



Strategic Partnership Boards

SAFETY SAFEGUARDING WELLBEING

Cuckooing Script

'Hi my name is Phil and I am the Anti-Social Behaviour Team Manager' and I wanted to talk to you about cuckooing which is when a vulnerable person has their home take over by criminals.

I supported a man called Ali. He has brain damage and lives in a housing association flat, he met a woman called Leigh in the waiting room at their local GP. Leigh began to go around to Ali's flat and started to help with some small chores and errands. They became close friends after a few weeks and Ali enjoyed her company. Leigh began to come over with her boyfriend Mo. The first couple of times they visited together Ali felt a little off guard. Mo then started to openly use drugs in front of Ali, and then convinced him to try it himself. Leigh and Mo started staying over, and it got to the point where they would not leave after a couple of weeks. Ali did not like them taking over his home, and asked Mo to leave. At this point Mo became violent and physically assaulted Ali and told him that Ali would be evicted if the housing association knew he was involved with drugs and the police would arrest him. Ali became too scared to confront either Mo or Leigh and started using drugs more frequently. Mo started to use Ali's flat as a base to deal drugs. Neighbours started to complain to the council about the coming and goes of people into the flat late at night and making noise.

The housing association officer visited the flat. Ali insisted Mo and Leigh were his friends and just staying for a short while. The officer looked around and realised the property looked unkempt as did Ali, he had become thin and his clothes didn't look clean, he also seemed very anxious. It was clear the Ali had vulnerabilities, so the officer referred his concerns into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, known as MASH, where agencies could share the information they knew about Ali and criminal activity in Ali's neighbourhood.

MASH was able to make sure agencies worked in a way that safeguarded Ali at the same time as addressing the criminals.

My team arranged a closure order on the property, this meant that only Ali's support worker and sister were allowed in the property. This was discussed with Ali in private away from the property using the post office where Ali took out his money. The notice was enforced, Mo and Leigh left the property. The choice was taken out of Ali's hands, which meant the cuckooers could not blame him and instead were angry at the officials who enforced the notice.

Ali was checked up on over the coming weeks and was referred to Care Grow Live for support to come off drugs and to local befriending group where he got support and made friendships. Ali's neighbours were spoken to and were advised about what had happen and how he may be vulnerable, the neighbours now look out to make sure Ali is not coming to any harm.

Your three messages to take away are

1. Look out for the signs of cuckooing such as increase in anti-social behaviour, people coming and going all hours of the day, not seeing the person whose property it is
2. Always think about safeguarding as well as enforcement
3. Make a referral to MASH if you have any concerns or call the police on 999 in an emergency

