



**Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility**

County Lines

'**County Lines**' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs. These dealers **will** use dedicated mobile phone **lines**, known as 'deal **lines**', to take orders from drug users.

[County Lines - National Crime Agency](#)

Young children become vulnerable to exploitation when gang members encourage them carry tobacco/cigarettes from one area to another. This is a starting point for young people and once involved it becomes difficult to leave.

What are the signs of criminal exploitation and county lines?

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.