

### Cuckooing

'Cuckooing' is a crime that often, but not always, accompanies 'County Lines' offending and occurs when people take over the home of a vulnerable

person to use for drug dealing and other criminal activity. The name comes from a cuckoo's practice of taking over other birds' nests for its young

### County lines

'County Lines' refers to the phone numbers, or lines, that criminal gangs who traffic drugs from urban to rural areas operate to sell them. Often, they use violence to drive out local dealers and exploit

children and vulnerable people to 'run', or supply and sell drugs for them. Heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine and cannabinoids are the most common drugs supplied

### Victims

Victims are often lonely and isolated. They can have drug or alcohol problems and sometimes be involved in criminality themselves. They may not present as 'typical' victims and often do not identify as such.

They can be older adults, people with learning disabilities, mental or physical health problems, sex workers or single parents, anyone who could potentially be vulnerable

### Recruitment

Victims can be groomed, including via social media, and deceived into viewing the offenders as potential benefactors, friends or even romantic partners, before intimidation, physical or sexual violence and

debt bondage –'re-paying' the cost of drugs first given as 'free' – are used as means for gaining control of the property

### Consequences

Gangs can have access to several addresses. They can move quickly between vulnerable people's homes for a few hours, days or longer. Because 'cuckooing' means criminals operate from a property rather than the street they can evade detection by

the police more easily. Some vulnerable adults may be forced from their properties, or decide to abandon them, making themselves homeless and leaving the gangs free to commit more crimes

### Indicators of cuckooing

- Extra people at the house
- Increased traffic outside
- More litter & ASB
- Signs of drugs use
- Changes in behaviour
- Unexplained absences & missed appointments
- New 'friends'
- More parties
- Changes in finances
- Increased drug use
- Physical injury
- Disengagement

### What to do?

Have information? Contact Notts Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency

Worried about an adult? Contact Health and Social Care Point. Tel: 0300 131 0300

Worried about a child? Contact Children and Families Direct. Tel. 0115 8764800

Want to discuss concerns? Contact the Slavery Exploitation Team: [msvp@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:msvp@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)