



Safer Seven

On: Coercive Control



1. Introduction

Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour.

The offence carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a fine.

Coercive control is a **purposeful pattern of incidents** which takes place over time in order for one individual to **exert power, control or coercion over another**

It describes a variety of controlling acts that can include manipulation, intimidation, sexual coercion and '*gaslighting*' (when a victim is manipulated into questioning their own memory, perceptions and sanity).

3. What is Personally Connected

Individuals are 'Personally Connected' if they:

- Are in an **intimate** personal relationship
- Have previously been in an intimate personal relationship
- **Live** together
- Are members of the **same family**

While coercive control legislation is focussed around the above definition, it is important to remember that this behaviour can also be used in other situations to abuse and exploit individuals

5. Examples of Coercive control

Coercive control can include a range of behaviours such as:

- Monitoring of time, movements, and online activity
- Unreasonable behaviour or petty demands
- Degradation – continuous name-calling or bullying
- Restricting or controlling daily activities
- Isolation from friends, family, and support networks
- Financial control – monitoring of spending or giving an 'allowance'
- Deprivation of basic needs
- Destruction of possessions
- Threats to hurt or kill the victim or others around them

2. Background

The offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was introduced specifically to capture abuse in a relationship where the individuals are 'personally connected'

A person commits an offence if:

- They repeatedly or continuously engage in behaviour towards another person that is controlling or coercive;
- At the time of the behaviour they are **personally connected**;
- The behaviour has a serious effect on that person **and**
- **The** person knows or ought to know that the behaviour will have a serious effect

4. What is Coercive control

- **Controlling behaviour** - is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- **Coercive behaviour** - is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

6. What to do

- Adopt an understanding, non-judgemental, supportive attitude
- Recognise signs and how victims may present
- Risk assess the situation
- Signpost and/or refer to Dudley borough's single point of contact 01384 455411, text or WhatsApp 07384 466181 (9am to 9pm weekdays),
- Refer to Children's Social Care if children are in the household.
- Record all information accurately

7. Further information:

<https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/help-hub>

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