

What can Professionals do?

Early identification is paramount to safeguarding young and vulnerable people and identifying and tackling gang/group exploitation. A collaborative, multi-agency approach is the best way for professionals to safeguard young people.

Information sharing by key stakeholders such as housing, schools, missing/return home interviews, care/fostering and other frontline practitioners is absolutely key to effective identification and risk management.

Important:

- Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, landlords or property managers can receive up to 14 years imprisonment or a substantial fine for having drugs residing at their property
- The property may be seized or forfeited as well as prosecuted for money laundering
- The premises may be 'closed down' and boarded up under the terms of a Premises Closure Order: (Section 76 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)

Contact:

If you think you have spotted a drugs 'cuckoo' or you're concerned about drug-related crime where you live or work, call Derbyshire Constabulary on **101** or **999** in an emergency to report drug-related information.

If you don't want to speak to the police directly, you can call the anonymous **Crimestoppers** charity on **0800 555 111**

 **101** in an emergency always call 999
www.derbyshire.police.uk

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Do you suspect an address is being used for drug dealing?



'County lines', or 'going country', refers to groups or gangs using young people or vulnerable adults to carry and sell drugs from borough to borough, and across county boundaries.

It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the selling of drugs in an area outside of the area they live, reducing their risk of detection. **'County Lines'** is a national issue involving the use of mobile phone 'lines' by these groups to extend their drug dealing business into new locations outside of their home areas.

Reporting any suspicious drug-related behaviour may assist in making your neighbourhood a safer place where professional criminals are using vulnerable people's homes to manufacture and sell drugs.

Professional criminals often approach the vulnerable person, befriending them and offering free illegal drugs to use their home as a base for drug dealing.

These criminals are very selective about who they target as 'cuckoo' victims and are almost entrepreneurial, targeting their victims to use them due to their identified vulnerability. A lot of the time victims are lonely, isolated, frequently drug users themselves and are already known to the police.

Professional criminals are targeting the homes of vulnerable people to be used for drug-dealing – a process known as 'cuckooing'.

'Cuckooing' means the criminals can operate from an unobtrusive property, which is out of sight, making it an attractive option. They can then use the premises to deal and manufacture drugs in an environment under the police radar, usually staying for just one day. The criminals use the victim's property for criminal enterprises, the inhabitants become terrified of going to the police for fear of being suspected of involvement in drug dealing or being identified as a member of the group, which would result in their eviction from the property. Like a 'cuckoo' bird, which lays its eggs in the nests of other species of bird, the professional criminal or 'drugs cuckoo' moves into a vulnerable person's property, takes it over, and turns it into a drugs' den.

The gang might also send young vulnerable people from their own area to stay at the house and distribute the drugs, again often intimidating and threatening them to stay. This is sometimes known as a 'trap house', and mobile phones are used to order more drugs, carried by other young people or vulnerable adults, who travel by train or car.

The impact of this is that young people become indebted to gang/groups and are forced into labour and exploitation to pay off debts and local vulnerable people are targeted in care homes, foster care, and local authority and supported housing.

Below are some important signs to look out for if you feel you are aware of a property used to deal drugs, or if you are concerned about your property as a landlord or property manager.

We are asking that you stay aware and spot potential signs of drug dealers in your area.

Signs to look out for:

- Usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property.
- An increase in the number of coming and goings.
- An increase in the suspected drugs misuse of the vulnerable person.
- Offenders will often have new vehicles outside the property, frequently use taxis or hire cars.
- Possible increase in ASB activity in and around the property.
- Disengagement with support services.
- Professionals visiting may be aware of new unidentified persons in the property.