

mrbcfelixstowe

Maidstone Road Baptist Church, Felixstowe 1P11 9ED

Safeguarding information booklet



The purpose of this booklet is to provide detailed information to workers and volunteers at Maidstone Road Baptist Church, however it contains information that it is important for all individuals to know. There is a list of follow up reading and clips to watch that will further inform.

OVERVIEW

The necessity to safeguard children is outlined in numerous pieces of legislation, including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)
- Children Act (1989) re-enforced in 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Childcare Act (2006)

Safeguarding Partnerships were set up in 2018 following changes to legislation. They were previously known as Safeguarding boards. They are designed to ensure all professionals work together to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. Some local authorities have a board for adults and a board for children, some are combined for both adults and children. The new statutory framework requires the three safeguarding partners (local authorities, police and CCGs (medical)): to join forces with relevant agencies, as they consider appropriate, to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group; and implement local and national learning, including from serious safeguarding incidents

Everyone who works with **children, young people and vulnerable adults** has a **responsibility** for keeping them safe. They must know how to report concerns so these can be addressed quickly and appropriately. **Details on how to report are contained in the reporting paperwork. Please make sure you read it before filling in forms.**

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE OVERVIEW

Understanding, Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or a child or children. There are many different ways in which people suffer abuse. The list below is, sadly, not exhaustive.

Type of abuse	Child	Adult at risk
<i>Physical</i>	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering to an adult at risk.
<i>Emotional</i>	The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.	The use of threats, fear or power gained by another adult's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological distress. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.

Sexual	Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.	Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour. No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.
Neglect	Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.	A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.
Bullying	Bullying is another form of abuse and doesn't just happen to children, often adults can be victims too. There are different forms of bullying: physical, verbal, emotional/psychological and cyberbullying. Bullying is normally defined as a repeated pattern of behavior intended to cause emotional or physical harm to another person or exert power over them.	
Financial	The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	
Spiritual	The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority (e.g. minister). The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.	
Discrimination	The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	
Institutional	The mistreatment or abuse of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.	
Domestic Abuse	Domestic abuse is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody regardless of their age, gender, sexuality or social status. Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual or psychological, and whatever form it takes, it is rarely a one-off incident. Usually there is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour where an abuser seeks to exert power over their family member or partner.	
Cyber Abuse	The use of information technology (email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, etc.) to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner.	

Self-harm	Self-Harm is the intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is used as a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. An individual may also be neglecting themselves, which can result in harm to themselves.
Mate crime	'Mate crime' is when people (particularly those with learning disabilities) are befriended by members of the community, who go on to exploit and take advantage of them.
Modern Slavery	Modern slavery is the practice of treating people as property; it includes bonded labour, child labour, sex slavery and trafficking. It is illegal in every country of the world.
Human Trafficking	Human trafficking is when people are bought and sold for financial gain and/or abuse. Men, women and children can be trafficked, both within their own countries and over international borders. The traffickers will trick, coerce, lure or force these vulnerable individuals into sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.
Radicalisation	The radicalisation of individuals is the process by which people come to support any form of extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the risk of being groomed into terrorism than others.
Honour / Forced Marriage	An honour marriage / forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. The motivation may include the desire to control unwanted behaviour or sexuality.
Female Genital Mutilation	Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). FGM is a cultural practice common around the world and is largely performed on girls aged between 10 and 18. Performing acts of FGM is illegal in the UK as is arranging for a child to travel abroad for FGM to be carried out.
Historic Abuse	Historic abuse is the term used to describe disclosures of abuse that were perpetrated in the past. Many people who have experienced abuse don't tell anyone what happened until years later, with around one third of people abused in childhood waiting until adulthood before they share their experience.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- a child or adult at risk discloses behaviour that is harmful to them
- unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness in children
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

DEFINITIONS: More detail:

Physical abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Indicators:

- weight loss
- personal hygiene issues
- evidence of delayed or inappropriate treatment for injuries
- difficulty walking or sitting
- missing from education
- change in eating habits (e.g. over-eating or loss of appetite)

Emotional abuse:

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child/adult opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Indicators:

- communication problems / sudden speech disorders
- lethargic
- nervousness / poor self esteem
- sudden under-achievement
- inappropriate relationships with peers/adults
- attention seeking
- bullying

- running away/stealing/lying
- self-harm
- sulking/hair twisting
- rocking
- being unable to play/interact
- fear of parent/carer being approached regarding their behaviour
- fear of making mistakes
- delay in emotional development

Sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual abuse may be perpetrated on vulnerable adults who are unable to prevent it, or understand what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Indicators:

- bruising
- pre-occupied with sexual matters
- severe sleep disturbances
- bed wetting
- being sexually provocative with adults / flirtatious or promiscuous behaviour
- running away from home
- frequent toilet visits
- bodily odour smells
- sexually transmitted disease or urine infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy
- change in dress style – e.g. covering up to
- distress when approached by carers
- Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child/adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child/adult's health or development. It can be one of the hardest forms of abuse to identify/proof. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance or alcohol abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child/adult from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child/adult's basic emotional needs

Indicators:

- constant hunger
- sometimes stealing food from others
- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical attention/failing to attend appointments
- being constantly dirty or 'smelly' and looking uncared for
- loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate clothing for the conditions
- major changes in behaviour

Trafficking:

Trafficking is where children, young people, vulnerable adults are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

- Trafficking victims are often lured into another country by false promises and so may not easily trust others
- Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labour or commercial sex act. ...
- Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to lure their victims and force them into labour or commercial sexual exploitation.
- Sexual exploitation. This is when someone is deceived, coerced or forced to take part in sexual activity
- Labour exploitation- domestic servitude

Men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds are victims of human trafficking, forced

labour, domestic servitude or debt bondage (tricked into working for little or no money to repay a debt)

Forced marriage:

Forced marriage is when a person faces physical pressure to marry (for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (eg if you're made to feel like you're bringing shame on your family). Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or more of the parties is married without their consent or against their will. A marriage can also become a forced marriage even if both parties enter with full consent if one or both are later forced to stay in the marriage against their will. **Force marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes taking someone abroad to marry**

Forced criminality:

- Forced criminality involves victims, often children, who are forced to commit a range of crimes, including counterfeit DVD selling, bag snatching, ATM theft, pickpocketing, forced begging, forced sham marriage and cannabis cultivation
- Cannabis Cultivation this use of trafficked labour has become such a problem that it is now the largest trend of child trafficking within Britain. There has been a high rate of Vietnamese children who have been trafficked into the UK by gangs to cultivate the cannabis.

County lines:

County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines” or runners. Children and vulnerable people are often used by gangs to move drugs and money.

- Children as young as 12 have been used to courier drugs out of their local area. 15 – 16 years of age is the most common age range.
- Both male and female are being exploited.
- White British children are targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection.
- Social media is often used to make initial contact with children and young people.
- Vulnerable adults as well as Class A drug users are targeted so that gangs can takeover their homes as **Traphouses**. This is often done through force or coercion. This takeover is known as **Cuckooing**.
- Referrals in the UK have increased 48%

Indicators:

- Persistently going missing from school/home and/or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Relationships with controlling/older individuals or groups
- Leaving home/care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault/ unexplained injuries

- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being
- Adults being fearful or secretive about letting people into their homes
- Adults being “missing” from their normal activities or losing contacts with family or support networks (such as church)

Domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse is categorised by any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- physical
- emotional
- psychological
- sexual
- financial

This definition includes honour-based abuse and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. A perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse, can be female, male, child, or adult. ***Domestic violence referrals during COVID 19 have increased by 95% with a high increase of child on parent violence.***

Online abuse:

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including:

- social media
- text messages and messaging apps
- emails
- online chats
- online gaming
- live-streaming sites.
- **Cyber bullying** - Cyberbullying or online bullying is any type of bullying that happens online
- Unlike bullying that takes place offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go and it can sometimes feel like there's no escape or safe space
- **Emotional abuse** – is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child and this can happen both on and offline

- **Grooming** - is when someone builds a relationship with a child so they can sexually abuse, exploit or traffic them. Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face by a stranger or by someone they know
- **Sexting** is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexual messages. It's online abuse if a child or young person is pressured or coerced into creating or sending these types of images.
- **Sexual abuse** is when a child or young person is forced or tricked into sexual activities. Sexual abuse can happen online - for example, a child could be forced to make, view or share child abuse images or videos or take part in sexual activities on conversations online.
- **Child sexual exploitation** is a type of sexual abuse. When a child is sexually exploited online they may be persuaded or forced to create sexually explicit photos or videos or have sexual conversations.

Indicators:

A child or young person experiencing abuse online might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Some of the signs of online abuse are similar to other abuse types: cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation.

Honour based abuse:

Honour based violence is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. ... Women, men and younger members of the family can all be involved in the abuse. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and / or community by breaking their honour code.

Female genital mutilation:

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence.

There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

- FGM is illegal in the UK where it has been a criminal offence since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have FGM.

- Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.
- Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, you should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

Just a reminder that there is a mandatory reporting duty for FGM, which was introduced via the Serious Crime Act 2015, following a public consultation: all known cases of FGM in under 18 year olds must be reported to the police

The legislation states that a report must be made to the police, if in the course of professional duty:

- Someone is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her
- Someone observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.
- The relevant age is the girl's age at the time of the disclosure/identification of FGM – it does not apply where a woman aged 18 or over discloses she had FGM when she was under 18.

Breast ironing:

- Breast Ironing is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects for non-medical reasons.
- The purpose of the procedure is to make the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.
- It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education.
- The practice is commonly performed by family members, 58% of the time by the mother
- Similarly to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), breast ironing is classified as physical abuse.
- There is no specific law within the UK around Breast Ironing. However it is a form of physical abuse and there are concerns a child may be at risk of or suffering significant harm it must be referred to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Upskirting:

- Upskirting is a term used to describe the act of taking a sexually intrusive photograph up someone's skirt without their permission
- Upskirting is a highly intrusive practice, which typically involves someone taking a picture under another person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear)
- Upskirting is an illegal offence in the UK
- Perpetrators can face two years in prison. Perpetrators or upskirting may also commit voyeurism.

Fabricated or induced illness:

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) happens when a parent or carer exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness, generally in a child but potentially in a vulnerable adult. (Sometimes this is called Munchausen's syndrome by Proxy.)

FII covers a wide range of symptoms and behaviours ranging from extreme neglect (failing to get medical care) to induced illness

Indicators:

The perpetrator:

- Persuades healthcare professionals that their child is ill when they are healthy
- Exaggerates or lies about symptoms of the child/vulnerable adult
- Manipulates test results to suggest the presence of illness: Example: putting glucose in urine samples to suggest the victim has diabetes
- Deliberately induces illness, for example by poisoning the victim with unnecessary medicines or other substances

FII can involve children and vulnerable adults of all ages but the most severe cases are associated with children under 5. In around 85% of cases of FII the child's mother is responsible, however there have been cases where the father, foster parent, grandparent, guardian, healthcare or childcare professional have been responsible.

Read further:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/recognising-adult-abuse-exploitation-and-neglect>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/crime-law/forced-marriage/>

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/online-abuse/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/71429/what-is-breast-ironing-and-how-common-is-it-in-britain>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights>

Watch: Warning: this is difficult to watch, but it is important you are knowledgeable.

Domestic abuse: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCn-GC-1C4c>

County lines: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZPx0ZIY8sA>

Child exploitation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOsgQbmvuUQ>

Honour based abuse: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTQnCGbBmX8>

Upskirting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-ica8bbyQs>

Online abuse: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOsgQbmvuUQ>

Mate Crime

There is no statutory definition of mate crime in UK law. The term is generally understood to refer to the befriending of vulnerable people for the purposes of taking advantage of, exploiting and/or abusing them.

The perpetrator is likely to be perceived as a close friend, a carer or a family member and will use this relationship for exploitation.

Example: 'Tuesday Friends'

A typical story is a young person with Asperger's who had, what he called, his 'Tuesday Friends' The day when his benefits arrived, a Tuesday, a particular group of people would turn up at his flat, 'help' him to the cashpoint and then to the pub where they 'helped' him spend his money.

What are the signs?

The Perpetrator might try to exploit the following forms of abuse:

- Financial Abuse - lend or steal money or exploit labour.
- Physical Abuse - exert force to control the individual.
- Emotional Abuse - manipulate or mislead the person, make them feel worthless.
- Sexual Abuse – coerce the person into prostitution or sexually exploited them.
- Criminal exploitation - coerces or grooms the person to commit criminal offences.

Victims of mate crime might display noticeable changes in behaviour, such as:

- Unexplained injuries
- Bills not being paid/sudden loss of assets
- Weight loss
- Isolation from usual contacts
- Withdrawal from services
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Changes in friends or noticeable forms of control

What should be done?

- In many situations mate crime will be an example of disability hate crime and this should be reported to the police as such.
- Contact Social Services.
- Seek advice from your local Safeguarding team.

County Lines

According to a leading youth charity about 4,000 teenagers from London are being exploited and trafficked every year to sell drugs in rural towns and cities. Known as "county lines", gangs use children as young as 12 to traffic drugs, using dedicated mobile phones or "lines".

Example:

A 13 year old young boy was approached by a friend at school about selling drugs. Lured in by the prospect of making money, he began selling in his local area, but things escalated quickly. The gang was soon sending him on jobs out of London with the promise he could make around £500 a week. He was sent to the house of a vulnerable drug user that the gang had taken over in the Midlands (cuckooing). This was used as his base whilst out selling heroin and crack cocaine, day and night.

"I was actually scared," he says. "But from the time you see the money, you're just thinking, 'OK, I can just bear a bit more.'" He had a normal upbringing and a close relationship with his family who would be frantic about his long absences, he says, they would try to stop him by taking away his mobile phone - but as soon as he left his house, the gang would start hassling him again.

Despite living with a group of drug users, the 13 year old says he "didn't really recognise the risks" and that he once ended up staying in a graveyard after being left stranded hundreds of miles from home with nowhere to stay.

After being arrested for possession of drugs, Michael decided to stop selling, but says it was not easy to leave the gang behind. "They were trying to get at me but I moved away from the area, so I think that helped me a lot.

What are the signs?

- Withdrawing from the family/secretive behaviour
- Blocking family and friends on social media/New friends that you do not know
- Unexplained injuries
- Not sticking to agreed times to come home when they go out
- Going missing from home/Truancy or long term absences from school
- New expensive clothes or other items/Large sums of money that can't be accounted for
- Aggressive or difficult behaviour/Showing a lack of respect towards peers and teachers
- Arriving in taxis or unknown vehicles

What should be done?

- If immediate danger is suspected call the police
- Information sharing by key stakeholders i.e. housing, schools, care/fostering and other frontline practitioners.
- Contact Social Services.
- Seek advice from your local Safeguarding team

Cuckooing

The crime is named after the Cuckoo birds' practice of taking over other birds' nests for its young.

It is a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for dealing drugs. The victims are often left with little choice but to cooperate and are often battling their own drug addictions. The dealers are often in their teens and sent to towns across Britain by drug bosses in London.

Example:

According to a professional "It's a growing problem and for families it's absolutely devastating," he said.

"We've had one girl, four foot nothing; she's sitting at home with her two toddlers. She's an ex-user trying to stay clean.

"An old friend has knocked on the door and said, 'Can I come in and use the phone?' She has said, 'Course you can', and two huge guys have come in with her and have taken over the flat for two weeks."

What are the signs?

- It usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property
- There may be an increase in the number of comings and goings, including people you haven't seen before
- There might be new vehicles outside the property
- A possible increase in anti-social behaviour in and around the property
- It can happen anywhere.....

What should be done?

- Inform the Police
- Contact Social Services
- Seek advice from your local Safeguarding team.

In all cases of County Lines, Cuckooing and Mate Crime the perpetrators are likely to target:

- People with mental health problems
- Disabled
- Young people
- Lonely
- Drug addicts
- People in debt

Please note that none of the lists are exhaustive and you should seek advice if you are concerned