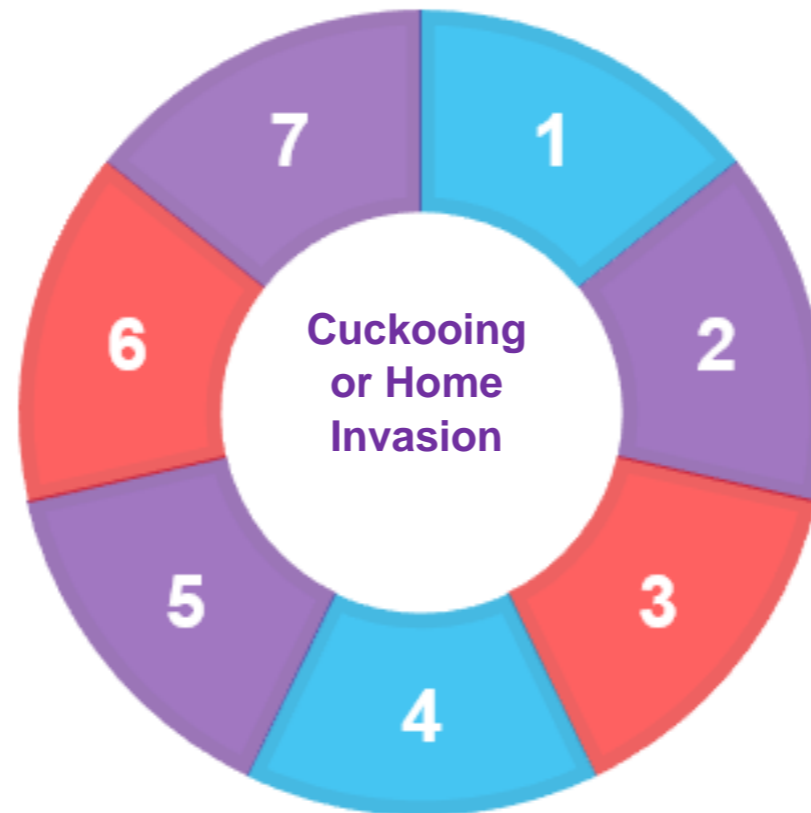


# 7 MINUTE BRIEFING – Cuckooing / Home Invasion



**KNOWSLEY  
SAFEGUARDING  
ADULTS BOARD**

PREVENTION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP



## 1. What is Cuckooing / Home Invasion?

- Cuckooing/Home invasion is when criminals take over the home of a vulnerable person and use it for criminal purposes such as dealing drugs
- The term comes from the behaviour of cuckoo birds who take over the nests of other birds
- A criminal will often befriend a vulnerable person in order to exploit them and use their property
- The person is usually intimidated and too scared to report it to anyone

## 2. Who are the Victims?

Victims are vulnerable individuals and can include people who are:

- Older
- Living with mental or physical health conditions
- Living with a learning disability
- Involved in prostitution
- Single parents
- Experiencing poverty
- Isolated
- Living with addiction or alcoholism

## 3. Controlling the Victim

- Criminals use the property to discreetly conduct criminal activity out of sight of the police
- They will use a range of tactics to control the victim.
- May offer free drugs to use their home for dealing
- Once they gain control, gangs move in
- Increased risk of domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, and violence
- Once the 'high' wears off the victims want the criminals to leave, leading to fear and threats or violence being used

## 4. Spotting the signs of cuckooing at a property:

- High number of vehicles stopping at the property for a short time
- Increased anti-social behaviour around the property
- Open drug dealing near the property
- Not seeing the resident of the property as often
- People coming and going at various times day and night
- Sudden and increased levels of noise and disturbance coming from household

## 5. The person at risk:

Due to the presence of criminals in their home, alongside continuing threats and intimidation, it is extremely difficult for people who have been cuckooed to report the crime. It is essential to be curious and think critically about what you see. Some typical signs are

- 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- They are appearing withdrawn and fearful of disclosing information for fear of 'betraying' the criminals, abuse, or eviction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

## 6. If you're worried...let someone know:

- Merseyside Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Visit [Contact us | Merseyside Police](#) for further contact details
- If you think a person with care and support needs is at risk, make a [safeguarding referral](#) or contact Knowsley Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team on Tel: 0151 443 2600
- It is also important to involve the housing provider if this is a registered housing property or the landlord if it is a privately rented property so you can also contact your housing provider

## 7. Further information / Operation Lamprey

Operation Lamprey (Police & Crime and Communities Team) work closely with partners including social landlords, to share information and develop tactics to protect a victim.

The team uses data to spot which residents might be most vulnerable to exploitation, then work with housing agencies to safely relocate them. For more information, please contact [safer.knowsley@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:safer.knowsley@knowsley.gov.uk) for a referral form.