

May 2022



CESHIRE EAST SERIOUS & ORGANISED CRIME BOARD

What is Cuckooing?

Cuckooing is when criminals take over the home of a vulnerable person and use it for criminal purposes such as dealing drugs.

The term comes from the behaviour of cuckoo birds who take over the nests of other birds.

A criminal will often befriend a vulnerable person in order to exploit them and use their property. The person is usually intimidated and too scared to report it to anyone.

Who are the victims?

Victims are vulnerable individuals, often drug users, but can include people who are:

- Older
- Living with mental or physical health conditions
- Living with learning disability
- Involved in prostitution
- Single parents
- Experiencing poverty
- Isolated
- Living with drug or alcohol addiction

One Minute Guide

The Vulnerable Person

- Not engaging with services
- May have unexplained injuries
- Has paid off debts in full with cash
- Misusing substances
- Appears withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information
- New, unidentified associates who are often present at the home
- Has changed appearance, either wearing expensive clothing or appearing unkempt

Spotting the Signs

There are several signs to look out for that may indicate someone is a victim of cuckooing:

- High number of unfamiliar vehicles stopping at the property for a short time.
- Increased anti-social behaviour around the property
- Open drug dealing near the property
- Not seeing the resident of the property as often
- People coming and going at various times day and night.
- Changes in your neighbour's daily routine
- Unusual smells coming from a property
- Property becoming untidy or visual signs of criminal damage occurring

Controlling the victim

The criminals use the property to provide a discreet location out of sight of the police from which to conduct their activity.

They will use a range of tactics to control the victim. This could be pacifying victims using drugs and alcohol. Once the 'high' wears off or the victim sobers up, the victims want the criminals to leave, leading to threats or violence being used.

One Minute Guide

Making a referral

Partnership working is essential in effectively tackling cuckooing and to prevent reoccurrence. It's important to identify it as early as possible and ensure the nature of the 'victim' is recognised.

If you are worried that an adult is a victim of cuckooing, you can contact **Cheshire Police on 101 or 999** in an emergency, you can also report online – www.cheshire.police.uk/contact

You can also make a safeguarding referral to Adult Social Care using the online portal or contact 0300 123 5010 (8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday) or 0300123 5022 (at all other times including Bank Holidays)

It is also important to involve the **housing provider** if this is a registered housing provider or the **landlord** if it is a privately rented property.

For Further information:

CrimeStoppers

0800 555 111

Modern Slavery Helpline

08000 121 700

Cheshire Police

www.cheshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/cl/county-lines/