



Nottinghamshire Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2028

Co-creating a safe Nottinghamshire for women and girls

Foreword

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains far too prevalent in our society. In Nottinghamshire we are determined to change this.

Sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation and forced marriage have no place in our society and no place in Nottinghamshire. It is vital that we do not allow for these crimes to be accepted as normal and that we come together as a united community to change the statistics that continue to shock us.

I have asked partners to come together, including Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council as well as all of our district and borough councils, to create our VAWG strategy and commit to delivering this ambitious plan for Nottinghamshire.

Our conversations with the public, victims and survivors of VAWG related crimes informed all of our early stage planning. This was followed by significant consultation with experts working to tackle and respond to these crimes every day.

We know that a change in approach is needed to protect women and girls and we have focused those changes in prevention. In seeking to change those deep-rooted attitudes that create an environment for VAWG to exist.

It remains critical that we provide trauma-informed, specialist support for those who do experience these crimes and that we do all we can to pursue and bring offenders to justice.

Our VAWG strategy closely interlinks with the Nottinghamshire's Police and Crime plan as well as the Safer Nottinghamshire Board's Strategic Safety plan and Nottingham Community Safety Partnership's plans too.

This forward thinking Violence Against Women and Girls strategy outlines our commitments and our areas of focus. Alongside this strategy is a delivery plan and a dedicated set of professionals who will work together to combine their expertise and ensure the successful execution of this strategy which I whole-heartedly believe will make women and girls safer in Nottinghamshire.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Henry".

Key partners



Join statement of support

We have come together as partners, united in the challenge to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) related crime. We have worked as one, to create this VAWG strategy for Nottinghamshire and are committed to its delivery across all of our responsible areas. The aim is to make Nottingham and Nottinghamshire safer for women, girls and everyone that may be impacted by this type of crime.

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What is VAWG?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an umbrella term used to describe any form of violence which disproportionately affects women and girls. This includes domestic abuse and homicide, sexual assault, stalking and harrasment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour-based abuse' and exploitation.

Whilst recognising that men and boys can also be victims of these types of crime, it is widely accepted that VAWG is deeply linked to women's inequality in society and the impact of these crimes is felt across the whole community.

Why do we need a VAWG Strategy?

Women and girls across Nottinghamshire are at a higher risk of harm than boys and men, particularly of high harm crimes, such as domestic and sexual abuse. Violence against women and girls related crimes have a significant impact on victims and survivors lives, and those of her children. Her mental health, use of substances, homelessness, loss of employment and lower educational outcomes and life chances.

Nottinghamshire is home to many expert specialist organisations working to meet the needs of victims and survivors, but there are opportunities to enhance prevention activity and improve access to services among some communities. There are also ways in which we can improve how effectively agencies work together. It is also important that we continue to enhance our knowledge of what works in tackling violence against women and girls and that we ensure that the work we do is evidence-led and robustly evaluated.

How did we develop this strategy?

The foundations of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy are rooted within an extensive theory of change model, which was developed alongside various sector leads, including those who respond to and provide support to people affected by VAWG crime every day in many different capacities.

This has been further enhanced by research, data scrutiny and independent consultation with survivors and the wider public, carried out via multiple methods, including surveys, questionnaires and focus groups. This multi-step approach has been key to ensuring that the content of the strategy is robust, meaningful and informed.

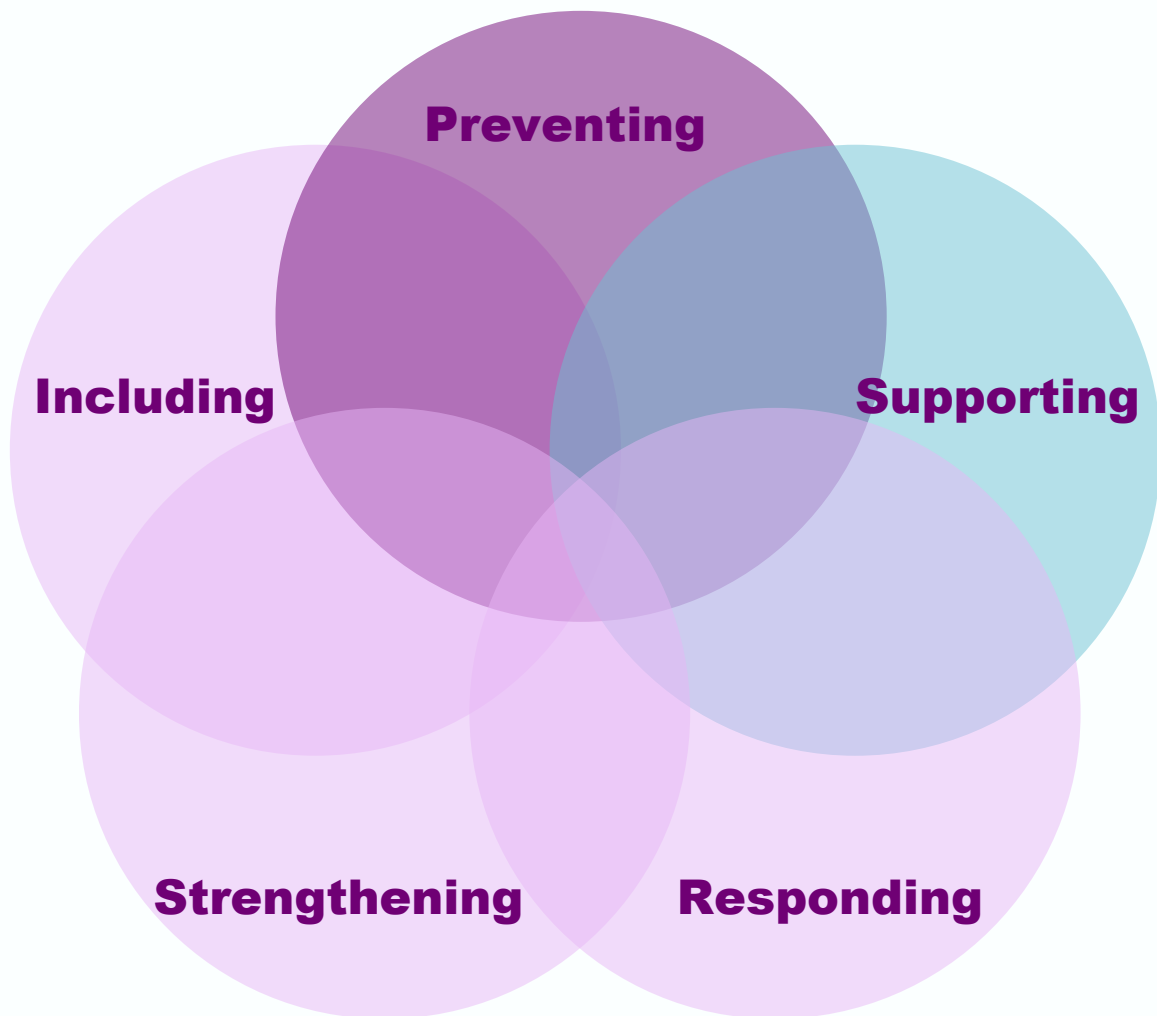
It also provides us with insight into survivors' journeys, ensuring that their voice is central to our plans. Incorporating a theory of change into the strategy ensures our commitment to long-term change and improving the environment for all.

Introduction

Our Mission

To ensure that Nottinghamshire is a safe place for women and girls to live, work, learn and enjoy by reducing the prevalence of violence against women and girls, preventing VAWG crime, bringing more perpetrators to justice and increasing support for all survivors.

Our mission is upheld by five pillars, each informed by the views of survivors, Nottinghamshire front line service providers, and members of the general public.



"I think all of this will work, like I say, as long as it's all put together good. With the right people in the right places." - VAWG Survivor

Our 5 Strategic Pillars

Preventing:

Embed a zero-tolerance approach to VAWG across all activity to instill 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:

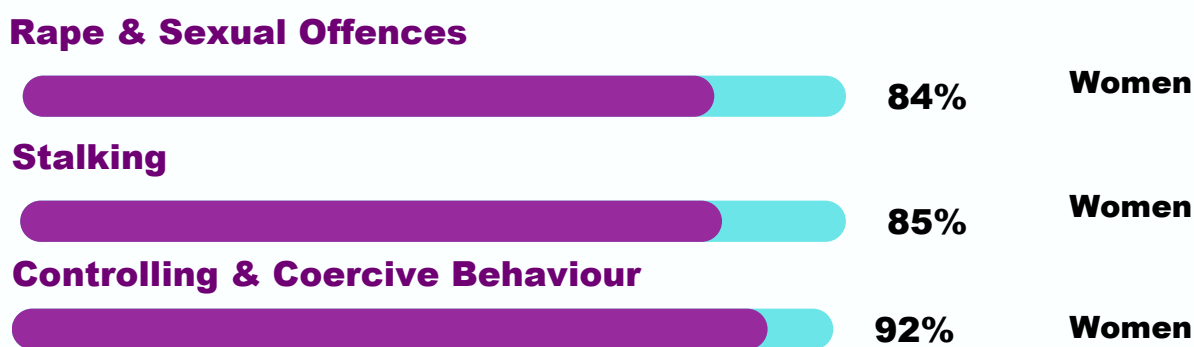
Ensure our services are culturally competent and meet the needs of women and girls from all protected characteristics. Enhance the awareness of the needs and barriers women and girls from marginalised groups face.

Strengthening:

Ensure we have a comprehensive joined up system of strong and suitable services casting a wide net of support.

Snapshot of VAWG in Nottinghamshire

Victims*



Suspects*



Preventing

No one should ever face abuse or harassment because of their gender. We need to change the way that people see women and girls, promote and empower positive role models and challenge the attitudes, inequalities and social conditions that excuse it. We will not excuse it. We will work with communities to ensure that perpetrators of violence against women and girls are held to account for their actions and that victims do not face blame.

"First is the mentality that men and women are equals, in certain communities that we represent. Women are not seen as equal. Yep. So to shift that mindset is quite difficult." - VAWG Survivor

What we plan to do:

- Roll out and further develop schools-based healthy relationship programmes in order to support the development of healthy attitudes.
- Targeted prevention activity including one-to-one and group support for children affected by VAWG.
- Work with families to complement school initiatives to strengthen our communities' response.
- 'Bystander training' to ensure people have the confidence to speak out against VAWG and misogyny, to intervene and protect women and girls.
- Long-term communications and campaigns to raise awareness and combat harmful attitudes and misogyny.
- Ensure a range of evidence-led programmes are in place to address the behaviours and attitudes of those that commit abuse.
- Create safe spaces for women and girls to reduce levels of fear, especially in areas where women and girls feel more fearful.
- Ensure that VAWG crimes are responded to at the earliest opportunity by prioritising early intervention to prevent escalation.

Outcomes we aim to achieve:

- We want to see more children and young people have a greater understanding of consent and healthy relationships. This is key to preventing the development of misogynistic and harmful attitudes.
- Increased safe spaces for children and young people in education to ensure they feel protected and safe.
- Ensure children and young people have better coping strategies which can mitigate the harm caused by VAWG offences.
- We want men to understand what women have to consider to reduce their risk of harm.
- Expand the number of tools people have to challenge harmful beliefs and behaviours which relate to VAWG.
- Increase the number of allies women and girls have within the community.
- Ensure that perpetrators take responsibility for the negative consequences of their offending behaviour.
- Move away from a victim-blaming culture to create social change

How we will measure success:

- Positive improvements in attitudes and behaviours among those accessing the range of programmes and interventions we commission. (Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- Increased early intervention and use of protection orders and notices for VAWG related offences. (Nottinghamshire Police)
- Reductions in serious harm associated with VAWG offences, including reductions in domestic homicide rates. (Recorded crime)

Responding

We need to ensure that women and girls have trust in our Criminal Justice System, especially the police. To respond to violence against women and girls effectively we need to increase the number of people referred into support services, and ensure responsible bodies know what to do when dealing with a violence against women and girls incident, disclosure or request for help.

"It's almost like maybe someone who's like part of the police but has a different role. To be there to comfort" - VAWG Survivor

What we plan to do:

- Raise awareness of the specialist support and help available among both professionals and communities. This is key to ensuring all survivors of violence against women and girls receive support.
- Ensure that professionals and communities not only know how to respond to violence against women and girls, including the perpetrators of these crimes, but that they take action.
- Continue to work with partners to ensure women and girls have access to a 'safe space', are believed and feel believed and understood when accessing services.
- Introduce a range of criminal justice programmes and activity, including listening exercises and violence against women and girls Upstanders.
- Improve our monitoring of violence against women and girls offences to improve our overall response.
- Expand our work with partner agencies to improve the collective response to emerging trends, issues, risks and threats.

Outcomes we aim to achieve:

- Increased take up of support by those affected by violence against women and girls.
- The creation of identifiable 'safe spaces' for women and girls to seek help.
- An overall reduction in the level of harm experienced by women and girls.
- A marked improvement in women and girls' levels of trust and confidence in the police and criminal justice system, with subsequent increase in reporting.
- Improved survivor support and criminal justice outcomes for those affected by violence against women and girls.
- A swifter and more co-ordinated response to emerging issues, risks and threats to ensure our response is proactive and not reactive.

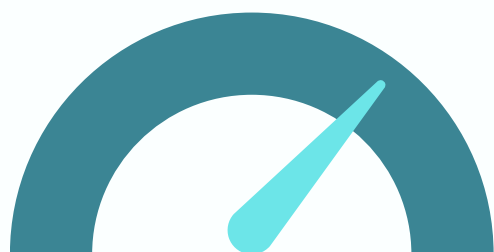
How we will measure success:

- Improvements in feelings of safety among women and girls across Nottinghamshire, particularly at night. (Police and Crime Survey)
- Increase in perpetrators of violence against women and girls offences being charged, prosecuted and held to account for their actions. (Police and Crown Prosecution Service)
- Improvements in trust and confidence in the police and criminal justice system, particularly among women and girls. (Police and Crime / Criminal Justice System Survey programme)

Supporting

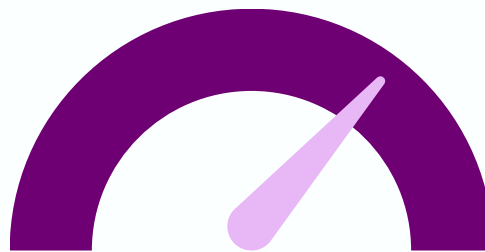
We need to ensure that women and girls can easily access and receive high quality support services, operating in a trauma informed way, in order to recover from their experiences and go on to lead fulfilling lives. We plan to do this by adequately providing a range of services that survivors can access at the right time for them, and which are accessible for all women across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

After receiving support from a specialist service*



70%

Had increased feelings of safety



71%

Felt better informed and empowered to act

What we plan to do:

- We need to ensure that a consistent range of trauma-informed and gendered support services are in place for all survivors.
- Implement long-term advocacy, therapy, and peer support to empower survivors' recovery and resilience.
- Ensure services are streamlined and joined up to work most effectively together. This is key to ensuring survivors receive full access to a range of support from our specialist and generic services.

Outcomes we aim to achieve:

- Increased safety for survivors of violence against women and girls.
- Reduced repeat victimisation.
- Survivors having improved mental and physical wellbeing
- A more sustainable and resilient network of local services across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

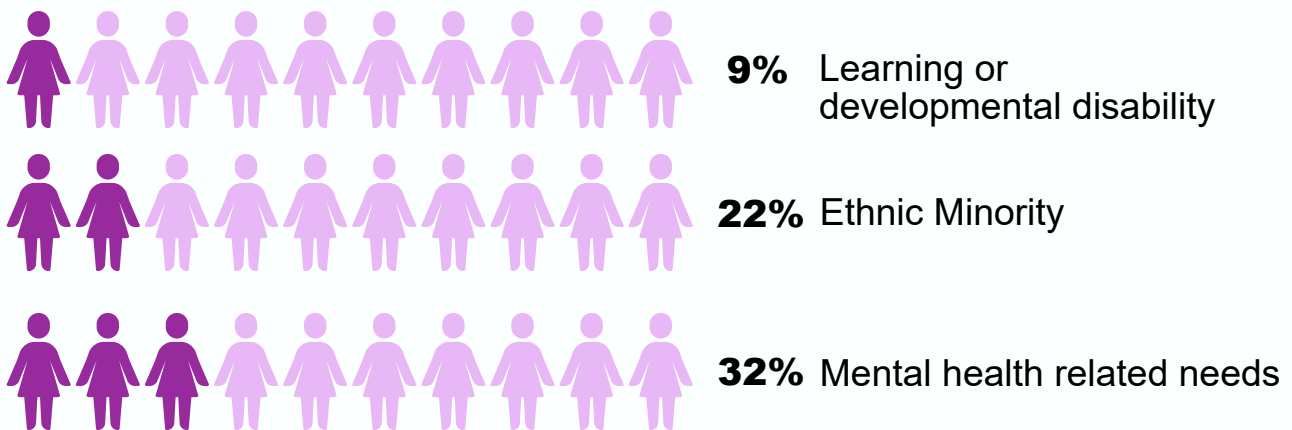
How we will measure success:

- Increased reporting of violence against women and girls offences, particularly among marginalised or harder to hear communities. (Police recorded crime)
- Reductions in attrition within the survivor services referral and support process. (Nottinghamshire Police and local victim support services)
- Increase in the number of survivors of violence against women and girls offences that are supported to cope and recover from the harm they have experienced. (Victim support services)

Including

We must ensure that our services are informed by the views of people with lived experience of violence against women and girls in order to ensure that they understand and truly reflect their needs. We have a diverse community throughout Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, it is paramount that no one is left behind and that the available services are able to provide a quality service for everyone in need.

Service user demographic in Nottinghamshire*



What we plan to do:

- We will actively reach and engage with underrepresented communities in the development of initiatives.
- We will ensure all our services are accessed by all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's diverse communities.
- We will ensure issues of inclusion are considered in all violence against women and girls related commissioning and service delivery.
- We will build, develop and expand partnerships between specialist and mainstream services, including by and for organisations.
- We will place lived experience at the heart of our service design and delivery.

*Service Provider data of new cases from December 22 to April 2023

"I think it's just as helpful for us to feel empowered to feel like they have a voice and to know that they take those concerns seriously, and are keen and are actually wanting to make a change for me." - VAWG Survivor

Outcomes we aim to achieve:

- Greater awareness of needs of marginalised groups and the barriers they face when accessing support.
- Services are informed and shaped by survivors.
- A more inclusive and adaptive network of support services.
- Increased trust in service providers among survivors of violence against women and girls.
- Increased take up of services from under-represented groups.

How we will measure success:

- Monitor and reduce disproportionality in access to services and service outcomes.
- Gather survivor perceptions via exit surveys based on their experiences in service and use this to inform development and improvement of services.
- Scrutinise the extent to which services are informed by the views of people with lived experience of violence against women and girls by supporting providers to complete routine self-assessments.

Strengthening

We need to ensure that the network of specialist services working to support survivors of violence against women and girls remains strong, resilient, capable and equipped to manage future demand.

This ranges from ensuring our services are well informed with the most up-to-date research to keeping our partners equipped with the right tools to tackle violence against women and girls across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. This also will require the support of non-specialist and responsible services across Nottinghamshire.

What we plan to do:

- Utilise gender-based qualitative and quantitative data to understand the needs and risk of women and girls.
- We will develop a shared research and evidence base for all delivery partners to ensure all delivery is informed by the most robust up-to-date evidence.
- Mainstream violence against women and girls into all relevant strategies and policies to build a stronger, wider response.
- Develop employer violence against women and girls policies to ensure safer and more supportive workplaces.

Outcomes we aim to achieve:

- Improve our understanding of gender-specific needs and risks that inform how our services are developed and delivered.
- A wider shared understanding of the evidence bases in respect of violence against women and girls.
- We will have services that are fit for purpose, safe, effective and resilient.
- Tackling violence against women and girls will be embedded in all public sector policies and strategies.
- Employers will be aware of violence against women and girls and how to respond.

How we will measure success:

- Agencies feel better informed and have greater awareness of the support pathways available to survivors of violence against women and girls related offences. (Agency self assessments)
- Agencies report improvements in their capacity and capability to provide trauma informed and gender specific support to survivors of violence against women and girls offences. (Agency self assessments)
- Reductions in waiting times for key services across the violence against women and girls sector. (Victim support services)

Contact details for support

There are a range of specialist services that have been commissioned by the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, NHS England and the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board.

Those listed below are first points of contact.

All services are independent, confidential and free.
You do not need to report the crime to the police to get help.

Domestic Abuse

Women's 24 hour free domestic abuse helpline and access to services

0808 800 0340

www.junowomensaid.org.uk

Men's domestic abuse helpline and access to services

0115 960 5556

www.equation.org.uk

Sexual Violence - Adults

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (Topaz)

0800 085 9993

www.topazcentre.org

Sexual violence helpline and access to services

0115 941 0440

www.nottssvss.org.uk

In an emergency always dial 999

Contact details for support

Sexual Violence - Children and Young People

East Midlands Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Service
0800 123 0023 | www.emcypsas.co.uk

Stalking

Nottinghamshire Stalking Advocacy Service
Women's helpline: 0115 941 0440 | Men's helpline: 0115 960 5556

For support with any other crime

Nottinghamshire Victim CARE
0800 304 7575 | www.nottsvictimcare.org.uk

For up to date details of support services please visit:
nottsvictimcare.org.uk or equation.org.uk/need-help

In an emergency always dial 999