or forced his victim. There are hopes that this might go some way towards increasing the conviction rate for rape in Sweden, which, despite everything, remains one of the lowest in Europe at 10 per cent.

One person who knows the system only too well is Anna Kallden, who was treated at the Stockholm rape crisis clinic on a number of occasions when she and her children were living with

her abusive partner. Now she's left him and found a uniquely Swedish way of dealing with her past. She is adamant that she doesn't want to be treated like a stereotypical victim, downtrodden and ashamed. Rather, she wants society to see her as an expert. She stresses that she's a normal woman with a full family life and successful career.

Kallden has teamed up with the Red Cross and formed an organisation to use 'survivor's experiences' to educate those who work with abuse victims. She has also set up an online forum to encourage others to come forward and speak out about abuse to help victims realise that they are not alone. Part of the solution, she thinks, is for women to talk more openly and frankly about sexual violence in order to take away the stigma of abuse.

'The problem is not typically Swedish, but the solution I think is part of me being a Swede,' Kallden said. 'Because we have a history of working with women's empowerment a bit earlier than some other countries. So it's like a legacy: I think we can be upfront.'

Joanna Impey, the daughter of one of our volunteers, is a radio journalist working in Germany. In early 2011 she visited Stockholm to report on the Swedish approach to dealing with victims of sexual violence.



The importance of collaboration

Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable

Kenyan proverb

Essex Women's Aid (formerly Refuge Essex) is a partnership of independent refuges whose members are the chairs and chief executive officers of refuges in Essex, Thurrock and Southend. Each refuge has unique characteristics, strengths and expertise, but we also recognise the need to work together as one body. In the current economic climate it is particularly important that we collaborate to ensure that cuts in funding do not diminish our ability to provide support for women and children affected by domestic violence.

Together we can campaign to raise awareness among the general public and statutory agencies about our services. We can share best practice and expertise. We can work with decision-making bodies in the statutory sector to ensure that responses to domestic violence in Essex are appropriate and adequately resourced.

We have lobbied MPs and tabled questions in the House of Commons on the impact of the cuts on domestic violence services. We have forged links with local authorities so that we are in a strong position regarding the commissioning of services and we have met a national representative of Women's Aid to look at ways of working together. We need to maintain our core beliefs and keep our public persona alive to represent the rights and needs of the women we serve and provide the best possible support for them.

As the chair of Essex Women's Aid, I am continually impressed by the degree of experience and passion that members of the group convey. We are determined to continue to reject all forms of domestic violence and any attempts to justify it, as well as any attempts to cut the funding that supports the women and children forced to live with it.

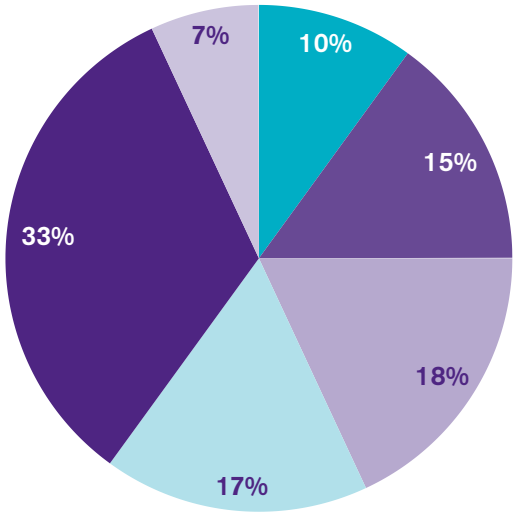
The statistics below relate to the six refuges in Essex, namely Basildon, Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring, Harlow (now called Safer Places and incorporating Southend) and Thurrock.

	2010–11	2009–10
Total number of women accommodated	635	664
Total number of children accommodated	775	701

Age of the residents

The age of most of the women in the refuges was between 19 and 45 years (87%). The number of children under 5 years was the same as that between 5 and 11 years. Between them they represent 84% of the children. Nearly all the remainder were 12 to 16 (15%) with less than 1% aged 17 to 18.

Length of stay

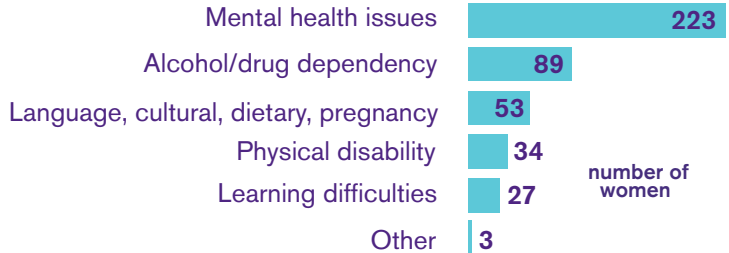


- Less than 1 week
- 1 week to 1 month
- 1 month up to 3 months
- 3 months up to 6 months
- 6 months up to 1 year
- 1 year or over

Nearly 48% of women stayed in a refuge for over three months and 33% for over six months, which is very similar to the figures for 2009–10.

Additional support needs – women

There has been a considerable increase in the number of women with mental health issues from 148 in 2009–10 to 223 in 2010–11 and a drop in alcohol/drug dependency from 89 to 52. Women living with domestic abuse commonly suffer from depression and loss of self-esteem, leading them to need help with mental health problems. The multicultural status of many of the women can lead to language, dietary and pregnancy issues.

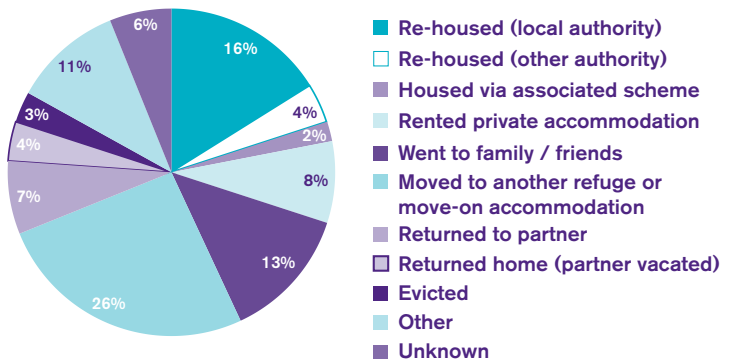


Additional support needs – children

12% of the children were on a Child Protection Plan and 26% were either receiving social work support or had been referred for it. 42% of the children had suffered abuse of some kind – sexual, physical or emotional.

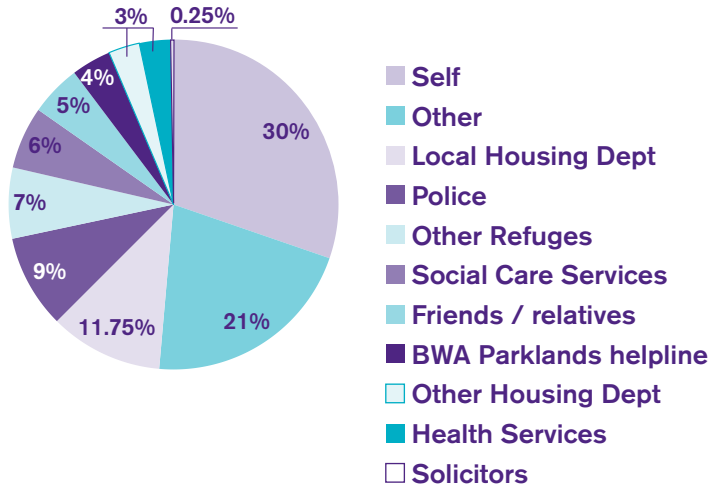
Action on leaving

There is very little change from 2009–10, with the vast majority of women making a fresh start – even fewer women returned home to their partner this year (36 compared with 49).



Sources of referral

The trend has not changed greatly over recent years with self referral being the largest source.



Outreach and Floating Support services

Outreach offers advice, help and counselling to women living in an abusive relationship who are unable or choose not to leave their homes. The number of women accessing outreach services has dropped slightly this year, after a steady rise in the last few years. However the figure for 2010–11 was still 37% higher than in 2007–08.

	2010–11	2009–10	2008–09	2007–08
Number of clients accessing Outreach services	1332	1405	1374	973

The number of floating support clients has risen from 208 families re-settled back into the community in 2009–10 to 250 in 2010–11.

Basildon Women's Aid

PO Box 41
Basildon
SS14 0ND
Tel: 01268 581 591
Fax: 01268 581 791
Email: refuge@basildonwa.org
Website: www.basildonwa.org
Manager: Lyn Headley

Braintree Women's Aid

PO Box 4128
Braintree
CM7 5QP
Tel: 01376 321 720
Fax: 01376 329 967
Email: janice@bwaid.co.uk
Manager to be appointed

Chelmsford Women's Aid

PO Box 2538
Chelmsford
CM1 1AP
Tel: 01245 493 114
Fax: 01245 496 253
Email: refuge@chelmsfordwa.co.uk
www.chelmsfordwa.co.uk
Manager: Nes Mitchell

Colchester & Tendring Women's Refuge

PO Box 40
Colchester
CO1 2XJ
Tel: 01206 500 585
Fax: 01206 500 325
Email: info@colchester-refuge.org.uk
Website: www.colchester-refuge.org.uk
Executive Director: Ann Taylor

For Women Centre

(CTWR outreach service)
Tel: 01206 867 120

Harlow: Safer Places

PO Box 2489
Harlow
CM18 6WZ
Tel: 0845 0177 668 (24 hour line)
0845 0743 216 (Head Office)
Email: info@saferplaces.co.uk
Website: www.saferplaces.co.uk
Chief Executive: Janet Dalrymple

Southend

(See Harlow: Safer Places above)

The Dove Project

4 West Road
Westcliff on Sea
SS0 9DA
Tel: 01702 302 333

Fledglings

Tel: 01702 343 868

SHE Helpline

Tel: 01702 300 006
24 hour service

Thurrock Women's Aid

PO Box 32
Thurrock
RM17 6HN
Tel: 01375 845 899
Fax: 01375 845 869
Email: info@thurrock-wa.org
Website: www.thurrock-wa.org
Manager: Erica Jenkins

Domestic Violence National Helpline:

Tel: 0808 2000 247

ChildLine

For children experiencing problems
such as abuse or bullying
Tel: 0800 11 11
www.childline.org.uk
www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk

The Hideout

Website helping children and young
people understand domestic abuse and
offering advice
www.thehideout.org.uk

ManKind Initiative

For male victims of domestic abuse
Tel: 01823 334 244
www.mankind.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

Helpline for men experiencing
abusive relationships
Tel: 0808 801 0327
www.mensadvice.org.uk

Domestic violence is not a marginal social issue. We will continue to campaign to eradicate it. We believe we owe this to all the women who continue to experience such violence.



I like the children's worker because when I am upset they make me feel happy again.

(On the back the child has drawn a picture of the Refuge with two figures labelled 'me', 'Karen' [Children's Support Worker] and the word 'happy')

The Refuge

Colchester and Tendring

01206 500 585

advice support accommodation 24 hours

Patrons: Ruth Rendell
Amanda Root

Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge Ltd

PO Box 40

Colchester

Essex CO1 2XJ

tel 01206 500 585

fax 01206 500 325

email info@colchester-refuge.org.uk

www.colchester-refuge.org.uk

Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge is a registered charity, no. 1058295
Registered company no. 2266883 England