

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 behaviours of cuckoo birds who take over the nests of 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 and 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

- Criminals use the property to discreetly conduct criminal activity out of sight of the police.
- They will use a range of tactics to control the victim.
- May offer free drugs to use their home for dealing.
- Once they gain control, they move in
- Increased risk of domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, and violence
- Once the 'high' wears off the victims want criminals to leave, leading to fear and threats or violence being used.

7 Further Information:

[Safeguarding Adults Board - Cuckooing](#)

Crime Stoppers – 0800 555 111
Modern Slavery Helpline – 08000 121 7000

[Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults \(Home Office\)](#)

[County Lines \(National Crime Agency\)](#)



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.
- Sudden and increased levels of noise and disturbance coming from the household.

6 If you are worried... let someone know

- If you are worried that an adult is a victim of cuckooing it is important that it is stopped. Organisations can help stop cuckooing occurring so if worried, you can contact:
- Humberside Police on 111 or 999 in an emergency
- You can also make a safeguarding referral [North Lincs SAB | Reporting a Concern](#) or contact the Safeguarding Team on: Tel: 01724 297000 / Email: safeguardingadultreferrals@northlincs.gov.uk
- 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 so you can also contact your housing provider.

5 The person at risk:

- They have stopped engaging with support services.
- They are presenting with unexplained injuries.
- They have paid off debts (including housing debts) in full and in cash.
- They are appearing withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information for fear of 'betraying' the criminals, abuse, or eviction.
- They are associating with new unidentified people who are often present at the home.
- They have changed their appearance either wearing expensive clothing or appearing unkempt.

