

Catalyst Specialist Project Team



PROVIDING
SUPPORT FOR
VULNERABLE
ADULTS AFFECTED
BY CUCKOOING

SPECIALIST
OUTREACH
TEAM

- Supporting people to live safer lives
- Increasing community safety
- Financial savings for the police and our community

Cuckooing in Surrey - Quotes from victims

"I HAD NEVER HEARD OF CUCKOOING AND NEVER THOUGHT MY SO CALLED FRIEND COULD BE MY NIGHTMARE"

"THE ONLY PLACE I COULD SLEEP IN MY OWN HOME WAS THE KITCHEN FLOOR"

"I WAS FORCED TO STAY IN MY ROOM WHILE THEY WERE HERE"

"MY CONTACT DETAILS WERE SOLD TO SOMEONE IN PRISON FOR SPICE"

"I CAME HOME TO FIND A DRUG PRODUCTION LINE IN MY KITCHEN"

"I NEEDED THE SUPPORT WHEN IT WAS HAPPENING, NOT AFTERWARDS"

"THE ONLY WAY I COULD SEE OUT WAS TO TRY TO KILL MYSELF"

"THEY CLIMBED IN THROUGH THE BACK GARDEN, WOULD OPEN THE WINDOW, CLIMB IN AND THEN LET OTHERS IN THE FRONT DOOR"

"HE WAS ONLY ABOUT 17 YEARS OLD BUT HE PUT A BIG KNIFE ON THE TABLE SO I KNEW I HAD TO DO AS HE SAID"

"I COULD HAVE LOST MY ACCOMODATION BECAUSE OF MY SON"

What is Cuckooing?

Cuckooing: is a type of exploitation where they take over the victim's home and use it for illegal activity. The name comes from the cuckoo bird, which is known for taking over other birds' nests.

This type of activity is closely linked to 'county lines' drug trafficking, where people are used to supply drugs from major cities to suburban, rural and coastal areas. In this case, the victim's home becomes a base for developing operations in a new area.

Methodology: Perpetrators will often deliberately target vulnerable adults who live alone, because they are seen to be easier to manipulate.

What we offer:

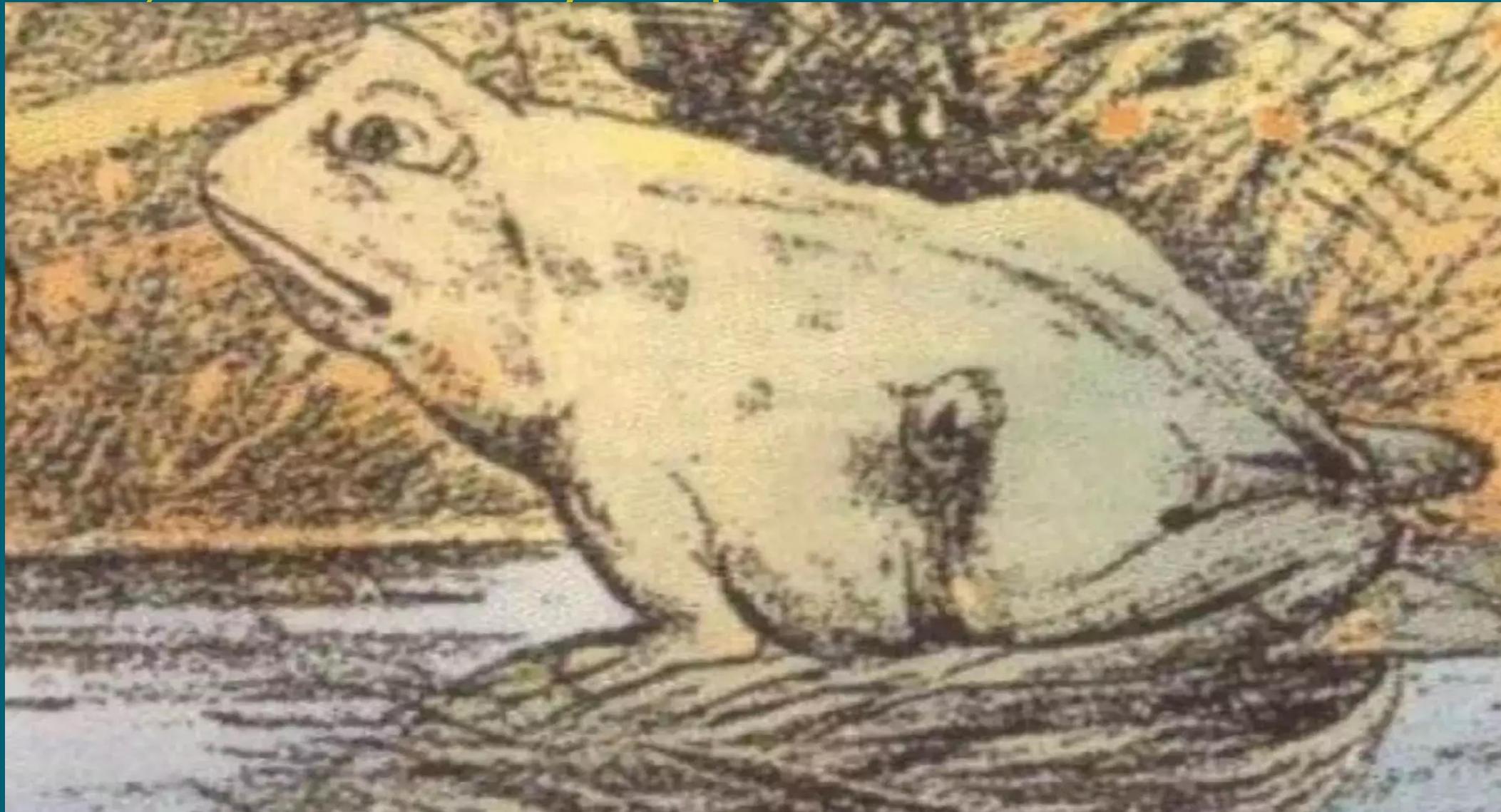
- Experienced assertive outreach workers
- A rapid response to support clients at immediate risk in collaboration with partner agencies
- Help build resilience to prevent future exploitation

Stevens Story

A short film based on the experience of
a cuckooing client.

[Click here to launch film; Steven's Story](#)

Things may not always appear as they first seem, or as how they are presented.



Since October 2018, our Cuckoo service has received **511** referrals across Surrey



77% happens within housing association and local authority properties.



7% were aged **70+**. The oldest person being 93. The Youngest person was 18



15% had **no history** of drugs or alcohol! A further 4% were **not using** drugs and alcohol at the time of being Cuckooed



Since 2018 we received referrals from **314** Males, **194** Females, **2** Transgender and **1** Non-Binary

Setting the scene in Surrey



62% Diagnosed mental health
48% Physical Health
32% Physical and Mental Health
13% Neurodiverse/Cognitive



17% where in privately owned or rented, 4% in supported housing and 1% in emergency housing

Could you pro-actively identify and safeguard victims?

Professional curiosity – signs to look out for

- Someone who is **known to drink** and **has a spare room** as they **sleep on their sofa**.
- Someone who is **suddenly unable to manage their finances**.
- Talk about a **new friend who is helping them**.
- Becoming **withdrawn**
- **Cancelled home visits**
- **Other people answering their phone**
- Often **similar signs** as in other **controlling relationships**.

Impact on individuals:



Risk of losing their tenancy-

“I thought they were my friends, but they have moved on, and I now have a notice of seeking possession hanging over me”.



Getting into debt -

paying for drugs or told they now have a drug debt. Funding other people living there with food and utilities.

“I was walked to the cashpoint at midnight and was only allowed £20 of my benefits



Disengaged from services -

being controlled and socially isolated or unable to leave their home.

“They always made sure at least one of them was in the house with me all the time and I had to leave my phone if I needed to go out”.



Relapse or start using drugs/alcohol –

possibly as a way of coping with the situation.

“I had been clean for 3yrs and thought I was helping someone by letting them stay during the cold weather”.

Impact on the communities:

Property in disrepair

Drug paraphernalia and ASB

- People coming and going at unsociable hours

Fear

of crime/feeling unsafe

Scared to let their children play outside

Mental health – not being able to sleep causing knock on impact on relationships and work

Cuckooing Victim Risk Indicators



70% Substance use



67% Reports from neighbours
(ABC behaviour or concerns)



31% Had Priority debt



57% Would benefit from tenancy support



72% Closure order or ABC considered



58% Were socially Isolated



31% Properties in disrepair



70% Sporadic engagement with services



44% History of homelessness

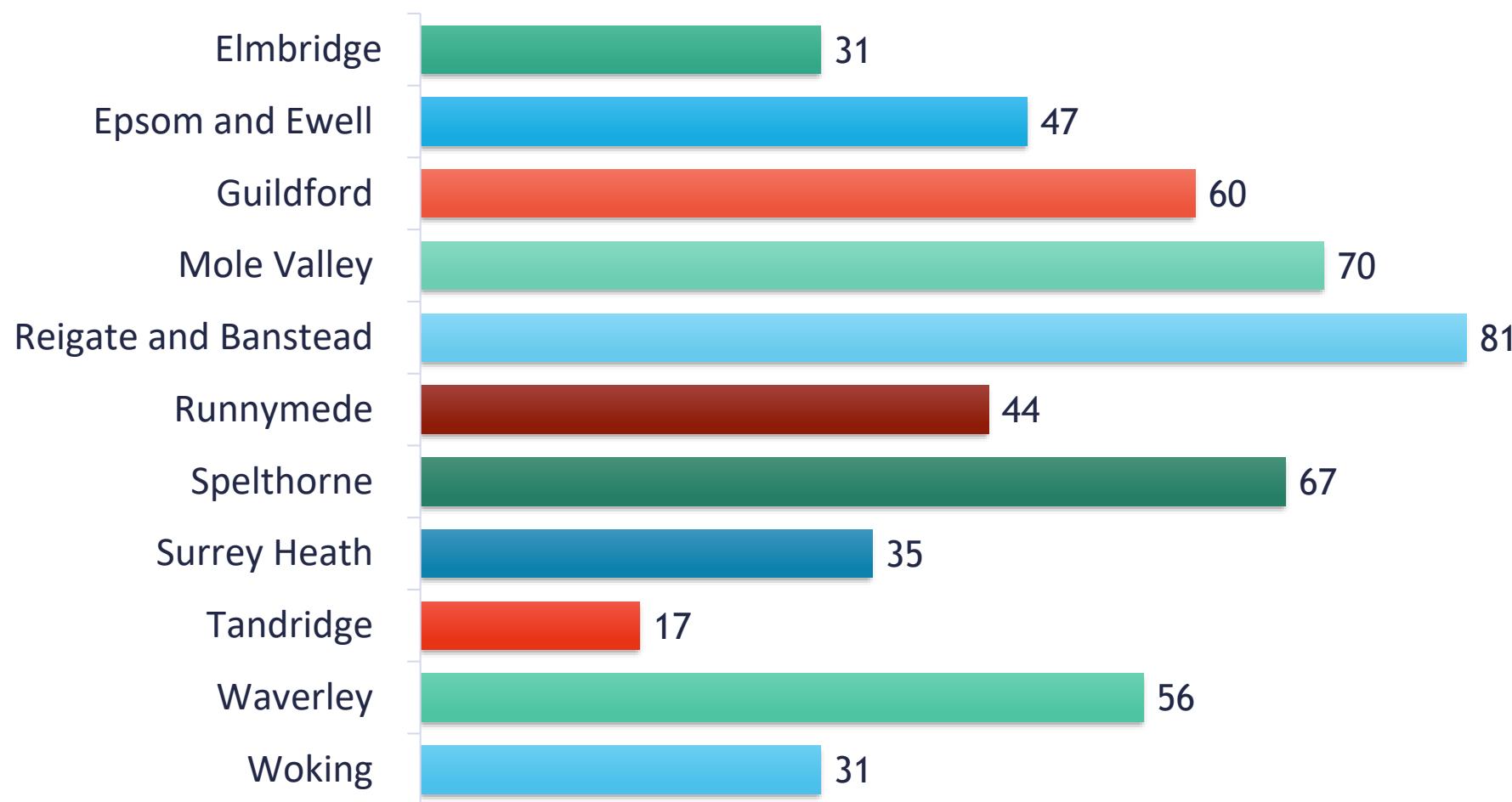


58% Mental health diagnosis



38% Did not meet the criteria for CMHRS

Referrals by Borough



What we do-

Immediate Support

Full assessment and clients consent leading to safeguarding – adults and children, and an agreed support plan



Wellbeing and Essential Support

- Mobile phones
- Phone Credit
- Emergency Repairs
- Lock Changes
- Food Parcels
- DA Kits
- Medication
- GP Appointments
- Gas
- Electricity
- Support Partial Closures
- Liaise with partner agencies and support networks
- Help to move into emergency accommodation – where applicable



Wrap-a-round support

Social Welfare

- Advocacy
- Birth certificate as ID
- Debt Services
- Referrals to appropriate agencies
- Benefits/DWP

Wellbeing

- Gym membership
- Mental Health
- Foodbank
- Bus Pass

Housing

- Fire Safety
- Infestations
- Repairs
- Support to/with moving
- Cookers
- Furnishings
- DOCO (Designing Out Crime Officer)



How to refer

- ▶ **Call a member of the team to find out more and make a referral**
- ▶ **Refer sooner rather than later** – clients may be less willing to engage with services if they feel the issue has been resolved with a partial closure. This does not help their resilience for the future.

Specialist Project Team contact details

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Key Points:

- Rarely do people like to think of themselves as vulnerable or being taken advantage of and so may not admit to being cuckooed.
- Question, why are they making that choice?
- Cuckooing can also be carried out by family members, local dealers/users and not just County Lines.
- Breaking down stigma and barriers can be a challenge to engaging and accepting support.
- Interim support may be needed to help get back on track.
- Seeing people in their homes helps give a clearer picture.

Questions?