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What is it?

Coercive control is a term used to describe a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's sense of liberty or freedom.

This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour

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Coercive control is:

A form of domestic abuse. Many perpetrators never use physical violence.

Some may use what is best described as minor assaultive violence such as pushing, grabbing and/or getting "up in a victim's face".

Others may threaten physical violence.

Some may follow through on these threats, but only when they are losing control over the victim

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Grooming.

Often coercive control starts through grooming to win the trust of their victim.

This will then lead to a pattern of behaviour including:

Isolating a person from their friends and family; depriving them of their basic needs; monitoring their time; repeatedly putting them down such as telling them they are worthless; controlling the finances; threats to hurt or kill.

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The Law

On 29th December 2015 the offence of Coercive Control came into force and applies to behaviour that has happened since that date.

It enables charges to be brought in domestic abuse cases where there is evidence of repeated controlling or coercive behaviour and carries a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

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Law UPDATE:

On 5th April 2023 the law was amended, and the controlling and coercive behaviour offence removed the 'living together' requirement.

New statutory guidance has been published.

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Additional information

For more information check on Coercive and control please check Luton Tri.X Local Resources and the Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding space - <https://panbedfordshiresabs.trixonline.co.uk/> In addition, check the safeguarding Adults and children from DA practice Guidance (reviewed)

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What is the impact?

Coercive control reduces a victim's power to make decisions, which limits the ability to exercise independence, making it difficult to break away from the abuser.

It can lead to: Increased levels of suicide, self-harm, and substance misuse; deterioration of mental health; risks to children in the family including emotional and physical abuse.

