

What is County Lines?

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which criminals try to make friends (groom) and manipulate children into drug dealing. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control a young person who is delivering drugs, often to towns outside their home county.

Spotting and reporting the signs of exploitation

- Your friend keeps going missing and you don't know where they are going
- Your friends have new clothes, trainers, mobile phone and has lot of money
- Always on their phone and texting
- Hanging around with the wrong choice of people or gangs
- Carrying weapons such as knives
- Your friends have unusual marks/injuries on their body



'Cuckooing' is a common word you will hear when criminals use the homes of vulnerable adults so they can use their homes for drug-dealing and other criminal activities.

SPOT THE SIGNS OF COUNTY LINES

Children and vulnerable adults are at risk of exploitation from gangs. This could include...

 Persistently 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 change in emotional wellbeing	

Who is targeted?

Children as young as six are being forced to carry and sell drugs far away from their homes. They are made to not go to school, sleep in drug dens, keep secrets from their family and friends. They are treated as criminals when they often feel trapped in a hopeless situation. Young people aged 14-17 are most likely to be targeted by criminal groups to get involved with County Lines.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

What to do if you are worried about a friend?
Please talk to an adult you trust or call the police 999.