

A guide for professionals about cuckooing

By adults with the lived experience



It is important that as professionals you know what cuckooing is, what signs to look out for and that you understand what you can do to help and support adults who might be at risk of this type of abuse.

What is cuckooing?

Cuckooing is when criminals and other bad people take over the homes of vulnerable people.

Cuckooing is a crime.

Criminals use the homes of vulnerable to commit their crimes, for example, they might:

- Use it for drug dealing.
- Grow drugs in the home.
- Hide drugs and other illegal things.
- They might invite their friends into the house and eat all the food and steal personal belongings.
- The criminals might ask the vulnerable adult to look after something illegal like a knife or a gun.

Now that we have told you what cuckooing is, we would like to tell you some of the signs to look out for:

- Lots of people coming the house at strange times.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Lots of cars or bicycles outside the house.
- Curtains closed all of time.
- You haven't seen the person who lives at the house for a while.
- The person living there might appear scared or anxious.

You might think that cuckooing doesn't happen, you are wrong, it happens everywhere!

We need you to help us and support us to keep safe.

If you think we might be the victim of cuckooing here are some things you can do to help us :

- Involve me - safeguarding is about me, not you.
- Help me and support me to keep safe – give me information but do not tell me what to do.
- Support me to get help but be careful not to put me at more risk.
- Always be honest with me, if you are sharing information about me with other professionals I would like to know.
- Please remember that being the victim of abuse makes me feel really scared – I might be too frightened to ask for help. This does not mean I do not want help.
- Do not tell me I am putting myself at risk – I might not have a choice.
- Do not make assumptions that I am 'working' for criminals – I am being exploited.
- Do not assume I am choosing to live this lifestyle – sometimes I do not even realise I am being abused and exploited, I might think these people are my friends.
- I might be scared about what will happen – you need to give me support and reassurance.
- Offer me a safe place to talk, I might be too scared to talk to you at my house.
I might be worried someone else is listening.

We have been working with the North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board and its partners to add lots of information about cuckooing on the website. If you would like to find out more please take a look at:

www.northlincssab.co.uk