**SAFEGUARDING ADULTS IN CASES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

**COERCION AND CONTROL WITH CONSIDERATION OF MENTAL CAPACITY**

**ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE**

When supporting adults experiencing domestic abuse through coercion and control within the safeguarding arena. There may be missed opportunities, and barriers to engagement, including the adult not recognising the behaviour/s as abusive. Professional curiosity and further exploration of the situation in a safe environment may help the adult to further understand the nature of domestic abuse and help to overcome barriers to accessing support.

When working with this service user group under adult safeguarding consider:

* Is the person living in fear of their partner?
* Are there any indicators (see below) of coercive control?
* Are the person’s decisions their own or made based off the views of their partner to mitigate the risk of another form of abuse?
* Is their ability to make informed choices to protect themselves impaired because of the fear of repercussions from their partner?

Consider the reasons why someone may be refusing/not engaging with support and remember to balance the risks with the persons views. Always consider capacity to make informed decisions and assess where appropriate.

Practitioners need to assess the potential for risks to escalate and safety plan around this. When risks cannot be assessed, liaise with WORTH’s Domestic Abuse Hub for advice.

**Examples of indicators for coercive control**

* Controlling or monitoring the victim’s daily activities (dictating what they can eat, wear and making them account for their time are examples)
* Isolating the victim from family, friends and professionals who may be trying to support them.
* Intercepting messages or phone calls or hindering access to communication
* Preventing the person from taking medications, over medicating them or preventing them to access health or social care.
* Using children to control the person (threatening to take the children away or manipulating professionals).
* Threats of institutionalisation (particularly for disabled victims).

*Further examples can be found in the*[*statutory guidance issued by the government under section 77 of the Serious Crime Act 2015*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482528/Controlling_or_coercive_behaviour_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

**Useful resources:**

**Refuge –** <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/en/Supporting-a-survivor>

**Womens Aid** - <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/>

**Case studies** - <https://coercivecontrol.ripfa.org.uk/case-studies/>

**Statutory guidance on coercion and control -** <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482528/Controlling_or_coercive_behaviour_-_statutory_guidance.pdf>

**Domestic abuse services in West Sussex:**

**WORTH services provide specialist support and advice Monday-Friday 09:00-17:00**

WORTH can be contacted on 0330 222 8181 or WORTH.IDVA.services@westsussex.gov.uk

**Safe in Sussex provide a variety of domestic abuse support services across Sussex, including a helpline, group work and refuge services**

More info can be found here: <https://www.safeinsussex.co.uk/>

**My Sisters House Women’s Centre provide step down and recovery domestic abuse services in Bognor and Chichester**

Information about the services on offer can be found here [www.mysistershouse.info](http://www.mysistershouse.info)