

## What is domestic abuse?

Any incident or pattern of incidents involving controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between individuals aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender, age, or sexuality.

Many people think that domestic abuse is about intimate partners, but it is clear that other family members are included. Much of the safeguarding work conducted at home is related to domestic abuse.

Abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, and financial.

## Spotting the signs of domestic abuse

Sometimes, it can be difficult to think of yourself as a victim of abuse. This diagram demonstrates how perpetrators use power and control over their victims. It can be applied to both males and females.



## **What is coercive control?**

Domestic abuse is not always physical abuse. Coercive control is a pattern of behaviour that aims to threaten, humiliate, intimidate, punish or frighten their victim.

They may use other controlling behaviours to make a person dependent by isolating them from their family or support, depriving them of independence and going about their everyday lives.

Coercive control is a recognised criminal offence. It creates a sense of fear that impacts all elements of a victim's life.

### Spotting the signs of coercive control

- Isolating them from friends and family.
- Making them feel that people do not care about them and that they can only depend on them.
- Depriving them of basic needs, such as food.
- Monitoring their time.
- Monitoring them via online tools/cameras.
- Taking control over aspects of their everyday life, such as where they can go, who they can see, what they can wear and when they can sleep.
- Depriving them access to support services, such as medical services.
- Repeatedly putting them down, such as saying they're worthless.
- Humiliating, degrading or dehumanising them.
- Controlling their finances.
- Making threats or intimidating them.

## **What is honour-based abuse?**

Honour-based abuse is a crime or incident that has been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.

Honour-based abuse can include:

- Domestic abuse perpetrated by family members, including coercion, psychological abuse and threatening behaviour.
- Forced marriage.
- Female genital mutilation.
- Sexual abuse/harassment.
- Preventing a person's freedom or restricting their contact with others/isolating from others.

## **What is stalking?**

Stalking is classed as any behaviour from another person that is persistent, unwanted, and harassing; anything that causes any fear or anxiety. Some examples can include unwanted or malicious communications, unwanted attention, watching or following someone or loitering where the person frequents, monitoring usage of

someone's internet, email or other electronic communications, and damaging a person's property.

In many stalking cases, the victim will know the stalker (such as a partner or ex-partner for example). However, there have been cases where the victim does not know the offender.

In some cases, stalking can escalate to physical abuse. If you feel that you are a victim of stalking or harassment, you should contact the police.

### **What is Clare's law?**

It's a domestic violence disclosure scheme (also known as Clare's law). Under the scheme, an individual can ask police to check whether a new or existing partner has a violent or abusive past. This is the 'right to ask'.

If records show that an individual may be at risk of domestic abuse from a partner, the police will consider disclosing the information if it is legal, proportionate and necessary to do so.

'Right to know' enables an agency to apply for a disclosure if the agency believes that an individual is at risk of domestic violence from their partner. The police can release information if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.