

“CUCKOOING”

What is Cuckooing?

Cuckooing, also known as ‘home invasion’, is where a criminal befriends an individual who lives on their own. The criminal then moves in and uses the property to operate unlawful activity. Victims are often lonely, isolated and vulnerable.

Who are the victims?

Victims are vulnerable individuals, often drug users but can include people who are:

- Older
- Living with a mental or physical health condition
- Living with a learning disability
- Involved in prostitution
- Single parents
- Isolated
- Living with forms of addiction, such as Alcoholism and Drug use

Controlling the Victim

Once residency is established drug dealers then have a discreet location out of sight of police of which to conduct their criminal activity. An example of controlling activity could be pacifying victims using drugs. Once the high wears off and the victim wants the criminals to leave, intimidation levels can escalate to the use of threats and violence

Spotting the Signs

- There will be an increase of vehicles stopping at the property, often for short periods
- An increase of anti-social behaviour around the property
- Open drug dealing near the property
- Not seeing the resident of the property as often
- An increase of the number of people coming and going at various times of the day or night

The Vulnerable Person

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- They are appearing withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information for fear of ‘betraying’ the criminals, abuse or eviction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

What to do if you are concerned about someone

- **Crimestoppers** – Anonymously report any concerns Call: 0800 555 111
- **Police** - In an emergency call: 999 - For non-emergency concerns call: 101
- **Council** - Speak to Gateway to Care Call: 01422 393000 (office hours) / Emergency Duty Team - 01422 288000 (out of hours) or Email: gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk

Cuckooing Legality

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, landlords or property managers can receive up to 14 years imprisonment or a substantial fine for having drugs residing at their property. The property may be seized or forfeited as well as prosecuted for money laundering. The premises may be ‘closed down’ and boarded up under the terms of a Premises Closure Order: (Section 76 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)