



## What do I do if I am being cuckooed?

You do not need to suffer in silence, and you should not feel ashamed that your home has been taken over. Cuckooing happens to thousands of people every year in England and Wales, and there are many services in your local area that are able to assist you.

The first thing that you should do is to talk to someone. This could be a family member, a friend or a support worker. It is important that you, or a person that you trust, contact the Police to report that you are a victim of cuckooing.

You can call the police on 101, or in an emergency call 999. You can also report [online](#).

If you would like to remain anonymous, call CrimeStoppers on **0800 222111** or submit a report [online](#).

## Get support

**Catch 22** is a specialist support and rescue service for young people and their families who are criminally exploited through County Lines.

For practical advice contact [Citizen's Advice](#)

For advice on drugs, their effects and the law, talk to [Frank](#)

[IversonTrust](#) work with parents and carers of children who are at risk of being exploited by perpetrators

24-hour [Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line](#)

[SafeCall](#) is a free, confidential and anonymous helpline and support service for young people and family members that are affected by missing, County Lines and criminal exploitation

To talk through issues or concerns, contact [Samaritans](#)

[Victim Support](#) is an independent charity in England and Wales that provides specialist practical and emotional support to victims and witnesses of crime

## Further information about cuckooing

### Victim perspectives

[Susan](#)  
[Aimee](#)  
[Mark](#)  
[Lisa](#)

### [West Yorkshire Police Cuckooing Animation](#)

**The Cuckooing Research & Prevention Network**  
Additional cuckooing resources can be downloaded from the Network's [webpage](#)

**Safer Leeds**  
Working in partnership to keep communities safe

 **horton housing**

 **WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE**

  
**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

# What is cuckooing?



**CUCKOOING**  
RESEARCH & PREVENTION NETWORK

## What is cuckooing?

Cuckooing is when criminals take over a person's home and use it for illegal activities. These activities can include:

- Preparing or dealing drugs
- Storing cash, weapons, valuables or stolen goods
- Sexual exploitation
- Taking money from the victim

Perpetrators may also use the property as a place to sleep.



## Who is at risk?

Cuckooing can happen to anyone.

However, research suggests that victims are often vulnerable. Key targets include those who:

- Suffer from addiction
- Have a physical disability
- Have a mental health conditions and/or a learning disability
- Recently left care, or who are living alone for the first time
- Are elderly
- Struggle financially
- Feel isolated or lonely
- Are involved in sex work

Cuckooing victims typically live alone in either a block of flats, or a house that has back alleyway access.



## What are the warning signs?

Perpetrators rarely force entry to gain access to a home. Instead, they befriend the victim, and seek to build their trust. This can make it difficult for the victim to recognise that they are being exploited and may be at risk of harm.

Warning signs of cuckooing include:

- Strangers being overly friendly
- People asking to visit your property when you have repeatedly said no
- People asking to stay over at your property
- Being offered things for 'free' – such as alcohol, drugs or food
- Your friends invite people to your property that are rude and disrespect you
- Your friends do not leave when you ask them to
- Your friends ask you to drive them around, or ask to borrow your car
- You do not feel comfortable or safe in your property anymore

## What can I do to protect myself?



**Do not tell people your address**



**Never give your door keys or access fobs to anyone**



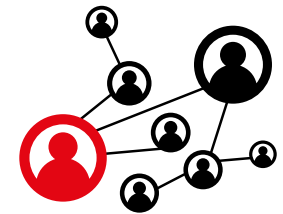
**Never let people you do not trust into your home**



**Practice saying 'no' in an assertive manner**



**Keep in contact with your support worker**



**Build up a social support network in your local community**



**Access support for substance use or financial difficulties**



**Report suspicious activity to the Police**