

The root of all evil

You will have read in the press about the success Woking Police have had with combatting drugs crime in the area. Those who keep track of Woking borough council's community initiatives will know that they have been targeting domestic violence and modern slavery. This may lead many residents to think that they have forgotten about burglary, theft, anti-social behaviour and those other crimes that concern the typical law-abiding resident of the borough. But that would be far from the truth.

The old vision of the typical burglar wear a mask and striped jumper with a swag bag over their back has long gone. Almost all theft involving houses, cars and people is organised. These criminals are often under the control of gangs and many are coerced into a life of crime by their drugs habit or by gangs and families who force them to carry out the crimes. Now you see why the Police and Woking BC are concentrating on these criminal areas that most of us have no personal experience of and consider "not my problem". Yes, it is our problem, because we become innocent victims of this crime.

It is the responsibility of all citizens to look out for evidence of modern slavery, of domestic violence, and of potential drug usage. Does a neighbouring house have occupants who you rarely see in and around the house and you never see leaving the house alone? Are there often sounds of domestic violence in the house and has one occupant (male or female) who seems to always be subdued and shy of making contact? Does your neighbour always seem a bit vulnerable, yet has men visiting and leaving the house at all times during the day and night? The latter is a common way that drug dealers carry out their crimes – the vulnerable occupant is the victim and not the criminal. One of the most heinous crimes is child criminal exploitation where the child is often unaware that they are being coerced or bullied. Do the children of the house rarely come out or are often away from school for no reason? Only a few weeks ago Woking Police arrested a man for this crime.

By targeting the gangs, drug dealers and the known centres of criminal activity the Police and authorities will remove the root of the evil and reduce the incidents of theft and anti-social behaviour that are a concern to all of us. The lives of the victims of exploitation will also be improved. We will all benefit.

You don't have to report a suspected crime in person or over the phone. You can also report it online. <https://www.surrey.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/>
Of course, always ring 999 if something needs action immediately

If you feel you want to contact social services rather than the Police, Surrey County Council operate a central team called the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Details at: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support-for-adults/contact>

Don't ignore something just because you think it's nothing to do with you. Remember, the victim may be someone who is forced later into committing a crime that will be something to do with you.