

# Coercive Control: a whole family approach

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# Why are we here?

- ▶ 2011 Domestic Homicide Reviews made statutory (under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004)
- ▶ 2012 New definition for Domestic Abuse
- ▶ 2012 Stalking criminalised (under protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- ▶ 2014 HMIC concerns indicative of problems in multiple agencies
- ▶ 2015 Coercive Control criminalised (under the Serious Crimes Act 2015)
- ▶ High profile criticism of agencies: Child Sexual Exploitation; Sexual; abuse; stalking; domestic abuse
- ▶ 2016 Abuse of Process campaign gains ground
- ▶ 2017 Family court scrutiny re child safety and DA victims cross examination

# Why do we need to understand coercive control?

- ▶ Research says that Domestic Homicide is predictable (Adams 2007)
- ▶ Coercive Control predicts homicide more effectively than violence by nine times (Stark 2007)
- ▶ At least ten people will die every week in the UK as a result of abuse and neglect
- ▶ Emerging findings from UK Domestic Homicide Reviews support and reflect international findings
- ▶ Course of conduct legislation – stalking and coercive control – reflect its importance
- ▶ Research shows that people who are controlling are not just ‘anyone’ they are identifiable in many cases

# Coercive Control

Domestic Abuse/Violence

Stalking

Psychological abuse/Abuse of Process

Immediate fear



Chronic fear



DREAD

# Fear of someone

- ▶ Walking on eggshells
- ▶ Avoiding the consequences of upsetting someone
- ▶ Threats to your safety or that of someone else
- ▶ Coerced compliance



# Turn our thinking upside down

## Victim

Skilled managers of a dangerous individual

Someone who has had many of their choices taken away

A life dominated by the needs of the perpetrator and fear of consequences

## CP

They are not responding to the particular dynamics of an individual relationship – this is 'who they are'

Deep seated fear of the victim leaving their control

Unable to take challenge or rejection

Obsessive, repetitive, compulsive, fixated

## DA/CC

Methods of control

Violence is one method of control, there are more

Pattern of behaviour or course of conduct – ongoing and constant

**S** - space

**T** - time

**A** – action/activity

**R** - resources

**E** - emotions

# A whole family approach

## Variable perspectives

Victim, children, offender, wider family

## Variable Risk

primary victim and children at risk. Offender at risk.

## Safety planning

three tier approach, and a wide angle lens

# Consideration of different perspectives

## Primary victim

Chronic fear

Managing CP

Managing safety

Anticipating consequences

Ambiguous behaviours – safety management

Inconsistent with fear – victims are human

## CP

Separation anxiety

Resistance to challenge

Fear of rejection

Maintaining control to manage anxieties

Maintaining control to manage status

Personality disorder

Control issues

## Children

Collateral damage

Focused damage

Controlled by primary victim to manage risk

Controlled by CP to achieve control over primary victim

Used to enforce control

Used to continue abuse

Used in court processes

Fear/compliance

# Consideration of Variable Risk and threat

## Primary Victim

Homicide  
Stalking  
Menace  
Violence  
Housing  
Finances  
Sexual assault

## CP

Suicide  
Life imprisonment  
Incarceration  
Court orders  
Child contact restricted  
Police record  
Anxiety  
Loss of employment

## Children

Homicide  
Lose both parents  
Physical harm  
Emotional harm  
Instability

# Ben Butler



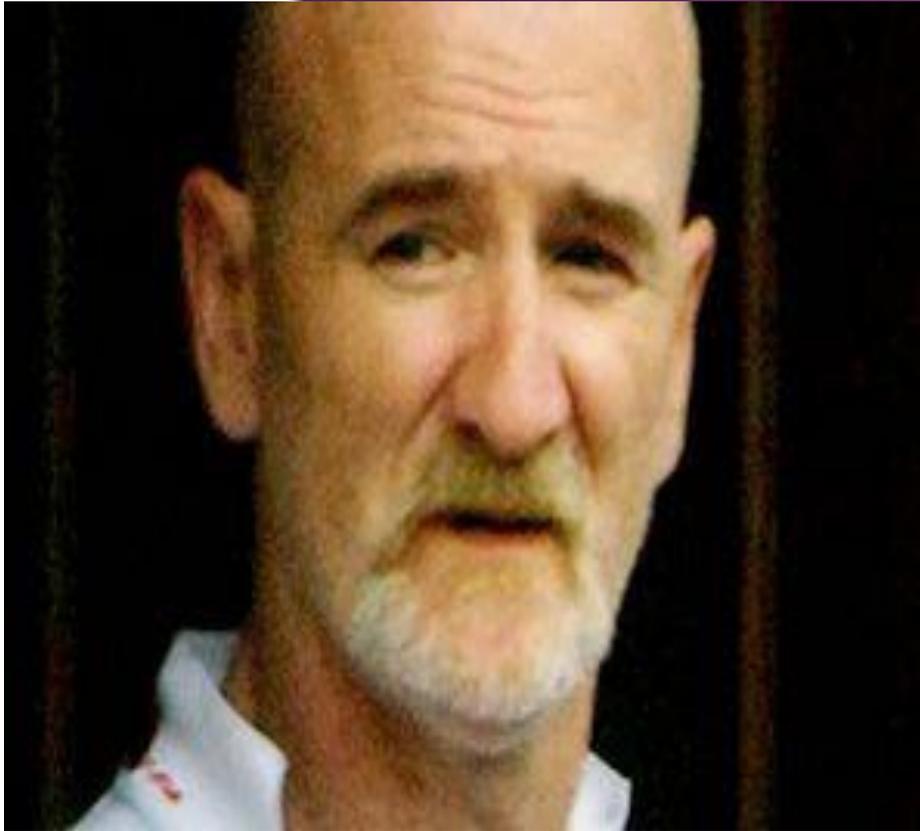
- ▶ Convicted of the murder of his daughter Ellie Butler
- ▶ Previous charges for violence against Ellie – taken away from his custody
- ▶ Fought to get her back from his in-laws
- ▶ Won his fight and murdered her within a year
- ▶ Defended himself a second time
- ▶ TRIGGER: DEFIANCE

# Raoul Moat



- ▶ Threats to kill
- ▶ History of abuse
- ▶ Threats to commit suicide
- ▶ History of violence
- ▶ Separation
- ▶ Peripheral threat
- ▶ TRIGGER: SEPARATION

# Mick philpott



- ▶ History of abuse
- ▶ History of 'threat to life' violence
- ▶ Domestic abuse and violence
- ▶ Control of two families
- ▶ Aggressive
- ▶ Obsessed
- ▶ Fixated
- ▶ TRIGGER: SEPARATION

# Alan pemberton



- ▶ History of abuse
- ▶ Stalking
- ▶ Threats to kill
- ▶ Threats to commit suicide
- ▶ Obsessed
- ▶ Fixated
- ▶ Peripheral threat
- ▶ Sexual violence
- ▶ TRIGGER: SEPARATION

# Daniel spencer



- ▶ History of abuse
- ▶ Threats to kill
- ▶ Stalking
- ▶ Violence
- ▶ Peripheral threats
- ▶ Sexual violence
- ▶ Control
- ▶ Obsessed
- ▶ TRIGGER: SEPARATION AND FINANCIAL THREAT

# Safety Planning



# Thinking about threat

- ▶ The threat is always situated within the CP/stalker/abuser – the threat may be to anyone associated with the victim or the CP
- ▶ The threat could be directed outside of the primary victim (Mick Philpott, Ben Butler, Raoul Moat, Alan Pemberton) threat has a wider focus
- ▶ Incarceration does not eradicate control (any contact will maintain control)
- ▶ Abuse of process (counter allegations, civil actions)
- ▶ Separation does not equal safety; the threat needs to be controlled, neutralised or contained. Separation often creates escalation

DART: Evidence based reference tool which organises information under six key headings:

### Information...

1. Coercive control
2. Stalking
3. Victim care
4. Evidence gathering
5. Homicide triad
6. Friends and families

### For use by...

Multi-agency Professionals  
Friends and families  
Victims

Being used and piloted by police



# Risk interview

- ▶ First stage of the process:
- ▶ fact finding
- ▶ Map against known risk markers
- ▶ Map against CP characteristics
- ▶ Consider peripheral threats

# Safety actions

- ▶ Second stage: having gathered the information mapped against knowledge – what are the actions relevant to this case?
- ▶ Agree safety actions with the victim

# Consequence management

- ▶ What consequences might there be for each action?
- ▶ Can the victim manage the consequences?
- ▶ Can others manage the consequences?
- ▶ How will the CP deal with challenge?
- ▶ Agree how the victim will manage the consequences of challenge to the CP
- ▶ This must be realistic – as soon as it becomes unrealistic the victim will probably revert to her original safety plan – you are trying to replace that

# Primary Victim perspective



*consequences*

CP



# Children

