

Gangs , County Lines and adolescent Risk

National Issue – Local Problem

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What Is County Lines

- **County lines, sometimes referred to as Dangerous Drug Networks (DDN's) is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs into our local market and coastal towns.**
- **Child criminal exploitation through the use of children from urban source area or targeting of local children and vulnerable adults to move both drugs and money.**
- **Urban gangs send junior members to market towns or coastal villages, where they run increasingly sophisticated drug dealing franchises.**
- **The runners are typically very young, vulnerable teenagers with complicated backgrounds**

What Is County Lines

- **Gangs established a market base and can typically take over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force, coercion and or deception in a term referred to as 'cuckooing'.**
- **Gangs recruit local rural children to do the grunt work while senior gang members manage operations from their headquarters.**
- **Use of mobile phones.**
- **Put simply, they're expanding.**

EXPLOITATION

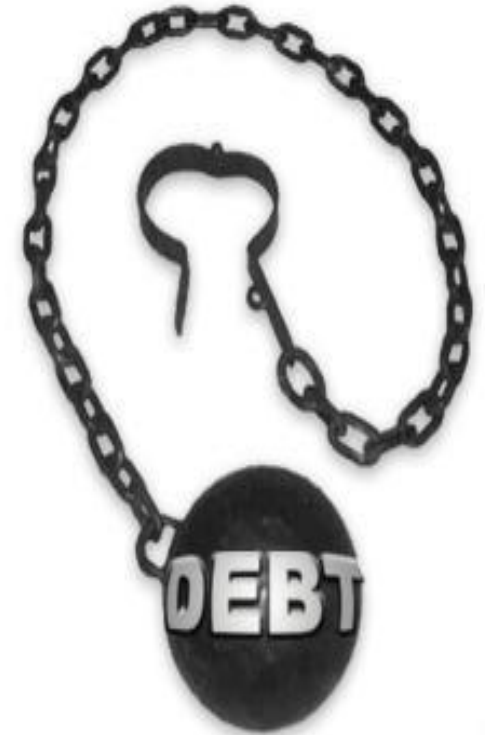
FEAR

**Cuckooing –
vulnerable adults**



Blackmail

EXTORTION



VIOLENCE

Debt bondage

Grooming

PREYING ON THE VULNERABLE



Definition of a Gang?

- **Serious Crime Act 2015 definition, is a broader definition than previously applied:**
- **the activities of a group that:**
 - **consists of at least 3 people;**
 - **and, has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.**
 - **This will include anti-social, violent and/or drug related activities.**

A young person's involvement in county lines activity often leaves signs.

ExploitationWhat to look out for

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

Marked in red on this map are all of the towns / cities in Devon and Cornwall that are known to be currently affected by a county line (as of June 2017).



Note: the local intelligence picture is only as good as the intelligence submitted. While Exeter appears to have the greatest issue, if more activity were undertaken in Plymouth or Cornwall, for example, it is likely that more problems would be discovered.

Why the South West?

One drug dealing insider today told the Echo: *“Quieter counties, like Cumbria, or Devon and Cornwall are seen to have less proactive policing operations, rather than operating in Liverpool or Merseyside, where dealing connections are long established.*

Dealing to Exeter, for example, is far safer, and there is an untapped market which can make profits pretty lucrative. Even if you’re transporting the stash by car, the M6 and then M5 route is straightforward.

Those quiet, sleepy service stations on the M5 have seen some sights in recent years. It’s a good place to conduct a drugs deal and it’s kind of neutral ground for everyone.”



What to do if you are concerned

Keep your eyes open and report suspicious activity

Call: Devon & Cornwall Crimestoppers 0800 555111

Email: 101@dc.police.uk

Report Online: <http://dc.police.uk>

To further support frontline staff – particularly council safeguarding leads, as well as staff working in social care, health, children and young people, and community safety – identify potential victims, the Home Office has produced a range of resources, including a guidance booklet and posters. We encourage you to use these resources to help your staff understand the signs to spot potential victims and the action they should take to safeguard the young people.

Other Useful Sources of Information:

- www.devonchildrenandfamiliespartnership.org.uk
- www.gov.uk/
- NCA National Briefing Report: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk
- Children's Society Toolkit: www.childrenssociety.org.uk
- BBC news article describing County Lines:



Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance



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Children are being exploited by gangs involved in drug crime. Know the signs to spot.

County lines gangs use children and vulnerable people to courier drugs and money. A young person who is involved in county lines activity might exhibit some of these signs:

Permanently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area	Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones	Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls	Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association	Leaving home or care without explanation
Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries	Parental concerns	Significant decline in school performance	Significant changes in emotional well-being	

[edit this text] If you have concerns, follow your safeguarding procedures and share your concerns with local authority social care services.