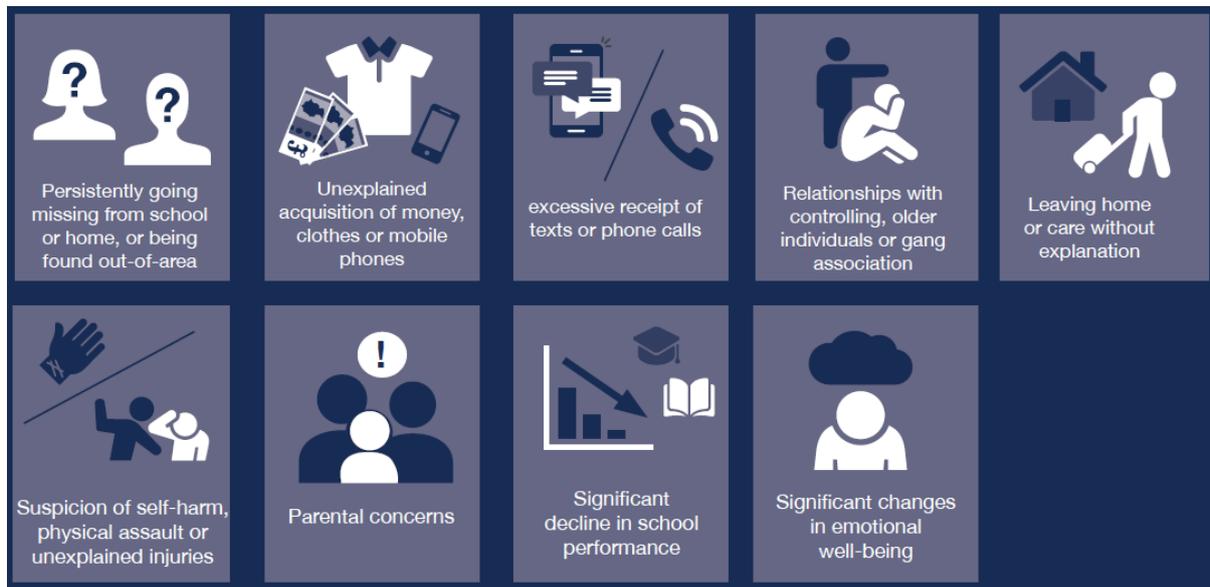


County Lines



County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation have a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.



How to spot the signs

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area.
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones.
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets.
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups.
- Leaving home / care without explanation.

- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries.
- Parental concerns.
- Carrying weapons.
- Significant decline in school results / performance.
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Recognise these terms?

Here are some words/terms that are commonly used when describing county lines activity. If you hear someone using these words then they might be involved in or might know of county lines activity.

Cuckooing

This is when drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable individual and use it as their base for selling/manufacturing drugs. Commonly, drug users are targeted and are offered “free” drugs in exchange.

Going Country

This is the most popular term that describes county lines activity. It can also mean the act of travelling to another city/town to deliver drugs or money.

Trapping

The act of selling drugs. Trapping can refer to the act of moving drugs from one town to another or the act of selling drugs in one.

Trap House

A building used as a base from where drugs are sold (or sometimes manufactured). These houses usually are occupied by someone (usually adult drug users but sometimes young people are forced to stay in trap houses) location.

Trap Line

This refers to when someone owns a mobile phone specifically for the purpose of running and selling of drug.

What to do if you are concerned

Any practitioner working with a vulnerable person who they think may be at risk of county lines exploitation should follow their local safeguarding guidance and share this information with local authority social services. If you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, you should contact the police on 101 or online at WMP Live Chat

<https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/>

CRIMESTOPPERS offer lots of advice and provide a way to report anonymously

Tel 0800 555 111 website <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information>

Fearless.org also offers lots of advice.

<https://www.fearless.org/en/campaigns/county-lines>