

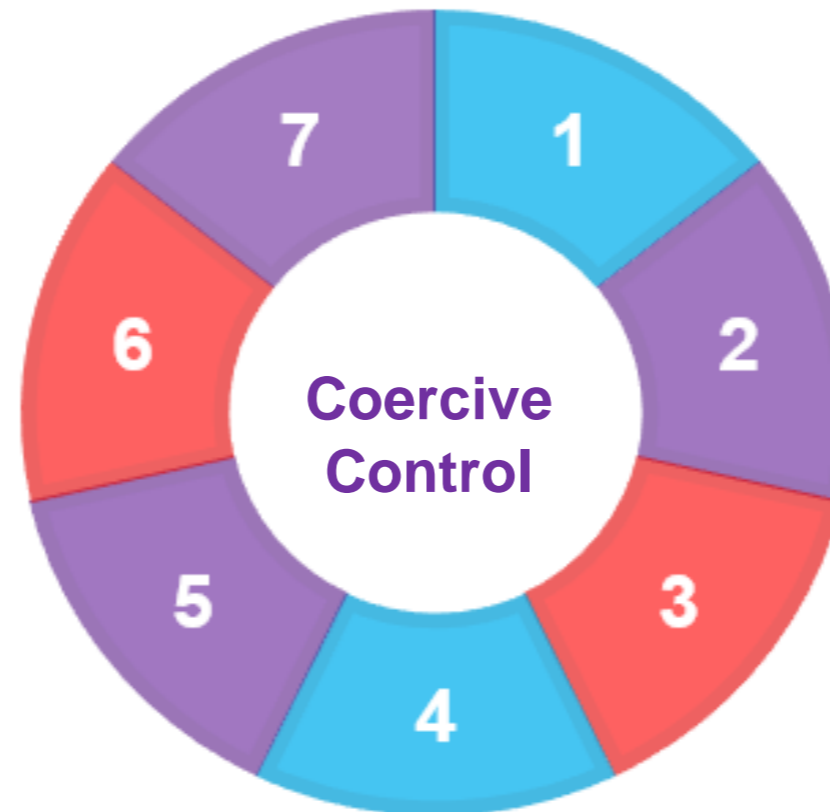
7 MINUTE BRIEFING

Coercive Control



**KNOWSLEY
SAFEGUARDING
ADULTS BOARD**

PREVENTION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP



1. What is coercive control/ behaviour?

Coercive control is a term used to describe a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victims sense of liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self.

Coercive behaviours are repeated or continuous acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.” (This definition includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.)

2. What is controlling behaviour?

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.

Victims of controlling behaviour, their family or professionals do not always realise they are a victim.

Across the region, there have been a number of domestic homicides which included coercive control as a key element.

3. Coercive control involves a wide range of controlling acts:

Often coercive control starts through grooming. They may initially provide support and assistance as part of the grooming process to win the trust of their victim.

More controlling acts include:

- Isolation from family & friends
- Manipulation of individual & professionals
- Threats & intimidation
- Sexual coercion
- Humiliation, degrading, dehumanising acts

4. Coercive control acts, continued:

- Depriving access to support or medical services
- Controlling finances, limiting access to money
- Repeatedly putting a person down
- Controlling aspects of daily life- where they go, who they see, wear, sleep
- Monitoring phone & online activity
- Depriving basic needs, i.e., sleep or food
- Threats to children or pets
- Gaslighting- a form of psychological abuse, the victim is manipulated into doubting their own memory, perception & sanity

5. Impact on the person

The impact of the control on the person may include:

- Lack of confidence & self esteem
- Feelings of shame
- Feeling trapped
- Powerless
- Use of drugs & alcohol to feel better
- Doubting own memory & abilities
- Physical injuries
- Fear of what they might do next
- Impact on children- physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse

6. Coercive control & the law:

- Coercive & controlling behaviour in intimate or familial relationships is an offence under The Serious Crime Act 2015
- It is a purposeful pattern of behaviour which takes place over time in order for one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another
- The pattern of behaviour has to have a serious effect on the person- caused to fear violence on at least two occasions OR they have been caused serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on the victim’s usual day-to-day activities

7. Further Information:

- Knowsley Council: [Support with Domestic Abuse](#)
- The First Step, Knowsley: <https://thefirststep.org.uk/>
- Women’s Aid: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/>
- Coercive & controlling behaviour, statutory guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482528/Controlling_or_coercive_behaviour_-_statutory_guidance.pdf