

Tool for assessing coercive control

This tool should be used where the Safe Lives DASH has identified elements of coercive and/or controlling behaviour in the relationship in order to assess this dynamic more fully in the context of the application.

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. Coercive control involves repeated, ongoing, intentional tactics which are used to limit the liberty of the victim. Those tactics may or may not necessarily be physical. They can be sexual, economic, psychological, legal, institutional, or all of these. By deploying these tactics the abuser can create a world where the victim is constantly monitored or criticised and every move and action checked. Victims often describe coercive control as not being 'allowed', or having to ask permission, to do everyday things; and being in constant fear of not meeting the abusers expectations or complying with their demands. The term walking on eggshells is often used.

For additional reference and information:

- [Learning and Development coercive control knowledge bite](#)
- [Home Office statutory guidance framework on controlling or coercive behaviours](#)
- [Women's Aid's toolkit for talking to young people about coercive control](#)

Note on Gender

Research both nationally and internationally is clear that victims of coercive control are overwhelmingly female and the perpetrators are male, whereas situational couple abuse has greater gender symmetry. For those using this tool where men are victims of coercive control, the tool should be used with full knowledge of the current research base as above and relevant gender notes included as appropriate.

Tool for Identification of Coercive Control

Restricting freedom	Always	To some extent	Never
My partner isolated me from family and friends			
My partner told me what to wear			
I was not allowed to go out without permission			
I was not allowed to use the car			
Medical care was denied to me or to the children			
I had to account for my time when I had been out			
My partner was jealous about who I spoke to when I was out			
I was accused of having affairs			
I was deprived of basic needs/food/sleep			
My partner tracked my phone location to monitor my whereabouts			
My partner monitored my messages, e mails and social media account			
Other identified behaviours			
Notes on gender if relevant			
Emotional abuse	Always	To some extent	Never
My partner belittled and abused me in front of the children			
My partner insulted me in front of family and friends			
My partner insulted my appearance			
My partner called me names and swore at me			
My partner had rules which I had to follow			
My partner withdrew affection			
My partner threatened to find me if I left			
My partner did not let me tend to the children			
My partner told me I was stupid or crazy			
My partner instructed the children to abuse me			
Other identified behaviours			
Notes on gender if relevant			
Intimidation and threats	Always	To some extent	Never
My partner physically abused me			
My partner used the threat of physical abuse to control me			
My partner changed their mood for no reason			
My partner destroyed my or the children's possessions			
My partner threatened to harm or did harm the children as a punishment to me			
My partner threatened to or did ruin planned events			
My partner threatened to take the children away			

My partner threatened to kill me in a way which made me believe it			
My partner raped me			
My partner humiliated me sexually			
My partner abused the family pet			
My partner drove the car in a reckless manner			
My partner blamed me for making them angry			
Other identified behaviours			
Notes on gender if relevant			
Economic abuse	Always	To some extent	Never
My partner denied me money			
I was not allowed to spend money on myself or the children			
I had to account for everything I spent			
I had to ask for basic necessities			
My partner spent money on themselves only			
I was kept in the dark as to our finances			
My partner went through my belongings for evidence of spending			
Other identified behaviours			
Notes on gender if relevant			

Assessment

The assessor will talk through the form with the victim and determine the nature and intensity of the behaviours and ask relevant questions around current perceptions and safety. The purpose of this task is to consider how the disclosed/ alleged behaviours may still be affecting the victim either as a current risk (ie they are ongoing), or whether the impact is more psychologically affecting and the victim still feels controlled or coerced.

The tool should be used to establish the risk with regard to the following factors:

- The nature of the behaviour and primary perpetrator
- The extent to which these factors **were** present in the relationship

Your assessment should establish:

- The extent to which these factors **remain** present in the relationship
- The current risk to victim and child
- The impact on parenting capacity
- The impact on the child
- Mitigating protective factors

This tool is a guide only. It is to be used in conjunction with complementary tools and as part of a holistic assessment process.