

7 Minute Briefing – Cuckooing

1. 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.

2. 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 addiction or alcoholism

3. Controlling the victim

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

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

4. Spotting the Signs

- High number of 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.

5. The Vulnerable Person

- Not stopped 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- Appears withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information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

6. 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.

Worried that an adult is a victim of cuckooing, you can contact **Greater Manchester Police** on 101 or 999 in an emergency. You can also make a referral for a [safeguarding enquiry](#) or contact 0161 631 4777 (0161 794 888 outside of office hours)

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

7. Further info:

- [Programme Challenger](#)
- [CrimeStoppers](#) – 0800 555 111
- [Modern Slavery Helpline](#) – 08000 121 7000

Contact details:

Salford Safeguarding Adults Board: SSAB@Salford.gov.uk

Worried about an adult: 0161 631 4777

GMP: 101 or 999 for emergencies