

What is Cuckooing?

'Cuckooing' is a form of exploitation and the term used when an individual or a criminal gang target the home of a vulnerable person so they can use the property for criminal purposes such as drug-dealing, hiding weapons and other criminal activities. Criminals often befriend a vulnerable person in order to exploit them and use their property. The term takes its name from cuckoos who take over the nests of other birds.

Initially perpetrators may approach the vulnerable person offering free drugs or other things they may need; however, this may progress to threats of violence, and/or the victim being made to pay off drug debts through use of their home and/or to assist in drug dealing.

Further Information

More information can be found via: [Programme Challenger](#), [British Red Cross \(North West\)](#), [Stop the Traffik](#), [the Salvation Army](#) and [the Modern Slavery Helpline](#): 08000 121 700.

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.

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 should contact the police via 999 if there is an immediate risk of harm, or for non-urgent cases via 101 or the Greater Manchester Police ['Report a Crime' webpage](#).

You can also make a safeguarding referral. For an adult, contact Adult MASH: 0161 770 7777 (8:40- 17:00, Monday-Friday) or Email: adult.mash@oldham.gov.uk. You can make a [professional referral for adults online](#). For children, You can contact 'Duty and Advice': 0161 770 7777 (8:40-17:00, Monday-Friday).

If you need to speak to someone outside of these times, please contact the Out of Hours Service on 0161 770 6936.

Who are the Victims?

Victims are vulnerable individuals and include people who are:

- Living with drug or alcohol addiction
- Older
- Living in a ground floor flat or close to a stairwell
- Living with mental or physical health conditions
- Living with learning disability
- Experiencing poverty, drug debt or financial difficulties
- Isolated
- Having reduced contact with services
- Single parents
- Involved in prostitution

Controlling the Victim

The criminals use the property to provide a discreet location out of sight of 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. Once the 'high' wears off the victims want the criminals to leave, leading to threats or violence being used.

Spotting the Signs - The Property

- High number of vehicles stopping at the property for a short time
 - Increased complaints of noise
- Young people frequenting the property
 - Increased anti-social behaviour and crime around the property
- Open drug dealing near the property
- The resident of the property not being seen as often as they previously were
 - People coming and going at various times day and night
 - Curtains and blinds being closed at the property
 - Damage to property or open doors
 - Security safe in the property

Cuckooing 7-Minute Briefing

Spotting the Signs - The Vulnerable Person

- May decreased their engagement with services
- May have unexplained injuries
- Has paid off debts in full with cash
- May be misusing substances
- May be carrying weapons
- Appears withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information
- Has changed appearance, either wearing expensive clothing or appearing unkempt
- May be scared or not willing to disclose what's happening or leave the property

For more information, see the [Exploitation in the form of Cuckooing Guidance](#) and the [Modern Slavery Toolkit](#)

Website: www.oldhamsafeguarding.org

Email: OldhamSafeguardingAdultsBoard@Oldham.gov.uk

