

Study finds millions may not recognise coercive control

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Four in 10 (43%) British adults say their understanding of coercive control is poor or non-existent, according to a new study commissioned by Vodafone and domestic abuse charity Hestia as part of a campaign to raise awareness and provide support to anyone affected.

The campaign, called 'It's Not Nothing', has been created by Vodafone Foundation and aims to help people recognise coercive control and direct people to the Bright Sky app and website as a source of help and support. The Bright Sky app is available to download free via the App Store or Google Play.

Coercive control is when a someone you know, repeatedly behaves in a way which makes you feel controlled, dependent, isolated or scared.

The results of the study suggest that despite media coverage and portrayals of coercive behaviour in popular dramas such as *Eastenders* and *The Archers*, millions of Britons might fail to recognise the warning signs.

When asked to consider behaviours consistent with coercive control in their own relationships, past and present, 23% said they had been isolated from friends and family, 19% had had their time monitored and 24% said they had been made to feel humiliated or degraded. Overall, more than quarter (28%) said they had been in a relationship where they considered themselves to be a victim of coercive control.

The study also found that almost one in four (23%) would not know how to help a friend, colleague or loved one experiencing domestic abuse.

Bright Sky is a safe and easy-to-use app and website that provides practical support and information on spotting the signs of abuse and how to respond. It uses location data to help users find the nearest support services and is for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, or for those concerned about family, friends or colleagues.

Bright Sky was developed by Hestia, Thames Valley Partnership and Vodafone Foundation and launched in the UK in 2018. The app is available in five languages - English, Urdu, Punjabi, Polish and Welsh - and has been downloaded 111,362 times in the UK since its launch. It is available in ten other countries where Vodafone operates as a business.

Nicki Lyons, UK Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Director, Vodafone said: "We have a long history of supporting people affected by domestic abuse, both within our own organisation and in local communities, with the help of brilliant partners like Hestia. Raising awareness of any type of domestic abuse is vital if we are to tackle it. Please download the Bright Sky app and share it with anyone who may need it."

Patrick Ryan, CEO of Hestia said: "Domestic abuse is again on the rise. Bright Sky details the different types of abuse, the signs to look out for and a wide range of information and resources for friends and family to confidently signpost anyone they believe to be experiencing domestic abuse. Now more than ever, it is vital that all victims of domestic abuse know they are not alone, and we all have a part to play in that."

Hestia recently reported [a 30% increase in demand](#) for domestic abuse refuge spaces and support in the first quarter of 2022.

Vodafone has a global domestic abuse policy in place for employees. One of the first of its kind, it provides specialist support for employees affected by abuse, including counselling and ten days of additional paid leave if needed. Vodafone's toolkit on domestic abuse includes guidance for managers on remote working and how to support anyone impacted by abuse. It is available for all employers to download [here](#). Vodafone is a founding member of the Employer's Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA).

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