

7-Minute Briefing – Cuckooing or Home Invasion or Home Takeover

What is Cuckooing/Home Invasion/ Home Takeover?

Cuckooing is where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. 'Cuckooing' sometimes referred to as "Home Invasion" or 'Home Takeover' is when criminals target the homes of adults who are perceived as being vulnerable in some way so they can use the property for drug-dealing or other criminal activities.

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.

Who is at risk?

Victims are vulnerable individuals and can include people who are:

- Older
- Living with mental or physical health conditions
- Living with learning disability
- Sex workers
- Single parents
- Experiencing poverty (person with money troubles)
- Isolated
- Living with addiction or alcoholism

Abuse and control of victims

- 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.
- Victims can be groomed, including via social media, and deceived into viewing the offenders as potential benefactors, friends or even romantic partners
- May offer free drugs to use their home for dealing
- Once they gain control, gangs move in
- Increased risk of domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, and violence
- Once the 'high' wears off the victims want the criminals to leave, leading to fear and threats or violence being used.

Spotting the signs.

You may notice changes around a property that indicate criminal activity is taking place.

- 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 household.
- The outside of the property possibly becomes unkept/ untidy. An increase in litter.

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- They are appearing withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information for fear of 'betraying' the criminals, abuse, or eviction.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

Steps to take if you suspect this is occurring:

- If you are worried that an adult is a victim, it is important it is stopped. Organisations can help. You should contact the police via 999 if believe there may be an immediate risk of harm, or for non-urgent cases via 101 or the Cheshire Constabulary [Report a crime | Cheshire Constabulary](#)
- You can also make a safeguarding referral in Halton via [Safeguarding Adults Alert Form](#) or ring 01519078306 (Out of hours 03450500148).

Other useful links:

- Crimestoppers, can anonymously report any concerns. [Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously | Crimestoppers](#) or call: 0800 555 111
- Modern Slavery Helpline [File a report](#) or call 08000 121 7000
- [impact_cuckooing_poster.pdf](#)