

Cuckooing

What is it?

It's a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it for drug dealing.

Why do we need to address it?

Because everyone has the right to feel safe wherever they live.

Who does it?

Criminal gangs who are exploiting vulnerable people.

Who are the victims?

- Drug users
- Older people
- People with mental health or physical health issues
- People who have a learning disability
- People who are socially isolated and lonely
- Single mums
- Those living in poverty
- Female sex workers

How does it happen?

The individual or group preys on a person's vulnerability offering friendship, gifts, drugs. They then move in and once they gain control, gangs move in and threaten domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, coercion and violence.

Spotting the signs

- Several visitors often at odd times of day or night at the property
 - Vulnerable person living alone
 - Verbal abuse
 - Increase in the ASB around the property
 - Increase in money, clothes or mobile phones
 - Suspicious signs of physical assault or unexplained injuries
 - Numerous cars and bikes visiting the property
-
- Evidence of drug use

- Significant changes in emotional wellbeing
- Late night/all day parties
- Increasing litter outside
- Lack of healthcare visitors
- Curtains or blinds always closed

What can we do to tackle Cuckooing?

- Know where our vulnerable tenants live
- Map reports and incidences of anti-social behaviour reports
- Where possible engage with local police
- Educate colleagues and neighbours through raising awareness
- Become more aware of issues such as hate crime, serious youth violence, sexual exploitation and abuse etc
- Check in on vulnerable tenants, door knock to see if they need help
- Encourage people to raise any concerns to a confidential body like Crimestoppers who are happy to receive anonymous reports

Samantha Latouche

June 2019