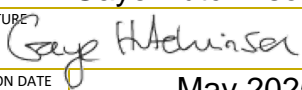


ISSUE YEAR	ISSUE MONTH
2023	May
APPROVED BY	
Gaye Hutchinson	
SIGNATURE	
	
REVISION DATE	
	May 2025

County Lines Policy

Changes made to policy since last issue:
Date change only.

What does county lines mean?

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in the movement of illegal drugs out of bigger cities into smaller towns and rural areas using children and vulnerable people, through the use of dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line'. The drug runner often needs a place to stay and to do this the gang will take over the home of a vulnerable person, often after following them home. Children and vulnerable people can also be persuaded, coerced or forced to store drugs and money.

How to spot possible victims

There are several signs to look out for when a child or vulnerable adult has been lured into this activity, these include:

- Change in behaviour
- Signs of assault and/or malnutrition
- Access to numerous phones
- Use of unusual terms e.g., going county
- Associating with gangs
- Unexplained bus or train tickets
- School truancy or going missing
- Unexplained gifts (clothes, trainers) and cash

What is Cuckooing?

This is a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing.

What are the signs of cuckooing?

Signs that 'cuckooing' may be going on at a property include:

- An increase in people entering and leaving

- An increase in cars or bikes outside
- Possible increase in anti-social behaviour
- Increasing litter outside
- Signs of drugs use
- Lack of healthcare visitors

Child Criminal Exploitation

This is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18.

What to do if you suspect county lines activity

Contact your Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or Crimestoppers anonymously using a non-traceable online form or by phone.

Crimestoppers

www.crimestoppers-uk.org
0800 555 111

What they will need to know:

- Names of individuals involved
- Addresses
- Car registration number of those visiting the premises
- Mobile phone numbers of individuals (if known)
- Types of drugs involved

Your contact will remain 100% anonymous. You will not be asked for your name, and your call or online report will never be traced.

Where can I get more information?

Contact the National Crime Agency on:

National Crime Agency

0370 496 7622 or online using
<https://tinyurl.com/y635mjgu>