



Home Office



Easy
Read

Controlling or Coercive Behaviour

What you told us



This is an Easy Read version of the
Controlling or Coercive Behaviour
Statutory Guidance Consultation

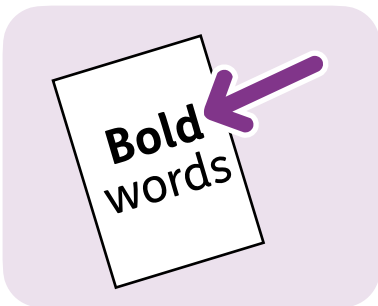
Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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About this booklet



The Government is writing new **statutory guidance** about **controlling or coercive behaviour**.

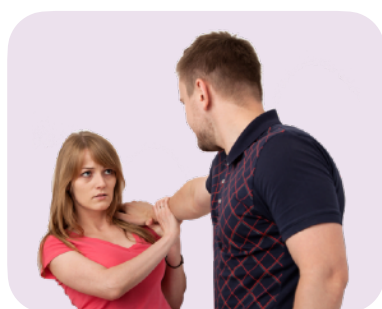


Statutory guidance explains what organisations should do to follow the law.



Controlling or coercive behaviour is when someone tries to:

- Control another person.



- Force another person to do things they do not want to do.



It is a type of domestic abuse - this is when you are harmed by someone you are close to, like a family member.

What people thought



We asked people what they thought of our statutory guidance between April 2022 and June 2022.



We have listened to what people said.



This information explains what we are going to do, based on what people said.

Controlling or coercive behaviour

Controlling or coercive behaviour happens over a long period of time. It can:



- Make people worried or scared.



- Affect people's daily lives.

It can include:



- Controlling a person's money.



- Making them feel bad.

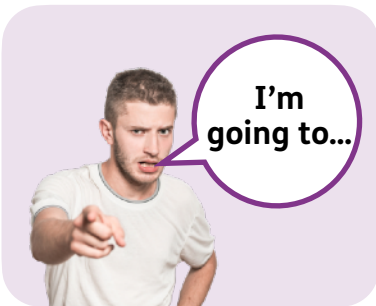
It can also include:



- Controlling how they think.



- Making someone feel bad using technology, like phones or the internet.



- Threatening them.



Controlling or coercive behaviour is a crime.

Someone who does controlling or coercive behaviour can:



- Go to prison.



- Have to pay a large amount of money, called a fine.



We wrote statutory guidance to help organisations follow the law.

These organisations include:



- Organisations that work with victims or people who do controlling or coercive behaviour.



- Services like the police and the courts.

Changing the statutory guidance

Who it can happen to



In 2021, we made a new law called the Domestic Abuse Act.



This new law says that you do not have to live with someone for them to do controlling or coercive behaviour to you.



Instead, it says you must be **'personally connected'**.

'Personally connected' can mean:



- You are, or were, in a relationship.

'Personally connected' can also mean:

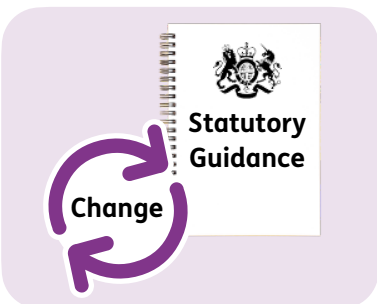


- You have both been parents to a child or had been in charge of looking after that child.



- You are family members.

Statutory Guidance



We want to change the statutory guidance to better fit with the new law.



We want to give organisations clear information about what counts as controlling or coercive behaviour.

We want to give organisations clear information about:



- When people are breaking the law.



- Examples of controlling or coercive behaviour.



- How to find and stop people who have done controlling or coercive behaviour.



- How to keep victims safe.

What people said



115 people told us what they thought.
We heard from people and organisations.



Thank you to everyone who told us what they thought.



There were things that a lot of people talked about.

In the next parts of this booklet, we will explain:



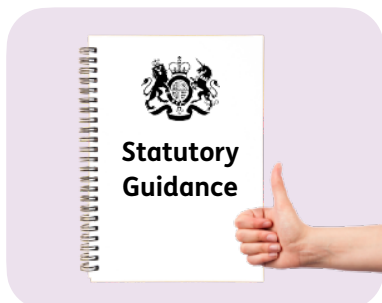
- What people told us about.



- Our response - this is what we think about what they told us, and what we are going to do.

The law

What people said



A lot of people thought it was good that we are changing the statutory guidance.



Some people were worried that the law talks about 'violence'.



They worried that people might think that there needed to be violence for it to be a crime.



They thought it should be changed to 'violent behaviour'.



The law says controlling or coercive behaviour can have a 'serious effect' on people's lives.



But some people said it was not clear enough what counted as a 'serious effect'.

Our response



We have included more detail about what is a 'serious effect', so it is clearer.

We have also:



- Included more detail about different types of 'violent behaviour'.



- Made it clear that controlling or coercive behaviour does not have to include violence.

Training staff

What people said

Some people said that some police officers:



- Mainly think about if someone has been violent when they try to help victims.



- Do not understand controlling or coercive behaviour.



- Might not always take victims seriously.



They thought the police would need training to better spot controlling and coercive behaviour.



They also thought the police would need training to support victims.



Many people said that organisations should get training about the different ways controlling or coercive behaviour happens.



People also said it was important for different organisations to work together to help support victims and their families.

Our response



We have said that police officers should get training to better understand controlling or coercive behaviour.



We will support new police officers to learn about domestic abuse.



£3.3 million

We will spend £3.3 million doing this.



Different organisations will carry on working together to support victims of domestic abuse.

What is or is not controlling or coercive behaviour

What people said

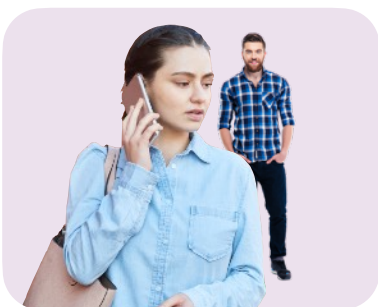


Our new law says that controlling or coercive behaviour can happen after a couple has split up.



But some people said this would make it a lot like other crimes, called **Harassment** and **Stalking**.

Harassment is when someone keeps doing or saying something that makes another person feel scared or not safe.



Stalking is when someone keeps following, watching or contacting another person without the other person agreeing.



They were worried the police might arrest people for the wrong crime.



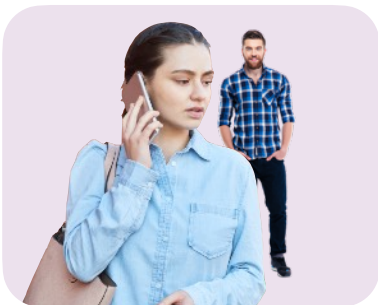
This might mean they do not get punished in the right way.



They wanted us to be clear on the difference between these different crimes.

Our response

We have written more advice on the difference between:



- Stalking.



- Harassment.



We have written more advice on the difference between controlling or coercive behaviour.



This advice will help the police and courts know which crime has happened.



You can read the advice here:
[www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/
controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-
intimate-or-family-relationship](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-intimate-or-family-relationship)



This information is not in Easy Read.

Family court



Family court is a type of court that decides where children will live when their parents have split up.

What people told us

A lot of people said that family court could be used to control or coerce someone. This includes:



- Making the victim go into court when they do not need to.



- Telling lies about the victim.



- Forcing children to spend time with the person doing the controlling or coercive behaviour.



Often victims do not feel they can talk about controlling or coercive behaviour in family court.

Our response



We are looking at how to stop people using family court in the wrong ways.



We have also looked at whether it is right that children have to live with a parent who has done controlling or coercive behaviour.



This is a very complicated issue, so we want to make sure we get it right.

Minority groups



Minority groups are groups of people of the same race or background, in a place where most other people are of a different race or background.

What people said



A lot of people said that people in minority groups are more likely to be victims of controlling or coercive behaviour.

This is because:



- They may not get the same chances as others.



- They find it harder to get help and support than others.



People also said that police needed training on supporting people from different minority groups.

Our response



We know that different people will need different types of support.



In July 2022, we wrote statutory guidance about domestic abuse, which supported services to better help minority groups.



We also wrote a new plan to spend money on supporting victims, including victims from minority groups.



This includes support that is run by people from minority groups.



We will work with local organisations across the country.



They will help us understand what support local groups need.

Migrant victims



Migrants are people who have come to this country from another country.

What people told us



A lot of people said we should do more to support migrant victims of controlling or coercive behaviour.

This includes thinking about:



- What might stop migrants from getting help.



- How people control migrants.



Some people also said that the police should not share information about people with **immigration enforcement**.

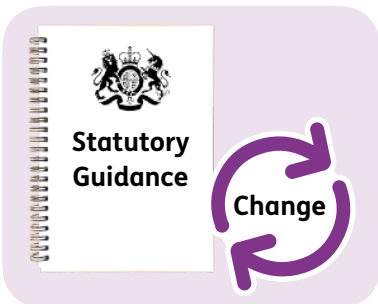


Immigration enforcement is a government service that checks whether people are allowed to live in the UK.



People said that victims might not speak up if they are worried they will be told to leave the UK.

Our response



We have changed our statutory guidance to include more advice about supporting migrants.



This includes examples of the different ways migrants can be controlled, like having their passports taken away.



We have thought about the idea of not sharing information between the police and immigration enforcement.



This is not something we can do.



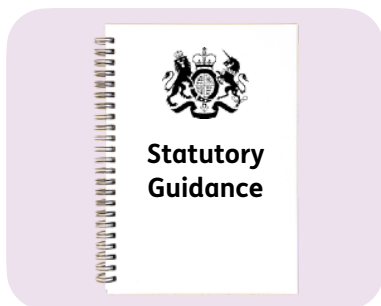
But the Government is going to have new rules to protect migrant victims when they speak up about a crime.

Men and women

What people said



Most victims of controlling or coercive behaviour are women and girls.



We talked about this in our statutory guidance.



Some people thought this was right.



But others thought we should not say this, or talk more about men and boys who are victims too.



It is important that men and boys speak up if they have been victims.

Our response



The law says we need to talk about how more women and girls are victims of domestic abuse than men and boys.

The statutory guidance says that:



- Different issues stop different groups from speaking up about domestic abuse.



- Men and boys might be less likely to speak up, or worry about not being believed.



- Domestic abuse can affect anyone.



Staff will think about this when they support victims.

Excuses



Our statutory guidance includes a part that explains the excuses people might give for controlling or coercive behaviour.

What people told us



Some people were worried that people could use these excuses to get out of being punished.



One excuse is helping people who cannot make choices for themselves.

This includes older people and disabled people.



But some people worried that this could be used to treat older people and disabled people badly.



People might pretend to help older or disabled people when they are not.

Our response

We have included more detail about:



- How people could try to get out of being punished for controlling or coercive behaviour.



- How to support victims who cannot always make choices for themselves.



- What staff should do if someone says they are just helping someone who cannot make choices for themselves.



We are looking at how to better protect people who cannot make choices for themselves from abuse.

Money



Controlling or coercive behaviour can involve money, like controlling how someone can spend their money.

What people told us



People thought it was good that we included this kind of domestic abuse.



People said that it was often a way that coercive or controlling behaviour happened after a couple had split up.



Some people wanted the police and other staff to better understand this type of controlling or coercive behaviour.



Some people were worried that the courts would not treat this type of domestic abuse the same as other types.

Our response



We have included more information about this type of domestic abuse in our statutory guidance.



We are spending more money on supporting victims of this type of domestic abuse.

After couples have split up

What people told us



Some people asked for more information about domestic abuse that happens after a couple has split up.

Our response



We have added a new part to our statutory guidance about domestic abuse that happens after a couple has split up.

Different organisations

What people told us

Our statutory guidance says that it is important for different organisations to work together to:



- Support victims.



- Stop domestic abuse.



But some people worried that this does not always happen.



Some people said that all staff who work with victims should get domestic abuse training.

Our response



The statutory guidance cannot make people get training.



But we can give information and advice about how staff and organisations should work.

Our statutory guidance does this.

Services that support victims

What people said



Some people were worried that the statutory guidance did not talk enough about the different support services for victims.

Our response

We have included more information about:



- The different types of support victims can get.



- How victims can get support from these services.

The length of the statutory guidance

What people told us



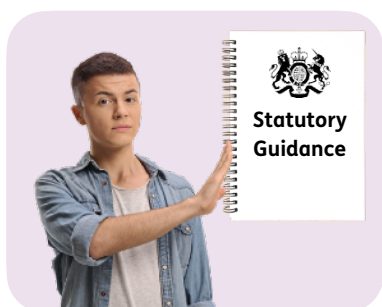
A lot of people said that it was good that the statutory guidance mentioned different groups of people, like older people and minority groups.



But some people wanted more detail.

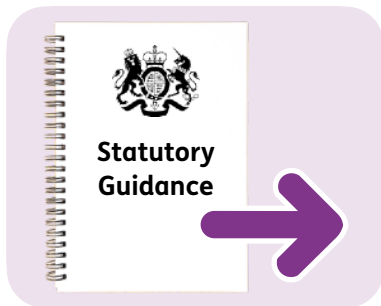


Other people said that the statutory guidance was too long.



They said that this meant some people might not use it.

Our response



We have taken out some parts of the statutory guidance.



These were parts that are also in different statutory guidance, called the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance.

What will happen next



We will carry on working with organisations to help them understand the law.



We will spend money on stopping domestic abuse from happening.

Find out more

To find out more, please contact us by:



- Post:
Domestic Abuse Policy Team
Interpersonal Abuse Unit
5th Floor, Fry Building
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF



- Email:
VAWGenquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

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