



BREAKING COUNTY LINES

County Lines
Key Facts and Impact



WHAT WE WILL COVER IN THIS SESSION:

What is County Lines?

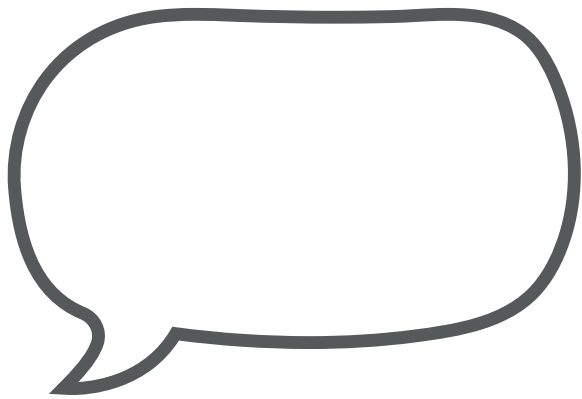
What is the scale of the problem?

How does it impact children, young people, families and communities?

How can you protect yourself and others?



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT COUNTY LINES?



WHAT IS COUNTY LINES?

'County Lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs.



WHAT IS COUNTY LINES?

“

The criminal gangs operating in England are complex and ruthless organisations, using sophisticated techniques to groom children and chilling levels of violence to keep them compliant. They prey upon marginalised children who have often been let down by multiple agencies.

Many of these children don't feel that they have any choice about their situation.

”

ANNE LONGFIELD –
CHILDREN'S
COMMISSIONER,
FEBRUARY 2019



WHAT IS COUNTY LINES?

In the last few years County Lines has become one of the most common forms of modern slavery in the UK.

"Criminal Exploitation is when a child or young person is befriended and abused, taken advantage of, groomed and controlled for a criminal purpose."



WHAT IS COUNTY LINES?



Children and young people are used because they are easier to manipulate, they can be deceived into working for little or no pay and are less likely to be detected.

HOW THE EXPLOITATION MODEL WORKS

3,000+

DEAL LINES ACROSS THE UK

£500M

ESTIMATED ANNUAL
TURNOVER

14–17

MOST TARGETED AGES,
SOME AS YOUNG AS 8

THE MECHANISM

- County Lines refers to phone line – used by the OCG
- They send bulk messages to the market. Customers place orders via the line controlled by the line holder and orders are despatched by the runners (children).

WHO'S INVOLVED & THE DRUGS

- 80% males involved but this is changing as girls are less likely to arouse suspicion.
- The drugs are mainly crack cocaine and heroin.

WHO GETS TARGETED

Can be any young person seeking inclusion or structure or maybe a certain status, those who are not excelling at school or at home and may be looking for some kind of validation.



RECRUITMENT OF

- Drug users & those with additional care or support needs
- Vulnerable women
- Children and young people ('clean skins')

IDENTIFIED VIA

- Social media (Snapchat, Instagram, etc.)
- People they know (peers, dealers)
- Places they go (outside schools, take-aways, etc.)

ATTRACTED BY

- Perceived 'benefits'
- Affection, companionship or status
- A commodity they value: money, gifts, or 'free'/ discounted drugs

COERCED BY

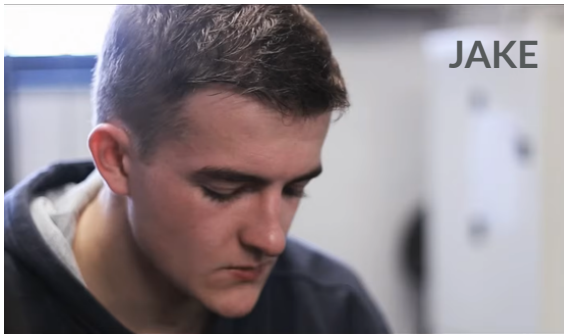
- Blackmail / fake mugging
- Debt
- Threats to themselves and their family



TRAPPED



TRAPPED



What were the reasons they became involved?

What are the consequences of their actions?

Consider the emotional consequences as well.

Do you think this
could happen to
you or anyone
you know?



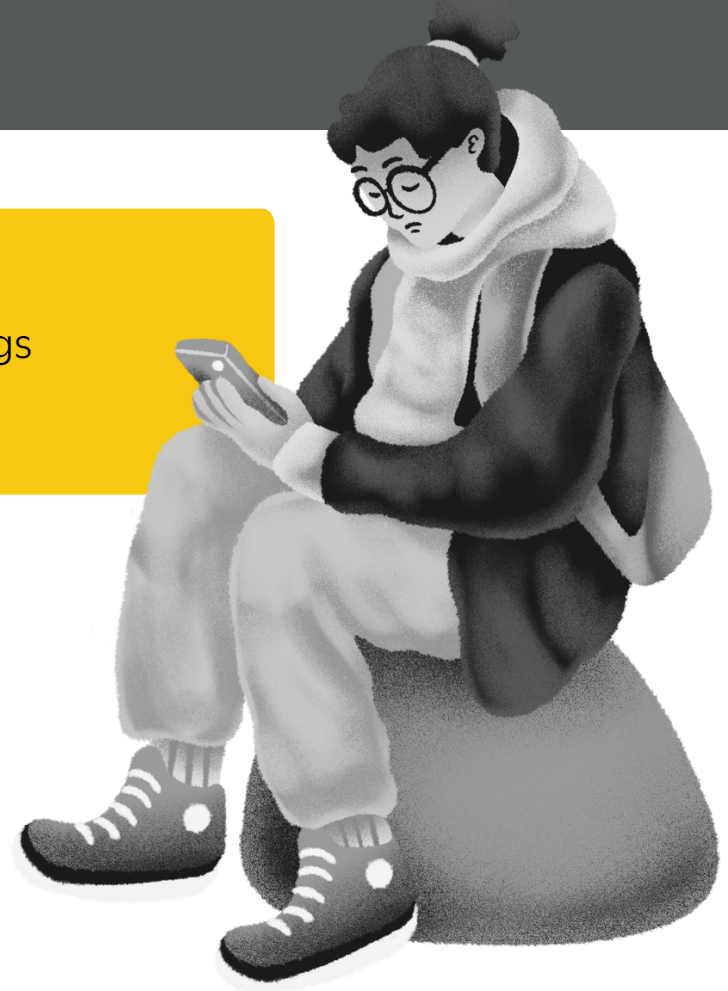
TARGETING



This is when an exploiter targets a young person who is vulnerable. Exploiters pick their targets based on things like age, strength or situation.

Signs of this stage include an exploiter:

- Observing a young person
- Finding out a young person's vulnerabilities, needs and wants
- Glamourising their lifestyle
- Gaining and developing a young person's trust



EXPERIENCE



This stage is where an exploiter might try to get a young person used to their lifestyle, or train them up in what they're doing.

At this stage an exploiter might:

- Give a young person gifts and rewards
- Include them in their activities
- Offer a young person protection
- Give them a sense of belonging
- Introduce a young person to more established members of their gang



HOOKED



This is the stage where an exploiter will make a young person feel like they're a member of their gang, even though they're just exploiting them.

- Being given a bigger role in the group (eg people running for them).
- Getting more responsibilities within the group eg more money.
- Engaging in activities such as drugs, alcohol and sexual behaviour
- Being asked for favours/to keep secrets/ to recruit others to the gang



TRAPPED



Now a young person feels dependent on the group, their relationship with their exploiter may start to become unpleasant, as their exploiter's true intents or character is revealed.

- Blackmail – include 'fake' mugging organised to create a debt
- Physical violence and sexual assaults
- People playing on their guilt, shame and fear and attempting to isolate them from their family, friends and society
- People humiliating them, either sexually or by exposing their mistakes to others
- Drug addiction

KEY FACTS & STAGES OF RECRUITMENT

SIGNS MIGHT INCLUDE...

- Displaying challenging behaviour.
- Going missing for long periods at a time.
- Staying out late.
- Being secretive about where they have been or are going to.
- Lack of interest in school, activities and hobbies.
- Disrespect for boundaries set by parents / carers or school.

ACT OR IGNORE

ACT ←————→ IGNORE

Choose one side of the room to move to in each scenario.

You're welcome to change sides at any point.

Be honest.



ACT OR IGNORE

ACT



IGNORE



You notice one of your friendship group has a new mobile phone, that they haven't given you the number for.

They seem a lot busier and have much less time to see you.

You notice they hang out with different people, who aren't in school.



ACT OR IGNORE

ACT ←————→ IGNORE

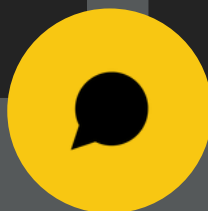
DISCUSS WITH THOSE AROUND YOU:

ACT

- Why would you act?
- Why is it your responsibility?
- What worries you?

IGNORE

- Why would you ignore this?
- Whose responsibility is it?



ACT OR IGNORE

ACT



IGNORE



You've heard a rumour that someone in your year is using and sharing drugs.

You don't know them very well.



ACT OR IGNORE

ACT ←————→ IGNORE

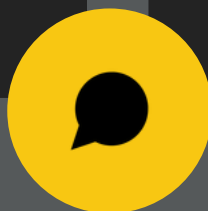
DISCUSS WITH THOSE AROUND YOU:

ACT

- Why would you act?
- Why is it your responsibility?
- Who could you share this within confidence?

IGNORE

- Why would you ignore this?
- Whose responsibility is it?



ACT OR IGNORE

ACT



IGNORE



A friend of yours had a message on Insta asking them to hold on to a bag.

The person messaging said they'd give your friend some cash once they get it back as long as it's kept secret.

ACT OR IGNORE

ACT ←————→ IGNORE

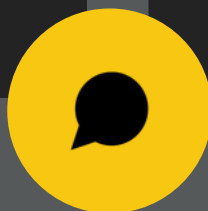
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WORRIED OR NEED HELP?

When something is worrying you, it's always better to talk to someone you trust rather than keep it inside. There are lots of adults and organisations who are here to help.



**School
Community
Police Officer**



**Teacher or
trusted adult**



0800 555111



**modern slavery &
exploitation helpline**

08000 121 700



THE CLEWER
• INITIATIVE