

# Drug use and Drug Dealing

It is illegal to be in possession of drugs and the supply of a controlled drug is a serious criminal offence. If you are aware of this occurring, please report it to the police immediately.

Our Housing officers and ASB team work closely with the Police, using their local knowledge to spot the signs of abuse and exploitation, particularly of delete gangs exploiting vulnerable residents and young people. It's a serious problem, especially for places with good transport links.

You may hear the phrases 'cuckooing' or 'county lines' used. These are terms often used to describe certain situations around drug dealing.

## What is cuckooing?

Cuckooing is a term for the takeover of a property by gangs from outside the area who use the home as a base. They specifically target and befriend vulnerable people as they may be isolated, lonely, and easy to manipulate.

Victims are vulnerable individuals who may be drug users themselves, and can include people who are:

- Older
- Living with mental or physical health conditions
- Living with a learning disability
- Involved in prostitution
- Single parents
- Experiencing poverty
- Isolated
- Living with addiction or alcoholism.

The next thing the person knows, their home's been taken over and someone from the 'gang' is staying there – exploiting others through illegal activities such as prostitution, people trafficking, modern slavery and drug dealing.

Signs to look out for cuckooing:

- Tenant appears anxious
- Frequent visitors to the property, including anti-social hours
- Smells of drug use
- Tenant appears anxious
- Unfamiliar vehicles calling at address
- The individual may change their regular routine – leaving home at anti-social times or not going out with their normal social group
- Increase in ASB in and around the property
- High number of vehicles stopping at the property for a short time
- Increased anti-social behaviour around the property

- Open drug dealing near the property
- Not seeing the resident of the property as often
- People coming and going at various times day and night.

The Vulnerable person:

- May appear withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information
- May have new unidentified associates often present at their home
- May have a changed appearance, either new expensive clothing or appearing unkempt.

If you have concerns that this may be happening to someone it should be reported to the police in the first instance by calling 101 or [Suffolk Police Online Reporting](#). If you have immediate concerns for someone's safety call 999 or Crime Stoppers (to report anonymously) on 0800 555 111.

### **What is County Lines?**

'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 then exploiting local children and vulnerable people to sell drugs.

The gang might also send young, vulnerable people from their own area to distribute drugs, often intimidating and threatening them to make them stay. The impact of this is that young people become indebted to the gang and are forced into criminal activity and exploitation to pay off debts and are living in fear, feeling they're trapped.

### **What you can do:**

- After you've talked to the police, in the first instance complete our online report [ASB Reporting Form](#) If you are unable to report online please get in touch with our Customer Contact Centre on 01473 432000. We will need to know your incident report number and the police officer you spoke to. We'll use this information to work with them and you on what happens next.