

‘Cuckooing’ or ‘Home Takeover’

Please be aware some of the resources signposted in this handout may contain scenes that some viewers may find distressing.

Cuckooing is where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. ‘Cuckooing’ sometimes referred to as ‘Home Takeover’ is when criminals target the homes of adults who are perceived as being vulnerable in some way so they can use the property for drug-dealing or other criminal activities. These criminals are very selective about who they target as ‘cuckoo’ victims and are often entrepreneurial. Victims of ‘cuckooing’ or ‘home takeover’ may be using substances but others can be targeted including older people, those experiencing mental or physical health problems, sex workers, adults with a learning disability, single mums and those living in poverty. Victims may be dealing with other forms of addiction, such as alcoholism, and are often already known to the police. Dealers often approach the victim offering free drugs to use their home for dealing.

When the criminals use the victim’s property for criminal enterprises, the inhabitants become terrified of going to the police for fear of being suspected of involvement in drug dealing or being identified as a member of the group, which would result in their eviction from the property. Some adults may be forced to leave their homes, making themselves homeless and leaving the gangs free to sell drugs in their absence.

The adult may experience multiple types of abuse in a cuckooing or home takeover situations.

(Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, 2022)

What are the signs of cuckooing?



An increase in anti-social behaviour.



Not seeing your neighbour as often or they are distancing themselves.



The outside of the property possibly becomes unkept/untidy. An increase in litter.



An increase in people entering and leaving



A neighbour all of a sudden driving people around.



An increase in cars or bikes outside



A decrease of the neighbours usual visitors

Resources on YouTube – Due to the subject some material may be distressing to watch	
Title and Information	Web Link
GMMH Cuckooing Safeguarding Training - Subtitled	Link
NCLCC Cuckooing Masterclass 20 Oct 2021 by National County Lines Coordination Centre - NCLCC masterclass session delivered by Anne Rannard & John Aspinall looks to empower colleagues to understand what Cuckooing is, what you can do and how to collaborate and record information.	Link
NCLCC - County Lines Awareness Video	Link
Cuckooing Informative V3 Surrey Police	Link
Monica Walton discusses her work to tackle cuckooing in Oxford! Monica Walton, Oxford City Council's dedicated cuckooing officer, discussing her work to tackle cuckooing in Oxford.	Link
Mark, who was a victim of cuckooing, shares his story (Oxford)	Link
See Something, Say Something: Exploitation - Franks' Story Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board.	Link
County lines short stories – Cuckooing (Kent Police)	Link
What is Cuckooing? Humberside Police	Link
Cuckooing Canterbury City Council	Link
Aimee's story: Camden police's film on cuckooing	Link
Examples of Hate Crime – Cuckooing, Lewisham Speaking Up	Link
Section 45 Modern Slavery Act	Link

Other Resources	
Trafford Safeguarding Partnership 7-minute briefing	Cuckooing - 7 Minute Briefing here
Article	Spicer, J. , Moyle, L. and Coomber, R. (2019) The variable and evolving nature of 'cuckooing' as a form of criminal exploitation in street level drug markets. Trends in Organized Crime (2020) 23:301–323 here
CUCKOOING/HOME INVASION – what is it.	Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board Here
Guidance for Working with Adults at Risk of Exploitation: Cuckooing	Although this is a resource from Leicester it contains some useful information on cuckooing) Access here
Do you suspect an address is being used for drug dealing?	Access here
County Lines & Cuckooing	Access here
SPOT THE SIGNS OF CUCKOOING – COUNTY LINES	What is Cuckooing County Lines? Access here
National Crime Agency - County Lines	Access here

References:

Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (2022) *Cuckooing – advice for all*. Manchester: Manchester Safeguarding Partnership. <https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/resource/cuckooing-advice-for-all/> no longer accessible online.

Peel Solutions (2022) *SPOT THE SIGNS OF CUCKOOING – COUNTY LINES. What is Cuckooing County Lines?* Warrington: Peel Solutions. <https://peelsolutions.co.uk/spot-the-signs-of-cuckooing-county-lines/>

Handout for learners accessing safeguarding training delivered by Partners in Care.
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