



**REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY (2026 – 2029)**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To gain feedback and input from Overview Committee on the draft Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (2026-2029).
2. To highlight available training opportunities in domestic abuse open to all and to promote the specialist domestic abuse support services across Nottinghamshire.

**Information**

**What is Domestic Abuse?**

3. Domestic abuse is defined as behaviour where both individuals involved are aged 16 or over, are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive. Abusive behaviour consists of any of; Physical or sexual abuse, Violent or threatening behaviour, Controlling or coercive behaviour, Economic abuse, psychological, emotional, or other abuse. Irrespective of whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
4. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) established the standard definition and also identified that children of domestic abuse survivors who have seen, heard, or experienced the effect of that abuse are survivors.
5. Domestic abuse can affect both women and men but not equally, women are much more likely to experience abuse than men. Experiencing domestic abuse has a significant impact on the whole family and can have life-long consequences for adults and children. Support to flee to safety, recover from trauma and move on positively is key to breaking the cycle. In 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act introduced a new definition along with a statutory duty for Local Authorities to provide safe accommodation support services.
6. Domestic abuse affects one in five adults in their lifetime, which equates to one in four women and one in six men<sup>1</sup>. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 3.8

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<sup>1</sup> [Domestic Abuse Statistics UK - NCDV](#)

million people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in year ending March 2025. This is equivalent to a prevalence rate of 7.8%.

7. The police recorded 1,350,460 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales in year ending March 2025; 816,493 of these were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes.
8. Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced. Many cases will not enter the criminal justice process as they are not reported to the police. One of the strengths of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police and provides reliable estimates of domestic abuse.
9. Across England and Wales, the estimated system wide social and economic costs of domestic abuse is £78 billion (2022/23 prices) over a three-year average period of abuse<sup>2</sup>. Locally, this impact can be felt on a range of local authority services, such as adult and children safeguarding and the supported housing requirements. Therefore, this creates a clear narrative to invest in prevention and early intervention to ensure that perpetrators are supported to change or held to account for their actions and survivors are supported to rebuild their lives.

### **Use of language in domestic abuse**

10. Language is very important in the domestic abuse sector as it often symbolises being believed and hope. Many victims of domestic abuse fear seeking help due to concerns over being judged or not believed. Therefore, it is important to consider in both spoken and written forms how we can be trauma informed and can avoid minimising or relieving the person using violence and abuse of responsibility and blaming the victim or make them mutually responsible for the violence and abuse they experience. Within this report and the strategy, the language used will be positive, 'survivors' rather than 'victims' will be used throughout to recognise that surviving abuse is possible and with support survivors can thrive and rebuild their lives.

### **Role of Nottinghamshire County Council in Domestic Abuse**

11. The authority has a number of key roles regarding domestic abuse, markedly related to the safeguarding of adults and children. Public health commission of support services (non-mandatory) alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse can access support following partnership or a self-referral. These services are essential and underpin the safeguarding agenda.
12. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed an additional duty on the authority to provide support to survivors and their children in safe accommodation. The Duty also included the establishment of a local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the development of a safe accommodation needs assessment and Domestic Abuse Strategy. The Duty came with funding £2 million per year which was allocated until 31 March 2028 as a key decision by the Cabinet Member in November 2025.

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<sup>2</sup> [Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report 2022 – A patchwork of provision – mapping report](#)

## Key aspects from the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment (2024)

13. The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment completed in 2024 identified the following four key findings:
- data highlights the high level of need for refuge and the increasing length of stay. Individual survivor and family needs can impact on their ability to access refuge.
  - Accessing permanent housing or a managed move has become increasingly difficult due to the lack of affordable housing. Survivors' experiences highlight economic abuse as a factor which continues to impact upon them after leaving the perpetrator, causing problems in the housing pathways.
  - Increased need for Sanctuary schemes which enables survivors to stay in their own home and is often viewed as the preferable option as it prevents the upheaval away from schools, family and friends. Districts are reporting challenges in meeting the increasing demand in Sanctuary referrals along with increasing costs for security installation.

## Updating a Domestic Abuse Needs Assessments

14. Domestic abuse is part of a range of needs assessments, these include the OPCC Victims Needs Assessment completed in 2025 which will cover the requirements as part of Duty to Collaborate within the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.
15. There will be an update to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on Domestic Abuse in 2026 to help drive forwards activity and commissioning in the new authority geography, when the new unitary council geographies have been announced. This will ensure that the strategy's delivery plan will flex to meet the priorities for the new geography.

## Local and National Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy

16. The authority has signed up to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire OPCC led VAWG Strategy. The updated Strategy, which runs from 2023 to 2028 and focuses on five key pillars: prevention, protection, support for survivors, pursuing perpetrators, and partnership working.
- **Preventing:** Embed a zero-tolerance approach to VAWG across all activity to instil social change in perceptions of women and girls. This will deliver a change in social views from victim-blaming to perpetrator-blaming.
  - **Responding:** Work towards reducing the levels of harm experienced by women and girls. Increase the number of women and girls referred into support and recovery services.
  - **Supporting:** Ensure that survivors are safe and feel safe and supported so that they can lead a fulfilling life.
  - **Including:** Ensure our services are culturally competent and meet the needs of women and girls from all protected characteristics. Enhance the awareness of the needs and barriers women and girls from marginalised groups face.
  - **Strengthening:** Ensure we have a comprehensive joined up system of strong and suitable services casting a wide net of support.
17. The national VAWG strategy was launched on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The four strategic ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (Prevention, Supporting, Responding and Strengthening the system) are closely aligned with the national VAWG

Strategy objectives of Prevention and Early Intervention, Relentless Pursuit of Perpetrators and Support and the drive for a whole of society approach.

### Development process of the Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

18. A dedicated workshop session was delivered in June 2025 with all stakeholders invited. This session shared details on the needs assessment undertaken looking at the safe accommodation elements of the domestic abuse agenda. It is acknowledged that there is further work required to transform the domestic abuse agenda at a time where there are significant geographic and organisational changes.
19. As part of a process of engagement, a copy of the draft strategy is included in Appendix A for input and feedback.
20. This Strategy sets out the overall vision, the main aim, our approach and associated strategic ambitions that Nottinghamshire is taking in tackling domestic abuse over the next three years:

Vision statement:

*Domestic Abuse is a complex social problem that impacts people, families, communities and services across our society. **In Nottinghamshire, we will take a zero-tolerance stance on domestic abuse** so that everyone can live safely and experience healthy relationships without the threat of domestic abuse.*

*We will focus on prevention and early intervention, provide support to survivors and families, and bring perpetrators to justice by taking a coordinated community response approach.*

*Collectively we will improve outcomes and reduce the impact of domestic abuse in, and on, our communities, so that our communities as a whole can flourish and thrive.*

Main aim of the strategy:

Across Nottinghamshire we will work together to minimise the risk of and the harm from domestic abuse, ensuring that those affected by domestic abuse get the right support as early as possible; and holding individuals who are abusive to account. We will prioritise prevention to ensure our future is different to our present and past.

Strategic Ambition 1: Prevention

Ensure effective primary and secondary prevention work, educating children and young people and intervening early with perpetrators, to reduce future domestic abuse.

Strategic Ambition 2: Supporting

Provide help and support to survivors of domestic abuse and their families so that they can rebuild their lives.

Strategic Ambition 3: Responding

Safeguard and protect survivors of domestic abuse to reduce the levels of harm experienced and hold perpetrators to account, helping to rebuild trust and confidence in our criminal justice system, especially the Police.

#### Strategic Ambition 4: Strengthening the system

Work together to strengthen the system to prevent and reduce the harm caused by domestic abuse, collaborating to develop a whole system response to a whole person and their family.

### **Co-production of the Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy**

21. Co-production is a developing area in the domestic abuse. The Coproduction Service commissioned in 2023 continue to work with a listen to survivors regarding their experiences and views of services and the system as a whole. This approach underpins the strategies development and will ensure the action plans make a difference to survivor's lives.

### **Promoting domestic abuse training and support across Nottinghamshire**

#### Training:

22. Equation is Nottinghamshire's commissioned service that works with the whole community to reduce the impact of domestic abuse by offering free expert training which is open to all, online or face to face, in order to increase knowledge and the ability to respond to domestic abuse. Access to training is via <https://equation.org.uk/training/>

#### Support services:

23. There are a range of specialist services that have been commissioned by the Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board and NHS England. Those listed below are first points of contact. All services are independent, confidential and free. There is no need to report the crime to the police to get help.

Women's 24-hour free domestic abuse helpline and access to services  
0808 800 0340  
[www.junowomensaid.org.uk](http://www.junowomensaid.org.uk)

Men's domestic abuse helpline and access to services  
0800 995 6999 - Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm (7:30pm on Wednesdays)  
excluding bank holidays. 24/7 confidential voicemail at other times  
[www.equation.org.uk](http://www.equation.org.uk)

LGBTQ+ domestic abuse helpline and access to service  
0330 088 0787 - Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm (7:30pm on Wednesdays)  
excluding bank holidays. 24/7 confidential voicemail at other times  
[www.equation.org.uk](http://www.equation.org.uk)

24. Councillors are encouraged to:

- a. Attend/share the training offered - the introductory course "Understanding and Responding to Domestic Abuse" is recommended as further training refers back to learnings from that.
- b. Promote the specialist domestic abuse support services across Nottinghamshire.

## **Other Options Considered**

25. Expanding the timeframe of the original strategy 2022-2025 was not considered a viable option as there had been substantial policy developments at a local and national level.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

26. The authority is required to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy as part of the Domestic Abuse duty responsibilities. The previous strategy is out of date.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

28. There are no direct financial implications identified in the Strategy.

## **Legal Implications**

29. There are legal and statutory requirements attached to the report from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

## **Local Government Reorganisation Implications**

30. Future local government reorganisation implications will be fully considered as part of the development of the JSNA in 2026. These implications will inform future revisions to the action plan.

## **Consultation**

31. The Strategy has been developed through consultation with stakeholders and build on the views shared through the coproduction service.

## **Implications for Residents**

32. The strategy considers the needs of all residents including the needs of survivors from the transgender community. The Supreme Court gender ruling (2025) relating to single sex spaces and services impacts on the domestic abuse services. The commissioned services are expected to support all survivors and systems are in place to ensure that all survivors are supported in settings that consider their needs and the needs of others.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That Overview Committee provides feedback and input on the draft Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (2026-2029).
- 2) That Overview Committee members share information on the available training opportunities around domestic abuse that are open to all and also promote the specialist domestic abuse support services that are available across Nottinghamshire.

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### 33. Legal Comments (CM 11/12/2025)

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires that the Council must:

- a) assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area;
- b) prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area; and
- c) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is supplemented by the Domestic Abuse Support (Local Authority Strategies and Annual Reports) Regulations 2021 which provide, among other requirements, that the strategy must be reviewed within three years of its first publication and within each subsequent three-year period.

The Overview Committee is the appropriate body to consider this report through the responsibilities set out in its terms of reference. Under the Local Government Act 2000 and other associated legislation, scrutiny committees have the power to review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the relevant functions of the Council. This includes considering reports and matters that fall within their terms of reference. The Committee may agree recommendations to be directed towards other bodies and decision makers, undertake further consideration of the matters at hand, or request further information in order to support the Committee's work.

### Financial Comments (PA 10/12/2025)

34. Whilst there are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report, any proposed work on domestic abuse that is not already reflected in the Council's budget will be brought forward for consideration and approval. This will include details of the estimated revenue and capital costs along with the proposed funding.

#### **HR Comments (JP 09/12/2025)**

35. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

#### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Domestic Abuse Duty Commissioning Plan – Informal Cabinet 24 November 2025

#### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All