

What is Cuckooing

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

A criminal will often befriend a vulnerable person, as comfort levels rise more criminals are brought to the home, adding to the activity and taking over the property entirely.

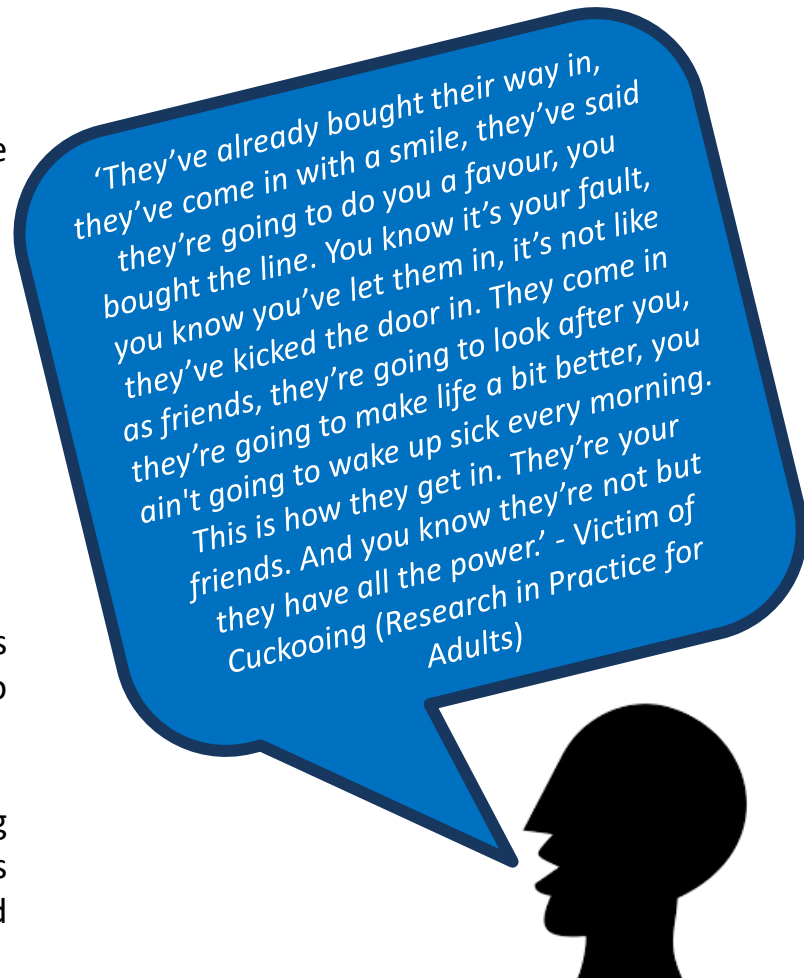
Who are the victims of cuckooing?

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

- older
- living with a mental or physical health condition
- living with a learning disability
- involved in prostitution
- single parents
- experiencing poverty
- isolated
- living with forms of addiction, such as alcoholism

Controlling the victim: Once residency is established drug dealers then have a discreet location out of sight of police from which to conduct their criminal activity.

An example of controlling activity could be pacifying victims using drugs. Once the high wears off and the victim wants the criminals to leave, intimidation levels can escalate to the use of threats and violence.



Spotting the Signs of Cuckooing



**Increase of vehicles
stopping at the
property, often for
short periods**



**Increase of anti-
social behaviour
around the property**



**Open drug dealing
near the property**



**Not seeing the
resident of the
property as often**



**Increase of the
number of people
coming and going at
various times of the
day or night**

The Vulnerable Person ...

**Has
stopped
engaging
with
support
services**

**Is presenting
with
unexplained
injuries**

**Has paid off
debts
(including
housing
debts) in full
and in cash**

**Has begun to
misuse
substances
or this use
has increased**

**Is appearing
withdrawn and
fearful of disclosing
information for fear
of 'betraying' the
criminals, abuse or
eviction**

**Is associating
with new
unidentified
people who
are often
present at the
home**

**Has changed
appearance
either wearing
expensive
clothing or
appearing
unkempt**



How to Refer

All referrals are to be reported MASH:

Call: 020 8496 3000

Email: WFDLiaison@walthamforest.gov.uk

All referrals are risk assessed then a joint problem solving approach is applied.

For cases that present significant safeguarding risks, they will be referred to ASBRAC which co-ordinates a multi-agency response to anti-social behaviour, manages risk and identifies solutions.

It is important to:

- Identify cuckooing as early as possible by recognising the signs;
- Support a community response;
- Ensure the nature of **victim** is recognised;
- Inter- agency sharing of information and cooperation is consistent throughout.

[Adults at risk document](#) has further information on policies and procedures.

Cuckooing Legality:

- Under the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*, landlords or property managers can receive up to 14 years imprisonment or a substantial fine for having drugs residing at their property;
- The property may be seized or forfeited as well as prosecuted for money laundering;
- The premises may be 'closed down' and boarded up under the terms of a *Premises Closure Order*: (Section 76 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)

