



# Safeguarding Newsletter



## County Lines

**What is 'County Lines'?** County lines is the way that inner city drug gangs expand their business to coastal and rural towns and villages.

**How do they work?** An inner city drug gang will recruit vulnerable young people to carry drugs (cocaine, heroin, cannabis), known as 'running', to various locations. Although it is predominantly young males that are recruited, males and females of any ethnic background can be targeted.

Young people are used in the hope that due to their age, they will not arouse suspicion and will therefore not be searched whilst transporting the drugs.

When the dealer is successful in setting up a 'line' from the city to the coast, they will recruit more young people to distribute drugs into the area.

**How do they recruit?** Dealers are often looking for vulnerable young people, often those who are 'loners'. These young people may be from a poorer background, have a history of neglect and/or other types of abuse. And are without a support network (for example, parents who are not at home much). Dealers will befriend these people and buy them desirable items such as new trainers, designer clothing or drugs.



**What should teachers be looking out for? Some signs that someone may be involved in county lines include...**

- Young people becoming unexpectedly popular or wearing more expensive/new clothing than you would expect.
- A change in behaviour with the young person often disengaging from school and staff.
- Young people that are in possession of more than one phone.
- Young people associating with and forming friendships with older people that they have not previously been seen with.

**Is this happening in Gosport?** Yes - we have a number of lines that are active in Gosport and we suspect that some young people are already involved. This would cause us to be concerned about the risk of other young people being recruited into this activity.

**If you suspect a student to be in the possession of drugs, speak to the safeguarding team immediately. Do not talk to the student about this or attempt to search them or their possessions yourself.**

### **Further reading**

[https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/toolkit\\_criminal\\_exploitation\\_and\\_county\\_lines.pdf](https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/toolkit_criminal_exploitation_and_county_lines.pdf)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/gangs-young-people/>