



Are you being

CUCKOOED?



Has your home been taken over by drug dealers?

- **Has your home been taken over by drug dealers?**
- **Do you feel powerless to ask them to leave?**
- **Do you feel you have to comply with their requests?**
- **Are you fearful of coming forward due to possible consequences?**

If the answer is yes, it is likely that you are the victim of cuckooing. This is the practice of criminal gangs targeting people's homes in order to use them to deal drugs.

How this can affect you

- If your home is raided by police, you face being arrested and possibly charged and convicted for drug dealing.
- You risk losing your home; this could impact on your ability to secure future accommodation.
- Your own drug use and mental health could deteriorate.
- You could be liable for any damage caused to the property and potentially left with an expensive drug habit.

What to do if your home is taken over

Cuckooing itself is not a criminal offence but it is anti-social. Sussex Police is working with partners to ensure that we take a sensitive approach to this activity and acknowledge the impact this has on the person being cuckooed.

You can report this activity to your housing provider/landlord or support worker.

Alternatively, you can contact **Sussex Police** on **101** by email **101@sussex.pnn.police.uk** or online at **www.sussex.police.uk**

Always dial 999 in an emergency. You can also report anonymously to **Crimestoppers** on **0800 555 111**.



Criminal exploitation: A guide for parents

Criminal Exploitation is when individuals or gangs target children and force them to carry out criminal activity. Exploiters may force young people to deal drugs, steal, commit violent or sexual acts and traffic them.

Children who are being criminally exploited will usually be subject to physical violence and threats – but exploiters are smart: they'll spend months or years grooming their victims, and parents often aren't even aware it's happening.

If you think your child is being exploited it's important to know that **you are not alone and not to blame**. You should:

- Report your concerns to Children's Social Care or the NSPCC's helpline on **0808 800 5000**. A social worker can help you take steps to protect your child. They will make an assessment based on concern your child is at risk of harm from outside of the family.
- You can also report your concerns to the police using their non-emergency number. If you feel your child is in immediate danger then call the police on **999**.

Don't be worried about contacting the police – you are trying to protect your child.

If you would like more support, go to other professionals who can help: your GP, school, police or a youth worker.

- If your child isn't where they are supposed to be, report them missing straight away on **101**. **You do not have to wait 24 hours.**
- If your child is picked up in a car, or has train or bus tickets, keep a record of this information to give to the police or social worker
- There may be other evidence that your child is being exploited, such as interactions on social media, unexplained money or phones, clothing or gifts, change in behaviour; where possible try to keep a record of this.

If you're able to speak to your child then let them know they aren't in trouble – and that you're worried about them. Remember that there may be threats made against you or your family by the people exploiting your child. Your child may believe that they are protecting you. Let your child know that you know about this risk and that it is not their responsibility to protect you.

If they don't want to talk to you, let them know that they can always call ChildLine on **0800 1111** or Get Connected on **0808 808 4994 (text 80849)**.