

What is the Definition of Coercive Control?

“Coercive control 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.

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”

What are the Issues in being able to advice a client in this situation?

In a word, proof. How does an individual prove to any external organisation- for example SSDC (Homelessness application) or Solicitors (legal aid) - that they are suffering Domestic Abuse?

Before Starting this Process Speak to a Supervisor

What should our Advice be at the Start?

Step 1 - Establish if there is an emergency

In the case of the client describing Coercive Control (Emotional, Financial, Psychological) it is unlikely they will say there is a risk of violence. If this was the case they would probably have said that to start with. However, **we must ask them**. The greater risk may be one of being terrified of taking action and/or of self-harm due to mental health issues caused by the abuse. **If this is the case signpost as appropriate from the following and/or ask them to come in:**

- Police - 999 or text phoning 0800 112 999.
- Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123
- SIDAS - 0800 69 49 999 <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/somerset-integrated-domestic-abuse-service/>

Note: This page can be translated into different languages via the option at the bottom of the page

- Women’s Aid - Email and Webchat, “Sometimes is it easier to write it down” <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>
- Refuge - 0808 2000 247
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247

Other specific options:

- The Men’s Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327

- The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428

Note: If the client has dropped in but is concerned about making these calls elsewhere then initiate the call and allow the client to speak to whoever in private in an advice room

Step 2 - Establish whether the Client has Capability to Self Help

- Does the Client's abuse situation or mental state prevent them from being able to do tasks such as using the internet or initiating a phone call?
- If the client has accessed initial advice by Telephone, Email, Web chat or WhatsApp would they be better served by dropping in?

Note: If the client needs to drop in we can still provide initial advice via the channel they accessed

Step 3 – Establish if the Client has any Financial Resources

- Does the client work or are they in receipt of benefits?
- If the client has regular income is it going in to their own bank account? Does the abuser have access to this account?

Note: If the client does not have regular income, which is highly likely, then do we need to help them to claim? If so it will be difficult to make a UC claim as a single person at this stage due to the nature of the situation, but it should be done later

Note: Can the Client drop in? Do we need to consider alternative assistance?

Step 4 – Does the Client want to leave their home now?

- This is a step the client has to take on their own (with support)
- Does the Client have somewhere to go, friends or family for example?
- If the Client does not have anywhere else to go then do they need to go to a Refuge? Client can contact SIDAS 0800 69 49 999 or go straight to [Women's Aid](#), 24hr helpline 0808 2000 247

Note: SIDAS may not help in a non-emergency situation

Note: SSDC will not accept a homelessness application unless the Client is in a refuge or has proof of the Domestic Abuse (see below)

Step 5 – Advise the Client to Report the Crime

The client needs to speak to the Police or attend their local Police station and report the crime. **All Domestic Abuse including Coercive Abuse is a crime.** The client does not need evidence at this stage, their statement is evidence.

Note: [Reporting an Offence to the Police \(PDF\) – Rights of Women](#)

Step 6 – Advise the Client to Gather Evidence

- Dates, times and descriptions of abusive incidents for example
- Medical Evidence (mental health issues?)

Step 7 – Advise the Client to Seek Legal Advice

- FLOWS - 0203 745 7707
<https://www.flows.org.uk/>
- Civil Legal Aid Helpline - 0345 345 4 345
<https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice>
- Right of Women Legal Advice Lines
<https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/family-law/>
- Law Society Solicitor Finder (using Legal Aid Criteria)
<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/for-the-public/using-a-solicitor/find-a-solicitor/>

Further Reading (can share with Client where appropriate)

- [Domestic violence and abuse \(EW\)](#)
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/gender-violence/domestic-violence-and-abuse/>
- [8.22.4.0 Domestic violence and abuse \(EW\)](#) (Adviser resource only)
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advisernet/family/ending-a-relationship/how-to-separate/domestic-violence-and-abuse/>
- [Legal Guide to Coercive Control and the Law \(PDF\) – Rights of Women](#)
- [Reporting an Offence to the Police \(PDF\) – Rights of Women](#)
- [What is Coercive Control – Women’s Aid](#)
- [Housing Advice - Shelter](#)

Before Continuing Speak to a Supervisor

