


ISSUE YEAR	October 2025
APPROVED BY	Gaye Hutchinson
SIGNATURE	
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P0002: County Lines Policy

1. Policy Statement

County lines and criminal exploitation are serious issues facing our learners that can have devastating physical, mental and emotional consequences resulting in a risk or actual violence or death. Release Potential Ltd therefore view this as an area where awareness across the organisation is essential.

2. Objectives of this Policy

This policy which forms part of our Safeguarding strategy, is aimed at helping to protect vulnerable people, including the young, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with a history of trauma, and those struggling with past or present substance abuse. It will raise awareness and ensure all learners and staff are aware of how and where to gain help.

3. Organisational Commitment

Our policy is visibly led and driven by its senior management team and governing body.

Designated Officer: Hugh Hutchinson, Director of Finance

Email: hugh.hutchinson@release-potential.co.uk

4. 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.

5. 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

6. 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.

6.1 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

7. 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.

8. 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

Phone: 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.

9. Where can I get more information?

Contact the National Crime Agency on:

National Crime Agency: <https://tinyurl.com/y635mjgu>

Phone: 0370 496 7622