

# SAFE & SOUND

Providing you with news and updates around safeguarding,  
prevent and British Values

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## Coercive control...where love stops and abusive relationships start

Research by Women's Aid and Cosmopolitan has found that a third of teenagers have been in abusive relationships. And, if that isn't shocking enough, when the remaining two-thirds were asked further questions, it emerged that 64% of them had, experienced abusive behaviour – they just didn't realise it was abuse.

In many relationships, there are occasions where one person makes a decision on behalf of their partner or where one person will take control of a situation. Within a supportive and healthy relationship, this is not an issue.

It is unhealthy when control of a person's day-to-day life is taken away by their partner, and when there are 'rules', they must live by so they do not anger their partner.

If a person has to change what they would normally do, say, or wear (for more examples see what the law about coercive control says) and is fearful or scared about what will happen if they do not comply, this is called coercive control.

Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse because of the presence of fear.

Being fearful of a partner is not healthy. Stress affects self-esteem, mental health and physical health.

Coercive control became illegal in 2015, but the majority of cases are dropped without charge.

Bestselling author Holly Bourne breaks down the 7 relationship red flags you need to know about the difference between a controlling relationship vs a loving one:

1. They get jealous when you spend time with your friends
2. They accuse you of flirting or cheating when you are just being friendly
3. They frequently have temper outbursts or sudden mood changes
4. They criticise you or put you down in front of your friends
5. They can make you feel like you can't do anything right
6. They check your messages or demand your social media passwords
7. They make you feel nervous all the time like you are walking on eggshells

*Check out Holly's latest book, The Places I've Cried in Public*



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# Coercive control...where love stops and abusive relationships start

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Another form of manipulation and psychological control is Gaslighting. Victims of gaslighting are deliberately and systematically fed false information that leads them to question what they know to be true, often about themselves. They may end up doubting their memory, their perception, and even their sanity. Over time, a gaslighter's manipulations can grow more complex and potent, making it increasingly difficult for the victim to see the truth.

Here are some things that could be said to a victim when the abuser is gaslighting them...

Why can't you take a joke?

You're crazy

Do you realise how stupid you sound?

No one else will love you like I do

Why can't you be normal?

## Need some help?

Women's Aid website

If you need help and support, you can find loads more info here including a live webchat, forums, and helplines.  
[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Cyfannol Women's Aid provides services and support to women and their children experiencing domestic abuse throughout Monmouthshire and the wider Gwent area. Call 03300 564456 for support or to access emergency accommodation, day or night.

Dyn Wales provides support to men who are experiencing domestic abuse from a partner, 08088 010321

Men's Advice Line: confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members).

Call freephone 0808 801 0327 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm or email [info@respectphoneline.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphoneline.org.uk)

**In an emergency you should always call 999 first.**



## Worried about a friend?

If you're concerned that your friend could be spending time with someone who doesn't treat them well, then here are some suggestions to help them. Remember, you're not on your own – if you feel overwhelmed, worried or like your friend may be in danger, seek help.

1. Start by observing – what are the differences in your friend's behaviour?
2. Text them to check in, ask them to hang out – make sure they know you're there for them.
3. Try to avoid any accusatory conversations with them – it may push them away
4. But don't forget to share your opinion – they need to know when things are NOT okay. Be honest: Don't be afraid to tell your friend that you're worried about them, that you think they may need help and that maybe they should tell someone else about what's going on.
5. Give them a chance to talk – don't pounce on them or talk over them. Don't judge or criticise. Saying things like, "How can you put up with this?" won't help your friend. Just thank them for trusting you enough to talk to them. Also, don't criticise the abuser – remember, it's more than likely going to be someone they care about and love.
6. Don't take things personally – this isn't about you.

**Thank your friend** for trusting you and let them know how strong they are – talking about violence and abuse takes a lot of strength and courage.

# Ketamine: the UK's growing drug problem

Often referred to as Special K or ket, it was made a class B drug in the UK in 2014 and is illegal to buy or sell. Possessing the drug can lead to a maximum five-year prison sentence, and supplying the drug up to 14 years in prison. On the illicit market, ketamine is cheaper than cocaine and MDMA (ecstasy), costing about £20 a gram. Police forces report large seizures of the drug, but global rates of production are high, and the wholesale price of a kilogram of ketamine is believed to have fallen from £8,000 to £5,000. This makes it an attractive drug for young people and those with a limited income.

Ketamine typically takes about 15 minutes to work and induces euphoria, relaxation, and a slight sense of detachment. However, higher doses can also cause dissociation. This can be confusing and can cause panic attacks and memory loss. It can increase blood pressure and affect breathing and heart function. Additionally, combining ketamine with other substances, such as alcohol or stimulants, can amplify its harmful effects, increasing the risk of overdose and long-lasting health problems.

As the popularity of ketamine continues to rise, it's essential to raise awareness about its dangers. While some are exploring its therapeutic potential for conditions like depression, recreational use carries significant risks—especially when used irresponsibly or without proper medical guidance. Users and those around them should know the potential consequences and the importance of seeking help.

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, professional resources and support are available to help manage and reduce the risks associated with ketamine and other recreational drugs.

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

# Brucella canis – What you need to know

There has been a marked increase in the number of cases of *Brucella canis* since the summer of 2020 (over 97 cases in 2023 alone, with only 3 cases prior to 2020). A statement by Public Health England reviews the current situation and makes key recommendations to veterinary professionals, as well as organisations importing dogs from *Brucella canis* endemic countries.

Key takeaways include:

- The greatest risk of exposure is potential contact with *Brucella canis* contaminated materials, especially tissues and fluids associated with breeding and parturition
- *Brucella canis* is also shed in a dog's bodily fluids, such as urine, blood, and saliva
- If positive, a dog is considered infected for life, even following antimicrobial treatment.
- Human cases are rarely reported, but a small number of cases have been confirmed following contact with an infected dog in the UK.
- If an imported dog with clinical signs suggestive of a possible *Brucella canis* infection is presented to a vet, staff attending the case should use appropriate PPE and consider appropriate sampling and submission to laboratories for testing.
- Veterinary staff should warn laboratory staff when *Brucella canis* is suspected.
- The risk of *Brucella canis* infection in imported dogs from endemic countries should be highlighted to potential owners, especially those determined to be at greater risk of infection, as well as advice given on recommended veterinary management (euthanasia) for test positive animals.
- Encourage charities or organisations importing dogs from *Brucella canis* endemic countries to ensure *Brucella canis* negative pre-export testing for the dog(s) in the country of origin before importing them into the UK.



Visit the BVA news website for the latest information.



# Is your car winter ready?

As the nights start drawing in and the guy in the red suit prepares to visit us once again, it is time to start preparing for winter travel. Lots of us travel quite a distance back and forth to work and college so it is important that we ensure we are safe when doing so by giving our cars a bit of a once over.

During the colder weather tyre pressures will drop so it is important to check these regularly and top up tyres where needed. It sounds a minor thing but an under-inflated will cause the car to lose stability, negatively affecting handling, cornering and stopping. The recommended tyre pressure for your car will usually be outlined in your manual or written on the inside of your driver or passenger doorway. If you don't have a pump at home, then most petrol stations have a compressed air machine which you can use to check pressures and inflate if needed and it is super easy to do.

Tyre tread is another important thing to check- Your tyres form the essential bond between your vehicle and the ground so if the tread of the tyre is not deep enough, traction will be lost which will increase braking times. Shallow tread grooves also make it a lot harder to control the vehicle in wet weather and the chance of aquaplaning increases. Both of which increase the likelihood of road traffic collisions. Most tyre fitters will check this for you free of charge or have a google of how to check it at home yourself.

Next thing, check all bulbs (tail lights, headlights, brake lights, fog lights) If you have any which aren't working get them replaced ASAP. Most garages are happy to help if you are unable to do it yourself.

Check windscreen wipers and ensure they are clearing the screen adequately, again, if they aren't doing their job get those replaced. Top up your windscreen washer bottle too. You can get screen wash containing antifreeze but as vet nurses be mindful of antifreeze toxicity in cats.

If you have a frozen screen in the morning tepid water or a good old scraper with a bit of elbow grease can be just as effective as antifreeze. An even better option is a windscreen cover which will stop your screen freezing overnight and you can have that extra 5 minutes in bed-winner!

It may also be worth having a kit in the boot of your car just in case a dreaded break down happens. Keep some essentials in there such as a blanket, torch, high visibility vest and an emergency snack! Make sure you have breakdown cover to plan for occasions like this too, some companies offer student discount and some banks even provide breakdown cover if you have an account with them so have a look into this.

Halfords offer a 10-point winter health check for your vehicle for £15 and they can also replace things like bulbs and wiper blades at an extra cost if needed. If you have a Totum card Halfords offer 10% discount in store.



## Important religious dates

### Advent (Christianity)

- Date: Sunday, December 1, 2024 (starts)
- Advent marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical year and is a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. It lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

### Hanukkah (Judaism)

- Date: Thursday, December 21 to Friday, December 29, 2024
- The Jewish Festival of Lights, celebrating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days.

### Kwanzaa (African-American, Pan-African)

- Date: Thursday, December 26, 2024 to Wednesday, January 1, 2025
- A celebration of African-American culture and heritage, created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966.