



Domestic Violence and Coercive Control

Recognising the signs, staying safe and knowing what to do while hosting

Airbnb is built on **trust**

With thousands of Hosts and listings across Ireland, the safety of our community is our priority. That's why we've partnered with Safe Ireland to provide information on ways to stay safe and vigilant while hosting, and guidance on what to do if you spot or suspect controlling behaviour.

Already we take extensive measures to keep you, your home and your guests safe. Our two-way reviews, secure guest communication, risk-scored reservations and house rules all help you to host great guests.

While issues are rare, you may encounter a guest that is not safe or free because of the controlling behaviour of the person they are with.

You may see or hear something that raises a concern for you and think that it's a private matter that you can do nothing about.

However, just being aware is a vital first step in helping somebody.

Together with Safe Ireland, we have produced this guide to help you recognise some signs of coercive control and what to do without putting you or your guest in further danger.

We encourage you to share this guide with your co-hosts, cleaners or neighbours, to ensure that all those around your property are also more aware of the signs of coercive control and what they can do.

Safe Ireland is the national development and coordination body with responsibility for domestic violence, working closely with 38 independent, affiliated services across Ireland.

In 2020, Airbnb partnered with Safe Ireland to provide vital emergency accommodation for women and children escaping abuse, supplementing the limited number of refuge spaces available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021 Safe Ireland and Airbnb launched the 'Safe Ireland Survivor Fund' to enable frontline services in local communities to provide longer-term support for domestic violence survivors.

For more information, visit www.safeireland.ie



Coercive Control

Coercive control is domestic violence. They are the same thing.

It's a persistent, deliberate pattern of behaviour by an abuser over a prolonged period of time that aims to achieve obedience and create fear in another person.

It may include bullying and pressure, threats and degradation, isolation, financial control, stalking and intimidation.

Coercive control may also include physical, verbal and/or sexual violence – things that you may traditionally have thought of as signs of domestic violence.

However, coercive control and domestic violence do not have to be physical to be abuse. It is most often much more subtle and disguised than that.

Coercive control is all about making a person's world smaller – trapping them, restricting their independence and freedom. A controlling partner may shut out the person's friends and family, control their movements, micro-manage what they eat or wear, restrict their access to money – all the time chipping away at the person's confidence and destroying their self-respect.

Importantly, coercive control is now recognised as a serious crime in Ireland. There have been increasing numbers of coercive control cases coming before the courts since the introduction of the Domestic Violence Act 2018.

This leaflet is meant to provide you with a little more understanding. You are not being asked to be an expert in domestic violence.

However, as well as remaining vigilant to signs of coercive control, Safe Ireland advises that you can:

Listen and believe

If a guest says or discloses anything to you, listen. Let the guest know that you hear them and believe them. Try not to dismiss, trivialise, minimise or excuse what they are saying.

Put safety first

Put their safety and your safety first. Do not do anything or take action into your own hands that might put you or the guest at further risk. Listen to what your guest wants and needs first. Follow their lead.

Know More

Understand more about domestic violence and coercive control. Look for advice from your local domestic violence service on what you can do safely to support a guest, if he/she wants that. Have the number of your local DV service on-hand.

Know the **signs**

This is not an exhaustive list but it describes some behaviours that would not be normal in an equal relationship or a family.

Control

If one guest does all the talking or makes all the decisions without question – that the family is almost “too good to be true”.

Fear

If a guest is unusually fearful or anxious about annoying or upsetting the other person, like keeping the place tidy, the kids quiet, or keeping to a routine.

Degradation

If a guest puts their partner down constantly in front of you and others, or if a guest makes fun of something somebody is wearing or of how they look.

Isolation

If you get a sense that a guest has been cut off from their family and friends or says that they no longer do things they used to – like going for a coffee or enjoying a hobby or past-time.

Financial control

If a guest takes total responsibility for the finances while they are with you and if the other partner appears not to have any access to money.

Tracking

If a guest seems to be calling or texting a partner all the time, asking where they are, where they have been, tracking and tracing their movements and who they are with obsessively, often under the cover of concern.

Read more about the behaviours related to coercive control, on www.safeireland.ie

Always put **safety** first

Anyone can experience, or perpetrate coercive control. However, it is most often used as a means of control by men against women and children. One in three women in Ireland has reported that they have experienced emotional, physical, sexual or financial abuse in an intimate relationship from the age of 15¹.

The most dangerous time for a victim is when their abuser feels that their behaviour has been detected and that their control may be exposed. If you're concerned about anything you see or hear:

- First, contact your local domestic violence service for expert advice. Visit safeireland.ie to find your local domestic violence service or call the national domestic violence helpline on **1 800 341 900**.
- Keep these numbers safe and include them as a regular part of your guest information pack / guidebook.
- If you think a guest may be in immediate danger, always call the Gardai on **999**. You can also reach the emergency services with one touch through the Local Emergency Services feature in the Airbnb in-app [Safety Centre](#).

The Airbnb [Neighbourhood Support Tool](#) enables anyone to report a concern about a listing or stay happening in their community directly to us, and we investigate all reports received through this channel. Neighbours can request a call - and a specialised Airbnb Community Support agent will aim to call back in 10 minutes or less - or share concerns with us in writing via the online form. We also work closely with An Garda Síochána through our [law enforcement portal](#).

As always, the Airbnb Community Support team is on hand 24/7 to help Hosts and guests by phone, through our [Urgent Support Line](#), via our [Help Centre](#) and on [Twitter](#). We have zero tolerance for illegal behaviour, and take action when issues are brought to our attention.

¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). Violence against women: An EU-wide survey — Main Results Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Working **together**

We encourage you to look out for coercive behaviour and report any concerns. Together we can help those who need it, and help you and your community stay safe while hosting.

- Go to www.safeireland.ie to find your local service or call **090-6479078**.
- Call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on **1-800-341-900**.
- In case of an immediate emergency, call the Gardaí on **999**.