



In the Spotlight...

Cuckooing

In this Spotlight on Practice...

The focus of this edition of the Safeguarding Adults Board Spotlight on Practice is cuckooing.

Cuckooing, also known as forced home invasion, is a form of criminal exploitation used by criminals to take over the homes of vulnerable individuals and use the property as a base for criminal activity. They will often use tactics such as grooming, coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Cuckooing is often linked to county lines operations. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' However, there are a few different types of cuckooing including:

- Using the property to deal, store or take drugs
- Using the property to sex work
- Taking over the property as a place for them to live
- Taking over the property to financially abuse the tenant

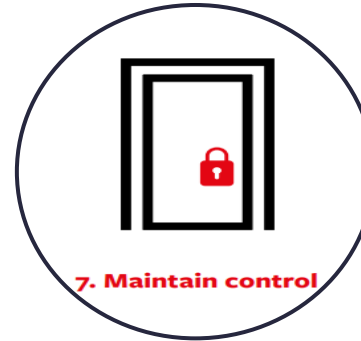
In this edition you can, find information about ...

- What is cuckooing
- Risk factors
- Signs and indicators
- Partnership responses
- Tools and resources
- Further information
- Contacts

Risk factors

Criminals target their victims because of their vulnerabilities, such as:

- Drug/alcohol dependency
- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health needs
- Financial insecurity, debt, poverty
- Housing instability, homelessness
- Loneliness, social isolation
- Age - elderly
- Young people leaving care
- Young people living alone for the first time
- Sex workers
- Lone female parents experiencing difficulties
- History of trauma - domestic abuse, neglect, sexual abuse
- Connections to those who are vulnerable



Stages of Cuckooing

Bainbridge, L and Loughery, A. (2024).
Adapted from Sinnamon, G. (2017).
The Psychology of Adult Sexual Grooming:
Sinnamon's Seven-Stage Model of Adult
Sexual Grooming. In Petherick, W. &
Sinnamon, G. (eds). The Psychology
of Criminal and Antisocial
Behavior. Academic Press.



Signs and indicators

An increase in the number of visitors to the property, around the clock

An increase in bikes, mopeds and vehicles, including taxis and hire cars

Suspicious friendships /relationships, gang association

Reluctance to return to property, rough sleeping, sofa surfing

Adult not seen by neighbours for some time

Signs of criminal damage, violence, graffiti

Drug dealing /manufacturing equipment, weapons

An increase in reports of antisocial behaviour

External doors being propped open

An increase in litter outside of the property, including takeaway boxes, drug paraphernalia etc

Possessing large sums of money/goods that can't be accounted for

Overgrown garden to hide people entering and exiting the property

People remaining at the property while the victim is out

Curtains/blinds being closed during the day

Carrying multiple mobile phones, receiving excessive amounts of text messages/phone calls

Disengagement with support/social networks

Newly installed locks on internal doors, newly installed CCTV

Partnership responses

Practitioners should proactively share information to help partners to act more effectively.

Make yourself aware of the mechanisms you can use to report information, locally and nationally, which can strengthen collaboration.

Effective collaboration and information sharing between agencies is essential to protecting victims and disrupting offenders.

It is important to provide as much information as possible as part of the safeguarding referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence to address harm.

Any response to cuckooing needs to be person-centred. It's vital that professionals recognise and identify tactics to disrupt perpetrators.

Families/friends/carers should be considered as safeguarding partners - listen to their concerns and discuss solutions with them as they could help you recognise what will work best.

Tools and resources

West Yorkshire police cuckooing advice video

Preventing and disrupting cuckooing victimisation: professionals toolkit

BSL Cuckooing Interview Video – Lithuanian, Polish and Romanian Languages also available

Safe Call national county lines exploitation support service

Division Trust county lines slang

Oxford City Council personal story on cuckooing video

Groundswell cuckooing toolkit

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SAB guidance for working with adults at risk of exploitation - cuckooing

Staffordshire SAB cuckooing video

Changing Futures Sheffield cuckooing video

Kent police county lines - short stories video

Cuckooing: A Prisoner in your own home story

Cuckooing and the link with Mate Crime

Further information

Available on the SAB website

- [NLSAB guide on what is cuckooing](#)
- [NLSAB 7-minute briefing on cuckooing](#)

Partner resources

- [Humberside police information about county lines and cuckooing](#)
- [Humberside police what is cuckooing video](#)

National guidance

- [Home Office criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance](#)
- [Home Office modern slavery statutory guidance](#)
- [NRM guidance and referral](#)
- [NPCC county lines policing strategy 2024-27](#)

For further information, please visit our website



Safeguarding Adults Board

www.northlincssab.co.uk



Sign up to the Safeguarding Adults Board communication emails by scanning the QR code or by visiting the below link

<https://forms.office.com/e/y4bsQkqFT5>

