

What is County lines?

A model of criminal exploitation whereby Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCG) coordinate the supply of illegal drugs, often using vulnerable adults and children. The model of exploiting young people has extended into Scotland, and there are increasing cases of persons being exploited through use of threats, violence and grooming to supply and move drugs across the UK, which is a recognised form of human trafficking.

What is Cuckooing?

Act of taking over a person's home often by exploitation, intimidation or violence. The home then becomes a safe-house to deal drugs and gives the SOCG a local base for a number of weeks, before they move onto the next house, which is a tactic to evade Police. Victims are targeted due to disability, mental health and substance use. Victims may initially be paid, given substance or may also be threatened, intimidated, assaulted or blackmailed.

Responding to concerns

Don't dismiss your suspicions and report concerns via 999 if someone is in immediate danger.

Ensure the individual is heard and feels supported. Keep them updated with any process or decision made. Share Intelligence and information via 101 or via Crime Stoppers. Local first responders can submit a referral to the [National Referral Mechanism](#) if there are concerns about trafficking.

Current picture in Scotland

While much of the criminal activity of county lines and cuckooing originates outside Scotland, there are numerous reports of such criminality within our communities. Local Police continue to work with and are supported by external forces to minimise the current threat that county line drug supply methodology has across the UK. Multiagency partners continue to work with partners to reduce the violence and exploitation associated with county lines methodology, safeguarding vulnerable people.

Impact on Adult's 'at risk' of harm

Gangs will deploy a gang member who is manipulative, with the aim of befriending a vulnerable householder to use the property for drug supply. Once within, the gang will discourage family, friends and support workers from visiting. A change in the situation or behaviour is important. The vulnerable person may appear intoxicated or distressed, have guests staying or frequent visitors. They may have unexplained money, new clothes or a mobile phone. The vulnerable householder is often abused during the ordeal.

Impact on Children and Young People

Young people are exploited within the county lines model and are coerced, manipulated, deceived, threatened and groomed into the transport and supply of drugs by SOCG's. Even if a young person believes or tells you they want to do this – **they cannot consent to their own abuse and exploitation.**

Signs of Cuckooing

Unknown persons in area/address, increase in reports of violence, antisocial behaviour usual occupant no longer at address or is less visible. Increase in drug dealing activity at the address, visitors/vehicles, and drugs paraphernalia. Occupant appears anxious or distressed. Bags of clothing or bedding around their property. Barricades within the address, including weapons.

