

‘Home Takeover’ or ‘Cuckooing’ - Exploitation & Complex Safeguarding

Home Takeover or Cuckooing is where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate **exploitation**. It is about the abuse of a position of vulnerability or power to use an individual's property for criminal activities leading to financial gain. Home Takeover or Cuckooing is often used as a base for the distribution of illegal drugs and weapons and often associated with high levels anti-social behaviour within a community (MSP, 2024).

Anyone can be the victim of this type of exploitation, but there are certain groups who, due to their situation and/or the social and environmental factors around them, are at greater risk of exploitation and of experiencing harm (MSP, 2024a). Therefore, adults who are perceived as being ‘vulnerable’ are targeted, in person or online initially, and their property used for drug-dealing or other criminal activities. Victims of ‘Home Takeover’ or ‘cuckooing’ may be using substances, but others can be targeted including older people, those experiencing mental or physical health problems, sex workers, adults with a learning disability, single mothers and those living in poverty. Individuals often approach the victim offering free drugs to use their home for dealing.

The adult may experience multiple types of abuse in a Home Takeover situation.

When individuals experience Home Takeover or Cuckooing and their property is used for criminal enterprises, they may be too afraid to tell professionals due to the fear of retaliation or being perceived as involved in criminal activity themselves and the potential consequences (Home Office, 2023).

Some relevant legislation: Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Premises Closure Order: (Section 76 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014).

What are the signs of cuckooing?



An increase in anti-social behaviour.



Not seeing your neighbour as often or they are distancing themselves.



The outside of the property possibly becomes unkempt/untidy. An increase in litter.



An increase in cars or bikes outside



A decrease of the neighbours usual visitors



An increase in people entering and leaving



A neighbour all of a sudden driving people around.

Resources on YouTube – Due to the subject some material may be distressing to watch	
Title and Information	Web Link
GMMH Cuckooing Safeguarding Training - Subtitled	Link
NCLCC - County Lines Awareness Video	Link
Home Takeover - Targeted and Trapped – Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board	Link
Cuckooing Informative V3 Surrey Police	Link
Monica Walton discusses her work to tackle cuckooing in Oxford! Monica Walton, Oxford City Council's dedicated cuckooing officer, discussing her work to tackle cuckooing in Oxford.	Link
Mark, who was a victim of cuckooing, shares his story (Oxford)	Link
See Something, Say Something: Exploitation - Franks' Story Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board.	Link
County lines short stories – Cuckooing (Kent Police)	Link
What is Cuckooing? Humberside Police	Link
Cuckooing Canterbury City Council	Link
Aimee's story: Camden police's film on cuckooing	Link
Examples of Hate Crime – Cuckooing, Lewisham Speaking Up	Link
Section 45 Modern Slavery Act	Link

Other Resources	
Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership	Home Takeover/Cuckooing 7 minute briefing here
Trafford Safeguarding Partnership	Cuckooing - 7 Minute Briefing here
Article	Spicer, J. , Moyle, L. and Coomber, R. (2019) The variable and evolving nature of 'cuckooing' as a form of criminal exploitation in street level drug markets. Trends in Organized Crime (2020) 23:301–323 here
Guidance for Working with Adults at Risk of Exploitation: Cuckooing	Although this is a resource from Leicester it contains some useful information on cuckooing) Access here
Do you suspect an address is being used for drug dealing?	Access here
County Lines & Cuckooing	Access here
SPOT THE SIGNS OF CUCKOOING – COUNTY LINES	What is Cuckooing County Lines? Access here
National Crime Agency - County Lines	Access here

References:

Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (2024) *Tackling Exploitation and Complex Safeguarding in Manchester 2024 – 2027 Strategy*. Manchester: Manchester Safeguarding Partnership.

https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/MSP-Tackling-Exploitation-in-Manchester-24-27-Strategy_FINAL.pdf

Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (2024a) *Tackling Exploitation & Complex Safeguarding*. Manchester: Manchester Safeguarding Partnership. <https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/complex-safeguarding/>

Peel Solutions (2022) *SPOT THE SIGNS OF CUCKOOING – COUNTY LINES. What is Cuckooing County Lines?* Warrington: Peel Solutions. <https://peelsolutions.co.uk/spot-the-signs-of-cuckooing-county-lines/>

Handout for learners accessing safeguarding training delivered by Partners in Care.
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