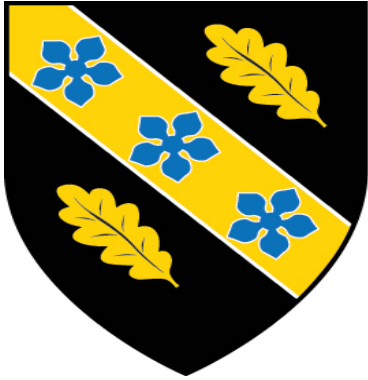




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**Domestic violence and police officers perception
on the positive actions and training to identify
coercive control.**

Rhys Maiden

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Many Thanks

Rhys Maiden

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: Rhys Maiden

Date: 03/07/2022

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA.

Signed: Rhys Maiden

Date: 03/07/2022

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed: Rhys Maiden

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I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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The aim of this dissertation was to answer the question regarding the police officers perception on domestic abuse and coercive control and the training they receive. The researcher has conducted vast in depth search of published literature surrounding the subject area. The researcher has studied the origins of domestic abuse, how the police perceived domestic abuse in the early centuries and how domestic abuse has changed to now. The researcher has also reviewed published literature around coercive control, how it is defined and the police responded to coercive control.

In order to obtain the perception of serving police officers, a self-filled questionnaire has been designed by the researcher. This questionnaire has been passed to two select departments within South Wales Police. The questions within the questionnaire focus on the officers perception on the training they receive in regards to domestic violence and coercive control.

The findings from the questionnaire completed by this research does support a vast amount of already published literature. The findings outline a number of issues still surrounding policing domestic abuse incidents. This is also back up by published literature and figures realised by the UK Government.

Abstract is a simple synopsis of the students work. It is the first piece of work that readers will encounter. This summary of student's work should capture the core of your research in a brief manner.

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Introduction

This research will review the current literature around domestic violence and coercive control. It will also be gathering police officers own perception on domestic violence and the training they receive on how to identify and deal with coercive control. The subject of domestic violence has become a hot topic within the media over the recent years including more high profile cases of domestic violence between high profile members of society. Another element of domestic violence is coercive control which has gained more recognition and identified more over the recent years. Controlling and coercive behaviour has always been a factor within domestic abuse. However prior to 2015 it was increasingly hard to prosecute due to no actual legislation or criminal offence for the controlling behaviour existing. Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 - Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship was created and introduced. Prior to this legislation being brought in any sort of criminal conviction would rely on proving harassing behaviour within an intimate relationship. This has been highlighted by the CPS themselves by publishing the following regarding the new legislation "Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship. Prior to the introduction of this offence, case law indicated the difficulty in proving a pattern of behaviour amounting to harassment within an intimate relationship"(CPS 2017).

The aim of this research will be to examine and critically review the current literature around domestic violence. The changing perception in domestic violence and the impact recent high profile celebrity cases have had on identifying domestic violence. It will be reviewing the current published literature around the changes to domestic violence. It will be reviewing the police's and criminal justice system approach to domestic violence over the years. It will be reviewing how police forces within England and Wales approached domestic violence in the early centuries. It will also be examining the changes made by the police forces within England and Wales on their approach to domestic violence throughout the years. It will also be highlighting key legislation that was brought in by the Government in order to support police and CPS to help prosecute suspect's and protect victims. It will be reviewing the impact third parties such as Woman's Aid had on forcing the changes in the police forces and government. It will then examine the current literature around how police forces respond to domestic violence in 2022.

It will also be reviewing the current literature around controlling and coercive behaviour in intimate and family relationships. It will be reviewing the current literature around the definition of coercive control and what it is. It will be reviewing a number of theories around coercive control and the controlling behaviours shown by the perpetrators. It will examine the literature around how coercive control was identified within relationships in the early centuries and the police response. It will examine published figures on how the legislation brought in to help performed in the early years of the legislation. It will also outline the findings noted for the reason why if the legislation did not work or was not as responsive as initially hoped. It will examine the findings published on how the police have dealt with the new legislation. It will also be reviewing how TV figures such as Ruth Dodsworth help to promote coercive control, by Ruth publishing her story about her controlling marriage and her husband being prosecuted for coercive control and stalking. Ruth was one of the first celebrities to release her story on her past marriage. She explains how her ex-husband had controlled her for the 18 years of marriage between each other. She goes on to tell her story on how she did not realise the behaviour he was showing was actually criminal offence. She would describe how controlling he was for the 18 years, how he would constantly text her, ask where she was and go through her phone deleting contacts. She state how he would attend her workplace and force her to leave the station to have food with him in his car. With a high profile figure coming out on national TV telling her story, this could help other victims of coercive control. Other victims who do not realise they are victims and see their partners behaviour as a normal relationship. By her raising the issue and showing people what she went through can educate people on the signs to watch out for.

The research will also gather opinions and feedback from a small amount of police officers regarding their experience with domestic violence. Although there will be only a small amount of officers selected they will be able to publish their opinions and experiences. Police officers especially response police officers deal with domestic violence calls routinely. They would have vast amount of experience and expertise in how to identify domestic violence. The research will draw on their views and opinions on coercive control and how they support victims of coercive control. It will also draw in the opinions of the training they received in order to identify coercive control.

In order to be able to discuss the similarities of the literature already written and the police officers perception, I will be using self-completing questionnaires. These questionnaires will be based around

domestic violence, coercive control and officers training in identifying and supporting victims of coercive control.

Research Rational

The decision to choose domestic violence and coercive control is due having to attend so many incident involving domestic violence. Whilst in my role as a response police officer for South Wales Police I have responded to multiple domestic incidents which all vary between them. I have become interested in domestic abuse and more so the new element of coercive control. I am interested in the background of domestic abuse and how it has changed over the years to now. With my experience I have noticed a vast amount of suspects I deal with regarding domestic violence are men and the victim's female. This research would allow me to back up my experience with published literature around the subject. Whilst dealing with a number of domestic abuse incidents I have recognised a vast amount of victims either decline to support prosecution completely or withdraw their complaint halfway through the criminal justice process. By reviewing the background of domestic abuse and its victims I would be able to identify if this is the case and the reason for victims either declining to support or dropping the complaint.

Also within my probation period with South Wales Police I am yet to identify and deal with coercive control. I have interacted with a number of people who had been reported by friends and family who were concerned they were being controlled by their partners. However after speaking with these individuals they did not feel they were a victim or being controlled. Personally I feel I have not had the sufficient training, knowledge or experience to identify all of the controlling behaviours. By research the origins of coercive control and the definition of coercive control this would allow me to identify victims of controlling behaviour. Also I will be able to examine the theory around coercive control, how it became recognised and the impact it has on victims. The research will review the changes in legislation and procedure around dealing with coercive control. By reviewing the legislation and procedure this would benefit me in my role as a response police officer. Also by reviewing current policies and procedures for South Wales police and other Welsh police forces, I would be able to identify any potential gaps or recommendations. By publishing if any recommendations it would allow South Wales Police and other Welsh Police forces to support victims of domestic abuse and coercive controlling behaviour.

Conclusion

To conclude this research will examine the current literature around domestic violence, how it has changed, the impact the changes have had and how the police now respond and perceive domestic violence. It will then allow the researcher to identify any gaps in police policy on how domestic violence is dealt with and propose recommendations to improve their practice. It will also examine coercive control, outlining what coercive control is and the behaviours associated with coercive controlling behaviour. It will examine the police perception and response to coercive control and highlight any shortcomings by the police forces in England and Wales. This research will only focus on police forces within England and Wales due to Scottish police forces having their own legislation and policies.

Literature Review

This chapter of the dissertation is to identify and analyse the existing published literature around the domestic violence and coercive controlling behaviour. It will critically review current literature around domestic violence, what domestic violence is and how it was first identified. It will also review current literature published around how police forces within England and Wales perceived and dealt with domestic violence from the early centuries up to current. It will also review current published literature around coercive control and define what coercive control is. It will examine published literature and figures around how police forces in England and Wales have done in tackling coercive control.

Domestic Violence

Definition of Domestic Abuse

There are many definitions of domestic abuse, Devon Council defined domestic abuse as “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality” (If You are Being Abusive or Violent - Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, 2022).

Edwards (1989:1) states that "The responsibility of the law, policing, the prosecution process and sentencing to the violent offender have always denied woman even the most 'miserable mouse' of protection". In the early years of policing domestic violence was still present within households and relationships however it was believed the domestic violence concept was not a policing priority. Dobash and Dobash (1992:150) states that "By the nineteenth century it was becoming possible to designate marital violence as a matter that be dealt with by the police, doctors or magistrates, rather than solely by the informal intervention of those who were related or lived nearest to the woman affected". Dobash and Dobash (1992) make the point that in the early years of policing domestic violence was not a priority. They state this was down to the fact police officers did not see domestic violence as a matter they should be dealing with or take serious. "Domestic violence was frequently seen as a private matter, not 'real' violence, and the sympathies of a predominately male police force were often with the violent man/husband". This adds to the statement made by Dobash and Dobash as they state that police did not see domestic violence as a serious crime, as a result, not intervening. The only support the victims had was when a close family member would step in and intervene.

Dobash and Dobash (2000:187) state that "During the last quarter of the twentieth century, male violence and the physical abuse of woman in the home were recognised throughout the world as problems of importance and placed on the agendas of social and political. Women's groups brought the problem onto a world stage and sought social and political changes and interventions in order to provide relief to women who were abused".

The Police Foundation added to this stating that "For twenty years there's been a push to get police to take domestic abuse more seriously. There is no doubt that abuse used too often to be dismissed as a "domestic". Police officers would sometimes ignore calls or refuse to do anything if they did turn up" (The Police Foundation, 2018).

Taking what the Police Foundation and Dobash and Dobash state there was clearly an issue with how the police and society interpreted and dealt with domestic violence. Changes were needed in order to support the victims of domestic violence, these changes needed to be government led powered by woman's aid Charities. Due to the handling of domestic violence by the police new legislation and practices were needed.

The first piece of legislation brought in to help woman against domestic violence was the Matrimonial Causes Act 1878. There was laws in place before this legislation which would punish the men who beat their wives too severely. However this act made it possible for the woman to gain access to the court proceedings to gain legal separation from their abusive husbands. The next piece of legislation for woman wouldn't be until The Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act of 1976. This legislation allowed woman to gain access to the courts system and obtain an order for the male partner to leave the marital home not matter the ownership. This meant the woman where able to protect themselves without a divorce proceeding. Around the same time woman's refuge was opening around the country to support the woman of domestic violence.

Not until 1986 when the first circular was created called "Violence against women". This published circular by the home officer forced the police to make domestic violence a priority. Sandra Walklate wrote that "Home Office Circulars in 1986 and 1990, gave the clear signal that domestic violence was to be treated as seriously as violence between strangers. In other words, the existing legal powers at the disposal of the police were to be applied in the private domain of the home as they were applied in the public domain of the street". (Walklate, S., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and McCulloch, J. 2018)

These circulars forced the police forces and criminal justice to change their priorities and procedures around domestic violence. The circular was then reformed in 2000 adding more pressure and changes to policies. The police forces had taken the reform on and changed the way they perceive domestic violence and started to change their policies. Sandra Walklate added to this by saying "Reiterated in 2000, these circulars resulted in a marked change of direction for not only policing (though, arguably, the police have been the most responsive to their content), but for the criminal justice system as a whole. In particular, these circulars formed the backcloth against which a 'presumption to arrest' the offender emerged". (Walklate, S., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and McCulloch, J. 2018)

Although this was a positive change the police still lacked the legislation to prosecute the offenders and protect the victims. Instead this led to police officers just arresting the offenders no matter what the victim wanted. This had a negative impact on the victim as this would result in the offender being released without charge and the potential for further violence increased. Sandra Walklate backed this by stating that "this policy stance imitated the North American model of mandatory arrest. It was adopted despite the fact that the researchers who first proposed this pro-arrest stance later pointed

out that the short-term gains for the victim often resulted in long-term losses (in other words, the violence worsened), especially for women from ethnic minorities”(Walklate, S., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and McCulloch, J. 2018). However the pro-arrest policy is still active within the police forces around the United Kingdom. Sandra Walklate stated that the pro-arrest is still seen within the UK police forces now, it is promoted and pushed by the central government. Police forces across the UK are measured on their arrests for domestic violence which questions how fair these arrest are.

Significant change towards domestic abuse happened when the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 was introduced. Sandra Walklate goes on to say that the act “has extended the reach of the legal system in tackling domestic violence. This legislation has done a number of things: it has made common assault an arrestable offence for the first time and it has strengthened the civil law in relation to domestic violence to ensure that co-habiting couples of any sex, and couples of any sex who have never been married or do not live together, have access to the same non-molestation and occupation orders as those who are married”. (Walklate, S., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and McCulloch, J. 2018)

Since the early centuries the police’s perception and response to domestic violence and has since changed. It is now a top priority for police forces around the United Kingdom and as such there are strict guidelines in how to respond and support domestic abuse victims. Due to priority changing police forces have removed the ability to use out of court disposals for domestic violence. With this any prosecution of domestic violence has to go through the court procedure and such rely heavily on the court to place orders to intervene.

However the Police foundation state that “If cases get to court (and police and prosecution struggle to get them there) most perpetrators get a fine or a generic community sentence, neither of which is likely to lead to any behaviour change. Only three per cent of those convicted of domestic abuse complete a specially designed course as part of their sentence”. (Police Foundation, 2018)

This would suggest that even though the perception and focus of domestic violence has changed within the police force it has not transpired to the criminal courts procedure. A police force in Hampshire Constrabury in 2012 had permission to conduct a trial for a new out of court disposal called project CARA. This pilot allowed officers in Hampshire to prosecute domestic violence offenders with

the means of an out of court disposal. This out of court disposal is used via a conditional caution for the perpetrator. However there are strict guidelines on who is applicable for this conditional caution. The domestic incident must firstly be graded using the DASH risk assessment. Only incidents graded as a medium or low can be considered for the caution, also the perpetrator must not have any previous convictions or cautions for violence in the last two years.

This trial was a success Hampton Trust who piloted the project published that “Project CARA was the first domestic abuse policing strategy in UK history to be trialled under experimental conditions. The trial resulted in 35% fewer men reoffending against their partner compared to those in the control group, and reduced further harm to victims by over a quarter. In 2015 Project CARA received an award from the National College of Policing for Innovation. Following conclusion of the trial Project CARA was rolled out countywide across Hampshire”. (CARA – Hampton Trust, 2022)

Introduction of coercive control.

Coercive control is a new element to domestic abuse which has only in the last few years been recognised and taken serious by the UK governments and its police forces. Woman’s Aid define coercive control as “Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim”. Woman’s aid goes on to state that the “This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour”. (Woman’s Aid 2020)

Evan Stark Defined coercive control as “as a strategic course of self-interested behaviour designed to secure and expand gender based privilege by establishing a regime of domination in personal life”. Stark goes on to state that “This definition incorporates three facets of woman’s experience that are obscured by the violence model: that the impression involved is “ongoing” rather than episodic (a “course of conduct”) and resulting harm is cumulative, that it is multi-faceted, and it involved rational, instrumental behaviour”. (Stark, E., 2013)

Evan Stark goes on to discuss that “as part of coercive control, intimidation is used in complement or in lieu of assault to keep abuse secret and to instil fear, dependence, compliance, loyalty and shame. Offenders induce these effects in three ways primarily- through threats, surveillance and degradation” (Stark, E., 2013).

Coercive control has always been an impacting factor within domestic violence however an actual definition was not introduced in the England and Wales until 2014 by the Home Office. Then in 2015 a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was introduced in Section 76 of serious crime act within England and Wales.

The Home Officer published that the following “The government’s new coercive or controlling behaviour offence will mean victims who experience the type of behaviour that stops short of serious physical violence, but amounts to extreme psychological and emotional abuse, can bring their perpetrators to justice”. They also published that their new legislation “aims to close a gap in the law around patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour during a relationship between intimate partners, former partners who still live together, or family members”. (Coercive or controlling behaviour now a crime, 2015)

Creating new legislation is a start to helping the victims of domestic abuse and coercive control but the new legislation requires interpretation and implementation. Walklate, Fitz-Gibbon and McCulloch (2017) stated that “The implementation of the new offence is reliant on a police officer’s ability to identify the potential presence of coercive and controlling behaviour, elicit information on a series of abusive events from the victim and correctly assess that behaviour, in terms of laying charges. This requires a reframing of an officer’s typical approach from responding and taking stock of crime ‘incidents’ as isolated events towards looking to a series of interrelated events and the harm that flows from these”. (Walklate, Fitz-Gibbon and McCulloch 2017)

The initial implementation of the new offence was poor by police forces across England and Wales. Charlotte Bishop reported that “that the new offence was used just 62 times in its first six months between the end of December 2015 and end of June 2016 and, out of 22 police forces in England and Wales, eight have not charged a single person with the offence” (Bishop, 2016). With this report it

shows that officers were either reluctant to use the new legislation or had insufficient training to recognise coercive control. The latter is the more evident as Bishop reported that “This has led to the implementation of a new pilot scheme by the College of Policing to help officers spot the signs of controlling and coercive behaviour”. (Bishop, 2016)

Another explanation on why the arrest and prosecution numbers are so low could be due to how hard it is to identify coercive controlling behaviour. In some cases the victim might not even recognise the behaviour themselves, this makes it even more difficult for someone like a police officer who is an outsider of the relationship. This is backed up by a report made by Bishop who stated “how coercive control, most often perpetrated by a male against his female partner, can be very hard to recognise. This is because it involves micro-regulation of some of the daily activities already commonly associated with women in their “traditional” role as home-makers, mothers and sexual partners” (Bishop, 2016).

Bishop goes on to state that “Unlike in cases of physical violence that can leave external bruising or broken bones, it’s difficult to objectively assess whether coercive control has taken place. The abuser will typically use signals and covert messages to exert and maintain control and often these have meaning only in the context of that particular relationship. For example, the perpetrator may use a specific look, phrase or movement to convey to the victim that they are close to breaking an unspoken rule”. (Bishop, 2016)

The government are continually reviewing the statistics around domestic abuse and coercive control. They are also reviewing the policies they have in place to make sure they are fit for purpose in order to prosecute the offenders and protect the victims. The Home Office recently published they have reviewed and altered the wording of Section 68 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, they removed the wording “living together” and replaced it with “Personally connected”. This allows the police and prosecution service to prosecute offenders who no longer live with the victim but still commit the offence of controlling behaviour.

The constant change in reviews of legislation and improved training to police officers to identify coercive control has seen a positive result. Since the first legislation was brought out there has been a dramatic rise in the amount of coercive controlling offences being reported/identified to the police

forces within England and Wales. This is supported by a report published by the Office of National Statistics "There were 33,954 offences of coercive control recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2021. This is compared with 24,856 in the year ending March 2020 and 17,616 in the year ending March 2019. The rise of coercive control offences over recent years may be attributed to improvements made by the police in recognising incidents of coercive control and using the new law accordingly" (Stripe/National statistics, 2022).

Conclusion

To conclude this research has examined domestic violence and how the police forces in England and Wales perceived domestic violence in the early centuries. It clearly outlines that in the early centuries the police forces did not take domestic violence seriously. It also outlines that the government and prosecution service also had little regard for domestic violence. It states how men were the main aggressors within domestic violence and how little protection women had against their abusers. It shows how the police and criminal justice service response and perception has changed over the years for domestic violence. It shows that domestic violence is now a top priority for police forces within England and Wales. It also shows there is still work needed to be done around preventing repeat offenders.

This research has also reviewed coercive control, it defines what coercive control is and outlines the behaviours associated with it. The research shows how only recently coercive controlling behaviour has been recognised by police forces and the criminal justice system. It outlines figures showing that although new legislation has been passed there is still a poor outcome for the number of people prosecuted for the offence despite the number of incidents being reported increasing every year. This would presume that there is still a great deal of work to be done on supporting victims of coercive control.

Methodology

There are a number of different research techniques to use whilst conducting a research project. This section of the research project will outline the various different research techniques that could be used whilst researching a topic area. This section will outline the technique which were used to gather the information and data for this topic area.

Research methodology was defined by Priya Pedmakar as “The procedures enhance the research process and it exposes the way research is carried out. It helps to explain the methods used in research and presents the idea to the audience in an elegant manner that depends mainly on the researcher”(Pedmakar 2022).

Methodology can be defined as “It is a set of systems, methods, procedures or rules that is used to conduct a structured research process for a thesis or dissertation. The main purpose of the methodology is to be able to come up with an original and significant outcome that will contribute towards the field of your research”. (Dissertation help online 2022)

Research Methodology

There are a number of different types of research methods available for someone looking to conduct a piece of research. Each of these research methods have their own advantages and disadvantages of use. The following are an example of some of the research methods available.

Quantitative research – This type of research uses information gathered from numbers and statistics and uses these figures to suggest a finding.

Qualitative Research – Would be used when a research project cannot be determined by numbers and statics fully this method allows the research to pull the information together and come up with an outcome.

Analytical Research – This method uses already published facts surrounding the topic area and critically evaluates the information available this method is used in connection with the Qualitative research.

This research project two main research methods have been used to answer the question on the Domestic violence and police officers perception on the positive actions and training to identify coercive control. The two research methods used for this project was the Analytical and Quantitative methods. By using these two methods the researcher was able to use the analytical method to gather facts from already published literature around the topic area. By gather the facts the researcher was able to examine how the issue around domestic violence has changed over the years in policing. This method also allowed the researcher to gather information available around coercive control, the police perception when the legislation was brought out. Due to being such a controversial topic throughout the years the police response has been well documented throughout the years, the changes made had also been documented. Then by using Quantitative method the researcher was able to gather new fresh information from serving police officers. BY gathering as much information from serving police officers the researcher was able to examine both piece of information and facts. The researcher was then able to either disprove or back up the facts which had already been published. By using this method the researcher was able to obtain real personal views on the subject area. This method will also allow the researcher to answer the question posed in this research paper. By gathering personal experience from serving police officers, the information and feedback will be coming directly from the source.

The aim for this research project was to gather serving police officers perceptions and experience from dealing with domestic abuse. The police officers used in this research project would be serving police officers from the South Wales police force. This due to the researcher currently working within South Wales police force and having experience dealing with domestic abuse within his role. Also the researcher has identified that the current policy for South Wales Police around domestic violence is a positive action response should be used for every domestic abuse incident.

The researcher will utilise questionnaires to obtain serving police officers opinions and perception surrounding South Wales Police policy of positive action. The use of questionnaires will also allow the researcher to gather and obtain Quantitative and Qualitative data. Due to the time constraints and

practicality the researcher has conducted a small amount of questionnaires to pass out to a collection of response officers and hub officers. The selection of two different types of officers are due to the vast amount of experience from response officers from dealing with domestic incidents day in day out, Hub officers are trained officers who's primary role is to deal with suspects of domestic violence, this would allow the researcher to gather information and experience from both angles. Due to the time constraints only one team of officers from each section would be given the questionnaire to fill out. The researcher has identified that for more accurate and update findings more police officers and roles could be included in the questionnaires, however with the time constraints by selecting a smaller amount of officers and questionnaires it allows the researcher to compile the results. The questionnaires will be given to 10 response officers and 10 hub officers and will be distributed via email, this prevents the researcher from finding and hand delivering each questionnaire and allows the officers to submit their feedback via email. This is a time saving and efficient way of obtaining information from officers who would be working different shift schedules. The researcher has attached a consent form with the questionnaire, this gives the persons selected for the questionnaire to sign to say they are happy to participate in the questionnaire. Also the details of the persons involved in the questionnaire will be kept anonymous when the findings are submitted. The researcher has decided to use South Wales Police email system to distribute the questionnaire, in order to guarantee security of the person's details. Once the findings have been collated and presented in the project the feedback forms of the questionnaire will be destroyed in order to keep personal information secure.

Sampling

The researcher has decided to use the sampling process for obtaining feedback and results from police officers. Shona McCombes stated that "When you conduct research about a group of people, it's rarely possible to collect data from every person in that group. Instead, you select a sample. The sample is the group of individuals who will actually participate in the research.

To draw valid conclusions from your results, you have to carefully decide how you will select a sample that is representative of the group as a whole. There are two types of sampling methods:

- **Probability sampling** involves random selection, allowing you to make strong statistical inferences about the whole group.
- **Non-probability sampling** involves non-random selection based on convenience or other criteria, allowing you to easily collect data." (McCombes 2019)

Within probability sampling there are a number of techniques available in obtaining fair and accurate. These four techniques are, simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling. The researcher has considered all of the four techniques of sampling available when gathering data from individuals. Due to the time constraints and the specific topic area, the researcher has chosen to use the cluster sampling technique.

Shona McCombes described cluster sampling as “Cluster sampling also involves dividing the population into subgroups, but each subgroup should have similar characteristics to the whole sample. Instead of sampling individuals from each subgroup, you randomly select entire subgroups” (McCombes 2019). The researcher has considered the topic area and due to wanting feedback from a specific area involving response to domestic incidents sampling technique was best suited. By using this technique the researcher was able to focus his questions on a specific target area of individuals within South Wales Police. By choosing to sample the questions and the individuals involved in the questionnaire, the researcher has been able to gather relevant information and feedback required for the research. However the researcher does admit that by using a different technique the questionnaire would ensure fairness and ensure all parties had their opinions heard. However by sampling to a specific department such as response officers in the case of this research, the researcher is not sampling by individuals rather by departments. This means there are a number of different persons within the response department chosen, this meaning fairness and equality has been obtained.

Conclusion

To conclude the researcher has outlined the two research methods Analytical and Quantitative that will be used in this research project to answer the question around domestic violence and police officers perception on the positive actions and training to identify coercive control. During this section of the report the researcher has outlined the possible issues that could arise whilst conducting this research. These areas of issue include the ethical decisions surrounding the selection of the questionnaire and the date collection of the questionnaire. The researcher has included a consent form attached to the questionnaire to guarantee that persons involved in the questionnaire consent to participate. The researcher has outlined that by using South Wales Police email database it provides a higher level of security for the persons involved rather than personal email account.

Results Chapter

Analysis of results

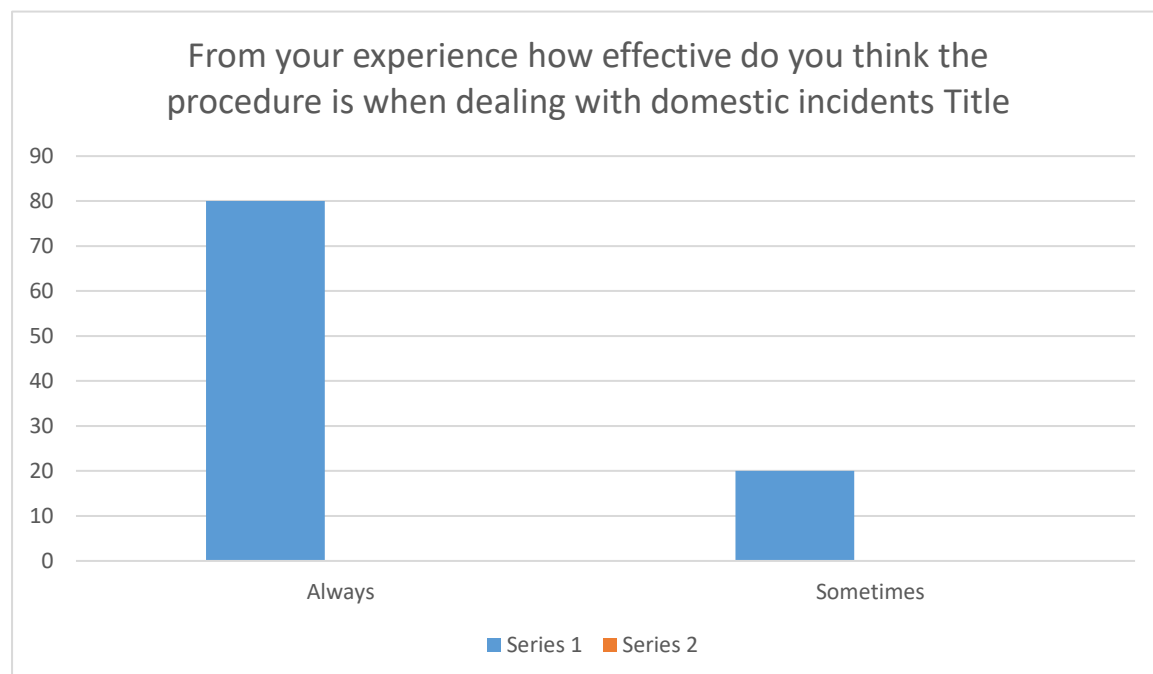
This chapter of this research paper will present the results from the questionnaire which was published to select amount of police officers within South Wales Police. It will also present the results found from the previous chapter surrounding the published literature around the subject area. This section of the paper will also attempt to answer the objective of the research: Domestic violence and police officers perception on the positive actions and training to identify coercive control. During this research, twenty police officers have participated in the questionnaire which has allowed the researcher to gather a variety of different officer's opinions and feedback surrounding domestic violence and coercive control. The researcher has used a ten question questionnaire to obtain quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher will attempt to use graphs, tables and additional literature in order to publish the results. The researcher has chosen to sample twenty police officers within South Wales Police, these twenty police officers have been chosen from ten response officers and ten hub officers. The researcher has sampled these selected officers due to these particular selected departments would deal with domestic abuse day in day out as part of their role. By departments deal with the different sides to policing domestic abuse and coercive control. The response officers would give their opinions and experience from being the initial attending officers supporting victims and potentially identifying coercive control. The hub officers would provide their opinions and experience from working within the police station and dealing with the suspects of domestic abuse/coercive control. The hub officers would give valuable experience from working alongside the Crown Prosecution service, they would be able to give their opinions on the prosecution side of policing, and they would be able to give their feedback on the level of protection victims get after the suspect has been arrested. Due to the researcher working as a response officer for South Wales Police they were able to get access to a select number of police officers for this questionnaire, the researcher has also used South Wales Police email system to distribute the questionnaire. This has allowed the researcher to distribute the questionnaire at a time efficient and cost efficient manner, also by using South Wales Police email system provides more security surrounding the personal information of the individuals participating.

Research Results

When asked “South Wales Police have a policy regarding domestic violence incident which is as follow: “The first priority of the attending officer is to ensure the safety of the victim and take Positive action to assess the risks, reduce or remove the threat and prevent any harm. If an officer is unable to gain access to the property or have face-to-face contact with the victim then consideration should be given to Police Powers of Entry”.

Are you aware of the positive action policy of South Wales Police when attending domestic violence incidents?” All twenty participants stated they were fully aware of the policy South Wales Police had in place for dealing with domestic abuse incidents. This would show that South Wales Police have made sure all of their officers are aware of their policy surrounding domestic abuse, it also shows that all officers responding to domestic abuse incidents are aware they have to conduct positive action.

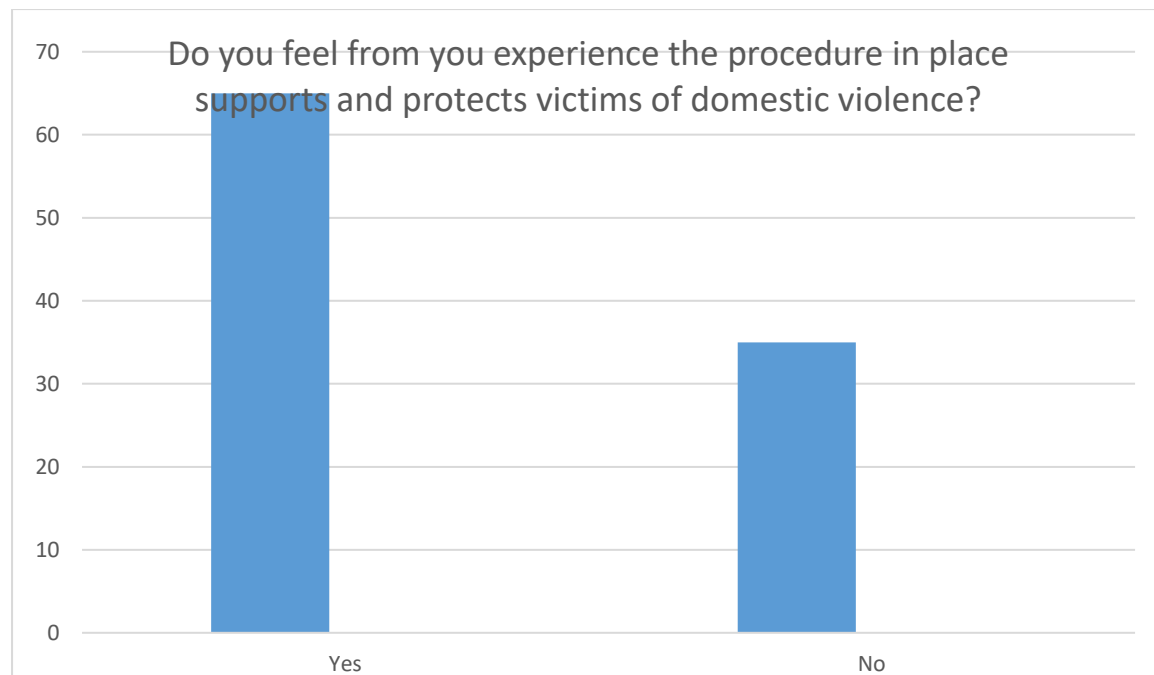
From this the questionnaire then asked the same officers how often to they believe South Wales Police “Positive action” policy works to support the victims of domestic abuse. The feedback received showed that 80% of the officers involved believed the policy sometimes effective dealing with domestic violence, whilst 20% of the selected officers felt it worked all of the time. These results can be seen in the chart below.



Due to results showing that 80% of officers thought the procedure worked “sometimes” it would indicate that police officers for South Wales Police feel more could be done around the policy for supporting victims of domestic abuse. During this question participants were asked for a reason for their selection most replied with similar answers, one officer answered by saying “If those within the relationship want to go against the positive action, advice and/or bail conditions then they will do so, they have free will and autonomy.” All of the officers who stated they felt the policy worked sometimes had the same response as this officer. The feedback was surrounding the fact the officers felt regarding domestic abuse they tend to visit the same addresses and deal with the same victims and suspects. The officers involved also stated that more support from specialist department or third parties such as charities was required. This would seem that officers feel more could be done to support victims of domestic abuse to stop becoming repeat victims. It also mirrors earlier in the research paper where the Police Foundation stated they felt ““If cases get to court (and police and prosecution struggle to get them there) most perpetrators get a fine or a generic community sentence, neither of which is likely to lead to any behaviour change. Only three per cent of those convicted of domestic abuse complete a specially designed course as part of their sentence”.

Following on with South Wales police “Positive Action” policy the same officers were asked “Do you feel from your experience the procedure in place supports and protects victims of domestic violence?”. The results from this question showed that 65% of the participants answered yes and 35% answered no. Majority answered yes to this question stating they believe there is not much more they can do as Police Officers. One answer to highlight was from an officer who answered yes and provided the following response when asked why “Appropriate advice, positive action and referrals are made. There are not many other options available. However as above stated - People can only be advised, police cannot babysit those involved”. This shows the continuation of frustration surrounding possible repeat victims returning to their abusive relationships. This is possibly an indication from the officers that they feel they have done everything in their powers and more support is needed from departments and third party agencies in stopping victims from becoming repeat victims. Whilst majority of the officers involved felt the policy worked to protect the victims a number of officers felt it did not work. The feedback from these officers was surrounding the power of arrest and the push to arrest suspects despite the victim’s stance or feelings around the matter. They did state they felt the power of arrest was needed to prevent further injury or to stop the suspect from intimidating the victim. However some comments were made surrounding low level domestic incidents where no injury is sustained, during these incidents they feel forced to arrest. Their opinions are that the suspect then gets released due to the victim not wanting to make a formal complaint and the potential for the

incident to escalate and become worse for the victim increases. This would indicate that further work could be conducted around dealing with low level domestic incidents. This could be as previously stated the CARA Model where low level first time suspect are dealt with via out of court and given educational classes around their behaviour to prevent them from re-offending. The results from this question are published in the below graph.

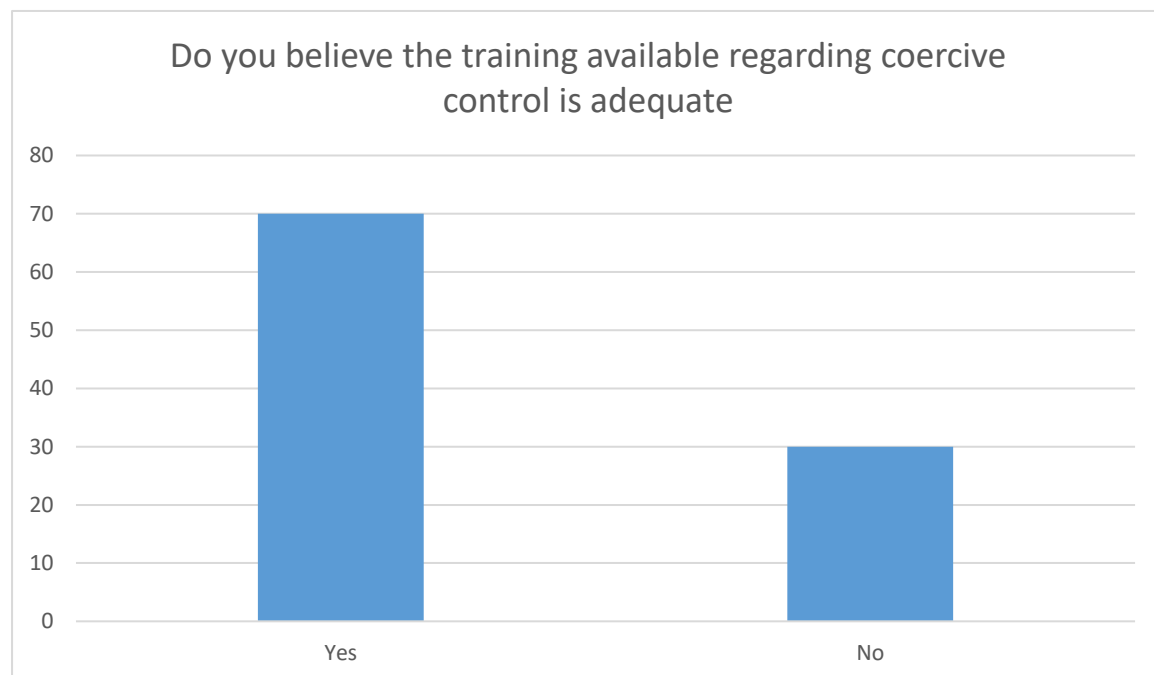


Furthermore the participants of the questionnaire was asked whether they had received training on how to deal with domestic abuse incidents. Considering the role it not surprisingly all participants answered yes to this question, this would be due to domestic abuse being a mandatory subject area in initial training. This was the response from all participants when asked what training they had received stating it was only from initial training they received training. Further to this participants where asked whether they felt the training around domestic abuse was up to date and fit for purpose. 90% of participants answered yes to this question where 10% answered no. This shows that the training provided by South Wales Police was very effective in helping its officer's deal with domestic abuse. However there was still 10% who answered no to the question, when asked for their explanation the feedback revived was they felt the initial training input was fit for purpose but felt training days where not utilised to the maximum. They felt by utilising the mandatory training days

more effective they could be given updated training surrounding domestic abuse. This would indicate that the initial training provided by South Wales Police surrounding domestic abuse is sufficient but also shows further work could be done to keep officers up to date around domestic incidents, legislation and procedures by using mandatory training days more effectively.

The participants were also asked “Coercive control is defined as “Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim”. Have you received any training in identifying coercive control?”.

All of the participants had stated that they had received training for coercive control within their role in South Wales Police. However the participants were also asked whether they felt the training they received in coercive control was adequate. 70% of the participants answered yes and 30% answered no. The below graph shows the results from this questionnaire.



When asked for their feedback around the reason for their answers, the officers who selected yes stated they had received an abundance of training around coercive control whilst in initial training. Whereas the officers who selected no stated the only training they had received was via an online training package on the South Wales Police system NCALT. The felt the online training was not sufficient and confusing. This would show that with the officers who conducted this questionnaire the

new officers in service who have recently completed initial training received adequate training around coercive control. This would be due to the recent legislation changes and shift in perception by South Wales Police around coercive control. Where the other officers who have more service missed this vital training and was substituted with online training which shows was not as effective.

Conclusion

This research project has allowed the researcher to take an in depth look into domestic violence and coercive control. It has allowed the researcher to use their own experience when dealing with domestic violence and coercive control from working within South Wales Police and merge it with already confirmed facts and published information. It has also allowed the researcher to gain an insight to police officers perception with dealing with domestic abuse/ coercive control issues within the police force. An interesting discovery whilst conducting the research was the background to domestic abuse from the early centuries. The information around how the police perceived domestic abuse during the early centuries and how they responded was interesting to the researcher. The researcher found that Dobash and Dobash stated ““Domestic violence was frequently seen as a private matter, not ‘real’ violence, and the sympathies of a predominately male police force were often with the violent man/husband”.

This was very interesting considering the changes to how domestic abuse is perceived now. During this research it has uncovered how domestic violence has changed from being seen a private matter as previously stated to a matter of importance. One factor for this change would be how the police forces in England and Wales now perceive domestic abuse. Another factor could be the use of media and high profile celebrities such as Ruth Dodsworth coming out and telling their story around surviving domestic abuse/coercive control. Sara Alatsu published an article stating the facts about benefits from celebrities speaking about their domestic abuse incident. Sara wrote that “When celebrities share their personal experiences with domestic violence, it can help give those who are still in abusive relationships, as well as survivors, a voice. Not to mention, its proof that domestic violence can truly happen to anyone. The fact that they are visible people means they command a voice.”(Everyday Health Online).

This research has found that police officers are vital and have one of the biggest impacts when dealing with domestic abuse. This is due to their role to protect the people they serve within their community, this makes them vital when tackling domestic abuse. Woman's Aid stated that "The police are a key 24 hour agency for women experiencing domestic violence, and the first port of call in emergency (by dialling 999). Being assaulted, sexually abused, threatened or harassed by someone you know or live with is just as much a crime as violence from a stranger, and is often more dangerous". However through the research it has become apparent that third party agencies such as domestic abuse charities and social services are vital in supporting the police with domestic abuse incidents. The research published would suggest the police are spearhead for domestic abuse due to attending the call and potentially arresting the suspect, however from there they require the support from the multi-agencies in supporting the victim. The research has shown the work the multi-agencies do is vital in potentially stopping re-offending and a victim returning to an abusive relationship and becoming a repeat victim.

The research shows that the perception around domestic abuse has changed within England and Wales. It shows how the matter has gone from being seen as a private matter to be dealt with by family and neighbours and not by police to it becoming a high priority within the police. It shows that campaigns by charities has pushed the government to change its stance around domestic abuse. With the government introducing new legislation around domestic abuse and pushing for results from the police, this has forced the police forces in England and Wales to change their views and approach on domestic abuse.

This research has also looked into coercive control and defined what coercive controlling behaviour is. The researcher discovered that coercive control is defined as "as a strategic course of self-interested behaviour designed to secure and expand gender based privilege by establishing a regime of domination in personal life". This is an interesting element to the research as domestic abuse is well known but coercive control is a new concept to domestic abuse. This research shows that coercive behaviour has always been an impacting factor within domestic abuse but due to the lack of legislation it was hard for police to support victims. This research discovered that before the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was introduced in Section 76 of serious crime act within England and Wales, the police had to try and prove harassing behaviour within a relationship which was seen as an almost impossible task. However the researcher has also outlined that the statistics around the amount of people prosecuted when the new legislation was brought out was poor. The researcher identified that "that the new offence was used just 62 times in its first six months between the end of December 2015 and end of June 2016 and, out of 22 police forces in England and Wales, eight have

not charged a single person with the offence". This showed that during the initial introduction of the new offence there was a great amount of work needed to be done in training police officers to identify coercive control.

Part of this research was also to discover the thoughts and opinions of serving police officers around domestic abuse and coercive control and the training they receive. To gather this information a select amount of police officers within South Wales Police were asked to participate in a twenty question questionnaire. This was to enable to gather serving police officer perception on domestic abuse/coercive control. The results from this was although the government and police forces in England and Wales have conducted a vast amount of changes and improvements there is still more to be done. When asked about the training they received regarding domestic abuse 90% of the participants stated the training around domestic abuse was adequate where only 10% stated it was not. This would show that the change in perception around domestic abuse has changed for police forces with England and Wales by ensuring their officers are well trained. However there was still 10% who stated they felt the training was not adequate, this shows there is still work to be done and a repeating comment was regarding the use of training days more effectively. The researcher also asked the question whether they felt the "Positive" action policy employed by South Wales Police was effective in supporting victims of domestic violence. 65% answered yes stating they felt the positive action approached helped victims of domestic abuse, however 35% stated no. Within the 65% they stated there was not much more as police officers they could do after submitting referrals and arrests. Whilst the 35% stated they felt they were pressured into arresting suspects against the victims wills and this sometimes caused further issues for the victims. This would show that the previous research around the current changes in domestic incidents are a true reflection from the frustrations from Police officers as stated by the Police Foundation where they felt "If cases get to court (and police and prosecution struggle to get them there) most perpetrators get a fine or a generic community sentence, neither of which is likely to lead to any behaviour change. Only three per cent of those convicted of domestic abuse complete a specially designed course as part of their sentence". So with this input from the police federation and the feedback from the participants in the questionnaire trials like the CARA where low level offenders are dealt with via courses and out of court are a sign of further potential change within domestic abuse.

During this questionnaire the participants were asked whether they had received training around coercive control, unsurprisingly all participants stated they had received some form of training. However the researcher also discovered that when the participants were asked if they thought the training was sufficient 70% stated it was whilst 30% said it was not. Although majority stated the training they received was adequate a large number of officers stated it was not. When questioned about why they felt the training was not adequate they stated the only training they received was via an online learning platform, whilst the 70% stated they had received adequate training whilst in initial training. The researcher has conceded that the response team used for the questionnaire did include a team which had a large number of new recruits. If another team with older more experienced officers was chosen the results could have been different. This outlines how recent some of the changes have been around coercive control and the work still needing to be done by South Wales Police to ensure all of its officers could identify coercive control.

There were also additional questions asked of the participants which have not been published in the findings. The researcher has gathered these results and feedback and due to this feels they have sufficient information in order for the researcher to publish recommendations they feel would positively help South Wales Police.

Recommendations

On reviewing the findings from the questionnaire completed by serving police officers around their perception on domestic violence and coercive control and the training they receive, this research has identified some issues. These issues have now been concluded and be sent for recommendation to police forces within England and Wales. One of the issues that has been identified from serving police officers is the training they receive, especially surrounding coercive control. With the feedback it would indicate that training for domestic abuse within South Wales Police is adequate and fit for purpose. However there are recommendations that training days are utilised more efficiently, this is to ensure that all officers are up to date with new legislation or policy change. Utilising training days could also include having incorporation days with third party organisations like woman's aid, this would benefit police officers to hear the effects domestic abuse can have. However the feedback

regarding the training police officers receive surrounding coercive control was not as positive, a large amount of officers felt the training they received was not adequate. Although majority stated they had received sufficient training this training was during initial training for the new recruits. However a lot of older serving officers could have missed or not had a substantial input. Most officers who stated the training was not adequate had received some form of training via an online platform, by utilising training days again officers could be taught by trainers in person and shown the effect of coercive control on victims. This would greatly improve officer's awareness around coercive control and be more equipped with identifying victims of coercive control and supporting them.

Another issue outlined to the researcher from the feedback from the officers involved within the questionnaire was the need for further third party support. Majority of the officers involved stated they felt the positive action approach was effective but also stated more third party involvement was needed. They aired their concerns that just by arresting a suspect does not solve the matter for the victim, however that is how far they can go. After arrest and referral are submitted it is then down to the Crown Prosecution service and third party agencies to support the victims. It is clear from the feedback that many officers felt they were dealing with the same victims and suspect and attending the same address. This shows that the efforts made by the officers to arrest and take positive action goes in vain. The recommendation would be for more third party involvement in helping victims from getting out of the abusive relationship. The researcher has also highlighted a recommendation for new trials such as CARA to be trialled within police forces around England and Wales. With more projects focused on dealing with low level first time offenders out of court and providing education centres for their behaviour, this would cut down the risk of re-offending. This researcher project has published figures on how the CARA project in other forces have managed to reduce the re-offending rate.

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Appendix A – Consent Letter

This questionnaire is for the researcher to gather serving police officers perception around domestic violence/coercive control incidents.

This questionnaire is designed to obtain your own personal views and experience on dealing with domestic abuse/coercive control. The questions are aimed towards the training you have received in regards to domestic abuse/coercive control. All information you provide in this questionnaire is private and will only be used in this research project, no personal details will be published within the project. You have been selected to take part in the questionnaire but to participate is your choice. If you wish to take part in the questionnaire can you please consent below.

Consent

I consent to participate in the research by completing this questionnaire:

To consent please tick an option below:

Yes	
No	

Appendix C – Questionnaire

Question 1-

On average, how often do you deal with a domestic violence incident?

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	
Never	

Question 2

A Domestic incident is described as “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Have you undergone training to aid you deal with domestic violence incidents?

- Yes
- No

If yes please provide a short description of the training received?

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Question 3

Do you believe that the training you have received within South Wales Police surrounding domestic violence is up to date and fit for purpose?

- Yes
- NO

Please provide a reason for you decision?

Question 4

South Wales Police have a policy regarding domestic violence incident which is as follow: “The first priority of the attending officer is to ensure the safety of the victim and take Positive action to assess the risks, reduce or remove the threat and prevent any harm. If an officer is unable to gain access to the property or have face-to-face contact with the victim then consideration should be given to Police Powers of Entry”.

Are you aware of the positive action policy of South Wales Police when attending domestic violence incidents?

- Yes - ☐
- NO ☐

Question 5

From your experience how effective do you think the procedure is when dealing with domestic incidents?

• Always	
• Sometimes	
• Never	

Please provide a reason for you answer?

Question 6

Do you feel from you experience the procedure in place supports and protects victims of domestic violence?

Yes	
No	

Please provide a reason for you answer?

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Question 7

Do you think the policy could be improved?

Yes	
No	

Please provide a reason for you answer?

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Question 8

Coercive control is defined as “Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim”.

Have you received any training in identifying coercive control ?

Yes	
No	

If you have answered yes can you please describe the training you have received

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Question 9

Do you believe the training available regarding coercive control is adequate ?

Yes	
No	

Please provide a reason for you answer?

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Question 10

Have you ever dealt with an incident involving coercive control whilst in your role as a Police Officer for South Wales Police?

Yes	
No	