



Safeguarding & cuckooing

The
Advocacy
Project

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Safeguarding adults & cuckooing: Today's focus

- What's happening locally
- Signs
- A typical victim
- Current practice
- Key principles
- Case study
- Next steps

What's happening locally: Westminster

Westminster Safeguarding Adults Executive Board (SAEB)
looked at :

1. crime & financial abuse
2. cuckooing & adult social care

Data from Westminster antisocial behaviour team cases:

- *Male, single occupant households*
- *50 years old*
- *Social housing properties*
- *Mental health / substance or alcohol misuse*
- *Majority known to services but varied engagement*

Signs of potential cuckooing

1. Typically social housing
2. Increased comings and goings; short visits: homeless / drug users / youths
3. Exchanges taking place
4. Increased cars outside: hire cars / expensive cars
5. Increased anti-social behaviour: arguments / violence
6. Drug use / paraphernalia (needles, foil, pipes)

Signs of potential cuckooing

7. Increased reports to police from local community
 8. Tenant withdrawn / disengaged from support services
 9. Property may be sparse of valuables and in disrepair
 10. Tenant has no key to their property
 11. Tenant is ambivalent; says visitors are friends
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Adults at risk: who?

- Mental health issues
- Substance / alcohol misuse
- Physical health problems
- Sex workers
- Learning disabilities
- Financial issues / poverty
- Survivors of domestic violence
- Lonely / isolated
- Chaotic lifestyle

Adults at risk: how?

- Dealers seek out vulnerable people
- Hang around pharmacies / hostels / walk-in surgeries
- Grooming / exploitation
- Giving tenant drugs / alcohol / money
- Making tenant feel important / special
- Pressure / duress
- Instilling fear (of going to the police / housing for help)
- Befriending
- Violence / force

What can be done that's not done already

- Eligibility criteria
- None enforcement approach adult with care and support needs unable to protect themselves
- Lack of a clear multi-disciplinary pathway and culture away from primary criminal activity
- Build up relationship with the person as to what they want to do; advocacy
- No current legal powers / legislation specifically for cuckooing; range of civil and criminal justice options: Closure Order power under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; Restraining orders and injunctions

Principles of joint working: collaboration

- Lead agency identified
- Involve professionals: mental health, anti-social behaviour (housing / council / high risk), adult social care, police
- Lead agency must take responsibility and arrange a multi-disciplinary team
- Person affected: what do they want to do?
- Embed in culture of all departments
- High risk panel only if needed
- Plan with clear actions

Case study 1

- Neighbour raised concerns to **Westminster Housing** about youths loitering / drug dealing in large groups. Hadn't seen the tenant for a few weeks.
- **Police officer** made a welfare visit but no answer
- **WCC Housing** spoke to tenant – she sounded spaced out and vulnerable; said she was scared but couldn't say why.
- **A group of men** are coming to her house. She called them 'friends'; doesn't want to get them into trouble; she can't get rid of them; they threaten her.
- She's taking anti-psychotic medication, but hasn't seen community mental health team since 2017

Case study 1 (cont.)

- Medication makes her drowsy. Once she woke up and saw other people's bodily fluids: possible sexual assault
- Doesn't want police involved; open to being referred to adult social care / other support services
- **Safeguarding raised**
- Outcome: resident would like to move
- WCC Housing arranged to meet to find out more details: identity of the men, her medication, what's been happening and for how long
- Work with police (complete risk assessment and management transfer application).

Case study 2

- Woman (65), early onset dementia, lives in one bedroom flat
- Lacks capacity re decisions about housing / finances
- Care package: twice-daily visits to help with medication & walks (she's unable to socially distance without support)
- Her daughter (46) and grandson (15) moved in a year ago; tenant is sleeping on the sofa whilst daughter and grandson have her bedroom
- Tenant's other daughter says they were not invited; tenant thought it was temporary; the two still remain in the property

Case study 2 (cont.)

- Phone calls from neighbour querying coercion and alleging the tenant is visiting herself; other neighbours saying she does not want them there
- Social services arrange care package. Daughter in the property is not providing any care or support. Tenant is frightened to call landlord for repairs as she thinks she'll get into trouble if the daughter is found staying there
- Tenant told staff that she's scared of her daughter
- Safeguarding multi-agency meetings conducted
- Advice from legal teams sought: use of coercive and controlling behaviours Serious Crime Act 2015 sec.76

Cuckooing road map

- Joint cuckooing policy
- Joint training to raise awareness at different levels, for external & internal staff
- Evaluations
- Communications
- Governance
- Safer Westminster Partnership & Safeguarding Executive Board

