



IS MY HOME BEING INVADED?



Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for anyone who is living independently, their families and supporters. It is for people to share and go through together and talk about. This leaflet talks about a type of criminal activity that happens when a person's home is taken over by others for things like producing, storing and supplying drugs and/or weapons, having parties and encouraging sexual activity.

This leaflet helps you think about what to look out for and what to do if this happens to you or someone you know.

Have you heard of the term 'Cuckooing'?

This term was developed because a cuckoo will often take over another bird's nest destroying the eggs in it and lay its own eggs for the bird to look after; so it is a term that has been used instead of saying that someone is trying to invade your home and take it over.

It is what happens when a person's home is used by other people for criminal activities. These activities are usually the production, storage and/or supply of drugs or weapons and can sometimes involve holding parties & encouraging sexual activity. It can be part of a bigger, organised plan to move drugs, weapons and people around the country. It means someone is trying to invade your home and take it over.

How does it start?

Often it starts by a person trying really hard to be nice to you, giving you more and more attention, offering to help you out or buy you things that you may need or want as gifts to make you like them. When they have gained your trust and you start to see them as a friend, they find ways to turn the friendship into something else – asking you to do things for them, these may seem like new and fun things, like having a party for example, or it could be things that you may not want to do. You may not realise that this is what's happening to you, as the person will try to use many different ways to trick or fool you that they care about you; including saying that they are your friend, that friends should help each other or that you are a bad friend if you don't help them.



How do I know if someone isn't really my friend?

There are some early warning signs – things that might help you realise that someone is acting in a way that isn't okay.

Try asking yourself a few questions:

- Do they want you to keep your friendship a secret from other people you already know?
- Do they want to meet with you alone, in secret or with other people you don't know?
- Do you feel pressured into doing or saying things that make you feel uncomfortable?
- Do they send or give you things you may need or want as gifts, or give you things you could not usually get yourself – such as things that are very valuable, or very personal – or things such as alcohol, tobacco or drugs?
- Do they seem to already know things about you that you haven't told them?
- Do they keep things about their own lives and family secret from you?
- Do they ask you to let them do things in your home, such as borrow a room to store something or to meet their friends?
- Do they discourage you from having other visitors they don't know e.g. other friends, family or support workers?
- Do they get angry with you or frighten you if you say you don't want to do the things they ask?
- Do they remind you that they have given you things and suggest that you owe them?



What can help?

These are just a few of the signs that someone could be trying to use you or your home for criminal activities, even if you believe they are your friend. If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then it's important that you talk to someone – preferably an adult you can trust, about what is happening. And remember, if something doesn't feel right – even slightly – then it probably isn't.

What signs might friends or family notice if someone's home is being taken over?

These are some of the most common signs to look out for. If you notice any of these things it could mean that the person's home is being invaded:

- An increase in people you don't know leaving or entering the home
- An increase in cars, taxi's or bikes outside
- Increase in litter outside
- Increase in antisocial behaviour
- Property falls into disrepair
- Signs of drug/ alcohol use and/or parties
- Your friend or family member no longer wants you to visit them at home
- Your friend or family member becomes withdrawn



- Your friend or family member has items that you feel they may not usually be able to afford

What can I do if I'm worried about someone?

If you are worried about someone because you think their home is being invaded it is extremely important that you tell someone, so that support agencies can begin a multi-agency approach in tackling the issue.

Inform the police by calling **101** or **999** in an emergency.

If you would like to remain anonymous, please call [Crimestoppers](#) on **0800 555 111**.

Make a safeguarding referral to SMBC Adult Services by calling **0121 704 8007** or online at www.solihull.gov.uk/adultabuse



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