No.28 County Lines

**County Lines is the accepted name given to the method of supplying, distributing and increasing drug use in rural counties. This is exploitation of children with devastating consequences for them and their families.**

All agencies have become increasingly concerned and involved with children of all ages who have been exploited by drug gangs from out of county using them to identify areas where drugs are already available, identify areas to sell drugs and identify potential clients. They are then used to distribute drugs into these areas (they could be moving across county lines themselves to do this) and to carry money from the transactions or weapons needed by the main distributors for protection, threat or damage to people and property.

The main lines that are known to be targeting the South West are managed from Manchester, Greater Manchester, London and Liverpool.

This exploitation is also identified as being one of the reasons for the increase in violence and knife crime amongst our young people and this OMG may help you identify any potential perpetrators or victims of this, as required under new regulation for schools.

This area of concern is often reliant on your professional curiosity and judgement and does not require you to have certainty of guilt or culpability to refer to the support network.

There is no set victim profile, they can be any gender, colour, background, social class and age but there are some indicators that you may find useful:

* they have friendships, relationships or association with controlling individuals or groups – look for patterns of non-attendance, listen to their peers about recreational activities, refusal or withdrawal from previous activities.
* they become isolated from peers and social networks – you could use a genogram to show how their friendship groups have altered over time.
* they have unexplained injuries, ill health, or suspicion of assault – sometimes those who are initially identified as victims become perpetrators.
* there are changes in their emotional wellbeing – they may show signs of stress, inability to concentrate, quick to temper or tearful, withdrawn and depressed.
* changes in behaviour or lifestyle – talking in an adult manner, disrespectful of authority (school staff and police etc), increase in money available to them (if dealing) or lack of financial resources (if using or in debt to the gangs), clothing may indicate a change in lifestyle or friendship group.
* going missing or staying out late and presenting as if beyond parental control, parents being unsure where their young children are or who they are friends with or going further afield than previously.
* someone else might share information with you that gives you cause for concern. This could come from a variety of sources - other parents, young people or agencies and should be recorded on the pupil chronology with the names of the third party withheld and placed in a separate report.

One Minute Guide

* Secretiveness, although this isn’t always the case and some young people can be quite open about their associations and movement or they may tell you something which suggests they were involved in an exploitative situation e.g. party where drugs were being given
* concerning use of the internet, social media or mobile phones, County Lines is controlled through the use of mobile phones and if you are concerned you should ensure that you consult with your school policy and if the phone is removed put in a safe area (fridge).

If a parent or young person tells you they have someone from another area staying with them for a couple of weeks and they don’t know their family, consider that this could be cuckooing

If you see or hear of lots of visitors to a certain property or area or children are gathering in a certain area – this could be a location of concern.

Educate yourself with the current language used although this is not a definitive guide and be aware that it could change:

* **Younger** – a juvenile dealer recruited to the gangs
* **Conch** - out of town for cycle of 2/3 weeks where they will work 24hrs a day
* **Cuckoo** – trap house which is not a pleasant environment for the dealers, particularly young children
* **Packaging** containing the drugs is referred to as **shots** which are normally 0.1 grams
* **Going Country** – base for the dealers
* **G Pack** - contains 50 shots which will cost £1000
* **Re Sup** – person arrives at Cuckoo location to re supply county lines dealer
* **Burner –** mobile phone given to young people

**The toolkit can be accessed at:**

<https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/identifying-exploitation/>

**You can refer to MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) via:** <https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Education/Children/Forms/AllItems>.

**Or phone MASH on 0345 1551071**

You can submit an information report to Devon and Cornwall Police through their secure Partner Agency Information Sharing Form. You do not need to gain someone’s consent before submitting an information report. Doing so could compromise the police’s ability to act on this information <https://devon-cornwall.police.uk/contact-forms/partner-agency-information-sharing-form/>

You can report information anonymously through Crime Stoppers by calling 0800 555 111

Information reports should not be used to report concerns over someone’s safety or welfare. If you are concerned about someone’s safety or welfare you must consult Devon’s safeguarding referral flowchart.