

CUCKOOING

A PRISONER IN YOUR OWN HOME

Cuckooing is when criminals take over someone's home to use it as a base for crime.

The victim's home may be used for:

- ✓ dealing drugs
- ✓ storing weapons
- ✓ sex work
- ✓ other illegal activities

By using the victim's home, the criminal hopes they can avoid the police.

Victims of cuckooing

Criminals usually target vulnerable people. This may be:

- ✓ someone with a drug or alcohol problem
- ✓ someone with money troubles
- ✓ someone with a mental health issue or disability
- ✓ an elderly person



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How it happens

The criminal often gives the victim something first. This could be money, drugs, or help.

Later, they convince the victim to let them use their home. They may do this through intimidation or as part of a friendly relationship.



Signs to watch for

Some of these things could be a sign of cuckooing. The victim may show:

- a change in mood
- a change in behaviour, for example, less contact with family, friends or neighbours
- a change in routine
- a change in appearance, for example, an injury, weight loss or not taking care of how they dress

At or around the home, you may notice:

- lots of visitors
- bikes and cars always arriving or parked nearby
- antisocial behaviour
- graffiti or damage
- litter such as alcohol bottles or cans
- drug-related items such as syringes, foil or cling film



Once inside the home, the criminal usually becomes more aggressive. They take control, and other criminals may visit or stay there. The situation may become so bad that the victim no longer wants to be in the home. The criminal may try to make the victim do things, like sell drugs.

The victim may feel too frightened to tell anyone. They may still care about the criminal and see them as a friend.

You can speak to your local police by dialling 101, or in an emergency 999.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



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