

CUCKOOING

1 BACKGROUND

Cuckooing is a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing and other criminal activity. The crime is named for the Cuckoo's practice of taking over other birds' nest for its young.

Cuckooing has become associated with 'County Lines' this may not be the case. Even if someone isn't involved in County Lines drug dealing, they may be being exploited in some other way,

'County Lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs. These dealers will use dedicated mobile phone lines, known as 'deal lines', to take orders from drug users.

2 WHY IT MATTERS

- Targets our most vulnerable members of our community
- Exploited local children may be 'working' from the address.
- The exploited person may have children who are being exposed to this practice
- This practice may affect a number of different individuals, so support agencies need to be vigilant and aware of this

3 INFORMATION

The signs:

- usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property
- an increase in number of comings and goings /people entering and leaving at all times of the day and night
- new faces appearing at the house or flat
- increase in cars or bikes outside - offenders will often have new vehicles outside the property, or frequently use taxis or hire cars
- possible increase in anti-social behaviour in and around the property
- increase in litter outside
- disengagement with support services/healthcare services and/or change to normal daily routines
- the property may appear almost sparse of valuable possessions inside and go into a state of disrepair
- signs of drug use

4 WHAT TO DO

IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE RISK – DIAL 999

Can I do more enquiries – neighbour/ Next of kin to gather further information

- Consider 101 in the event that other links are not in place.
- Utilise your existing links, processes and contacts with police to flag up any concerns. E.g MARF / VA1
- Crimestoppers is an option for anonymously sharing intelligence – not preferable to direct contact.

Share experience and good practice with colleagues to raise awareness

5 LEARNING/TRAINING

Take personal responsibility to seek/ understand awareness training
If there are training gaps, then to flag these with managers
Consider on-line learning and training packages