



College of  
**Policing**

## Five things you need to know about domestic abuse

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26 September 2018  
Excellence in Policing conference, Ryton

# 1. Domestic abuse is gendered (or is it)?



Prevalence of domestic abuse among adults aged 16 to 59, year ending March 2017 (CSEW)

## England and Wales

Percentage who were victims once or more	Since age 16		Last year	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Any partner abuse (non-physical abuse, threats, force, sexual assault or stalking)	11.0	22.9	3.0	5.9
Any family abuse (non-physical abuse, threats, force, sexual assault or stalking)	6.0	9.0	1.6	2.0

# What are we measuring?

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... has a **partner or ex-partner** ever ... ?

- Prevented you from having your fair share of the household money
- Stopped you from seeing friends and relatives
- Repeatedly belittled you to the extent that you felt worthless
- Frightened you, by threatening to hurt you or someone close to you
- Pushed you, held you down or slapped you
- Kicked, bit, or hit you with a fist or something else, or threw something at you
- Choked or tried to strangle you
- Threatened you with a weapon, for example a stick or a knife
- Threatened to kill you
- Used a weapon against you, for example a stick or a knife
- Used some other kind of force against you

# Is all physical violence 'abusive'?

<b>Pence &amp; Dasgupta</b>	<b>Michael P. Johnson</b>	<b>Evan Stark</b>
<b>Battering (coercive control)</b>	<b>Intimate terrorism (coercive control)</b>	<b>Coercive control</b>
<b>Situational couple violence</b>	<b>Situational couple violence</b>	<b>Partner assaults</b>
Violent resistance	Violent resistance	<b>Couple fights (SCV)</b>
Pathological violence		
Anti-social violence		

## 2. Domestic abuse is a repeat crime (or is it)?

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- Police/administrative data vs survivors' narratives

"I found the verbal abuse much worse than the physical abuse. Even though the physical abuse was terrible. Because I suppose it was only – only?? God – once, twice a year. It was the constant verbal barracking that used to get me down more than anything" (Survivor)

- Limitations of police data
  - Reporting
  - What gets recorded/what it gets recorded as
  - What gets written down
  - Use of flags

## What do we mean by 'repeat'?

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- HMICFRS – define 'repeat' as second report to the police?
- Coercive control is 'continuous'
- Other types of domestic abuse may not always repeat/escalate?
- Escalation – frequency, or severity?
- Serial abuse vs serial offending

## 3. Risk assessment is changing

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### **Review of the DASH model (Robinson et al., 2016)**

- DASH model implemented inconsistently between and within forces.
- DASH risk assessment completed inconsistently by frontline officers.
- Information recorded in an incomplete way.
- Some officers focus on the current incident (and especially physical violence and injury)

# Piloting a new frontline risk assessment

- Designed to help officers identify coercive control

	Never	Occasionally	Often	All the time	Not stated
1. How often does (...) make threats to harm you or things you care about such as people, pets or property?					

- Greater disclosure from victims?
- Officers made more appropriate risk assessments
- Further testing approved by College Professional Committee

## 4. It can be tricky to do research on domestic abuse

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- What does success look like?
  - 'Revictimisation'/reconviction?
  - Reduction in repeat calls?
  - Reduction in 'harm'?
- What outcomes do victims value (Westmarland et al., 2010)?
  - Respectful/improved relationships (open communication; empathy)
  - Expanded 'space for action'
  - Support/decreased isolation
  - Enhanced parenting (shared activity; abuser more attentive to children's needs)
  - Reduction or cessation of violence/abuse
  - Men understanding the impact of their domestic abuse

# Cambridge Crime Harm Index

<b>Offence type</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Assault – S18: GBH (Grievous bodily harm with intent)	1460
Assault – S20: GBH (Grievous bodily harm without intent)	19
Assault – S47: ABH (Assault occasioning actual bodily harm)	10
Engage in controlling/coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship	183
Stalking – involving fear of violence/serious alarm or distress	183
Breach a non-molestation order - Family Law Act 1996	5
Breach of a Restraining Order issued on acquittal	3
Threats to kill	10
Robbery	365

## 5. 'What works' in addressing domestic abuse?

- Evidence-base for MARAC?
- Some evidence for IDVAs and DVPOs



Islands in the stream:  
An evaluation of four London independent  
domestic violence advocacy schemes



**Evaluation of the Pilot of Domestic  
Violence Protection Orders**

Research Report 76

- Limited evidence for perpetrator programmes??

## Case-study: Project Mirabal

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- Acknowledged experimental design not possible
- 'Realist' multi-site design
- Longitudinal follow-up with victims
- Wider range of outcome measures
- Qualitative research with perpetrators

