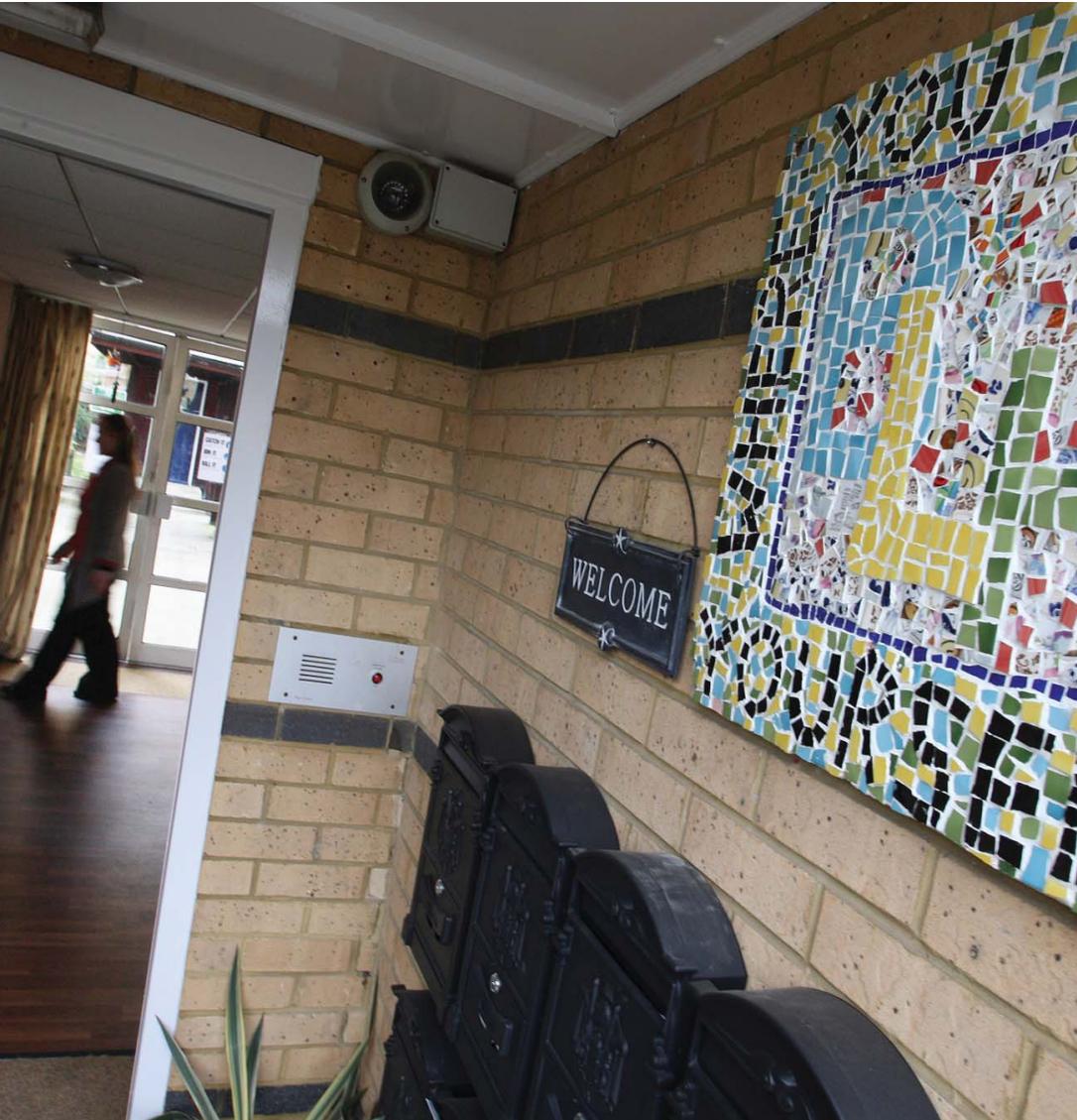




# Beverley Lewis House

A supported housing service that safeguards women with learning disabilities who are at risk of, or fleeing abuse



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**“We cannot change the past, but we can support you for a positive future.”**



## Who we are

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Since 1995 Beverley Lewis House has provided women with learning disabilities temporary accommodation and specialised support to help them escape domestic violence or other forms of abuse.

This unique service is currently the only refuge in the UK that is available to women with learning disabilities who may also have other special needs including mental health problems or physical disabilities.

Accommodation in our purpose built house is provided for up to two years, and during this time individuals are given the help and support they need to overcome the trauma of abuse and rebuild their lives.

Beverley Lewis House exists today thanks to organisations Powerhouse and East Thames Group, who supported a group of women with learning disabilities to turn their idea for Beverley Lewis House into reality.

## What we do

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Beverley Lewis House (BLH) is a specialist housing project, which provides a safe environment for women with learning disabilities, who might also have additional or complex needs.

We provide 24 hour support and safeguarding for vulnerable women who have experienced domestic violence or some form of abuse and need help to recuperate, work through their distress and develop strategies for personal safety.

Sometimes, the impact of abuse affects how an individual responds to support services, so our friendly and professional staff take a multi-agency approach and work closely with a range of specialists to ensure each woman is safeguarded and receives support for her specific needs, along with opportunities for personal development to build her confidence.

We respect the dignity, rights and independence of each woman by ensuring she has choice in managing her support and privacy to get on with her life.





## Who can use our service?

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- Women aged 18-65 are eligible for referral if they have a learning disability and have been diagnosed with having other support needs, owing to physical disability, sensory impairment or borderline mental health issues.
- The individual will also have experienced, or be at risk of, domestic violence or other forms of abuse.

Please note: our service does not extend to any children the woman might have.



## How does the service work?

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### Step one: Learning

Our specialist team work with each individual to help them understand their abuse and then move to build self confidence so that they can develop their potential.

We run a range of regular workshops to give women the life skills they need to protect themselves and live more independently, covering topics such as:

- personal safety planning
- sexual health
- relationship management
- general health and well being (healthy cooking, exercise and relaxation)
- behaviour management
- home management
- benefits and budgeting



## Step two: Growing

At BLH, women are encouraged to have a say in the day-to-day running of their home. By empowering them to make their own choices, we can help them develop skills to build their independence and raise their aspirations for when they leave BLH.

## Step three: Supporting

### *'Your helping hand'*

Each tenant at BLH is given a support officer to work with her every step of the way to make sure she receives the care and support she needs.

Support officers meet weekly with individuals and introduce them to a range of services that will help them grow, including: health, education, employment and social and leisure opportunities.

Support officers also provide information on local counselling and advocacy services to support individuals to recover from their abuse.

## A warm new home

BLH is a bright, modern home designed for comfort and containing a range of important amenities.

We have six self contained two-bedroom flats, two of which are wheelchair accessible on the ground floor.

The communal house facilities include:

- fully equipped kitchen
- lounge and dining rooms
- laundry room
- resources room; includes a computer, internet access and a library
- spacious garden





### With safety and security

Each resident receives a key to their own room and the front door of their flat. Our building has robust safety measures in place, including:

- intercom system for entry to the house
- 24 hour CCTV surveillance
- support staff available 24 hours a day
- a confidential address to safeguard tenants

### In a friendly neighbourhood

BLH is located in a friendly neighbourhood that has many shops, community groups and things for you to do, just a short stroll or bus ride from your flat.



### Our history, our values

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Beverley Lewis House has turned one woman's struggle to get the support she needed, into a positive safe haven that helps vulnerable women in distress.

Beverly Lewis was a black deaf-blind woman with learning disabilities. Her difficult life ended at the tender age of 23, when her mother's severe mental illness prevented her from providing Beverley with care and support.

Beverley was found wrapped in newspaper and weighing less than five stone. Her family asked authorities to help but they weren't able to act in time to prevent her death.

Since 1995, the memory of Beverley has lived on through Beverley Lewis House, where women in a similar situation to Beverley's can get the support they need to escape abuse or and build a better life for themselves.



## Referrals

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BLH is a national service based in London that any local authority can refer into.

### Emergency referrals

We are able to take emergency referrals by phone 24 hours a day, to provide immediate accommodation for women in high risk situations. To find out more, call us on 0207 473 2813.

### Steps for referrals:

1. Phone BLH with your referral
2. If the applicant meets our initial criteria, BLH will do a 'risk and needs assessment'
  - In emergency referrals, the applicant can move in immediately, before the assessment takes place
  - In planned referrals, the assessment will take place before the applicant moves in

3. From the assessment outcomes, we then decide: **can her needs can be met by our service?**

- a. If they can, her tenancy becomes official and we will create a detailed support programme for the rest of her stay
- b. If her needs cannot be met by our service, we will assist with finding more suitable accommodation

### Things to consider:

- **Prepare:** get the informed consent of the woman and confirm her social worker will work in partnership with BLH
- **Meet:** you can also make a time for the woman and/or her advocate to meet with us and view BLH



## A part of a bigger picture

The East Thames Group is a registered social landlord and social regeneration charity working across east London and Essex since 1979. We provide support services through a part of our business called East Living. Our mission is 'to make a positive and lasting contribution to the neighbourhoods in which we work'.

Our care and support schemes benefit from the experience and wide range of services available through the Group's housing developments, community services and social regeneration projects.

## Contact us today

tel: 0207 473 2813  
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[www.east-living.co.uk/blh](http://www.east-living.co.uk/blh)

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east LIVING

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