

Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

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County Lines : Glossary of Terms

County Lines	Urbanised group relocated to county area operating drug telephone line supplying Class A locally, sourced and ran from urbanised area.
Line	Mobile telephone number distributed to local drug users to order drugs
Enforcer	person hired to carry out violent attacks, act as protector
Taxing	rival groups taking money/supply from another group
Hitters	young persons trained to use weapons properly, such as concealing and use weapons without detection. These act as 'enforcers'. They will be paid per 'hit' of a target (person).
Elders	persons higher up the chain of command, usually direct the young persons.
Debt Bondage	taking control of user in debt and taking their property to pay off their debt and continue supply activity.

County Lines : Glossary of Terms

Cuckooing	Acquiring a local address through coercion, force or threat by supplying home occupier with drugs/money to initiate a relationship. The occupier is usually vulnerable.
Suicide Mission	a risky job (risk of violence or arrest) but will gain points with who working for (i.e. taxing rival drug gang, carrying larger shipment of drugs)
Tool	refers to a weapon, item used as protection, often uses the term 'tooled up'.
Graft	term used when person is out dealing, committing crime to fund themselves. A drug deal may be called a 'graft'.
G Pack	100 rocks of crack cocaine
Plugging	drugs inserted within the body (vaginally, anally)
Clean Skin	Person with no previous convictions.

THE COUNTY LINE MODEL

The term 'County Line' is used where an organised crime group from an urban area predominantly large cities, establish a new drug dealing market in a county force area using a mobile telephone 'line' to facilitate and organise the distribution of drugs.

The drugs being supplied are predominately Class A, crack cocaine and heroin.

The line will target vulnerable people from the urbanised force, such as young persons to transport and supply drugs in the county area, and local persons to occupy and supply from local addresses.

Persons involved may be criminally/sexually exploited.

In Humberside, County Lines have been identified from areas such as London, Sheffield, Manchester, Huddersfield, Birmingham, Nottingham and Liverpool.

There are 16 identified/scored County Lines in Humberside, and over 70 telephone numbers possibly linked to County Line activity.

County Lines: The 'Line' Mobile Phone

- The networks are establishing themselves as a 'business' with telephone numbers advertised via business cards and offering deals to users to make themselves more favourable with drug users.
- Each drug line will be known by a name. This name is constant, although persons working/controlling the mobile telephone will likely change. This makes it difficult to identify the gang members.
- The line is operated 24/7 by young persons in the county area. These are often paid around £50 a day. These numbers will send texts advertising drugs for sale to local drug users.
- The person controlling the line is not necessarily in contact with drugs themselves, with a second telephone number often arranging drug collection/drop off locations. Users can be given code names in order to collect drugs from a specified location.
- **In Humberside, county line groups are using multiple drug line telephone numbers in order to frustrate police activity.**

County Lines: How it works

- The persons involved in the county lines model are less likely to be known by local, on-beat officers and can operate and establish themselves freely.
- The gangs will move persons in/out of the county area regularly to avoid police becoming familiar with individuals. They will use hire cars, trains or local nominals vehicles.
- 'Runners', predominately children aged 15-18, will bring drugs to the county area, make cash deposits to accounts in the urban area and which are then quickly removed from accounts.
- Rival gangs are feared more than local drug dealers or police. They pose less risk compared to other urbanised gangs, who are more likely to have access to firearms or propensity for serious violence.

- In Humberside, networks are said to be making £2,000 - £5,000 daily.
- A drugs line (mobile telephone/SIM card) is said to be worth over £10,000 for the contact details of local drug users. A London borough contact list will cost around £20,000 - £30,000.

County Lines: Violence

- Gang members are more commonly being referred to carrying 'tools' (weapons) for protection. This is due to an increasing expectation of drug taxings (theft of drugs/money from rival groups). As a result, county line groups are bringing with them enforcers and hitters for protection/retaliation.
- Firearms are common from urbanised gangs, although often carried/kept for status and to threaten violence. They are rarely discharged (or reported to be).
- The gangs will use violence against themselves, to force persons to cooperate and deal (through fear) and to move persons around the country. Threats can be made to themselves or particularly, family members.
- In Humberside, county lines activity has resulted in serious violence including use of knives, predominately machetes.
- Gang members have been said to have access to firearms.

County Lines: Exploitation

- Females are increasingly becoming intertwined with County Lines. The presence of a female tends to move away from the expected ideology of a 'drug gang'.
- Those at risk of CSE often see males as their partners, who provide money, drugs, alcohol, clothing.
- These males will appear as 'protection' from other males, although females may be passed around gang members sexually.
- Gangs have been identified to use emotional leverage, such as making females fearful the gangs will target their family. Gangs have been known to recruit through families, i.e. gang members' sisters targeted in punishment.
- Child Criminal Exploitation is rife, with young persons viewed as 'cheap labour' for gangs so are becoming more popular. This could include plugging drugs, committing SAC to further financial gain.

County Lines: Evolution

- The age of persons becoming involved in this model are becoming younger with persons as young as 10 years.
- The gangs/groups are using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp – where their activity can be hidden from LEA.
- The groups are employing so many people that it is difficult to keep track of a person. A young person for example could work in Grimsby one week, and be sent to Wales the next.
- The exploitation of young persons is sophisticated , where they are made to feel they are part of a ‘family’ being in the gang, usually due to unhappiness in the family home environment/in care services.
- In Humberside, there has been a rise of persons from in care services in urbanised areas appearing in county areas. Gangs are aware that agencies from different areas may not as openly communicate intelligence.

County Lines: The Signs

- **A rise in drug use:** more drugs in an area is likely to encourage more people to use.
- **A rise in missing persons:** particularly young or vulnerable persons, who may be sent to work in other areas of the country.
- **A shift in attitude, failure to engage with services :** often young persons will be away from their home area for a week at a time. They become disillusioned that the gang has their best interests at heart. Children outside mainstream schooling have been identified as key targets for these groups.
- **A rise in violence:** violence is expected in markets targeted towards drugs and drug supply.
- **A rise in injuries:** initiations into gangs can include protecting themselves from an attack, or may be injured as punishment. Knife injuries are rising in persons under 25 years.

County Lines: How do we tackle the Offenders

- **Arrest for the Following Offences:**

Supply a Controlled Drug - Sections 4(3) and 4A of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 Regulation 6 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001

Money Laundering - Sections 327 to 340 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

Commit a Criminal Offence with Intent to Commit Offence of Human Trafficking - Section 4 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Human Trafficking - Section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

County Lines: How do we tackle the Offenders

- **Utilise Civil Injunctions and other legislation:**

Injunctions to Prevent Gang Related Violence and/or Drug Dealing - Sections 34 to 46 of, and Schedules 5 and 5A to the Policing and Crime Act 2009

Serious Crime Prevention Orders – Sections 1 to 41 of, and Schedules 1 and 21 to, Serious Crime Act 2007

Closure Orders - Premises Associated With Nuisance or Disorder - Sections 76 to 93 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Child Abduction Notice's - Sec 2. Child Abduction Act 1984 & Sec 49. Children Act 1989

County Lines: How do we tackle the Offenders

- **Utilise Civil Injunctions and other legislation:**

Criminal Behaviour Orders - Sections 22 to 33 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Slavery & Trafficking Risk Orders: *The Risk Orders can be used in two different ways:*

- *where investigation has commenced but protection of victims / potential victims is needed whilst police enquiries are on-going; or*

In cases where there is insufficient evidence to prosecute but there is a need to restrain the activities of suspects which may lead to harm.

County Lines: Challenges

Victim or Suspect

Human Trafficking – Victims non engagement, NRM, Section 45 MSA, CPS

Collaboration – Information sharing, working together with partners and other LEA

Mapping – Police and Partners

Obtaining Civil Orders

Cross Command working

County Lines: Questions

Questions

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If you have any concerns that a person is being exploited/trafficked or any intelligence relating to County Lines, please email:
FIB@Humberside.pnn.police.uk