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Author	Salil Meech Mazumdar
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Southwark Multi-agency Cuckooing Forum Terms of Reference

Introduction

'Cuckooing' occurs when the home of a vulnerable individual is unwittingly taken over within the context of exploitation, usually for the use, supply, storage and/or production of drugs and other criminal activities. It exposes the individual to numerous negative predicaments, consequences and risk. Cuckooing remains a live safeguarding issue in Southwark with a steady growth of cases in recent years.

The impact of cuckooing on subjected individuals is multifarious; the resulting harm experienced supersedes the usual Safeguarding Adults abuse categories. It includes violence, increased drug use, psychological distress, criminal exploitation - subjugated by the power imbalance via control, indebtedness and dependency. For women, the risk is compounded by reports of sexual coercion and assault.

It is recognised that those inflicting cuckooing practices often have needs in their own right or are being exploited themselves; thus the narrative of victim/perpetrator is fluid.

The forum brings together a range of relevant agencies and services to work in partnership to ensure those subjected to cuckooing are supported and safeguarded, and to identify contextual themes pertinent to the borough.

Terminology

Cuckooing

The practice in which a vulnerable individual's home has been unwittingly taken over and used for drug related or other criminal activities. There is always a degree of coercion and exploitation taking place.

Victim

The individual who has been subjected to cuckooing, often they are a service user known to Southwark Adult Social Care (ASC) and/or South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM).

Perpetrator

This term is used to distinguish a person/s who has infiltrated a vulnerable individual's home via cuckooing, but it is acknowledged that they themselves may have needs in their own right.

Cuckooed premises

An Individual/SU's home that has been taken over via cuckooing by a perpetrator/s.

Safeguarding Adults – Care Act 2014

Cuckooing predominantly falls within the remit of Safeguarding Adults as defined by the Care Act 2014, and where required will entail a S42 safeguarding enquiry, with oversight from the local authority.

About the Forum

The forum draws on the principles of MARAC and allows agencies to identify high risk cases and for the identified risk to be managed through a multi-agency response.

Aims of the Multi Agency Forum:

The overarching aims of the forum are to safeguard and support those subjected to cuckooing via a coordinated multi-agency response.

The aims are:

- To provide and share intelligence and information on individuals subjected to cuckooing, to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of victims (adults).
- To provide and share knowledge on alleged perpetrators, to highlight any care and support needs that they may have. To document unmet need.
- To construct jointly and implement a plan, including risk management, that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm.
- To ensure support services are aware of a high risk or potentially high-risk situations, and that adequate and appropriate support is available to the victim.
- To gather data regarding cuckooing cases (victims and perpetrators) to inform further analysis of relevant contexts in the borough.
- To identify systemic issues that could be addressed to reduce the impact of cuckooing on vulnerable adults and residents.

By using the knowledge and expertise of different agencies in attendance the identified risks will be either reduced or managed in the most appropriate and effective way.

Data / Information Sharing Agreement (ISA)

The ISA aligns to the same principles of the ISA for MARAC.

All parties to read and sign the ISA for the Cuckooing Forum.

A week prior to the monthly forum, the spreadsheets ('Cuckooed' and 'Perpetrator') will be circulated to both core and partner members. There is an expectation that members review this data set to establish if cases are known to their agencies. Relevant information/intelligence to be shared at the forum or passed on to the Forum chair.

Governance and performance management

Cuckooing, falls within the arena of community harm, exploitation and contextual safeguarding – noted as a Council priority.

Reports back to the Southwark Safeguarding Adults Board, via the Safe Communities subgroup, on a regular basis to ensure identified themes/contextual factors are shared to look at how issues may be addressed on a system and broader strategic level.

The Forum also links with the work of the Community Harm and Exploitation Hub (CHEH); a representative from CHEH is a core member of the Forum.

Membership

Each agency will nominate a lead person and a suitable deputy to be present at the cuckooing multi-agency forum. This is to ensure consistency in the nominated representatives from different agencies. Nominated representatives should have the authority within their agencies to prioritise the actions that arise from the forum and to be able to make an immediate commitment of resources to those actions.

Organisation	MAF Role	Name / position
Southwark Adult Social Care	Core member	Salil Meech Mazumdar / Team Manager Emily Brunton / Team Manager Thomas Wilbey / Advanced Practitioner
Housing and Modernisation	Core Member	Tim Calver / IOM Administrator
South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust	Core member	John O'Neil / Team Manager Sian Davis / Safeguarding Lead
Metropolitan Police	Core member	Kinga Cieslak / Neighbourhood Policing Chris Scott / Neighbourhood Policing
SASBU	Core member	Ken Dale / Senior ASB Management Officer Pauline Campbell / Senior ASB Officer
CGL	Core member	Jackie Boyton / Outreach Lead
Housing	Core member	Marie Samuels / Prevention & Relief Manager Jo Wilson / Supported Hostels Manager Lurna Huggins / Resident Services Manager
Community Harm and Exploitation Hub	Core member	Bethan West / CHEH Consultant
Fulfilling Lives	Partner member	Diana Smith / Head of Programme
Youth Offending Service	Partner member	Ana Figueira / Team Manager
Probation	Partner member	Natalie Hobbs / Probation Officer Ayodeji Ogunyemi / Senior Probation Officer
St Mungo's	Partner Member	Eammon Egerton

Other supporting or relevant agencies will be invited to present cases as required.

Membership expectations

It is expected of members to:

- Attend the monthly forum.
- To deliver against the delivery plan of the group and commit to effective performance management.
- It is the responsibility of the referring agency to ensure all fields are completed on the referral form and necessary victim consent is sought (where applicable) to share information with other agencies in the forum.
- To communicate and share activity in relation referrals across the wider membership prior and post forums to ensure the risk to the victim and has been lowered.
- To provide their professional expertise.

- To support external referral's received and/or report back in relation to any information request within the designated time scale.
- It is the referring agencies responsibility to record and demonstrate how they 'flag and tag' referrals.

Where indicated, the Forum will seek additional services from across the Southwark Partnership to support individuals and their families where help is accepted from both the statutory or voluntary sector.

Forum Chair

To chair the forum, objectives of which are listed above.

Forum Coordinator

To attend and coordinate the forum (invites, meeting schedule, documentation as required).

To review referrals that are coming into the cuckooing inbox.

To review information coming into the cuckooing inbox and pass on to relevant agencies as required.

To ensure that referrers have raised a Safeguarding Concern.

To update databases where required.

To share lists of cuckooed cases/perpetrator data a week prior to the Forum.

To circulate any actions following each meeting.

To circulate minutes following each meeting.

Non membership attendees

Suitable specific workers/officers and specialists from key agencies will be invited as the agenda requires. These officers/specialists may participate in meetings in relation to specific referral's but shall have no strategic decision-making powers but will have powers to ensure actions are completed to lower the risk to victims.

All attendees must sign the confidentiality agreement.

Forum frequency

The forum on the first Friday of every month. At present this taking place via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will run between 10am to 12.00pm. Calendar invites are sent to all members notifying them of meeting dates and referral deadlines. The minutes also list all future dates for the calendar year.

Forum members may request emergency meetings in an exceptional event and is only called when a victim is assessed as very high risk and the risk of harm is so imminent that statutory agencies have a duty of care to act at once.

Forum Format (broad)

1. Exploration of contextual themes
2. Case presentations
3. Review Cuckooed cases to ensure there is a clear plan

Referrals for panel discussion

Staff can make a bring a case for discussion at the forum using the referral form. This is to be sent to the Forum chair.

Staff are reminded to raise a safeguarding concern as soon as there it is suspected cuckooing may be taking place and not wait for the Forum.

Quorum

Actions/interventions agreed by those present at the forum.