

County Lines



What is it?

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.



BBC Investigation into County Lines

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPXlx9C0Rxs>

Exploitation of Young and Vulnerable People



A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The 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.

In some cases the dealers will take over a local property, normally belonging to a vulnerable person, and use it to operate their criminal activity from. This is known as cuckooing. People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business.

As we have seen in child sexual exploitation, children often don't see themselves as victims or realise they have been groomed to get involved in criminality. So it's important that we all play our part to understand county lines and speak out if we have concerns.



Warning Signs

Some signs to look out for include:

- An increase in visitors and cars to a house or flat
- New faces appearing at the house or flat
- New and regularly changing residents (e.g different accents compared to local accent)
- Change in resident's mood and/or demeanour (e.g. secretive/ withdrawn/ aggressive/ emotional)
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Changes in the way young people you might know dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g clothes, jewellery, cars etc)
- Residents or young people you know going missing, maybe for long periods of time
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries



What to do if you are worried:

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, so it's always worth speaking out.

You can speak to your local police by dialling 101, or in an emergency 999.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111.

If you notice something linked to the railways, you can report concerns to the British Transport Police by texting 61016 from your mobile. In an emergency dial 999.

If you are a young person who is worried about your involvement, or a friend's involvement in county lines a good option is to speak to an adult you trust and talk to them about your concerns.

You can also call Childline on 0800 1111. Childline is private and confidential service where you can talk to specially trained counsellors about anything that is worrying you.

Alternatively, speak to a children and young people's service like [Catch 22](#). They work with children and young people of any age to help get them out of situations they're worried about, and have helped lots of children and young people involved in County Lines.

Source: <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>



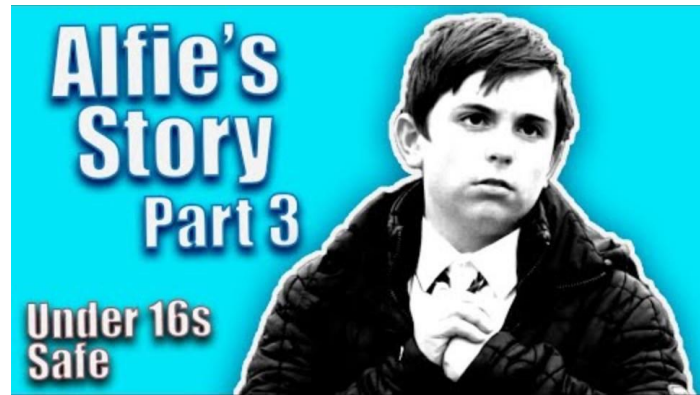
Other resources:



Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sfr4f8FmwrM>



Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFQtA0Xi7NQ>



Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sH6Bx-VcMJA&list=PLHQ6K3_1FVtQKACIOLxYqZh5ln6r38nNr&index=8



Part 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FU8nm8zRTs&list=PLHQ6K3_1FVtQKACIOLxYqZh5ln6r38nNr&index=9

Alfie's Story

A short film about a young boy groomed and criminally exploited by drug dealers. Based on real life events; co-written with survivors and made with a local cast to show how grooming and child criminal exploitation works and how we can look out for each other.