

Welfare Awareness Topic: Gangs and County Lines


Overview – The [National Crime Agency](#) states: County lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries, and usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. Dealers will frequently target children and adults – often with mental health or addiction problems – to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement.

The gang will make some form of contact with the target, and the grooming process will begin, either by person, mobile phone, or over social media, which might be used to glamorise gang life and to entice people. Some individuals could be groomed through family members. County lines gangs offer money or status to attract people, and young people may feel powerless to leave, and may be told they will be in trouble if they seek help.

If you are worried about a friend or someone you know, here are some signs to look out for:

- Change in mood or demeanour, like changes in personality or changes in mental health
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things, or changes in the way they dress
- Being seen in different cars driven by unknown adults
- Going missing, maybe for long periods of time
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Receiving excessive texts or phone calls, and having multiple phones or sim cards

Check in on them and make sure they are okay. The best advice is to trust your instincts. Even if someone isn't involved in county lines drug dealing, they may be being exploited in some other way. If you are ever worried about your involvement, or a friend's involvement in county lines, a good option is to speak to someone you trust and talk to them about your concerns.

 **Remember the importance of two of the fundamental British Values of Democracy and Individual Liberty**, to create a safe environment to live and work, and contribute to a culture built upon freedom and equality.

Article/Source / Support

- If you, or someone you know is in an unsafe situation, don't be afraid to reach out and get help, **you can speak to your local police by dialling 101, or in an emergency, dial 999.**
- If you notice something linked to the railways, you can report concerns to the British Transport Police by texting 61016 from your mobile.
- You can speak to a service like [Catch 22](#). They work with young people to help get them out of situations they're worried about and have helped lots of young people involved in county lines.
- [CrimeStoppers](#) has more information about county lines. You can call 0800 555 111 – or use their non-traceable online form [here](#). You will remain 100% anonymous. Always. They will never ask for your name, and your phone call or online report will never be traced.
- The [National Crime Agency](#) has information on spotting and reporting gangs and county lines.

Support

If you would like to talk to the safeguarding team about anything you have just read, we will listen without judgement and signpost you to support. If you would like to talk to a member of the Safeguarding Team then please get in touch: safeguarding@bpp.com