

What is Cuckooing?

Cuckooing/Home invasion is when a vulnerable adult's address is taken over for criminal purposes, usually as a site to supply, store or produce drugs in order to avoid police detection.

Gangs involved in County Lines will establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults and families by force or coercion (giving free drugs or offering to pay for food or utilities).

Groups At Risk

Vulnerable Groups at Risk:

- Teenage children and young adults
- History of domestic violence, parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality
- Are homeless or have insecure accommodation status
- Exposed to violent crime, gang-related activity and deprivation
- Are socially isolated, lonely or experience social difficulties
- Are economically vulnerable
- Have a physical or learning disability
- Experience mental health issues or substance misuse
- Are or have been in care
- Children excluded from school (either permanently or temporarily)
- Migrants.



One Minute Guide

Cuckooing / Home Invasion

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A lot of the time victims are lonely, isolated, or frequent drug users themselves, and 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.

They may also be at an increased risk of eviction (if they are in social or privately rented housing) and isolated from their communities due to the anti-social activity it can create. There is also the risk that babies and very young children may be living in the properties, presenting significant safeguarding risks.

How Does It Happen

Befriending - A gang member may begin by befriending the vulnerable adult.

Something Of Interest - They will then offer the vulnerable adult something of interest to them. This could be a relationship, friendship, drugs, alcohol, money or clothing.

Borrow A Room - In exchange they may ask to 'borrow a room', to store something or meet other 'friends' at the property. In some cases, they may make it clear that this is for criminal purposes.

Benefits Will Reduce - Gradually the benefits will reduce and may eventually come to an end, and more and more people will come and go from the address.

Threaten - The gang members may threaten the vulnerable adult verbally or physically if they try to put a stop to their criminal activity.

Discourage Visitors - They will also discourage family or friends and support workers from visiting the vulnerable adult's address.

Signs

Cuckooing not only has an impact on the individual or family whose home has been taken over, but also the neighbours and neighbourhood of the property that has been cuckooed.

- An increase in people coming and going. This includes people you haven't seen before, young people of school age, and visitors throughout the day and night. Visits will often be for short periods.
- New vehicles outside the property, including taxis or hire cars.
- Possible increase in anti-social behaviour
- Increase in litter outside, bags of clothing or bedding around the property.
- Reliance on takeaway services (as no food provisions are within the house or premises).
- Signs of drug use.
- Lack of support service visitors.
- Property falls into disrepair.

What to do if you are worried about someone

If you know someone who is cuckooed/invaded it is extremely important that you tell someone, so that support agencies can begin a multi-agency approach in tackling the issue.

Inform the police by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency

If you would like to remain anonymous, please call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Make a safeguarding referral to Adult Social Care by calling 02476 833 003 or email ascdirect@coventry.gov.uk

Key Contacts and Further Information

- [Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Regional Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [Adult Safeguarding Procedures](#)
- [Crimestoppers](#)