



Operation Sanctuary.

Public information.

What is Operation Sanctuary?

Operation Sanctuary is an investigation into allegations of a series of sexual offences involving a number of men and vulnerable female victims, including teenagers and young adults.

We are aware that groups of men are befriending vulnerable girls and women with the intention of using them for sex.

We believe the girls/women are befriended by one or more of the men over a period of time and then attend addresses with them where there are other men present. The women and girls are often under the influence of alcohol or drugs and are then subject to sexual assault/rape.



Why does it affect you?

We need the public's help to identify such situations and report them to us. They might know of addresses where such activity is taking place, they may hear or see something or have heard repeated rumours. This is what we want them to tell us about.



VERA BAIRD QC
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER



**NORTHUMBRIA
POLICE**

What to Look Out For:

- The victims are all vulnerable in some way. This could be that they have a chaotic lifestyle, a drug or alcohol addiction or are, or have been, in care. This may be someone you recognise or someone you think may be on the verge of becoming involved.
- These crimes are happening behind closed doors, in local streets and it is likely that people living nearby recognise the behaviour we describe.
- There may be groups of men going into properties with teenage girls or one or two women.
- You might see women under the influence of drink or drugs who might appear distressed in some way. We need this reported to us. This allows us to check and may avoid someone else becoming a victim.
- Some of the girls and women may frequent certain businesses which brings them into contact with these men. You may see them hanging around.
- If it doesn't look right and doesn't feel right then we need to hear from you.

This is about ensuring that such criminal activity has no place in our communities. We will disrupt those involved and stop it happening. The key to this is the support of local people – you are the eyes and ears in the community that can prevent this.

**If you see something let us know on 101
or in an emergency dial 999.**