



# COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET - 20 NOVEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>ADOPTION OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience Email: <a href="mailto:paul.hodgkinson@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.hodgkinson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Joseph Walker, Head of Economic Development and Communities Email: <a href="mailto:joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk">joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Director of Communities and Place, Helen Martin Email <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To seek Cabinet's adoption of the 'Gloucestershire Tackling Domestic Abuse Strategy', which reflects the importance of different agencies in the county working collectively to address domestic abuse.
Annexes	Annex A – Gloucestershire Tackling Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-28
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Adopt the Gloucestershire Tackling Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-28
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Good Services</li><li>• Delivering Housing</li><li>• Supporting Communities</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO



<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>The development of the strategy has been overseen by Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB), which includes Cotswold District Council representation. This has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engagement with victims/survivors, perpetrators, professionals and community members to gather views and opinions on understanding, experiences and perceptions of domestic abuse and awareness &amp; experiences of accessing support.</li><li>• Workshops with strategic and operational partners (with representation from district councils) across themed areas of focus, including housing, children &amp; young people, communities and health.</li><li>• The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024.</li><li>• Engagement with key partners and stakeholders including the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee, the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board.</li><li>• A countywide public survey to gather feedback on the vision to tackle domestic abuse, strategic priorities and objectives &amp; outcomes to help achieve these.</li><li>• Feedback from the Gloucestershire DALPB and other stakeholders.</li><li>• Formal approval of the strategy by the County Council's Cabinet in July 2025.</li></ul>
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, convened by Gloucestershire County Council, is responsible for co-ordinating activity to address domestic abuse and to this end, has prepared a strategy to cover the period 2025-28. The District Council is part of this partnership, playing a critical role as a housing authority and through its frequent interactions with residents across services. Cabinet is asked to adopt this policy to guide council activity and ensure our local contribution supports a shared approach across Gloucestershire.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Domestic abuse remains a significant issue in Gloucestershire, with 2.3 million people affected nationally each year. Crimes recorded as domestic abuse account for 19% of all crimes reported to Gloucestershire Constabulary; an increase from the 13% seen in the previous domestic abuse needs assessment.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** The new Tackling Domestic Abuse Strategy builds on the previous strategy and the achievements of Gloucestershire's multi-agency response and strategic approach which has been in place since 2014. It reflects increased awareness, improved crime recording and strengthened partnerships. The strategy acknowledges that whilst domestic abuse can affect all genders, it disproportionately affects women and girls, so there is a strong strategic connection with work to prevent violence against women and girls.
- 3.2** The strategy outlines the county's vision for everybody to live free from abuse and harm and that victims/survivors will have access to the right support at the right time and our ambition to end domestic abuse. It includes the strategic priorities, objectives and outcomes that sit underneath and the key metrics that will be used to monitor progress in achieving these.
- 3.3** Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires the County Council (as the tier one local authority) to:
- Conduct a local assessment of need for accommodation-based support (however, the County's needs assessment goes beyond this to include community-based support).
  - Convene a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DA LPB).
  - Develop and publish a local domestic abuse strategy that has been informed by the needs assessment.



- Report annually to government on investment and impact.

As housing responsibilities lie with the district councils, the County Council, district councils and other system partners work closely to ensure that victims/survivors of domestic abuse have access to the right support when they need it, whether this be accommodation-based support or community-based support. As such, the strategy aims to address both accommodation-based and community-based support.

- 3.4** Following the formal approval of the strategy by the County Council's Cabinet in July 2025, district councils are now also asked to formally consider the strategy and adopt the principles which will in turn guide their own work towards tackling domestic abuse.
- 3.5** Gloucestershire County Council is planning an in-person launch event for early December, to raise awareness and promote partnership engagement. Details will be shared once these are confirmed.
- 3.6** Although this is a new strategy, it is the latest iteration of an ongoing process which has been in place since 2014. The strategy, therefore, sets the context for an ongoing workstream rather than establishing new responsibilities for the Council. By adopting the strategy, the Council is supporting its aims and responding to its legal duties, as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 3.7** The Council's Housing Team plays a vital role supporting those experiencing domestic abuse and has fully adopted the new duties placed on local authorities when assessing applications for housing and homelessness. These include but are not limited to:
- Widening the definition of Domestic Abuse.
  - Extending the priority need criteria for homelessness applications.
  - Working with our partners to provide safe accommodation.
  - Ensuring that victims of domestic abuse are not disadvantaged when seeking social housing, by giving them appropriate priority and addressing local connection requirements.
- 3.8** There is also a wider role across services to spot the signs of domestic abuse and to design services that do not disadvantage victims.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1** The Council works closely with its fellow district councils and the county to address housing need, community safety and domestic abuse, amongst many other areas of



work. This strategy reflects that collective action to address shared issues and helps to set out and update a clear ambition and priorities. There is not a realistic alternative approach to working in partnership and so no clear alternative to adopting this partnership strategy.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** Adoption of this strategy will formalise and strengthen the existing partnership arrangements to address domestic abuse. Cabinet is recommended to support the adoption of the strategy.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** There are no specific identifiable costs relating to the Council's adoption of this strategy. An effective partnership response to domestic abuse should reduce the incidence of domestic abuse and timely action can prevent both the most serious consequences and potentially costs to responding partners. Domestic Abuse is a driver of housing need and in particular, a factor in the increase of temporary housing costs.
- 6.2** The Council received a New Burdens grant of £36,818 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 to assist with the additional housing duties introduced in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Around £31,000 of this grant is allocated annually to the Gloucestershire Housing Partnership to fund specialist workers who ensure that the principles of the strategy are implemented on behalf of the six local authorities.
- 6.3** Funding for 2026/27 will be through the Local Government Finance Settlement ("LGFS") and it is anticipated that the current grant funding will be rolled up into a wider consolidated grant with a bespoke distribution.
- 6.4** There is a risk that as the total level of funding expected through LGFS will be significantly lower than 2025/26 levels with no specific funding. The Council may not be able to confirm availability of budget and therefore, unable to confirm allocations to third parties until February 2026.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** None identified.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** The Council already works with partners to deal with domestic abuse and its service implications. The strategy sets up some broad expectations which are consistent with how the Council works.



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**8.2** There would be reputational risk from not adopting the strategy, as the Council would be setting itself apart from a partnership response, rooted in legislation.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**9.1** The strategy properly reflects that domestic abuse can impact individuals regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, socio economic background and religion. The strategy recognises that protected characteristics play an important role, for example, the majority of victims are women and the majority of perpetrators male. The strategy commits to providing a response to domestic abuse that is accessible to all, regardless of gender and other protected characteristics.

**10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1** None noted

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**11.1** None

(END)