

What can you do to help reduce the chances of cuckooing?

- ✓ Know your needs and vulnerabilities:
 - loneliness
 - struggling with emotions
 - pattern of difficult or abusive relationships
 - substance dependency
 - financial difficulties.
- ✓ Find different ways to meet your needs through services and positive relationships.
 - Build up social support in local community
 - get mental health or relationship advice and support
 - get support for substance use (e.g. script, detox)
 - get support from the police or local police to protect you / your property.
- ✓ If you use drugs, separate where you live from where you use/pick up drugs.
- ✓ Assertiveness and boundaries to protect your property
 - don't tell people your address
 - never give your keys to anyone.
 - Don't let people you can't trust in your flat.
 - practice saying 'no' in an assertive way.

Strategies perpetrators use to cuckoo individuals

- ✓ Visiting areas where drug users gather and discuss housing situations.
- ✓ Creating false debts, for example, claiming, "We bought you alcohol last week, so you owe us—let us stay at your flat."
- ✓ Loitering near drug and alcohol treatment centres to approach service users.
- ✓ Pretend to need a place to stay.
- ✓ Persistently call drug users for home access.
- ✓ Lurking in hospital emergency departments for drug-seeking individuals.
- ✓ Targeting people outside pharmacies collecting methadone prescriptions.
- ✓ Engaging people at food banks, Jobcentres, or places of worship.
- ✓ Initiating conversations with lonely individuals.
- ✓ Using 'honey trapping' tactics to exploit single men.

What can you do if it is already happening?

- ✓ Recognise that they are taking advantage of you and this could end up very badly for you if you don't do something- you could lose your flat to them or end up getting hurt or going to prison if there are drugs involved!
- ✓ Talk to staff and ask for help.
- ✓ 'Break the cycle': you can say that you are going to move out and go away for a while so that they have to find somewhere else.
- ✓ block numbers and blank the people if you see them in the street- do not engage with them!
- ✓ Think ahead to times when you are more likely to feel vulnerable
 - what are your *triggers* that make you feel more vulnerable?
 - what you can do when feeling more vulnerable?
- ✓ Tell them that professionals or police are watching the address (even if not true).
- ✓ People who have been through this all advise you to get support as soon as you can! it isn't grassing, it's about keeping you and your property safe from people who are exploiting you.

"In this game you cannot win. You can only win by leaving the game"

"As soon as they find out you have your own flat they start wanting to be your friend. They start calling you, suggesting you hang out at your flat together. They start being really nice to you and offering you the drugs they know you are addicted to"

"They are in and out. Saying they need to go to the shop but really they are using your place as a base to sell drugs from"

"People overstaying their welcome, often saying they are helping me or caring for me"

Sources of support

Cuckooing is extremely common – if it happens to you support workers will not judge you and will support you.

Your safety comes first, and support workers are here to help. You have a say in what happens next. If workers believe you're at risk, they may involve other services to protect you, but they will always try to keep you informed so you remain in control as much as possible.

Worker contact number:

My housing officer

Maintenance number

Substance use worker (if applicable)

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Mental health crisis line.....

Police 101/ 999



What is cuckooing?

Tenancy cuckooing happens when someone takes over your home, often by gaining your trust and then refusing to leave.

They may claim they are helping to keep you safe by staying in your home. Over time, they might start using your space for risky activities or even dealing illegal substances. They may also offer free or discounted drugs in exchange for staying over.

You may feel this is fine and manageable until you want the perpetrator to leave, at which point they may become aggressive and force you out of your home.

Professionals will not blame you and can support you to reduce the risk to yourself and others.