

SAFEGUARDING



County Lines is a term used to describe gangs, groups or drug networks that supply drugs from urban to suburban areas across the country, including market and coastal towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. They exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money to and from the urban area, and to store the drugs in local markets. They will often use intimidation, violence and weapons, including knives, corrosives and firearms.

Please [click here](#) to access a video on 'What is County Lines'

County Lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations. CL activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

Spotting the signs

A young person's involvement in County Lines activity often leaves signs. A young person might exhibit some of these signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a young person's lifestyle should be discussed with them. Some indicators of County Lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

If you have any concerns regarding County Lines, please refer them to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, askforhelp@tchs.org.uk

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING