



What is a domestic violence refuge?

Basic info

Regulation 75H of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 says that Category 3 specified accommodation is:

- Accommodation which -
 - (a) is provided by a relevant authority or a relevant body to the claimant because the claimant has left the home as a result of domestic violence; and
 - (b) consists of a building, or part of a building, which is used wholly or mainly for the non-permanent accommodation of persons who have left their homes as a result of domestic violence.

“Relevant authority” and “relevant body”

“Relevant authority” is defined in Regulation 2 of the HB Regulations 2006 as “an authority administering housing benefit”. This means any local authority in Great Britain except the county council in an English county where there is still two-tier local government. But English county councils are covered by the term “relevant body” in any case.

A “relevant body” means more or less the same kind of landlord that provides Category 1 exempt accommodation. English county councils are defined in a slightly different way in Reg 75H from how they are defined for Category 1 exempt accommodation, but the distinction is immaterial because as noted above any local authority that is not covered as a “relevant body” is covered as a “relevant authority” instead - therefore any local authority-provided domestic violence refuge is covered by Category 3.

Meaning of domestic violence

Reg 75H defines “domestic violence” as follows:

- “domestic violence” means any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling behaviour, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse, including but not limited to -
 - (a) psychological abuse;
 - (b) physical abuse;
 - (c) sexual abuse;
 - (d) emotional abuse;
 - (e) financial abuse
- regardless of the gender or sexuality of the victim.

“Coercive behaviour” and “controlling behaviour” are further defined:

- “Coercive behaviour” means an act of assault, humiliation or intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim;
- “Controlling behaviour” means an act designed to make a person subordinate or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means



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needed for independence, resistance or escape or regulating their everyday
behaviour.