

# Police better equipped to spot controlling behaviour

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New risk assessment tool supports police to spot the signs of coercive control and better protect victims of domestic abuse

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We've created a new risk assessment tool to help police spot the signs of coercive control and better protect victims of domestic abuse.

The domestic abuse risk assessment (DARA) replaces the domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence questionnaire (DASH) – which is completed by most officers at every domestic abuse call. The DARA has an increased focus on coercive and controlling behaviour.

A pilot using the DARA showed a 38% increase in the proportion of officers coming to the same decision about risk as an expert in domestic abuse. It meant officers were in a much stronger position to take steps to reduce or remove the risk to the victim and protect them from further harm.

*Violence against women and girls is a pervasive crime but it is not inevitable and policing must do everything we can to prevent it or stop it escalating. Officers must be totally equipped to spot all the signs, including some that are less obvious, so we can better protect victims and put more criminals behind bars.*

*The College of Policing's new risk assessment tool has been very successful in force pilots and will mean more officers making the right decisions at the right time to keep women and girls safe. Assessing the risk better allows us to put the right protections in place to stop abuse escalating or happening again.*

*This is the latest in a suite of new resources, guidance and training the College of Policing is providing to support officers and staff in getting the basics right, so policing can rebuild the trust and confidence of communities.*

**Chief Constable Andy Marsh, College of Policing CEO**

Coercive control was made a criminal offence in 2015. It can take many forms, including a partner limiting the other's freedom, monitoring their movements, controlling their finances, and isolating them from friends and family.

The new DARA complements our Domestic Abuse Matters programme – training on spotting the signs of coercive control. The risk assessment was created using international research, interviews with survivors of abuse and the insights of frontline officers.

*It is paramount that the police are well equipped to recognise abuse and protect victims. The new Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment will help to provide officers with the tools they need to keep vulnerable people safe.*

*Through the Domestic Abuse Act we extended the controlling or coercive behaviour offence. We will soon be publishing updated guidance to support implementation of this new offence, so that police can be even more confident in investigating this pervasive criminal behaviour.*

**Sarah Dines, Minister for Safeguarding**

*I'm really pleased to see the College of Policing introduce the new domestic abuse risk assessment. It's been created by policing and academics working together so we can make sure officers have the best resources available when responding to domestic abuse.*

*The new tool is more user-friendly and will allow police responders to identify and deal with risks of harm thereby helping to keep victims and survivors safer.*

*We know there is more to do to reduce the number of domestic abuse cases but this is the latest step in making sure we protect victims as best as possible.*

**Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for Domestic Abuse**

- [See the DARA tool](#)
- [Access DARA training on College Learn \(you will need to log in\)](#)

## Tags

Domestic abuse Risk Violence against women and girls