

Coercive Control

CONSIDER & DISCUSS

- Do you know enough about coercive and controlling behaviour to recognise it?
- Are you clear about the impact on adults and children of coercive and controlling behaviour?

For more information visit the resource hub on the MSB website at www.manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk

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 pattern of behaviour which seeks to undermine a person's self-esteem or sense of self and restrict or remove their liberty or freedom. It describes a variety of controlling acts including manipulation, intimidation, sexual coercion, gaslighting (a form of psychological abuse in which a victim is manipulated into doubting their own memory and sanity).

WHY IT MATTERS

The legislation closes a gap around patterns of coercive & controlling behaviour in relationships between:

- intimate partners
- former partners who still live together
- family members.

This **does not** relate to a single incident. It is a pattern of behaviour that takes place over time, in order for one person to exert power, control or coercion over another. The perpetrator knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour will have a serious effect on the victim.

WHAT TO DO

- observe the evidence of coercive control
- adopt an understanding, non-judgemental, supportive attitude
- recognise the impact and how victims may present
- record your observations.

Remember that individual behaviours add up to cumulative effect.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- risk assess the situation
- signpost and/or refer to support services as relevant - including [Manchester Contact Centre](http://www.manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk)
- triangulate information, for example by checking what the adults or children say.
- financial control – monitoring of spending or giving an 'allowance'
- monitoring of time – stalking of movements
- removal of mobile phone or changing passwords
- deprivation of food
- destruction of possessions
- deprivation of the means needed for independence, resistance or escape
- controlling dress code
- behavioural control
- sexual coercion.

Remember that individual behaviours can add up to a cumulative effect

WHAT IS COERCIVE CONTROL?

Coercive control is exerted by a range of behaviours such as:

- unreasonable behaviour or petty demands
- degradation – malicious name-calling, or bullying behaviour
 - restricting daily activities – isolated from support
 - threats or intimidation if the victim doesn't comply

