

Exploitation at Home: Cuckooing



What is cuckooing?

Cuckooing is a practice where people take over a vulnerable person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. It takes the name from cuckoos who take over the nests of other birds.

The most common form of cuckooing is where drug dealers take over a person's home and use it to store or distribute drugs.

Cuckooed residents are victims of crime and Hertfordshire Police can use Closure Orders, which prohibit anyone from entering the property, apart from the resident, their immediate family, and support workers to ensure that these vulnerable people are safeguarded. Anyone found in the address not listed in the Closure Order can be arrested.

Closure Orders also help to deter any criminal activity or anti-social behaviour, which have a detrimental effect on the wider community and can make local residents' lives a misery.



HERTFORDSHIRE
Modern Slavery Partnership

What do we need from you?

We need members of the community to be vigilant and look out for their neighbours who may be vulnerable. Those whose homes are most vulnerable include older and younger people, those with mental health problems, drug users or those living on low income.

If you think the activity at a vulnerable person's address is suspicious, please either report to the police or to the 24/7 [Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline](#).

The signs of potential drug dealing are:

- Lots of visitors, who don't stay very long, arriving at all times of the day and night.
- People waiting in cars outside particular properties exchanging small packets or cash.
- Lots of visitors bringing items such as TVs or bikes but leaving empty handed.
- Lone/vulnerable neighbours suddenly having groups of people living at their address.
- A possible increase in anti-social behaviour.
- Increased litter outside.
- Signs of drugs use.

What to do if you have concerns?

The best advice is to trust your instincts. Even if someone isn't being cuckooed, they may be being exploited in some other way, so it's always worth speaking out.



If you have suspicions, please let us know:

- Time, date and place.
- Vehicle registrations and the make, model and colour.
- Descriptions of people and details of what they were doing.
- Direction they were travelling to and from.
- How many times you have seen them - is it always at the same time of day?

Don't put yourself at risk. Please always pass information to the police and do not confront or approach suspected drug dealers.

You can report:

- Online at: www.herts.police.uk/Report/Report-Shared/Report-a-crime.
- Call 101 (or 999 in an emergency or if a crime is in progress).
- If you would rather remain anonymous, call the charity-run [24/7 Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline](#): 08000 121 700.
- Contact [Beacon](#) to receive support for yourself or a family member: 03000 115 555.